

**THREE RIVERS MONTESSORI EMPLOYEE  
HANDBOOK  
2021-2022 School Year**



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# **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

## **GOALS AND PURPOSE**

TRM is a Montessori School (hereinafter “TRM” or “School”). Our common goal is to provide a secure, inviting, challenging, interesting and stimulating environment prepared for the intellectual and social development of each child in attendance. All employees are expected to be actively involved with the children.

Although each person is primarily responsible for his or her own class, everyone shares the responsibility for all the children in the school as a whole. We all share the same goals and in order for the school to serve the children’s needs to the best of our ability, we must all care for all the children all the time.

Specific goals are to help the children to:

- Grow in independence and self-confidence
- Learn non-sexist human roles and avoid gender stereotypes
- Develop self-control and self-discipline
- Learn to give and share
- Learn to get along with others
- Develop large and small motor skills
- Develop academic potential
- Peace Education

TRM is a Montessori, K-6 grade, full-day program. We offer authentic Montessori education for children ages 6 – twelve years as follows:

- Three K/1 Classrooms
- Two 2nd/3rd Grade Classrooms
- One 4th-6th Grade Classroom

TRM staff will lead by example;

- Parents are always treated respectfully.
- Parents and children are greeted pleasantly with eye contact upon arrival and departure. This handbook sets forth an overview of the School’s policies and procedures.

## **MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY**

TRM follows the educational philosophy developed by Dr. Maria Montessori. Dr. Montessori based her philosophy on her observations of children and it is based on the true nature of the child. Its application is universal and results can be successfully achieved in any country and with any racial, social, cultural or economic group. Dr. Montessori’s philosophy reveals the child as a lover of work, both of the intellect and mastery of the body (especially the hand). This work is chosen spontaneously and carried out with profound joy. Through attention to work, the child shows spontaneous discipline that originates within the child and is not imposed by others. This type of discipline is real as opposed to the artificial discipline that results from rewards and punishments. This method of education provides suitable occupations based on the vital urges of the child at each stage of development. The child masters each stage before

attempting the next. A comprehensive Montessori program offers the child a maximum of spontaneity in choice of physical and mental activities.

In the Montessori environment, children are free to work at their own pace. The quick are not held back and the slow are not pressured. Opportunities for group work are plentiful and the children spontaneously offer help with the work they have mastered to those children who have not. The teacher should guide each child individually in each subject according to his or her own individual requirements. Never should the teacher impose her own personality or will on the children. Children work from their own free choice. Their choices are preceded by knowledge and are thus real choices. Dr. Montessori's method eliminates competition as a major motivation for learning. The child competes with him or herself. Ultimately, the Montessori Method develops the whole personality of the child. It does not focus solely on the intellect, but rather includes the powers of deliberation, initiative and independent choice with their emotional complements as well. The child becomes a free member of a real social community and is trained in those fundamental social qualities that form the basis of good citizenship.

All employees at the TRM should act in support of the Montessori philosophy at all times. Attention to this philosophy must be paid in all interactions with the child. The method does not simply apply to academics. Instead, it is an encompassing philosophy that should be applied at non-academic times as well (e.g., transitions, lunch time, outdoor play, etc.). The Montessori teachers are ultimately responsible for ensuring adherence to the Montessori philosophy. However, supporting employees play a vital role in reinforcing the major points of Montessori and should take the initiative in learning about and carrying out the philosophy.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*"Empowering students to reach their full potential through authentic Montessori learning"*

## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

TRM is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against its employees or applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, pregnancy, genetic information, national origin, disability, or other legally protected status. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including, but not limited to, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, transfers, compensation, benefits, and training.

# **PART II: EMPLOYMENT POLICIES**

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## **EMPLOYMENT AT-WILL**

TRM and its employees share a working relationship defined as employment-at-will. This means that you or the School have the right to terminate your employment for any or no reason. The at-will status cannot be altered except through a written agreement between the School and you or your representative. By agreeing to comply with the various policies stated in this handbook, employees are not entering into any agreement with the School for employment for any specified period of time.

## **EMPLOYEE CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

Every employee agrees to keep any information regarding enrolled children and their families completely confidential. Failure to maintain these levels of ethics, loyalty, and confidentiality will result in immediate dismissal from the School.

