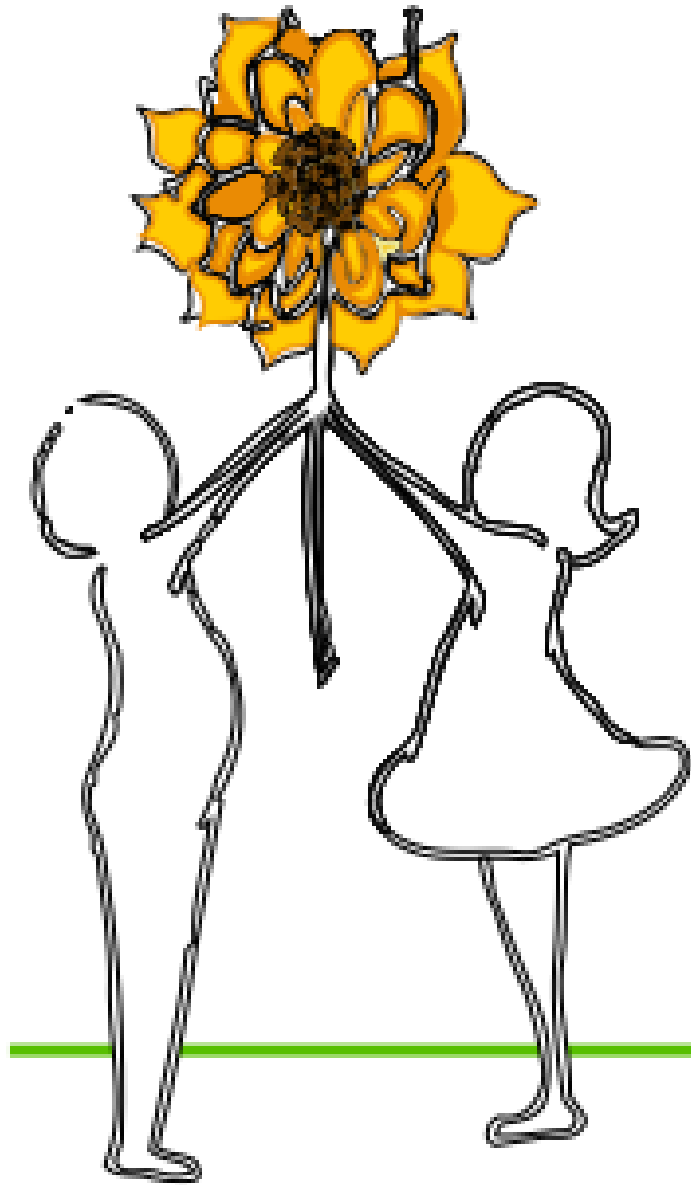




Élan Vital Montessori School
Parent Handbook
2026-2027

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Organization and Administration

History of Élan Vital Montessori School

Élan Vital Montessori School was founded in 2006 by a dedicated group of families with a passion and desire to build a quality Montessori school.

Élan Vital Montessori School abides by a truth in advertising policy that all communications are accurate and truthful to the best of our ability. Élan Vital is committed to providing future and current students, faculty, staff, and members of the community with concise information regarding all aspects of their involvement with the school.

Mission Statement

The mission of Élan Vital Montessori School is to create and sustain an optimum Montessori educational environment to enable each child to realize his or her richest potential for learning and to become an independent, self-motivated, and contributing member of the world community. It is our aim to instill respect and responsibility for humankind, the environment, and ourselves.

School Governance

School Administration

The School Directors handle daily school administration and finances. This includes managing school operations, parent contact, and financial administration.

The Directors are responsible for setting policy, website maintenance, newsletters, event coordination, and long range planning.

Parent Involvement

Élan Vital Montessori School depends upon the support of the parents in order to function. Parental involvement is a necessity; without the time and resources provided by parents, Élan Vital Montessori would never have been founded and would not exist today. The children at Élan Vital Montessori benefit in immeasurable ways from seeing their parents take an active role in supporting their school. By their involvement, active parents underscore the importance of education and the value of each and every child.

Upon enrollment at Élan Vital Montessori, families are also committing to being active members of our parent association. A parent association plays a vital role in creating a strong, supportive bridge between families and the school community. These groups often organize events, support classroom needs, and assist with fundraising efforts, all of which directly enhance the learning environment. Beyond logistics, a parent association cultivates a sense of belonging and shared purpose, reinforcing the idea that education is a partnership. When families are engaged and involved, children feel more supported, and the entire school community thrives.

There are many ways to volunteer. For example, parents have painted, landscaped, made classroom materials, listened to children read, volunteered at events and assisted with recruiting. In addition, parents can support fundraising activities. Teachers will provide options as well, throughout the year. Parents are welcome to contact the School Administration to learn more about service opportunities.

HOME VISITS

Teachers are happy to visit the homes of students in order to assist with better integrating Montessori principles into the child's home life, including aspects such as meal times, naptime, and setting up a play area. Parents are

encouraged to contact the school to schedule such a visit. However, while teachers may visit students in their homes for these aforementioned purposes, it is against school policy for teachers to provide babysitting or tutoring services for students at Élan Vital Montessori.

Grievance Procedure

If any Faculty/Administrator is contacted by a Parent/Guardian regarding a grievance, the faculty/ Administrator shall provide such Parent/Guardian with the Grievance Procedure and shall direct such Parent/Guardian to the initial step which may be taken in an attempt to resolve such matter.

Any Faculty/ Administrator contacted regarding such matter shall keep any and all information confidential and shall disclose such information only in response to an investigation conducted by the School Administration, or a Grievance Committee appointed by the Administrators, or in response to a proper request made during legal proceedings regarding such matter.

1. The complainant should schedule a first conference, as soon as possible, with the School Director. If a specific incident has given rise to the problem, this first conference should be scheduled as close to the date of the event as possible.
2. If this first conference with the School Director fails to resolve the problem, an official complaint should be submitted to the School Director, in writing using the Grievance Form (Appendix A) within fifteen (15) working days following the first conference. The grievance form requires the complainant to describe in detail the problem and steps that have been taken to resolve it. Upon receipt, the School Director shall date the grievance form and return a dated copy to the complainant.
3. The School Director shall begin an investigation into the problem. The School Director shall have ten (10) working days to complete the investigation. Upon completion of the investigation the School Director shall meet with the complainant and inform him/her of the results of the investigation and what remedy the School Director thinks is appropriate. This meeting is the second conference. The School Director shall also provide an answer to the grievance in writing at or prior to the second conference. If the complainant is not satisfied with the School Director's investigation or suggested remedy, he/she may appeal to the Director or President of the Board by submitting a written complaint, on the form provided in this Handbook, within ten (10) business days following the second conference. Upon receipt, the Director or President of the Board shall date the grievance form and return a dated copy to the complainant.
4. If a problem is brought to the Director, a Grievance Committee appointed by the Administrator shall conduct their own investigation into the complaint and shall respond in writing to the grievance within thirty (30) working days. The Grievance Committee shall consist of three members, including at least one member of the Administration and one member of the teaching staff. Any decision made by the Grievance Committee shall be final and binding.

In order to preserve the integrity of this internal procedure, no faculty/staff member is to take any matter to any other person without first taking the appropriate steps laid out in the grievance procedure.

Any conferences between faculty/staff members and Administrators, or other parents/guardians who are not directly involved concerning a grievance, which take place outside of the internal grievance procedure, are highly inappropriate and inconsistent with our goal of maintaining the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of employment information.

While we acknowledge parental responsibility and welcome positive involvement, Élan Vital Montessori School reserves the right to deny student admission or discontinue enrollment in the event that a parent exhibits behavior that is discourteous, scandalous, rumor driven, disruptive, threatening, hostile, or divisive. In such a case, the decision of the Directors regarding the suitability for continued enrollment or acceptance in the school would be final.

In addition, a Parent / Guardian may make a complaint to the Louisiana Department of Education if you have unresolved licensing complaints. This can be done by emailing General Early Childhood Support at earlychildhood@la.gov or calling toll free: (877) 453-2721.

Brightwheel Messages

Our preferred method of communication is through Brightwheel. The administrative team monitors Brightwheel throughout the day and keeps it open at all times in case of an emergency. Teachers will respond to Brightwheel messages, but please understand that their priority is to remain present and engaged with the children. They will reply to messages during moments when they are not actively working with students. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we strive to maintain a safe and attentive learning environment.

Phone Calls and Voice Messages

Élan Vital Montessori acknowledges that clear, timely, and effective communication between parents, staff, and teachers is essential. Parents can call the school at any time to schedule a visit or come to the school during office hours any time there is a concern. Staff and teachers return calls as soon as possible. Be aware that teachers are responsible for children all of the school day and cannot easily get away to return your call immediately. They will, however, return your call at their earliest possible convenience. Parents should call the School Director at any time to address issues promptly when concerns exist. Concerns regarding Extended Care issues should also be directed to the School Director. We encourage you to communicate regularly with us, so we may work together to best meet the needs of the students. **If the school phone is not answered please leave a voicemail. The voicemail is checked periodically throughout the day.**

As always, if your child must be absent from school and/or in Extended Care, please notify the school office by voicemail, email or in writing by 8:00 am. The school office will notify the teacher.

Newsletters

Parents will receive newsletters in folders, by email, or on Brightwheel remain updated on classroom, school events, important school updates, and general information.

Hours of Operation

Élan Vital Montessori is open Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. with Administrative Office hours of 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. **Again, if you are attempting to call the school, please leave a voicemail if we do not answer.** Extended Care is available from 3:30 pm until 5:30 pm daily.

Enrollment and Tuition

The enrollment process at Élan Vital Montessori follows the following procedure, which is designed to best equip prospective families and Élan Vital teachers with the information necessary to determine a prospective student's fit within the school.