## **EMPLOYEE DOCUMENTATION**

In accordance with federal law, state law, and Minnesota's licensing regulations, employees are required to submit the following documentation:

- Application for Employment
- Federal I-9
- State W-4 (must be for state in which employee resides)
- Minnesota Department of Social Services Background Check (must be resubmitted every 3 years)
- Emergency Contact info (must be resubmitted annually)
- MN Teaching License (for teaching staff)
- Additional training documentation may be required at the discretion of the Administration. Failure

to obtain or update required documentation will result in unpaid suspension or termination.

## **ANTI-HARASSMENT/NON-DISCRIMINATION**

TRM is committed to maintaining a work environment in which all individuals are free from harassment or discrimination based on race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, citizenship status, genetic information, veteran's status, disabilities and other characteristics protected by federal or applicable state law.

Harassment is defined as verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility toward an

employee because he or she is a member of a protected group and that interferes with an employee's work performance or creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment.

Sexual harassment, in particular, may consist of (a) making unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct or comments of a sexual nature; (b) making submission to or rejection of such conduct the basis of employment decisions; or (c) creating an intimidating, offensive, or hostile working environment by such conduct. Examples of sexual harassment can include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal: Sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, insults, threats, jokes about gender-specific traits or sexual propositions.
- Non-verbal: Making suggestive or insulting noises, leering, whistling or obscene gestures
- Physical: Touching, pinching, brushing the body, coercing sexual intercourse or assault
- Graphic: Displaying or circulating in the workplace written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group (including through email)

This policy is intended to prohibit harassment, discrimination, and retaliation whether engaged in by fellow employees, by a supervisor or manager, by independent contractors, or by someone not directly connected to the School (e.g., an outside vendor or client).

## **RETALIATION**

TRM will not tolerate unlawful retaliation including any adverse employment action, harassment or other form of retaliation against an employee because that employee filed a complaint of discrimination or harassment, participated in a complaint-related investigation, or otherwise opposed discrimination or harassment. Any employee, including any member of School management, who violates this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

## **COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

Any employee who believes he or she is being harassed, discriminated against or retaliated against must immediately bring it to the attention of the Director of the School. TRM will promptly investigate reports of such misconduct and will keep such reports confidential to the extent possible.

## **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES**

In all hiring and employment practices, the School does not discriminate against qualified individuals who have a disability and complies with applicable law governing disability discrimination in employment. Moreover, the School prohibits any and all discrimination against a qualified individual with a disability. This includes, but is not limited to, discrimination with respect to hiring, placement, promotion, termination, transfers, compensation, benefits, and training.

TRM seeks to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with disabilities by making reasonable accommodations that do not result in undue hardship on its business operations.

## EMPLOYEE RULES OF CONDUCT

To ensure the orderly operation of the School and to provide a safe and welcoming learning environment, the School expects employees to follow certain rules of conduct. The following list provides examples of conduct which may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. This list is intended to be representative of the types of activities which may result in disciplinary action. It is not intended to be comprehensive nor does it alter the employment at-will relationship.

- o Violation of a School policy
- o Harassment or discrimination of any kind
- o Leaving a child or children unattended
- o Assault of any student or co-worker
- o Criminal activity
- o Theft and/or destruction of school or employee property
- o Refusal to comply with Licensing Standards or School Policy
- o Malfeasance
- o Gross Negligence
- o Failure to obtain required training
- o Failure to submit required employment documentation
- o Failure to maintain confidentiality of information regarding enrolled families
- o Impairment due to alcohol or drug use
- o Possession of illegal drugs
- o Insubordination
- o Willful misrepresentation of time worked, i.e. timesheet fraud
- o Excessive tardiness or absenteeism
- o Failure to notify the school before an absence or tardiness in accordance with the leave policy
- o Repeated failure to be available during on-call
- o Lack of commitment to the ideals, objectives, and philosophy of the school
- o Inability to work effectively with children or other employees

## CELL PHONE USE

The unauthorized use of cell phones and other personal devices is strictly prohibited during working hours. Unauthorized cell phone use during work hours is unprofessional and distracts from the supervision of children. Employees may use their cell phones before or after their shift begins or during their break as long as they do so outside of School or in the break room with the door closed so conversation does not drift into the hall. Cell phones and other personal devices are not to be used in the hallways or outside in the path of entrances and exits. Only School-issued technological (see School Technology Policy) devices are permitted in classrooms, hallways, and other common areas where children may be present. At all other times, personal cell phones and other personal devices must be turned off, completely out of sight, and away from the employee's person. Accordingly, employees are highly encouraged to leave cell phones in their cars whenever possible. The Administration reserves the right to confiscate any personal cell phones or other personal devices being used in violation of the foregoing. Confiscated devices will be returned to the employee upon completion of the workday.

**If a teacher is outdoors alone with children, the Director may approve a cell phone to accompany the teacher. The cell phone will be kept away in a pocket while the teacher is outside and is to be**

**used for emergency purposes only.**

## **EMPLOYEE DRESS CODE**

The Montessori philosophy promotes beauty and order, and this includes the teacher and her assistants as well. All employees must strive to maintain this ideal and appear neat and clean on a daily basis. Employees should dress appropriately for a school environment. The official dress code for all classroom employees is smart casual. Please see the following list for clothing items that are prohibited by the School.

### **Inappropriate for TRM:**

Exposed Cleavage/Midriff

Holes in clothing

Jeans need to be medium to dark wash (no light/acid wash)

Exposed Undergarments

Pajamas (except on designated FUN days)

Workout or Exercise Clothing with colors or designs

Sweatpants

Short Shorts or Short Skirts

Tank Tops with Spaghetti Straps

Soiled and/or tight clothing

T-shirts with Inappropriate Pictures/Logos

Clothes should allow employees to get down to the level of the children.

All employees are required to wear shoes while in the classroom. Teachers may bring in slippers of their choosing. However, slippers must be close toed with a closed heel, have a rubber sole, and be a solid color. Logos, characters, decorations such as jewels, feathers, etc., are discouraged. Lastly, please remember to wear comfortable shoes for outdoor time that will allow you to meet the demands of working with children. Flip-flops are strongly discouraged, either in or outside of the classroom. Flip-flops and shoes without ankle support are a safety hazard. Teachers must be able to run in an emergency without endangering his/her feet or risking a fall.

**Teachers failing to meet the dress code may be sent home to change. Work time loss due to a dress code violation will not be compensated and/or personal leave will be deducted.**

The dress code for individuals working in the office is business casual.

## **PROFESSIONALISM IN YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Your first responsibility is to the children, to protect the health and safety of those in your charge and that of any other children from the School when they are near you. Always be alert to any safety hazard; avoid even the appearance of a safety hazard, of poor supervision of children, or of inattentiveness to their needs.

You have a responsibility toward parents, so conduct yourself and your class in such a way that they do not have to worry about their children's emotional or physical safety. In the difficult job of raising a child in today's world, and as they also cope with the problem of dual career demands and perhaps changing family structure, parents count on your support, encouragement, and help. You are expected to be non

judgmental toward parents, no matter their lifestyle, ethnic group, culture, or goals/expectations for their children that may be different than yours.

You have a responsibility toward the school, its reputation and its success educationally. You interpret, by your words and your performance, the school's mission and aims; know what we stand for and believe it. Dedicate yourself to providing the most effective education ever for the young children in your care.

You have a responsibility toward one another, to support and nurture one another in the workplace.

# **PART III: BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION**

## **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

Employees may be eligible for certain employee benefits. Currently, those benefits offered by TRM include, but are not limited to, health insurance, and supplemental insurance (e.g., dental, long term disability, life insurance, etc.).

Health Insurance is only available to full time employees (i.e., employees working at least 32 hours a week, or as otherwise defined by the School's plan) following a 30 day waiting period on the first of the month following this waiting period.

Benefits extended to TRM employees are provided at the School's discretion and are subject to change at any time.

## **EMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION CLASSIFICATIONS**

For purposes of compensation, employees are divided into two classifications: Exempt and Nonexempt Employees.

- o Non-Exempt Employees are eligible for overtime at time and one half of the employee's regular rate for time worked in excess of forty hours in any single workweek, but these hours must be approved by the Director.
- o Salaried Exempt Employees are paid a set salary for any workweek in which the employee performs any work for the School, without regard to the number of days or hours worked, and are not entitled to overtime.