- Prospective families should contact Élan Vital Montessori to schedule an appointment to tour the school.
- Following the tour, prospective families are invited to submit an application and an application fee.
- The prospective student is invited to return for a visit-in, in which the prospective student participates with the other students in the activities of the school day.
- The application is reviewed by teachers and director of Élan Vital Montessori, an admission decision is made, and notification of acceptance may be sent to prospective parents.
- Upon accepting an offer of admission, prospective parents must complete registration papers and submit a **non-refundable** registration fee. **Please note: The enrollment process is not complete until the School receives the completed registration forms and the non-refundable fee.**

Enrollment

Enrollment at Élan Vital Montessori requires a family commitment for the academic year. As we are a school environment and not a day care facility, we do not offer limited enrollment for short periods of time (by month or by week). This allows our classes to remain consistent and for the class to grow as a group academically. All enrolled families are expected to maintain their commitment for the entire school year. Reenrollment is held each January for the following school year program.

Notice of Non-discriminatory Policy

Élan Vital Montessori does not discriminate in enrollment, hiring practices, or in the care of children based on race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, or religion.

Élan Vital Montessori School admits students of any race, color, gender, national, or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, national, or ethnic origin in employment or in its administration of its educational policies, admission policies, financial aid programs, athletics, or other school administered programs. Admission decisions are based upon the space available and an evaluation of the suitability of EVM for each student.

Religious Activities

Élan Vital Montessori is not affiliated with any religious organization.

Required Admission Forms

Upon your decision to enroll your student at Élan Vital Montessori, you will be asked to complete the following forms. Completion of these signed forms is required prior to your child's first day of attendance:

- Tuition Contract
- Enrollment/ Health Packet
- Immunization Records
- Copy of Social Security Card
- Copy of Birth Certificate
- Copy of Insurance Card

Your child's records are not shared unless you sign a release stating that Élan Vital has permission to share the information with another school. While we strive to have open communication between members of teaching teams and the administration, information about children is not shared with a person who has no legitimate need for knowing. When initiating a conversation, you may state that the matter is to be kept confidential within the teaching team and administration. Consultants or educational diagnosticians requesting teacher evaluations will be mailed or emailed directly to the person requesting information.

Tuition Rates and School Fees

Your tuition rate will be verified at the time of student admission and is documented on the registration form. School and extended day hours are calculated into tuition rates beginning each school year in August. Tuition rates are revised each December for the next new school year. Please direct all payment questions to the school Director.

Payment Plans

Parents are required to pay for the time their child/children are scheduled to be in school and/or Extended Care. Payment is required for reserved space regardless of attendance. Payment is due in advance and payment must be received prior to service. Payment plans are selected at the time of registration.

Monthly Payment Option

Tuition is due on the 1st or 15th of every month for services of that month. All families are expected to keep their accounts current. Tuition payment will not be accepted in the School office but shall be made through the TUIO site on a monthly basis or by automated bank draft.

Holidays, Vacations, School Breaks and Closures

Fees are not reduced during months that have holidays. Our rates include allowances for all holidays, including winter and spring break.

You will be required to pay 100% of your regular rate while you are on vacation. Your class placement and enrollment are continuous while you are on vacation.

These breaks are outlined on the school calendar yearly. Consult this year's calendar for specific dates. Our School Program is closed during these dates. School breaks are calculated into the tuition cost and no tuition credit or discount is given for these dates.

We are doing everything we can to avoid school closures due to illnesses. In conjunction with the Department of Education and Louisiana Department of Health, Élan Vital is doing everything we can with group sizes, pods within classrooms, sanitation schedules and frequent student and staff screenings to avoid school closures. In the event of a school closure, payment schedules will remain.

Payment Penalties

You will be billed \$1.00 per minute for the first late pickup from school after 3:15 p.m. or Extended Care after 5:30 p.m. within 30 days. The second late pickup will be billed at the rate of \$2.00 per minute. Late pickups commencing with the third occurrence must be addressed directly with the School Director.

Withdrawal Policy

On the date that the school's designee signs the enrollment contract, the parents or legal guardian becomes responsible for the full tuition for the academic school year, as liquidated damages, even if the student never actually attends the school, the student withdraws, or for any other reason fails to continue attendance for the school year, unless withdrawal is requested by the school. An exit interview may also be requested.

Please contact the school office to settle all financial arrangements when withdrawing a student. Once withdrawn, Élan Vital Montessori will fill the space vacated with a new incoming student or an advancing student.

Families withdrawing from Élan Vital Montessori with the intention of avoiding payment for an extended family vacation or other personal reasons will not be re-admitted to Élan Vital Montessori, as this behavior undermines the educational process and disturbs the class structure. Élan Vital Montessori School follows an academic year from August to May. The Toddler families have a choice between this ten month option and a twelve month option, August to July.

Termination of Contracts by School

The following are conditions that will cause school day or extended care services to be terminated:

- Continual late payments or continual late pick-ups (more than three within a one month period)
- Child behavioral problems deterring successful school experiences

- Disrespect of the school day or extended care setting, policies, and staff
- Sporadic attendance
- Consistently arriving after 8:30 am and disturbing the educational process

Receipts and Taxes

You can receive a statement at the end of the year reflecting all tuition paid through Smart Tuition. You will receive a form reporting your annual childcare expenditures for the applicable tax year. **Élan Vital Montessori's Federal Identification Number is 20-5098093.**

The School Experience

Parent Orientation

All parents or legal guardians of incoming students are required to attend the first Parent Information Night of the school year to gain a better understanding of Montessori, the school day, school policies, and school procedures. Curriculum Nights are also offered periodically.

Phase-In

According to common Montessori practice, students will be phased-in during the first week of school. Beneficial to all children, this process entails starting the first day of classes with only a small segment of students. Additional students are added a few at a time on subsequent days until the class is complete. Phase-in allows teachers to spend important additional time on a one-to-one basis with each child during the first days at school. This allows important routines to be established and helps the child feel more comfortable with school. Parents will be notified before school begins of their child's start date.

Please do not request that your returning student be phased in early. Please plan ahead to make any necessary child-care arrangements during the phase-in week. Remember, when your child was a new student, they were given the benefit of this important additional time.

School Day Program

The school day program operates from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily. Students enrolled in the school day are required to attend during the entire school year. Please consult your school calendar for start and end dates of the school year.

Regular attendance at school is critically important to our program. Arriving on time is respectful to teachers, assistants, and to classmates since lessons begin at 8:30 am. Families who repeatedly arrive late or maintain sporadic attendance will be asked to reconsider their commitment to their child's education at Élan Vital Montessori.

Extended Care Program

Students enrolled in the extended care program are admitted to the program between 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. daily. At the time of registration, families are required to specify if they will be utilizing extended care. Upon arrival to pick up your child, parents are **NOT** permitted inside the gate. You must call the school phone (225)767-6620 to announce your arrival to pick up your child.

Summer Session

Élan Vital Montessori operates on an academic year. The dates for the academic year are set each year in March which includes the toddler summer session. Consult this year's academic calendar for specific dates. All families committed in writing to the Toddler Summer Session by or on March 15th will have secured a placement. Tuition rates are not discounted in summer and no vacation credits are given. Without written confirmation, Élan Vital Montessori will consider school and extended care students not enrolled for the summer session.

Arrival and Dismissal

We strive to keep the atmosphere within the school and classrooms child-centered. It is disruptive to children when parents linger in or near the classroom. It is specifically for this reason that the following arrival and departure arrangements are followed:

When leaving the buildings, make sure doors are completely closed. When leaving the school grounds, always latch the gate.

Some younger children, especially those who are coming to school for the first time, may cry the first few days at drop-off. Parents should quickly, firmly, and cheerfully say good-bye at drop-off. You may remind your child that you will be back, but you should leave quickly. Children who cry on arrival will stop crying shortly after your departure. Linger or trying to convince your child to stop crying will only exacerbate the crying and anxiety. By maintaining a positive, cheerful attitude about the separation and about school in general, and immediately leaving, you will help your child acclimate to school. Parents who are worried about the state of their children are welcome to call the office and ask the office staff to check on the child. Remember that the staff has the best interest of your child in mind. If in the rare instance a child continues to cry and display extreme anxiety, a teacher or office staff member will notify the parent.

Students can only be picked up by their parents or an authorized person specified in writing by the parent in the child's file. If a parent needs someone other than the person specified on the pickup authorization form to pick up his or her child, prior written notification must be made. Élan Vital Montessori will not release your child to any person without written parent permission. The authorized person picking up your child must have picture identification, such as a driver's license or passport. PERSONS PICKING UP STUDENTS MAY NOT BE A REGISTERED SEX OFFENDER.

If you need to pick your student up early, please contact the school office, during the office hours of 8:00 to 3:00, so we may notify the teacher of the early pick up and your child's day will be modified to allow for this change.

Any parent or authorized person who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol and arrives at school or child care to pick up a child will be asked to call someone else to accompany them home. 911 will be called if any parent or authorized person leaves school or childcare with a child while they appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

If your child is not picked up by 5:30 pm, your child's emergency contact (listed on the child's enrollment paperwork) will be notified. If we cannot reach a parent or emergency contact, the proper authorities will be called. A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged for each minute the parent/emergency contact is late and \$2.00 for the second occurrence within 30 days.

ARRIVAL

Toddler and Primary arrival is from 7:30 to 8:00. Please park and walk your child to the gate. Sign your child in on one of the provided iPad's by using your Brightwheel code. EACH PERSON MUST UTILIZE THERE OWN UNIQUE BRIGHTWHEEL CODE. A staff member will help your child to their classroom. Please have all of your child's personal belongings easily accessible. Using cell phones in any manner during drop off is strictly prohibited.

DISMISSAL

Children will be dismissed at 12:30 pm if they are a half day student, and 2:45 pm if they are full day student. Afternoon carpool ends at 3:00 pm. Please park in a parking spot and walk to the gate to sign out your child. Your child's teachers will walk them out to you so you can buckle them in their car seats. Please be patient, children are changing shoes, gathering belongings and teachers will only walk a few children at a time due to safety. Children not picked up by 3:00 pm will be checked into After Care and parents will be billed accordingly.

Tardiness

Timely arrival is essential to your child's educational success. Being on time allows children to fully participate in the school day, supports classroom consistency, and demonstrates respect for teachers, classmates, and the learning environment. Our school takes its commitment to your child's education seriously. Repeated tardiness is disruptive to the educational process and impacts not only your child, but also teachers, staff, and fellow students. Our work period begins promptly at 8:00 AM. Families are strongly encouraged to arrive before 8:00 AM. Children who arrive after 8:00 AM miss morning arrival routines, morning group times and activities, and the beginning of the uninterrupted work period. This loss of instructional time directly affects your child's learning experience.