Salaried Exempt Employees will **not** be paid for any workweek in which they perform no work. Generally, deductions will not be taken from the salary of a Salaried Exempt Employee. For example, deductions from the salary of an Exempt Employee shall not be made for absences occasioned by the School's decisions or by its operating requirements or any time when the Exempt Employee is willing and able to do work but work is not available. However, deductions may be taken from the salary of an Exempt Employee in the following circumstances:

- o The Exempt Employee is absent from work for one or more full days for personal reasons, other than sickness or disability;
- o The Exempt Employee is absent from work for one or more full days occasioned by sickness or disability (including work-related accidents) and the deduction is made in accordance with the School's plan, policy or practice of providing compensation for such leave;
- o The Exempt Employee is suspended without pay for a violation of a School safety rule of major significance;
- o An unpaid disciplinary suspension of one or more full days is imposed in good faith against the Exempt Employee for violating the School 's written rules governing conduct; or
- o The Exempt Employee fails to work the entire workweek in the initial or final week of employment with the School.

## OVERTIME POLICY

As noted above, all non-exempt employees who work more than 40 hours per week are entitled to overtime pay equal to time and one half their regular rate of pay, as approved by the Director of the school. For example, an employee whose regular rate of pay is 10.00 per hour would earn 15.00 per hour for each hour of overtime worked.

All overtime must be approved in advance by the Director. Per the FLSA, overtime only applies to non-exempt employees.

## EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

All employees should take extra care to accurately report all of their hours worked. If, however, you believe your wages have been subject to any improper deductions or your pay does not accurately reflect all hours worked, you should report your concerns to the Director of the School immediately. The School shall investigate the matter promptly and thoroughly. If it is determined that any deductions from salary or other compensation paid were made in violation of this policy or federal or state law governing the payment of wages, the School shall reimburse the employee for any improper deductions or compensation and make a good faith commitment to ensure compliance in the future.

## HOURS and BREAKS

The duty day for classroom teachers is 7:30am-3:30pm and may change upon the needs of the school. All employees are expected to be on time for their designated work hours which may include prep time before and/or after school. **“On time” means at the location where you are expected, (e.g., in the playground, in the classroom, etc.) not simply in the school building.** Promptness must be a daily habit. When you are late you are disrespecting your co-workers’ time, presenting them with unnecessary hardship, and asking others to do the work for which you are responsible.

TRM believes that employees need time during the school day to rest and recharge away from the classroom so we strive to provide each employee with a break time during their shift. **Non-exempt employees are given paid breaks.** Employees are given a 30 minutes duty free lunch break. **Breaks are considered an added benefit and may be cancelled, shortened or rearranged to accommodate the needs of the school.** The duration of employee breaks are determined by the number of hours worked in a given day. Employees working the following number of hours typically receive the following break:

- 5 hours or less = no break necessary
- 6 to 8 hours = 30 minute break
- Over 9 hours = 60 minute break

Breaks will generally be at the same time each day. In the case of employee absences, break times are subject to change. Break times may also be changed from time to time during the school year. Employees **are responsible for starting and ending their breaks on time.**

Unauthorized extensions of breaks are prohibited and grounds for discipline. Unauthorized extensions of breaks may result in employees having to extend their work hours.

## LEAVE POLICY

**Religious observances.** Employees who need time off to observe religious practices or holidays not already scheduled by the company should speak with their supervisor. Employees may also take personal time or take off unpaid days. The company will seek to reasonably accommodate individuals' religious observances.

All employees are expected to make every effort to come to work, as scheduled, on time. Employee absenteeism causes hardship for children and co-workers and disrupts the harmony of the school. The following is an outline of the various types of leave available to employees and procedures for requesting time off.

### **Paid Time Off:**

- 10-month exempt (salaried) employees receive ten (10) days of paid leave
- 12-month employees receive twelve (12) days of paid leave
- Full-time hourly (non-exempt) employees accrue PTO at a rate of 0.5 days per pay period

Part-time or temporary employees do not currently receive or accrue paid time off.

A day of leave is based on the number of hours typically worked by the employee. Leave is accrued at the rate of one day per month for hourly employees.

**These days should be reserved for illness and personal emergencies.** PTO will not be approved for extended vacation or in excess of five (5) consecutive business days unless verified by a doctor's note or other emergency.

PTO can be taken in half-day or full-day increments only. Please notify the Office Manager AND include on the Time Off Request Form if you will be utilizing a half-day or full-day of PTO.

Hourly/non-exempt employees may not use PTO that has not been accrued (i.e. employees cannot go "in the hole" with PTO they have not yet earned).

A portion of an employee's paid time off may be carried over between contract periods (see below). Leave may only be used when an employee is under an active contract.