One staff member will be assigned to accept late arrivals until 8:30 AM only. Children arriving after 8:30 AM will not be admitted to school that day.

Children in our infant environment are allowed to arrive at any time. Families are required to be in contact with Élan Vital Staff through Brightwheel about that child's arrival time, dismissal time and routine for the day. Infants are only allowed one arrival time each day. If the child must be picked up and removed from campus for an appointment, we will need a doctor or therapist excuse for admittance.

If your child has a scheduled appointment that will cause them to arrive after 8:30 AM, this must be communicated through Brightwheel by the end of business the day prior and, when applicable, a doctor's excuse must be presented. Please understand that it is in your child's best interest to schedule appointments in the afternoon whenever possible to avoid interrupting the school day. Children thrive on routine, and arriving after the morning work period has already begun disrupts their rhythm and does not set them up for a successful day.

Absences

We request a phone call, e-mail or Brightwheel message to the school office by 8:00 am on any day your child will be late or absent from school. If a previously scheduled appointment means that your child will be late or must leave early, we request a Brightwheel message or e-mail with that information prior to the day of the schedule change.

Any absences occurring regularly jeopardize social interaction with classmates and the Montessori curriculum. Frequent absences can create negative feelings about coming to school for students as well as heightened separation anxiety. Such occurrences on a regular basis may result in student dismissal from Élan Vital Montessori.

Inclement Weather and Power Outage Procedures

In the event of a power outage or plumbing issue longer than 30 minutes, parents will be contacted via phone, the Brightwheel and email to pick up their children until the heat and/or power or plumbing can be restored.

In the event of inclement weather, Élan Vital will often follow the closures of East Baton Rouge Parish schools. In the case that EBR is waiting to make a decision, we may cancel school before them. Please understand that due to the small sizes of our school as well as the trees that surround our campus, we err on the side of caution to protect our students and staff. Please check your Brightwheel, email and/or the School's Facebook page for a closure message.

Classroom Observations

Primary parents: we request that you schedule at least two observations in the classroom during the year. Please contact the school office to schedule an appointment.

Toddler parents: teachers and admin will send videos periodically of the classroom, especially before conferences, that will give you a peak into the classroom environment. Often, parent observations for students this age do not give you a clear picture of what is happening in the classroom. Toddlers typically wish to sit with their parents, and other students are distracted by the extra adult in the room. Pictures and videos will give you a clearer understanding of the happenings in our toddler environment.

Conferences

Conferences are held two times a year as stated on the school calendar. A conference sign up schedule will be emailed no later than one week prior to the conference dates so that parents can schedule a time that is mutually acceptable. At the conferences, parents will receive a progress report that provides a framework for conversation so that parents may get a clear picture of their child's social, emotional, and academic growth and development at our school. Conferences will be offered for all students two times yearly, in order to maintain a healthy learning relationship between the teacher, student, and family. If you have scheduling conflicts, please speak directly with your child's teacher so alternative arrangements may be made.

Dress Code

Please dress your child in simple, neat, comfortable clothing that the child can manage alone. Clothing should be free of cartoon or movie characters, pop stars or violent images. All clothing needs to be appropriate and non-distracting towards other students. The appropriateness of an outfit is at the discretion of the teachers. If one is deemed inappropriate or distracting, the student will be asked to change.

Slacks and shorts with elastic waistbands, pullover shirts and sweaters, and jackets with large zippers should be worn. While the staff will assist children who are having trouble, children should be able to manage their own clothing with little or no assistance. This is in keeping with our Independence learning objective: independence is essential to the development of high self-esteem.

Outdoor shoes should be sturdy, have rubber soles, and be easy for children to put on and remove themselves. Students may wear shorts, slacks, or dresses (with bloomers) as long as the dress does not restrict movement in climbing and playing. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather conditions. Remember that children do go outside every day, unless heavy rain prevents outdoor recess.

Remember that school is a place where we use paint, glue, and all sorts of other learning materials that may occasionally spill on your child's clothes. Please do not send your child in clothing items that you have an emotional attachment to.

On the first day of school, please send three complete changes of clothes for your child. Label each item with the child's name. Send the clothing in a clear plastic bag clearly marked with the child's name. This clothing will be stored at school and used in case of accidents at school. Please remember to immediately replace any clothing that is sent home so that a change of clothes will always be available for your child.

Sharing Items from Home

Teachers may request "sharing items" for their classrooms. Please label your child's sharing items. Sharing items must have an educational value and the student must have permission from the teacher. We welcome books, music, and articles of scientific interest. **Toys, fidget spinners or trading cards are not permitted.** If you are uncertain about any item, please ask the teacher if it would contribute to the class program.

Please do not send valuables with your child unless special arrangements have been made between you and the classroom teacher. Élan Vital Montessori will not be held accountable for personal items that are lost or broken.

Lunch

Your child should eat breakfast prior to arriving at Élan Vital Montessori each morning. Parents are responsible for packing a lunch for their child in an appropriate container with a cold pack, (if necessary). Cold packs in lunches are required to keep food cold and safe. Students should have foods in containers that they can easily open and feed themselves, cut into small pieces at home. Please send forks, spoons and other utensils needed.

Send servings in plastic or aluminum containers rather than disposable items in order to support recycling efforts and to lessen our trash output. Use a thermos for soups, casseroles, etc. We will not heat lunches. Any food that needs to be kept warm needs to be heated in the morning and stored in a thermos.

Élan Vital Montessori has a lunch program catered by local restaurants. The menu will be provided each month. You may turn in a lunch calendar monthly, or weekly, by turning in a completed calendar to the school office or emailing the order to lunch@elanvitalmontessori.org. EVM school lunch is \$6.50/day. Orders will not be accepted after 9:00 am each day.

Lunches are eaten as a class and positive manners are modeled and encouraged. Lunch is a quiet and social time when good manners and polite conversation are observed. Children set out their own lunches and all are required to tidy up after eating.

Please send a balanced nutritional lunch for your child. Please pack “healthy body” foods. Suggestions include pasta, sandwiches, string cheese, cheese snacks, fruit, yogurt, and vegetables. Do not send lunchables of any kind, go-gurts or any yogurts packaged in this way, candy, soda, cookies, sugared crackers, desserts, punch, Capri Sun, juice boxes or foods with high sugar content. **If sent, these items will be returned unopened.** If a teacher has to repeatedly send inappropriate food items home, the school has the discretion to require the family to order school lunch. We appreciate your understanding in this matter.

Infant and Toddler students have further guidelines mandated by the State Licensing Office. These are specified in the Appendix E.

There is organic milk, fresh juice and filtered water available to the children.

We do not allow students to share lunches with each other due to allergies.

We do not allow fast food or takeout food to be delivered to the children.

Snacks

Élan Vital Montessori has snack time each school day. The cost of snack is included in the supply fee. We follow the “healthy body” guidelines outlined in the lunch section of this handbook.

Extended care children will need to bring their own snack from home which will be eaten only during extended care hours. These snacks may be placed in the after care snack basket located in each classroom. If the snack requires to be kept cold or hot please package them appropriately.

Food Allergies and Restrictions

Food Allergies are becoming more widespread and their reactions can be quite serious and in some cases, life threatening. It is the parent's responsibility to notify Élan Vital Montessori in writing of any allergies or adverse reactions that your child may have with certain foods or beverages. You should note this on the Medical form, which will be made available to you at registration time. This form will be posted in the child's classroom and in the school

office. A doctor's note must be provided to the school outlining procedures in the event of accidental contact, or ingestion, allergic reaction.

In the event that certain foods are restricted for other medical, religious, or personal reasons, please also indicate this on your child's medical form.

In the event that a child is diagnosed with an air born allergy, EVM reserves the right to enforce the proper restrictions within their classroom or within the entire school setting.

Sleep / Rest

Infants shall be allowed to sleep according to their individual schedules. Children under the age of four shall have daily rest time of at least 75 minutes. Children aged four and five shall be offered the opportunity for daily quiet time.

Birthdays/ Celebrations of Life

The Celebration of Life is our way to commemorate your child's birthday in the classroom. This celebration allows us all to enjoy some happy moments and memories with the birthday child. We strongly encourage parents to allow each child to have this happy experience. Summer birthdays can be celebrated in the month of May.

During the Celebration of Life, the birthday child walks around a symbolic circle representing a year. As each circle is made, a statement is read giving the child's history for that year and a photograph from that year is shown. We ask that parents send in one picture that represents each year of a child's life. (one picture at birth, one picture at one year old, and so on...) On the back of the picture, please write a few sentences about what your child did special during that year. Did they start to walk? Go on a special vacation? Learn to ride a bike? Was a new sibling or pet added to the family? All photographs and materials will be returned.

Please feel free to send a birthday treat to share. EVM tries our hardest to have healthier snack options, but it is up to you on what treat item you would like to share. Popular items include popsicles, fruit skewers, a dessert item from the child's culture, or even mini cupcakes or cookies.

Some children enjoy presenting a book or donating classroom materials in honor of their birthdays. If you do, please write a little note on the inside so we can read the inscription for years to come. Ex: "This book is given to the EVM community in celebration of John's 3rd birthday. At EVM, John has enjoyed working in the outdoor classroom this year and he loves building the pink tower with his teachers." Your child's teacher would be happy to make a recommendation if you would like to make a donation.

Parents in the Primary classroom are welcome to attend. Due to big feelings when saying goodbye – Toddler parents may attend, but you will need to bring your child home with you for the remainder of the day. Otherwise, toddler teachers will be happy to send you updates and/or pictures of your child during their celebration of life.

****Elan Vital will NOT hand out birthday party invitations. However, there is a "Parent Directory" on Brightwheel. We are not responsible for any planning or coordinating non-Elan Vital events. ****

Special Activities and Field Trips

Special activities and trips are occasionally planned throughout the school year. Parents will be given a minimum of two weeks prior notification with details outlining any planned special activity or trip and cost, if applicable. Monthly classroom and school events are included in our periodic emails.

Parents volunteering for field trips must have:

- a Louisiana Driver's License
- car insurance

- cell phone
- vehicle used must have current registration, inspection and be in good repair
- take a school field trip emergency bag

Written parental permission is required for all children leaving campus to attend field trips whether students are walking or traveling by car.

The following are our field trip guidelines:

- All students attending the field trip by car must travel in an approved car seat, as required by Louisiana State Law, provided by the student's family on the day of the field trip. Please label your child's car seat, as many families use similar or alike models. Students requiring a car seat will not be able to attend without a car seat.

<http://www.lahighwaysafety.org/Documents/New%20Child%20Safety%20Seat%20Law.pdf>

- If you are volunteering to drive, please arrive in a timely manner before the trip and report to the teachers. You will receive a list of children that will ride in your car from the teacher. Your cell phone number should be on the list along with numbers of the teachers however, please do not use your cell phone except for emergencies while driving with students in your car.
- Teachers will have emergency kits, student information, and directions needed for the field trip.
- Groups of children will be called to the assigned cars; the teachers and volunteers will meet in the parking lot so that we may caravan to our designated spot. Follow the route to the destination provided by the teachers
- While you have children in your car, be mindful of the radio station and/or DVDs that might be playing. We do not allow movies in cars so please turn them off. Different parents have different views on appropriateness for their children. Classical music or a child's radio station is preferred.
- Children will bring their lunch and/or a snack on the field trip when it is appropriate. No other snacks are necessary.
- Drivers should stay with the class for the duration of the field trip unless otherwise directed by the teachers.
- We are representing Élan Vital Montessori School, and we want to make sure our students are as respectful as possible. If needed, remind students to stay in line and to use an appropriate noise level. Alert the teacher if any student is not cooperative.

Animal Visits

Your pets can visit the school and your child's classroom with prior approval of the teacher and School Director. If any child in the classroom has an allergy, no animals will be allowed to visit.

Health and Safety Procedures

Discipline Policy

“To let the child do as he likes when he has not yet developed any powers of control is to betray the idea of freedom.” – Maria Montessori

At Élan Vital Montessori School, it is important that the child clearly understands the rules and possible consequences for violating rules. Through nurturing and sensitivity, we hope to prepare them to function as social assets rather than as social liabilities. With this in mind, it is important this understanding is reflected in methods of discipline used at home and school.

Our approach is to lead the child towards self-discipline. We avoid spending unnecessary time responding and reacting to behavior problems. Another quote by Maria Montessori is, “The undisciplined child enters into discipline by working in the company of others; not by being told he is naughty.” Discipline is, therefore, a learning experience and less a punitive experience if appropriately dealt with. We use the approaches of positive discipline and redirection, as opposed to time out.

In the Montessori class, a child’s opinion is respected and the child is asked to share his or her view. Children want to follow the rules if the adult clearly defines the rules and then invites the child to assume responsibility for his or her behavior. Assuming responsibility for behavior is to understand and accept the consequences for violating rules.

Children whose rights are violated by physical harm are asked to report this problem to the nearest adult rather than hit back. This instills the practice of following legal procedures we adults must follow as we seek help from law officials when our rights are violated.

Discipline Procedures and Possible Consequences

First Offense

- The teacher explains or reviews class and school rules and warns of possible consequences.

Second Offense

- The teacher communicates the problem to the parents through written communication on Brightwheel.

Third Offense

- The teacher communicates the issue with the director and the parents and schedules a conference with the parents.

Fourth Offense

- The teacher sends the child to the office and the child is sent home. You will be notified immediately and will be expected to pick up your child within an hour.

Expulsion:

Expulsions will be considered as a final action after the implementation of behavior support strategies, including at a minimum engaging parents by written communication and/or parent conference; and providing a referral to EarlySteps, Child Search, and/or mental health consultant if appropriate. However, fighting and/ or violence against others may lead to out-of-school suspension or permanent dismissal from EVM.

Behavior Support & Intervention Agreement

In some situations, a child’s behavior may indicate the need for additional developmental, behavioral, medical, or therapeutic support rather than solely requiring disciplinary consequences. When administration believes a child’s behavior may be influenced by an underlying developmental, sensory, communication, emotional, or medical concern, the school may temporarily suspend progression through the standard discipline policy while the family and school actively pursue appropriate evaluation and intervention.

Participation in a Behavior Support & Intervention Agreement is at the sole discretion of school administration and is intended to support the child while maintaining a safe learning environment for all students.

As part of the agreement, the family may be asked to:

- Schedule an appointment with the child’s pediatrician or another recommended professional within a specified timeframe.
- Follow through with recommended evaluations, screenings, or referrals, including but not limited to speech therapy, occupational therapy, behavioral therapy, developmental evaluations, or other appropriate services.
- Sign any necessary releases allowing the school and outside providers to collaborate regarding strategies that may benefit the child in the classroom.
- Maintain ongoing communication with administration regarding appointments, recommendations, and progress.

While the agreement is in effect, the school will continue documenting incidents, implementing classroom supports, and monitoring the child’s progress. Unsafe behavior will continue to be addressed immediately, and the school reserves the right to modify, suspend, or terminate the agreement if the safety of children or staff cannot be maintained.

If the family does not make reasonable progress toward obtaining the agreed-upon evaluations or services, fails to maintain communication, or declines recommended follow-through without an alternative plan approved by administration, the standard discipline policy will resume from the point at which it was temporarily suspended. Incidents that occur during the agreement may also be considered by administration when determining whether the agreement remains appropriate.

Nothing in this agreement guarantees continued enrollment. Élan Vital Montessori reserves the right to determine whether it can safely and appropriately meet the needs of the child while also protecting the well-being of the other children and staff in our care.

Ill Children

Please notify the school office if your child will not be attending school due to illness. If your child should become ill during the school/extended care day, you will be notified immediately and will be expected to pick up your child within one hour. If you cannot pick up your child, choose and authorize a designator so that your child does not further expose other children and staff to illness. In such event, your child will be given a place to rest, away from the other children in the school office until you arrive. Parents are responsible for finding alternative care in case of the child's illness. Children who are contagious must stay at home. School parents and the Health Department, will receive a notice of communicable diseases that are present at the school when applicable.

If your child displays any of the following symptoms, you must keep them home until they are symptom free for at least 24 hours:

- **Fever:** Temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher and sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability or confusion within the last 24 hours.
- **Diarrhea:** Three or more watery stools in a 24-hour period, especially if child acts or looks ill.
- **Vomiting:** Vomiting on one or more occasions within the past 24 hours.
- **Rash:** Body rash not associated with diapering, heat or allergic reactions, especially with fever or itching. Even if non-contagious, families must provide a doctor's note for the child to be admitted to school.
- **Eyes:** Thick mucus or pus draining from the eye, bumps, redness in or around the eye, or pink eye requires your child must stay home until the infection has been clear for 24 hours. This rule stands regardless of a doctors note.
- **Appearance/Behavior:** Unusually tired, pale, lack of appetite, difficult to wake, confused, excessive crying or irritable for 1 or more hours, or are unable to fully participate in the daily routine.
- **Sore Throat:** Especially if associated with fever or swollen glands in the neck.
- **Common cold.** Regarding chronic allergies: If your child is under the care of a physician, a written statement from the doctor must be presented specifically stating the nature of the child's condition and that the condition is not contagious. Guidelines regarding the care of the child should be provided from the physician.
- **Mucus:** Thick or colored mucus must be completely clear for 24 hours before returning. Doctors note may be required.
- **Sores or open injuries:** Must be completely covered. What is covered must be revealed to Elan Vital staff. Please see below for specific guidelines for illness that cause sores. Elan Vital employees will not be responsible for re-dressing any wounds should a bandage become unattached.

Parents or guardians must report a diagnosis of communicable diseases to the school as soon as they are confirmed. In addition to the above symptoms, please utilize the following rules regarding common childhood illnesses at our school:

Chicken Pox: A student may return to school when all the following conditions are met: At least 5 days have passed since the onset of the rash. All lesions have crusted over (scabbed), even if some scabs are still present. New lesions should not be appearing. The student feels well enough to participate in normal school activities. A healthcare provider's note confirming the student is no longer contagious is required.

German Measles (Rubella): A student may return to school when the following conditions are met: At least 7 days have passed since the onset of the rash. The student is fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. The student is feeling well enough to participate in normal school activities. A healthcare provider's note confirming the student is no longer contagious is required.

Measles (Rubeola): Students or staff who are infected with measles must isolate themselves at home and away from all public places, including school, for at least 5 days after the onset of the rash, or until they are no longer contagious. A healthcare provider's note confirming the student is no longer contagious is required.

Mumps: Students should be excluded for at least 5 days after the onset of parotitis (swelling of the salivary glands). A healthcare provider's note confirming the student is no longer contagious is required.

Whooping Cough (Pertussis): Whooping cough is a highly contagious respiratory illness. A student may return to school under the following conditions: The student has completed at least 5 full days of appropriate antibiotic treatment prescribed by a healthcare provider. The student is fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. The student is well enough to participate in normal school activities. If no antibiotic treatment was given, the student must remain home for 21 days from the onset of symptoms, as they are considered contagious for that period. A healthcare provider's note confirming the student is no longer contagious is required.

Roseola (Sixth Disease): A student diagnosed with roseola may return to school when all the following conditions are met: The student has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. The student is feeling well enough to participate in regular school activities. The rash has appeared and there are no other symptoms of illness (roseola is usually not contagious after the rash appears). A healthcare provider's note confirming the student is no longer contagious is required.

Strep: Strep is a highly contagious bacterial infection that spreads through respiratory droplets and direct contact. Students can return to school 24 hours after starting antibiotics. Also, the student has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. The student is feeling well enough to participate in regular school activities.

Hepatitis A: Students may not return to school for at least 1 week (7 days). Clearance from a healthcare provider or public health authority must be submitted prior to the student's return to school.

Meningococcal Disease: A student diagnosed with meningococcal disease must remain out of school until cleared by a healthcare provider and/or public health authority. The student must be on the appropriate antibiotics for at least 48 hours. Clearance documentation must be provided before the student returns to school.