### **Carry Over:**

- 10-month salaried/exempt employees who have leave remaining at the end of the school year may carry over up to a maximum of 5 days of leave over to the next contract period
- 12-month employees may carry over up to a maximum 6 days of PTO over to the next contract period
- Full-time hourly/non-exempt employees may carry over up to 2 days of PTO

\*If your contract is not renewed or you choose to resign, your unused leave will not be paid. If an employee resigns or is terminated during the contract period any unused leave is forfeited.

### **Paid Holidays:**

All hourly full-time employees are paid for any of the following holidays that fall within their employment period.

The holidays are as follows:

- Thanksgiving Day
- Day After Thanksgiving
- Day Before Christmas Day
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Day
- MLK Day
- President's Day
- Good Friday Holiday Observance
- Memorial Day

Salaried employees are paid for holidays/breaks that occur within their contracted days for the school year.

Part-time or temporary employees are not eligible for holiday pay.

### **How to Request Leave:**

Personal leave requests for one day must be submitted **IN WRITING** as soon as possible and no later than one week (7 days) prior to the requested day of leave.

Requests for two or more days of personal leave must be submitted in writing two weeks (14 days) in advance.

**Time Off Request Forms** are to be used and are available in the office. Before submitting your request, review the staff calendar. Staff leave is recorded there. If someone is already scheduled to be out on the day you want to take off, please choose another day. Personal leave is granted on a first come basis. If someone is already scheduled to be out, your request may be denied. The School has sole discretion to grant or deny requests for leave based on operational needs. The foregoing is subject to other policies contained in this Handbook.

### **How to Call In Sick:**

In the case of absence for illness or emergency, **call the Director on his or her cell phone the night before, prior to 8:00pm, whenever possible. If this is not possible, call the Director no later than 6:30am. If you have not called by 6:30am, you are expected to be at work, on time, as scheduled.** If you are unable to reach the Director, call the Office Manager. Do not leave a voice message and assume it will be received. **Never send a text message to call in sick.** Always be sure to talk to the Director in person.

DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL TO CALL IN ABSENT IN THE MORNING. **DO NOT TEXT OR EMAIL TO REPORT AN ABSENCE.**

**Additional Notes on Leave:**

**NO PERSONAL LEAVE WILL BE GRANTED DURING THE FIRST SIX WEEKS OR THE LAST TWO WEEKS OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.** These six weeks begin on the first day of school and do not include teacher set-up week. **There will be no exceptions.** It is imperative for the children that all employees are present every day at the beginning of school. It is at this time that routines are established, separation anxiety is appeased, and children become acclimated to a new school year. During the first six weeks/last two weeks of school, leave will only be granted for emergencies or illnesses verified by a doctor's note. The foregoing is subject to other policies contained in this Handbook. Missed hours during the regularly contracted workday cannot be made up by coming in early or working late.

Part-time hourly employees are not eligible for PTO.

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## **BEREAVEMENT POLICY**

TRM understands that at times employees will need to be absent from school due to the death of a loved one. Since we all experience these types of situations, the School has established a bereavement policy to ensure that employees are afforded fair and equal time off to attend to the matters associated with the death of a relative or close friend.

In the event of the death of an immediate family member, employees will be allowed three days of paid leave. If bereavement extends beyond three days and additional personal leave is not available, additional days not worked will be unpaid. Immediate family members are defined as spouses, parents, parents of spouse, children, siblings, grandparents, step-parents, step-children, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, or grandchild.

In the event of the death of a non-immediate family member (any individual not included in the aforementioned list), employees will be granted one day of paid leave.

## **FAMILY LEAVE**

TRM understands the need for children to receive strong, loving care, particularly in the first weeks of life. TRM's Family Leave Policy applies to the birth of a child or the adoption of a child as well as incapacity due to prenatal complications ("Triggering Event"). TRM offers up to 12 weeks of maternity leave ("Family Leave Period"). Family Leave requires the use and exhaustion of any personal leave the employee may still have available and includes paid vacation days that may fall under those six weeks. Family Leave is only available to individuals who have been employed by the School for at least 12 months. Family Leave is only available to employees planning to return to work after their scheduled leave. Employees are eligible for Family Leave, EMPLOYEES may take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave.