Hib Disease (haemophilus): Students may not return to school until they have been treated with an antibiotic for at least 48 hours. A healthcare provider's note confirming the student is no longer contagious is required.

Impetigo Contagiosa (Staph or Strep Infection): The student must be on the appropriate medication for at least 48 hours. All remaining sores must be covered.

Ringworm: Students may not return to school until the rash has been treated with an antifungal medication for at least 48 hours.

Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease (Coxsackie Virus): A student may return to school only when the following conditions are met: The student has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. All open sores, blisters, or wounds have fully dried, scabbed over, or healed. No student with open wounds or active lesions will be permitted to return to school. If a student returns to school and scabs become reopened or lesions begin to drain, the student will be sent home to reduce the risk of secondary infections such

as impetigo or staph infection. The student may return once the area is dry, closed, and no longer at risk of spreading infection. A healthcare provider's note confirming the student is no longer contagious is required.

Lice: Children who have lice may not return to school/childcare until they are louse and nit (egg) free. Your child may not return to school for 24 hours after being treated and are louse and nit free. Please make sure to wash all of your bedding, car seat covers, etc.

If your child develops any of these symptoms while at school or extended care, you will be notified and asked to make immediate arrangements to pick up your child within one hour. Children are welcome to return to school the morning after they are 24 hours symptom free and when they are able to participate in all regularly scheduled activities of their class.

An example of this means if your child vomits on Monday at 11:30am, and is 24 hours symptom free by Tuesday at 11:30am, they may return to school at regular drop off time on Wednesday. Students who are unable to participate in recess or who need "extra" rest should stay at home until they are fully recovered from their illness.

Medical Appointments

Parents should try to schedule visits to the doctor and dentist so that they do not conflict with school hours. If this is not possible, inform the school in advance so that the staff can be prepared if your child must arrive late or leave early.

Hand Washing Policy

Hand washing sinks are provided with easy access to comfortably warm water, soap, and towels. Adults and children are encouraged to wash hands frequently throughout each day (including, but not limited to upon arrival, after toilet use, after blowing a nose, as well as before and after snacks and meals. Children are taught how and why they must frequently wash their hands. This includes use of running water, soap, and single use of disposable towels. Hands shall be washed and scrubbed for at least 10 seconds with soap and running water. Art and outside activities are times when additional hand washing is needed. Élan Vital Montessori staff is aware of this important health practice and monitors the situation by helping the child.

Nose Blowing Policy

Noses shall be blown or wiped with disposable, one-use tissues that are discarded in a plastic-lined and covered garbage container. Hands will be washed after a nose is wiped or blown.

Diapering Policy

Students at Élan Vital Montessori School take an active role in their own potty training from the first day of school. Potty learning is an ongoing process throughout their time with us. This is a part of the curriculum and is crafted to be a positive experience for your child. They will learn the independence of wiping themselves, re-dressing themselves, and washing their own hands with the gentle guidance and assistance from the adults. Please send diapers and clothing that are simple for the child to dress and undress themselves.

To ensure the comfort, hygiene, and well-being of each child, diaper changes will be conducted according to the following guidelines: Diapers will be checked and changed at least every two hours during the day, or more frequently if a soiled or wet diaper is detected. Staff will monitor for signs of discomfort or the need for a diaper change and respond promptly. All diaper changes will follow strict sanitary procedures, including the use of gloves, appropriate sanitizing of the diapering area, and proper handwashing protocols to prevent the spread of germs.

Once a child is developmentally able to stand independently, they will begin transitioning to the standing diaper changes, which supports independence and encourages participation in self-care routines. This active role of the child makes potty training a more simple process, as they have already learned how to clean and dress themselves. When a child has shown enough control and interest in toileting independently, we will ask you to begin sending them to school in underwear.

For toddlers, Élan Vital provides hypo-allergenic, non-scented wipes for diaper changes. Families must provide diapers and changes of clothes for their child. For infants, families must provide diapers, wipes and changes of clothes for their child. Staff members are required to wear gloves during each diaper change and utilize safe hand-washing practices. Each student is required to wash hands after a diaper change to learn proper hand washing techniques and practices. Soiled diapers are disposed of in a day-care grade diaper pail which is emptied properly each day.

Students in our Primary Classroom (3-6 year olds) must be potty trained upon admission. No diapers will be permitted in this classroom.

Diaper Cream Policy

To ensure the health and safety of every child and to comply with Louisiana childcare regulations, Élan Vital Montessori requires both parent authorization and healthcare provider instructions before diaper creams or medicated ointments may be applied by school staff.

Parents have two options:

Option 1 – Standing Authorization (Recommended)

For children who routinely require diaper cream or who are prone to frequent diaper rashes, parents may submit:

- A completed Élan Vital Topical Product Authorization Form (available electronically through Brightwheel), and
- A healthcare provider's note with clear, standing directions for application.

The healthcare provider's instructions must include specific directions, such as:

- Apply at every diaper change.
- Apply after each bowel movement.
- Apply at the first diaper change of the day and the diaper change before nap.

Directions such as “**apply as needed**” cannot be accepted for standing authorization. Staff must have clear, objective instructions that do not require them to determine when medication is needed.

Once these documents are received, they will remain in effect until the authorization expires, is updated, or is revoked by the parent or healthcare provider.

Option 2 – Temporary Authorization

If a diaper rash develops unexpectedly, parents may complete the required authorization and provide healthcare provider instructions at that time before staff are able to begin applying diaper cream.

Important Information

- Staff may not apply diaper cream, medicated ointments, or other topical medications without both the required parent authorization and healthcare provider instructions.
- All diaper creams and ointments must be supplied by the parent in their original container and labeled with the child's name.
- If a child develops redness or a diaper rash and no authorization is on file, staff will notify the parent so that treatment can begin at home or the required documentation can be completed before the product is used at school. Our goal is to provide prompt, consistent care while remaining in compliance with Louisiana childcare regulations and ensuring that staff always have clear written instructions for the safe administration of topical products.

Sunscreen and Bug Spray

Sunscreen and bug spray are recommended for all children. Please apply at home prior to sending your child to school.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

All Élan Vital Montessori staff members are trained in First Aid and CPR for both adults and children. Minor cuts, bruises, and scrapes will be treated with soap, water, and a bandage and parents will be notified upon their arrival at school for pickup with an incident form. The original will be kept at the school in the child's file and a copy will be given to the parent. In case of a serious injury or emergency, staff will call 911 and may administer appropriate first aid. Parents will be notified after 911 has been called.

Staff will notify the parents immediately of any head injury, nose bleed, or other serious injury and treatment given. If staff members are unable to reach a parent, they will call the second emergency contact number listed on the Parental Authorizations Form. If a student injury results in medical treatment or hospitalization, Élan Vital Montessori is required to immediately call and submit an "Incident Report" form to the Department of Social and Health Services Licenser.

Medication Management at School

Medication can be either internal or external. The only medications that will be administered by EVM are life saving medications that are prescribed by a physician. They will only be administered with the written approval of a parent or guardian. The school must keep the life saving medication in its original packaging along with a copy of the doctors orders, the pamphlet of information that comes with the prescription and the prescription label provided by the pharmacist. This medication and the appropriate paperwork must be updated by the parents every six months.

If your child requires a prescription medication during the school day it must be administered by the parent or guardian. Before administering the prescription to the child, the doctor's orders and prescription bottle label must be presented to the school office. If it is the first time the child is receiving the medication, the parent or guardian must remain present to observe the child for one hour.

Élan Vital Montessori School does not administer non-prescriptions, such as: anti-histamines, non-aspirin pain relievers and fever reducers, cough medicine, decongestants, anti-itching creams, and sunscreen.

Epinephrine Policy

Elan Vital Montessori School will authorize all trained early learning center employees to administer auto-injectable epinephrine to a child who is believed to be having an anaphylactic reaction whether or not such child has a prescription for epinephrine. Elan Vital will have at least one employee trained on campus at all times in the administration of auto-injectable epinephrine. The employee must have training to be completed by a registered nurse, a licensed medical physician, a child care health consultant, anaphylaxis training organization, or any other entity approved by the Louisiana Department of Health. Elan Vital Montessori School will do their best to maintain a supply of an auto-injectable epinephrine at the center in a secure and easily accessible location but inaccessible to children. At the start of each academic year, Elan Vital will contact a healthcare professional authorized to prescribe medications to prescribe epinephrine auto- injectors in the name of Elan Vital Montessori School to be maintained for use when deemed necessary. If no auto-injectable epinephrine is on campus, then Elan Vital will contact emergency health care professionals in a timely manner to come to the aid of the child.

Plans for COVID-19 Cases Occurring on Campus

Guidelines and mandates are required by the Governor of State of Louisiana, the Mayor of East Baton Rouge Parish, The Department of Health and the Department of Education. Elan Vital will provide you with the most updated guidelines as we are advised.

Child Abuse Reporting

Louisiana State Law requires that school staff immediately report to the Office of Community Services in good faith and in accordance with Louisiana Children's Code, Article 610 D any instance where there is reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect, or exploitation.

More details are located in Appendix

Asbestos Management Plan

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) requires that all schools conduct detailed inspections to identify all asbestos containing building materials (ACBM) that may be present in the school environment. AHERA requires the inspection results and the associated Management Plan be submitted to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ). A copy of the Management Plan must be maintained in the administrative office for review by the public.

Élan Vital Montessori School maintains a proactive asbestos awareness program. This letter of notification is an annual requirement to administration, staff, parents and students. If there are questions, please contact administration at (225)767-6620.

SCHOOL SECURITY

Transportation of Children

Children are authorized to be transported to and from school only by those authorized by the child's parents/guardians. The child's Pick-Up Authorization Form lists all those adults who are permitted, by the child's parents/guardians, to pick up the child from school. Under no circumstances, should a child be permitted to leave school grounds with an adult, without written permission from the parent. If a staff member is unfamiliar with the person picking up the child, photo identification (of the adult picking up the child) is required to be checked against the Pickup Authorization Form or parent signed note. A copy of the photo id must be copied and placed in the child's file.

Strangers

The school gate must be locked by 8:00 each school day. It will only be unlocked during arrival, dismissal, and aftercare times. If a parent or authorized pickup person arrives to pick up a child early or during aftercare, they must ring the doorbell at the gate and announce their presence in the intercom. Staff members will visually check that the appropriate person is picking up before sending the child to them.

The classrooms must be locked once all children are inside from any recess time. Staff members must have school keys on their person during school hours. If someone unfamiliar to the staff enters the school building or school grounds, the staff should immediately exit the school grounds through the gate, then, they must inquire as to their presence. Strangers are not allowed on campus without a confirmed appointment. ID's of anyone with an appointment to tour or visit EVM will be checked to confirm the information given at the time an appointment was made and they must sign in. Appointment information may be found in the school office. If there is any concern as to a stranger's presence in or around the school grounds, please follow the emergency protocol that is communicated and practiced during emergency staff training. 911 must be called immediately if there is serious question as to a stranger's presence on school grounds.

Emergency Situation and/or Active Shooter Protocol

Elan Vital Montessori School puts in to place a written plans and procedures that address the immediate response to emergency situations that may develop in the school:

This plan shall, at a minimum, address management and response in the event of a shooting or other violent incident on a school campus or school-related activity; and provide for a safe, secure, and orderly school that is conducive to learning for every student, teacher, and school employee. All Elan Vital employees shall receive training pertaining to the plan and shall be reviewed at least once annually. Within the first 30 days of the school year, Elan Vital shall conduct a safety drill to rehearse the plan. This shall be jointly developed with local law enforcement and emergency personnel and local law enforcement office and the fire chief whose office is in closest geographic proximity to the school shall have a copy of the plan.

Bullying and/or Harassment Policy

Elan Vital Montessori School believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. The school, students and community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance.

Elan Vital Montessori School will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student. A student shall not intimidate, harass, or bully another student through words or actions. Such behavior includes: direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling; and social isolation or manipulation.

Elan Vital Montessori School expects students and/or staff to immediately report incidents of bullying to a director or lead teacher. Staff who witness such acts take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. Each complaint of bullying should be promptly investigated. This policy applies to students on school grounds and at any school-sponsored activity.

To ensure bullying does not occur on school campus, Elan Vital Montessori School will provide staff development training in bullying prevention and cultivate acceptance and understanding in all students and staff to build our school's capacity to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment.

Teachers should discuss this policy with their students in age-appropriate ways and should assure them that they need not endure any form of bullying. Students who bully are in violation of this policy and are subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

The Student Code of Conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Any student who engages in bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.
- Students are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to the director or a lead teacher.
- Students can rely on staff to promptly investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner.
- If the complainant student or the parent of the student feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached, the student or the parent of the student should contact the director. Elan Vital Montessori School prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

The procedures for intervening in bullying behavior include, but are not limited, to the following:

- All staff, students and their parents will receive a summary of this policy prohibiting intimidation and bullying: at the beginning of the school year, as part of the student handbook and/or information packet, as part of new student orientation, and as part of the school system's notification to parents.
- The school will make reasonable efforts to keep a report of bullying and the results of investigation confidential.

- Staff who witness acts of bullying shall take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. People witnessing or experiencing bullying are strongly encouraged to report the incident; such reporting will not reflect on the target or witnesses in any way.

Élan Vital Montessori School will follow its discipline policy listed in the Handbook for any student who engages in bullying or harassment.

Appendices

Appendix A – Additional Policies for our Infant and Toddler Classroom

Additional Class Policies

List of Policies Posted

Please find the following postings in the Elan Vital Toddler Classroom. These postings will be updated as needed.

- A. Daily Schedule
- B. School Calendar
- C. Hours of Operation
- D. Lunch Calendar
- E. Emergency Phone Numbers
 - a. Fire
 - b. Police
 - c. Poison control
 - d. Child protective services
 - e. School address
- F. Prohibits
 - a. Alcohol
 - b. Tobacco
 - c. Firearms
- G. Sleep position
- H. Safety Box
- I. Charlie's Law

Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

DCFS Child Protection hotline: 1-855-4LA-KIDS

The goal of this policy is to ensure that Elan Vital employees partner together to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. This Policy also addresses the duties under the mandatory reporting laws and the timely and professional investigation of allegations of abuse and neglect. This Policy provides a guideline in coordinating the obligations and roles of each of the parties. This guideline will be supplemented with continued training in order that all partners develop the best procedures to ensure the protection of our children.

I. ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILD REPORTING ACT

The responsibility of all school personnel to report child abuse and neglect is mandated by law.

II. IDENTIFICATION OF MANDATORY REPORTERS

A. Definitions:

The law defines mandatory reporters as those professionals who may work with children in the course of their professional duties. Every teacher and teacher's aide clearly falls within this definition. In the school environment, the following individuals are also included as mandatory reporters: Paid, full-time, part-time, volunteer or substitute school personnel, principals, school counselors, assistant principals, deans, truant officers, school psychologists, staff of before and after school programs, custodians, lunch room monitors, school bus drivers, school librarians and assistants to the librarians, school resource officers and law enforcement officers assigned to the school, school athletic coaches or intramural coaches or assistant to the coaches and trainers.

III. REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

All school personnel must immediately contact the department of children and family services when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child who is under the age

Of eighteen and known to them in their professional capacity has been abused or neglected or is in danger of being abused or neglected – physically, sexually or through neglect – and that a caregiver, or person in a position of trust

and authority over them, committed the harm or should have taken steps to protect the child from harm. Child abuse and neglect reports are made by calling the DCFS hotline at **1-855-4LA-KIDS**. In making the hotline report, all school personnel shall provide any and all information requested by DCFS.

- All mandated reporters have the obligation to make the Hotline call. The mandated reporter with the most direct knowledge of the suspected abuse should be the one to make the hotline call.
- The mandated reporter must follow any applicable guidelines regarding the making and documenting of any report. However, under no circumstances shall any person in charge of a school facility or school district or his/her designated agent to whom such notification has been made, exercise any control, restraint, modification or other change in the report or the forwarding of such report to DCFS.
- The mandated reporter or Elan Vital should not notify the alleged perpetrator of the child abuse or neglect that a report of has been made, or that there is a pending investigation unless compelling reasons exist to do so.
- The law does not require a mandated reporter or the School District to notify the child's parent or guardian of a report of abuse or neglect. In considering whether notice to a parent should be made, Elan Vital district shall consider the child's safety and any directives by DCFS and law enforcement investigating the report.

IV. WHEN A REPORT MUST BE MADE

When there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused – physically or sexually – or is neglected:

- A. Abused child is a child whose parent or immediate family member, or any individual residing in the same home as the child, or a paramour of the child's parent, or any person responsible for the child's welfare, who:
 - a. inflicts, causes to be inflicted, or allows to be inflicted upon such child physical injury, by other than accidental means, which causes death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function;
 - b. creates a substantial risk of physical injury to a child by other than accidental means which would be likely to cause death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function;
 - c. commits, or allows to be committed, any sex offense against such child, including acts of vaginal, oral, or anal sex; fondling a child or having the child touch the person sexually;
 - d. commits, or allows to be committed, an act or acts of torture upon a child;
 - e. inflicts excessive corporal punishment;
 - f. commits or allows to be committed the offense of female genital mutilation against the child; or
 - g. causes an illegal controlled substance to be sold, transferred, distributed, or given to a child.
- B. Neglected child is a child who is deprived of adequate food, shelter, clothing, or necessary medical care by a parent or caregiver. Neglect can also occur when an adult fails to provide adequate supervision of a child as when a child is left either unsupervised or in the care of someone unable to supervise the child. A child will not be considered neglected or abused solely because the child is not attending school. Nor shall a child be considered neglected or abused for the sole reason that the child's parent or caregiver depends upon spiritual means through prayer alone for the treatment or cure of disease.

Reasonable Cause

A credible report of suspected child abuse or neglect must be reported to DCFS. In the context of the Act, "reasonable cause" is synonymous with a credible suspicion. Once the School District suspects or should suspect that a child may be abused or neglected, it shall call the DCFS Hotline and no further investigation should be conducted by the School District. DCFS is assigned the authority and discretion to substantiate the accuracy of all reports of suspected child abuse or neglect. The Reporter may consider the following in determining whether reasonable cause of child abuse or neglect exists: (NOTE: These are suggested factors to consider and this list is not intended to be exclusive.)

Use an objective/reasonable person test. A reporter should not consider personal opinions of either the alleged abuser or the alleged child victim in determining whether reasonable cause or credible suspicion of child abuse or neglect exists.

1. Has the child been harmed or been at risk of harm?
2. Have you observed evidence of damage to the child? e.g. bruises, cuts, hunger, poor hygiene.
3. Always report statements made by a child regarding sexual misconduct.
4. Report credible evidence even if the child denies any abuse or neglect.

5. Are the communications given by the child consistent with what you observe; is the statement plausible?
6. Consider past suspicious incidents or the frequency of signs of abuse or neglect.
7. Sexual abuse to be reported under the Act includes intentional touching and fondling of any part of a child under 18.
8. Err on the side of caution. The concept of the Act is to encourage people to report bad acts committed on children.
9. Make a report even if the child is now over 18 and the statute of limitations may have run, especially if the alleged abuser continues to have contact with children in a professional setting or other children remain at risk.

V. INVESTIGATIONS

The investigation of any report of child abuse or neglect shall be undertaken by those who possess specialized experience, training, authority and discretion to determine whether suspected abuse or neglect of a child actually occurred. Elan Vital may initially undertake to determine the credibility of any “rumor” of abuse or neglect. Elan Vital shall not conduct or cause to be conducted on their behalf an independent investigation to determine whether reasonable cause exists or whether such abuse or neglect actually occurred before reporting the matter to the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services.

The investigation into the accuracy of any report of child abuse or neglect shall be conducted by DCFS and, where necessary, the East Baton Rouge Parish District Attorney and the local police. Elan Vital Montessori School may conduct a disciplinary investigation of its personnel based on a report of child abuse or neglect. Elan Vital Montessori School shall cooperate with DCFS and law enforcement in their investigation of all reports of abuse or neglect. Elan Vital shall not impede any investigation being conducted by the Department and law enforcement. DCFS and local law enforcement shall conduct their investigations in a manner that minimizes disruption of the school day. Elan Vital Montessori School shall provide the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Service investigators reasonable access to the suspected victim of child abuse or neglect for the purpose of conducting an interview. Elan Vital Montessori School and the Police Department shall enter into all necessary reciprocal reporting agreements.