The Family Leave Period begins to run on the date of the Triggering Event. Family Leave runs concurrently with the first six (6) weeks of the Family Leave Period. Thus, if the Triggering Event occurs prior to the beginning of the term of the employee's applicable Employment Agreement, the employee will be entitled only to the remainder of the Family Leave Period's twelve (12) weeks, if any, and the remainder of the six (6) weeks of Family Leave, if any, when the term of the Employment Agreement begins. Additionally, Family Leave's duration will not continue past the end of the term set forth in the employee's Employment Agreement for the applicable School year.

Montessori Teachers who take maternity leave are required to leave detailed written narratives on each student's current academic level. The teacher must also leave detailed written plans for general lessons, themes, holiday projects, etc. Narratives and lesson plans should be submitted to the Director of the school at least two weeks prior to the scheduled start of leave for review.

## **CIVIC DUTY LEAVE**

### **Jury Duty**

The School encourages employees to fulfill their civic duties. To that end, employees will be allowed leave to serve on a jury, if summoned. We request that you bring in a copy of your summons notice as soon as you receive it, so that we may keep it on file. If you are called during a particularly busy period, we may ask you to request a postponement. The School will provide additional documentation in this regard, if necessary, to obtain such postponement.

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Jury duty can last from several days to several months or more. During this time you will be considered on a leave of absence and will be entitled to continue to participate in insurance and other benefits as if you were working. While serving on jury duty, you are expected to call in to your supervisor periodically to keep him or her apprised of your status.

The School will compensate full-time employees for the difference between jury duty compensation and your current daily pay for the first five days you serve as a juror (or in accordance with applicable law, if different). If additional time is required, it will be granted, but without pay.

### **Appearance as a Witness**

An Employee called to appear as a witness will be permitted time off to appear, but without pay. Employees will be permitted to use accrued vacation time when appearing as witnesses.

## **VOTING**

The School encourages all employees to vote. Most polling facilities for elections for public office are scheduled to accommodate working voters. The School, therefore, requests that employees schedule their voting for before or after their work shift. An employee who expects a conflict, however, should notify his or her supervisor, in advance, so that schedules can be adjusted if necessary.

## **MILITARY SERVICE LEAVE**

Employees serving in the reserve or National Guard may take unpaid military leave, as needed, to enable them to fulfill their obligations as reservists or Guard members. Employees may use accrued vacation or personal leave for this purpose

### ***Military Caregiver Leave***

The federal Family Medical Leave Act, as amended in 2008, allows an employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin of a member of the Armed Forces with a serious illness or injury up to 26 weeks of unpaid leave within a twelve-month period to care for the injured or ill service member. An employee may not, however, take more than 26 weeks of FMLA leave of all kinds in a single 12-month period. (For example, if you take six weeks of FMLA leave for your own illness or that of a family member, you may take no more than 20 weeks to care for an ill or injured service member.) Generally, you must give the School at least 30 days notice before the commencement of any military caregiver leave.

### ***Qualifying (Military) Exigency Leave***

The FMLA now provides for up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave within a 12-month period when an employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is on active duty in the National Guard or Reserves or has been notified of a pending call to active duty in support of a "contingency operation." This leave may be used to take care of such things as child care or financial and legal arrangements necessitated by the deployment of the family member.

## **POLICY FOR SUPPORTING BREASTFEEDING EMPLOYEES**

In recognition of the well documented health advantages of breastfeeding for infants and mothers, Three Rivers Montessori provides a supportive environment to enable breastfeeding employees to express their milk during work hours.

## **SCHOOL CLOSINGS AND DELAYS**

TRM will follow the Elk River Public Schools for school closings and delays due to emergencies or inclement weather. TRM may, however, deviate from Elk River's decision to close, delay, or close early. **IT IS THE EMPLOYEE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK THE SCHOOL'S OPERATING STATUS.** Of course, if you feel conditions are unsafe for you to come to school you may elect to stay home. However, standard leave policies still apply. Employees must report their absences between 6:00 and 6:30 am and will be charged a day of leave or will not receive compensation for that day.

If the School opens late or closes early, the start time will be determined from our opening time and closing time. For example, if the School has a two-hour delay, the teacher duty day will also have a two hour delay.

School closings and delays are always announced on the school website, the school voicemail, and school social media accounts. Additionally, we utilize School REMIND to send out text message blasts along with email communications. Every teacher is automatically enrolled in this program. You may choose to opt out of either program. Please note that standard text messaging rates apply from your carrier and the School is not responsible for any additional fees that you may incur. Again, it is the employee's responsibility to verify the school's operating status during inclement weather.