VI. RIGHTS OF MANDATED REPORTERS

All rights of the mandated reporters of the School District as allowed in any collective bargaining agreements, including their right to legal representation, shall apply, except to the extent inconsistent with the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act and this Policy. The individual policy of Elan Vital Montessori School may require notices to the administrator or director of any report made by their Employee under the Act. However, no policy may be implemented which is inconsistent with the Act or with this Policy.

Mandated reporters are entitled to immunity for any report of child abuse or neglect under the Act as long as the report is made in good faith. However, any failure of a mandated reporter to make a report may be subject to criminal prosecution, license suspension or revocation and civil liability.

Parental Access Policy

Classroom Observations

Parents are encouraged to make appointments to observe their child's class during the school year. First observations should be scheduled after the beginning of October to allow students to "normalize" and feel comfortable with observers in the classroom.

It is the parent's responsibility to coordinate with the office to schedule observations at least 24 hours prior to the time of the observation. Please call the school's office at (225) 767-6620 to schedule. Most observations are scheduled for mornings, preferably Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays. Every effort will be made to accommodate parental schedules. Most observers stay about 30 minutes.

When you arrive at the school for an observation, please check in at the office and you will be given some basic observation guidelines. All classroom observers sit in the room on chairs provided by the teacher. Observers should watch the students work, but refrain from active participation.

Conferences

Conferences are held two times a year as stated on the school calendar. A conference sign up schedule will be emailed two weeks prior to the conference dates so that parents can schedule a time that is mutually acceptable. At the conferences, parents will receive a progress report that provides a framework for conversation so that parents may get a clear picture of their child's social, emotional, and academic growth and development at our school. Conferences will be offered for all students two times yearly, in order to maintain a healthy learning relationship between the teacher, student, and family. If you have scheduling conflicts, please speak directly with your child's teacher so alternative arrangements may be made.

Reading Volunteers or Special Activity Volunteers

Parents are invited to share a special talent, activity, lessons or books they may have to offer. Examples of talents include but are not limited to: playing an instrument, helping with an art project, sharing about an occupation or culture, and sharing about any special interest you may have. Parents are also invited to come read to their child's class. Please contact your child's teacher via e-mail to schedule a date and time.

Parent Association

Élan Vital Montessori School has a Parent Association that focuses on community building to support the school. Please contact this year's Parent Association Coordinator or the Parent Association Liaison if you would like to get involved.

Parent Education Seminars

Élan Vital Montessori School holds Parent Education Nights multiple times a year. These nights are provided by Élan Vital staff to help our student's families better understand a Montessori education and what the students in the classroom are working on. Please refer to this year's school calendar for dates.

Disclosure of Information

Parents may access all regulations as well as Élan Vital's licensing survey's and inspection reports on the department's website: <https://doe.louisiana.gov/>

Computer Practices Policy

There will be no lessons involving computers in Élan Vital Montessori School's Toddler Classroom.

Programs, Movies and Video Game Policy

The Toddler Class does not watch any programs or movies. There are no video games at Élan Vital Montessori School.

Electronic Device Policy

The Toddler Teachers are supplied with an iPad for the school year. The students in the toddler class do not use the iPad. The teachers use it to take pictures of the children for weekly updates, record keeping in the Brightwheel program, educational music and classical music during rest time. These are the only reasons the iPad is used. Personal use of the iPad during school hours is strictly prohibited.

Shoe Policy

Sometimes the children in the Toddler Classroom enjoy taking their shoes off. When they do, teachers peacefully redirect them to put them back on. We will also offer to help them and show them to do it themselves. We will not force a child to keep their shoes on.

Medication Policy

Elan Vital Montessori School only administers lifesaving medications. Elan Vital Montessori School will not give oral or topical prescription or over the counter medication without a written doctor's prescription and a permission to administer form signed by a legal guardian. Medications must be in the original container and have the medication information sheet from your pharmacist. The container must have the child's full name, name of medication, dosage, time to be administered, route of administration, and date of expiration. A detailed record will be kept by the school office of any medication administered by staff. EVM staff will only administer medications per the doctor's written directions.

At the end of each school year in May, all medications will be sent home. Parents must resubmit both the doctors note and the permission to administer medication form with the medication at the beginning of the next school year.

Signing Students In and Out Policy

Elan Vital Montessori School staff sign in students by documenting who drops the child off and at what time. Staff members will also sign children out in the same manner as above as they leave for the day. This may also be done by parents or staff using the Brightwheel program.

Children who are dropped off later than 8:00am are considered tardy. The child must then be walked into school and the guardians must sign them in on the late arrival form in the office.

When the child is being picked up, EVM requires that it must be by an adult, 18 years or older, who is authorized to do so on the enrollment paperwork. Additional persons added to the pick-up list must be submitted by the legal guardian in writing before the sign-out time. Each authorized person picking up a child must bring a valid ID to be photo-copied and placed into the child's file. Adults who are dropping off or picking up students may not be a registered sex offender.

Staff Members

Elan Vital Montessori School staff will not be eligible to work until they receive Child Care Civil Background Check that deems them eligible for child care purposes. EVM will not hire someone that is deemed ineligible or indeterminable through the CCCBC system.

Physical Activity for Students

Weather permitting, Elan Vital Montessori School will encourage students to spend at least one hour of uninterrupted outside play time per day. When the Toddler Students are in their classroom, they will be allowed to choose to work their brains and small motor skills in the work room or they may choose to work on their gross motor skills in the "play" room.

Child care activities will provide for each child's physical, intellectual, emotional and social development. Activities, both indoors and outdoors, will be appropriate to each child's developmental stage and age, include active and quiet time, and contain both provider-directed and child-initiated activities.

Lunch

We have a hot lunch program. Please submit your menu to the office with your order. If you choose to send your child's lunch, please note the following:

Container Options:

- Please send a lunch box with an ice pack. We cannot store individual items in our refrigerator.
- Containers should be easy to open, as the students will learn to open the containers themselves.
- EVM will provide placemats, napkins and silverware. In an effort to reduce waste, please send reusable containers.
- Any food that needs to be kept warm needs to be heated in the morning and stored in a thermos. We cannot heat up items.

Drinks Options:

EVM will provide milk and water.

Food options:

According to the Louisiana Department of Education, Title 28, Bulletin 137, Food and Nutrition:

“Children under age 4 shall not have foods that are implicated in choking incidents. Examples of these food include but are not limited to: whole hot dogs, hot dogs sliced in rounds, raw carrots, whole grapes, hard candy, nuts, seeds, raw peas, hard pretzels, chips, peanuts, popcorn, marshmallows, spoonful of peanut butter, and chunks of meat larger than what can be swallowed whole.”

According to page 16 of the Elan Vital Montessori School Parent Handbook:

Please send a balanced nutritional lunch for your child. Please pack “healthy body” foods. Suggestions include pasta, sandwiches, string cheese, cheese snacks, fruit, yogurt, and vegetables. Do not send lunchables of any kind, go-gurts or any yogurts packaged in this way, candy, soda, cookies, sugared crackers, desserts, punch, Capri Sun, juice boxes or foods with high sugar content. If sent, these items will be returned unopened.

We have had an incident where a child choked on a pit from a piece of fruit (like a plum). While they are not banned, please be cautious if sending these types of items with your child.

Item Options: sandwich, pasta, quesadilla, cut up chicken, roll ups, apple slices, berries, orange slices, bananas, cut up bell peppers, pickles, broccoli spears, sliced cucumbers, edamame, yogurt cups, granola bars, cheese slices, leftovers

Infant Classroom:

To ensure the health, safety, and individual dietary needs of each infant, families are required to provide all food and beverages for their child while enrolled in the Infant Classroom. This includes:

- Breast milk or formula (prepared or in original containers)
- Solid foods appropriate to the child’s developmental stage
- Snacks, if desired
- Any special feeding utensils or containers preferred by the family

Bottles are permitted in the infant environment only. All formula bottles must come premade with your child’s full name on the bottle. These formulas are to be brought in bottles with caps and tops and shall immediately be placed under refrigeration. All bottles will be sent home at the end of the day for guardians to wash and sanitize.

All solid food items or snacks must be provided by the students family. Due to allergy concerns and individual dietary needs, food may not be shared among children. We ask that families update the classroom staff promptly if there are any changes to feeding routines, allergies, or new foods being introduced. EVM will not provide food, snacks or anything edible to the infant classroom.

Additional policies based on CDC, Dept. of Education and Child Care Guidelines

- Staff will be required to take everyday precautions to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses. This includes scheduled hand washing, cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, avoiding close contact and wearing clean cloth face masks that cover the mouth and nose.
- Parents will be required each day to verbally confirm whether a child has received a fever reducing medication or supplement within the last 24 hours and does not have shortness of breath, sore throat, rash or a cough upon entering EVM's campus.
- Students must disinfect their hands immediately upon arrival. Children's hands will be washed with an antibacterial soap or an alcohol based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol at a minimum of every two hours while on campus.
- Any person who has a fever of 100.4°F or above, OR has any other visible signs of illness will not be admitted to the facility. If a student develops symptoms or fevers during the day, the child will be placed in isolation and must be picked up immediately. Staff members will call everyone on the child's pickup list until they reach someone who is available to come pick up the child.
- If a student or staff member tests a confirmed positive for COVID-19 after being on campus, Elan Vital will be required to follow all guidelines set by the Department of Health, the Department of Education and the CDC. Our COVID-19 policies will be updated as new guidelines are required by the state, the parish, and the department of education.

Appendix B - Parent Grievance Form

Élan Vital Montessori School Parent Grievance Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

Please explain your complaint with specific details:

I discussed this matter with the School Director on the following date (Date of first conference):

I disagreed with the School Director's response because:

I think the proper solution should be:

Received by School Director (Date):

Response of the School Director to the complaint after investigation:

Date:

A second conference was held with the School Director to discuss the investigation of the complaint on (Date of second conference):

I disagree with the School Director's response because:

Appendix C- Parent Observation Form

Guidelines for Observing

Thank you for observing at Élan Vital Montessori School. We welcome you into the classroom to observe and to gain a better understanding of Montessori philosophy and curriculum. In order to observe a true environment and to be able to see the children working as they do when you are not present, we have a few guidelines for you to follow.