If the School must close (or open) outside of Elk River Public Schools (e.g., if the power was out in the School' building), the Administration will make all attempts to report it to news stations, as well as leave status messages on the voicemail and website.

In the event that the school is closed more than three days in a single school year, non-exempt employees will not be paid for these days unless they are made up over holidays or at the end of the school year.



# PART IV: COMMUNICATION POLICIES

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Carefully read this policy, and the School's other policies (including the School's Anti-Harassment/Non Discrimination Policy) and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### School Social Media Accounts

TRM has a Facebook page. Employees are free to join the TRM's Facebook page. As a representative of the school, all employees must receive approval from the Administration before posting, commenting, etc., through these venues.

### Personal Social Media Accounts

The School recognizes that its employees use social media. Be aware that regardless of personal privacy settings or access allowances, social media is public domain and is likely viewable by other individuals and organizations that have not been directly authorized by you. **Posting of photos of TRM'S students or personnel is strictly prohibited.** Any violation of this policy is grounds for immediate dismissal.

Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow employees or otherwise adversely affects students or their families may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false.

In addition, express only your personal opinions. **Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the School.** If the School is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee and make it clear that your views do not represent those of the School, fellow employees, members, or people working on behalf of the School. If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with the School, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of the School.

Finally, refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment the School provides, unless it is work-related as authorized by the Administration consistent with School policy. Do not use School email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.

Additionally,

employees are prohibited from "friending" students and their family members on social media sites like Facebook, as well as social media apps like Instagram, SnapChat, etc. TRM employees are prohibited from using personal devices to text families regarding students.

## **Friend Requests**

Do not initiate or accept social media “friend” requests from current or former students under the age of 18. Also, employees are strongly discouraged from “friending” parents of current or prospective students due to the inherent conflicts of interest that may arise.

## **CONFIDENTIAL TREATMENT OF RECORDS**

The Code of Minnesota requires that all parent and child information be kept confidential. Every employee has signed a confidentiality agreement that requires he or she to keep confidential all information shared with them about children and their families. This includes repeating information with other employees. If information is meant for multiple employees it will be disseminated from the office. Keep private and sensitive information to yourself.

In the event a parent tells you information that you think other employees or the Administration may need to be aware of, ask the parent for permission to disseminate the information. If you feel it is emergency information and the parent is not available to give permission, report it to the Administration. Do not gossip about children and their families. Requests for access to a child’s file should be referred to the Administration.

## **SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

TRM provides employees with various technological devices to assist in the duties of their jobs, e.g., record keeping, parent communication, photography, research, safety and supervision, etc. These devices include, but are not limited to, computers, iPads, cameras, cell phones, etc. The School prohibits using these devices for any purposes other than those for which the School advises and instructs. All employees must use these resources in a professional, ethical, and lawful manner.

School technology is intended for use by employees only. Any use of school technology by a student must be pre-approved by the Administration and supervised by an employee at all times.

Employees have no right to or expectation of privacy concerning their use of the School’s devices. In addition, the School has the right to monitor, inspect, review, or access all forms of information created using the School’s resources (or otherwise transmitted to or through the School’s computers), including e mail and voicemail (even information that has been deleted, erased and/or destroyed). Employees will be required to sign a property agreement form. Employees are responsible for any damaged/stolen technology.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY/RECORDING OF STUDENTS**

Employees of the School are prohibited from taking photographs of children on personal recording / picture taking devices. Pictures and video may only be taken on school devices. Parents provide the School with a release to photograph their child. Employees will be notified of any children who may not be photographed. At times it may be necessary for employees to take pictures of children for educational purposes, e.g., Montessori training. In this case, a special notice will be sent to parents. This will be coordinated through the office.

All School employees are prohibited from using personal devices in any way to record, photograph, engage or communicate with students. Personal devices are prohibited in all classrooms, hallways, and other areas used by students (see Cell Phone Policy) and will be confiscated by the Administration and not returned until the end of the employee's work day.

## Employee Acknowledgment

I have received my copy of the *Employee Handbook*, which outlines the policies, practices, and benefit guidelines of the School. I have read, understand and agree to operate under these policies contained in this handbook. I understand that nothing in this handbook expresses or implies any contract or commitment to employment. Since the information in this handbook is necessarily subject to change as situations warrant, it is understood that changes in the handbook may supersede, revise, or eliminate one or more of the policies in this handbook.

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Employee's Signature

Date

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Name [Please Print]

Date