Guidelines:

- Turn off all electronic devices.
- Dispose of any food or drink before entering the classroom.
- Enter the classroom quietly.
- Sit in the chair provided for visitors. The chair has been put in a specific place for you to get the best view.
- Please remain seated during the entire observation time.
- Watch what happens without interfering. Please remember that this is an observation and not a time for interaction.
- If a child talks to you, briefly ask him or her to allow you to do your work, which is to observe.
- Exit as quietly as you entered.

Please complete and return the attached form to guide your observation. Thank you for observing our school!

Guided Questions for Observations

Visitor's Name: _____ Date: _____

Please use the following questions to guide your observations.

1. What do you notice that is child-centered about this environment (furniture, shelves, materials, etc.)?
2. How are children engaged with peers, with teachers, and with materials?
3. Can the child take the work from the shelf, complete the work, record his/her work, and return it to the shelf (the work cycle)?
4. Is the child able to concentrate on his or her work or is s/he easily distracted?
5. Does the child show independence in scheduling his or her own work or does s/he look to classmates and/or teachers for directions and ideas?
6. Do you observe an atmosphere of respect between the teacher and the children?
7. Does the class atmosphere promote learning?
8. Do you have any other observations or questions?

Appendix D – Child Abuse Prevention

Child Abuse Prevention

This document is a summary of the measures Elan Vital Montessori School has in place to prevent child abuse. Several current federal and state laws are referenced. In the event that a state or federal law changes and conflicts with any policy summarized below, Elan Vital Montessori School shall abide by the revised law.

Screening of Employees and Volunteers

The hiring process at Elan Vital Montessori School includes:

- Submission of a resume that includes prior employment and previous experience working with children;
- Confirmation that the applicant has not been convicted of nor pled nolo contendere to any crime listed in LA R.S. 15:587.1 (which includes crimes related to abuse and neglect of children) or similar crimes as defined under the statutes of other jurisdictions;
- A personal interview with staff who are trained to recognize signs of child abuse and/or grooming behavior and subsequent online training within the first 30 days of employment;
- Documented reference checks from at least 3 persons conducted by staff who are trained to ask questions that would elicit reasons why prior employers would not rehire an applicant; and
- In accordance with LA R.S. 15:587.1(C), a background check conducted by the Louisiana Bureau of Criminal Identification and Information and by the Federal Bureau of Investigation that surveys the arrest and criminal records of all jurisdictions in which the applicant/prospective employee has resided.

Most volunteers who work at Elan Vital Montessori School never have any opportunity to interact with children unsupervised by staff. These volunteers include parents/guardians who chaperone field trips and groups who visit our schools in the summer (when school is not in session) to assist with projects such as painting and sorting books.

On the rare occasions where a volunteer would regularly interact with children, the volunteer would first have a personal interview with staff who are trained to recognize signs of child abuse and/or grooming behavior and have a background check performed (as described above for staff).

Elan Vital Montessori School performs the same background checks as described above on all contractors and vendors' staff who will regularly be in its schools and/or interact with its students. These include bus drivers, cafeteria staff, and special education service providers.

In the 2018-19 school year, Elan Vital Montessori School began refreshing background checks for staff. We utilize the Louisiana Department of Education's Child Care Civil Background Check System. This system requires all staff, volunteers, and contractors to have updated background checks at least once every 5 years. Additionally, Elan Vital Montessori School has a policy in place requiring all staff members to alert their principal within 5 days of being arrested or convicted or pleading nolo contendere to any crime.

Training

All school staff and volunteers who regularly work with students must, on an annual basis, take the online training for mandatory reporters created by the Louisiana Department of Child and Family Services. This training covers how to recognize signs of child abuse and neglect and how to report such to the appropriate authorities. A certificate of training completion must be submitted by each employee and volunteer to Elan Vital Montessori School to document attendance and satisfactory completion of the training. Elan Vital Montessori School has documented in its personnel manual that failure to complete the training and submit the completion certificate may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Additionally, all staff and volunteers who regularly work with students are trained annually on the organization's other policies (described in sections below) that help prevent child abuse and their obligations under Title IX. Attendance is taken at this annual training, staff sign off on having received and understanding the policies, and disciplinary action up to and including termination for violating any policy (including the policy requiring training) is written in the organization's personnel manual.

All staff members who are involved in the Title IX grievance policy are trained on their responsibilities.

Prevention Measures

Élan Vital Montessori School has a variety of policies in place to limit the potential for child abuse. These include:

- Prohibiting employees and volunteers from sharing personally identifiable student information with external parties without parent consent;
- Denying students access to the internet and electronic communication tools,
- Maintaining best practices for how Zoom or other similar online platforms should be used with parents and if students are engaged in virtual learning;
- Prohibiting employees and volunteers from engaging with students through their personal social media accounts;
- Prohibiting transportation of students in private employee-owned or volunteer-owned vehicles, except under emergency circumstances in which case at least two adults must be present;
- Prohibiting employees and volunteers from engaging in dating, romantic, and/or sexual relationships with students;
- Prohibiting employees and volunteers from covering all of the interior windows of their classrooms and offices;
- Prohibiting employees and volunteers from being alone with students unless specifically required by their job and with their supervisor's permission (e.g. counseling, therapy, mentoring, etc.);
- When one-on-one situations are necessary between students and adults (e.g. counseling, therapy, mentoring, etc.), ensuring that these interactions occur near regularly-populated hallways, offices, or other areas;
- Prohibiting the corporal punishment of students;
- Ensuring that students with significant age differences are never alone in an unsupervised setting;
- Limiting unsupervised student movement through the schools by requiring hall passes or similar staff permission;
- Having staff members as hall monitors positioned near restrooms to monitor restroom usage;
- Having single-use restrooms adjacent to many classrooms for the youngest students to use;
- Ensuring that when a student needs diapering or toileting assistance, the assistance is given by staff members in a changing room or restroom with the door open;
- On field trips, sufficient adult chaperones accompany students to ensure there will be adequate supervision;
- Ensuring staff members monitor student transitions;
- Ensuring staff members monitor student meals, recess, and other outdoor play;
- Regularly reviewing outdoor spaces on campus to ensure there are no places for students to hide from staff supervision; and
- Promptly investigating and issue appropriate consequences, up to and including termination or expulsion, for instances of child abuse or other inappropriate interactions towards a child.

Identification of Potential Abuse and/or Grooming Behavior

All school staff and volunteers who regularly work with students must, on an annual basis, take the online training for mandatory reporters created by the Louisiana Department of Child and Family Services. This training covers how to recognize signs of child abuse and neglect, how to recognize behavior of potential abusers, and how to report such to the appropriate authorities. A certificate of training completion must be submitted by each employee and

volunteer to Elan Vital Montessori School to document attendance and satisfactory completion of the training. Elan Vital Montessori School has documented in its personnel manual that failure to complete the training and submit the completion certificate may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Additionally, all staff and volunteers who regularly work with students are trained annually on the organization's other policies (described in section above) that help prevent child abuse. Attendance is taken at this annual training, staff sign off on having received and understanding the policies, and disciplinary action up to and including termination for violating any policy (including the policy requiring training) is written in the organization's personnel manual.

School leaders and other staff members who regularly observe teachers and other employees are also trained on how to recognize potential "grooming" behavior and how to respond to it.

Reporting of Abuse and Other Problematic Behaviors

All employees at Elan Vital Montessori School are mandatory reporters as defined by Louisiana state law and must report any instances of known or suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authority. Additionally, all employees at Elan Vital Montessori School are required, under Title IX, to report any instances or known or suspected sexual assault or sexual harassment of students occurring at school or at a school-controlled event to the schools' director.

All school staff and volunteers who regularly work with students must, on an annual basis, take the online training for mandatory reporters created by the Louisiana Department of Child and Family Services. This training covers how to recognize signs of child abuse and neglect, how to recognize behavior of potential abusers, and how to report such to the appropriate authorities.

Staff members are also trained to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the School Director. The Director ensures that the proper authorities have been contacted. The Director will also ensure that the incident is reported to the organization's insurance carrier when appropriate.

Investigations

Elan Vital Montessori School cooperates with authorities investigating alleged incidents of child abuse or neglect to the extent permitted by law.

Elan Vital Montessori School has a grievance policy in compliance with Title IX that dictates how it investigates Title IX complaints.

When necessary to conduct an investigation on its own that does not fall under Title IX, the School Director may conduct the investigation, or the organization may hire an external party to do so.

Protection of Victims

During a Title IX investigation, Elan Vital Montessori School offers supportive measures and protection to the alleged victim as described in its Title IX grievance policy, as required by federal law.

During investigations that do not fall under Title IX, Elan Vital Montessori School offers supportive measures and protection to the alleged victim to ensure that they are treated with dignity and compassion and removed from situations and potential interactions that could be harmful.

Response to Confirmed Abuse

In the event that an abuse allegation against an employee or volunteer is confirmed, Elan Vital Montessori School will terminate the relationship with the employee or volunteer.

In the event that an abuse allegation against another student is confirmed, Elan Vital Montessori School will take appropriate disciplinary action, which may include expulsion. Elan Vital Montessori School will also ensure that the abuser is removed from situations where they might encounter the victim at school or school-sponsored events.

Elan Vital Montessori School will communicate the results of its investigation to the student victim and the victim's family and maintain communication while the student is enrolled, unless the family was the source of the abuse.

The Director will notify the insurance carrier when abuse perpetrated by an employee, volunteer, or fellow student is confirmed. The Director will be or designate a media spokesperson. The Director will review the organization's policies to determine if any should be changed to prevent future incidents of child abuse.

CONFIRMATION OF RECEIPT OF PARENT HANDBOOK

I, _____, confirm that I have received a copy of Élan Vital Montessori School's Parent Handbook. I assure that I have read and understand all of the guidelines set forth. I have received this information on behalf of my minor child _____.

Signature of Parent

Date

Signature of School Representative

Date