



Family Handbook

Our Commitment

To create a school atmosphere where every child is physically and emotionally safe and where every classroom is engaging and joyful so that each child can do his/her best learning and growing.

Table Of Contents

Welcome/Mission/Overview.....	Page 1
Calendar.....	Page 2
Parent Engagement	Page 4
Daily Procedures:	
Arrival and Dismissal.....	Page 7
Communication, Conferences and Report Cards.....	Page 8
Extracurricular Activities/Field Trips	Page 9
Food Services	Page 10
“Healthy” Homework Policy	Page 11
Student Rights and Responsibilities	
Attendance Guidelines.....	Page 12
Communication Devices	Page 16
Dress Code	Page 16
Promotion and Retention	Page 17
Technology Usage.	Page 19
Transportation	Page 20
Discipline: An Overview of our Approach	Page 21
Suspension and Expulsion	Page 23
Discipline of Students with Disabilities	Page 30
Appendix.....	Page 32
Bullying Policy	
Crisis Assessment	
Statement of Inclusivity	
FERPA Policy	
FOIA Policy	
Homeless Policy	
Title 1 Rights and Procedures	
Wellness Policy	

Welcome to First State Montessori Academy!

The mission of FSMA is to create successful, contributing, life-long learners in a Montessori public educational program for students in Kindergarten through 8th grade.

FSMA strives to create joyful classrooms that are filled with learning. We respond to individual needs, set individual goals, and give each child an individualized education. We are committed to making this a place where your child loves school, embraces learning, develops strong friendships and learns new ways to think about the world around them.

FSMA provides parents and students with an authentic, time-tested, Montessori education in a public school. We believe that the creation of a Montessori public school in New Castle County, DE will improve student learning, allow for greater choice for parents, and serve as a model for alternative approaches to education by providing a proven and innovative teaching and learning environment.

As a charter school, we are given the flexibility to create our own educational model while also being held to a high level of accountability from the State of Delaware Department of Education. We work closely with other charter and Montessori schools and are committed to being a member of the larger education community. We are also committed to building a community within our classrooms, within our school, and with our families.

First State Montessori Academy 2018 - 2019 School-Wide Calendar

August						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1

8/15– New Teacher In-service

8/22 – First Day for Staff

8/23 – “Meet the Teacher” Night

8/28 – First Day for 1st, 3rd, 5th, 6th, 8th graders

8/29 – First Day for K, 2nd, 4th, 7th graders
(All grades attend)

8/31 – Holiday/School Closed

September						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

9/3 – Holiday/ School Closed

(9/20 – Open House)

October						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

10/5 – No School for Students/ Teacher Inservice

10/8 – No School for Students/Teacher Inservice

(10/24 – “Watch Me Work” Day)

November						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	1

11/1 and 11/2 Parent/Teacher Conferences (No School)

11/12 – Holiday/School Closed

11/19 – 11/23 Holiday/ School Closed

December						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

12/24 – 12/31 Holiday/ School Closed

January						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

1/1 – Holiday/School Closed

1/2 - No School for Students/Teacher Inservice

1/21 – Holiday/ School Closed

February						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

2/15 -No School for Students/Teacher In-service

2/18 and 2/19 - Holiday/School Closed

March						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

(3/12 – “Watch Me Work” Day)

3/20 and 3/21 - Parent/Teacher Conferences (No School)

3/22 – No School for Students/Teacher Inservice

April						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

4/19 – 4/26 Holiday/School Closed

May						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1

5/24 – No School for Students/Teacher Inservice

5/27 – Holiday/ School Closed

June						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22

6/6 – Last Day for Students (1:30 dismissal)

6/11 – Last Day for Teachers

Parent Engagement

***At FSMA, it is more than being INVOLVED,
it is being ENGAGED!***

A note on the term “parent” - We recognize the diversity in family structures and the challenge of coming up with one word that fits all of our unique situations. In using the word “parent,” we are referring to any adult who is the child’s primary caregiver. Our intention is to honor/include all those who devote their time, attention, care and love to raise the children who attend FSMA.

Our **hopes and dreams for parent engagement**.... we ask that you are engaged with our school in a way that is meaningful to you and positively impacts our students. Each family is asked to do what they can –no required number of hours but instead, we ask that you **participate as often as you can** and **contribute when you are able**. Not only does it help our community, you are an extremely powerful model for our students...remember, “the life you lead is the lesson you teach!”

Why? Over 30 years of research shows that one of the most effective ways to increase student social and academic achievement is for parents to be actively involved in the education of their children... in addition, the regular presence of parents in the school can bring a diversity of style and a richness of experience that no teacher alone can provide.

Who to contact for more information about a certain program or to get involved:

FSMA Board of Directors	DaWayne Sims (chair)	Fsma.governance@gmail.com
PTO	Angela Angeny (president)	fsma.pto@gmail.com
English Language Learners	Liz Madden	Liz.madden@fsma.k12.de.us
Title One	Courtney Fox	Courtney.fox@fsma.k12.de.us
Homelessness	Courtney Fox	Courtney.fox@fsma.k12.de.us
Medical Related Services	Liz Madden	Liz.madden@fsma.k12.de.us
Afterschool Clubs	Debbie Wishnow	Debbie.wishnow@fsma.k12.de.us
Enrollment	Sherry DiGiovanni	Sherry.digiovanni@fsma.k12.de.us
Transportation	Courtney Fox	Courtney.fox@fsma.k12.de.us
Food Services and Student Health	Laurie Murray Becky Adeleke	Laurie.murray@fsma.k12.de.us Rebecca.adeleke@fsma.k12.de.u
Special Education	Liz Madden	Liz.madden@fsma.k12.de.us

Parent Engagement Expectations and Opportunities

FSMA is committed to providing a high-quality education utilizing the Montessori Approach in conjunction with the Common Core State Standards for every child. Instruction will be provided in a safe, joyful and engaging learning environment that allows all children to attain personal success and growth in all academic and social areas.

What Can Parents Expect from FSMA to keep them informed and involved about their child's education? Parents are welcome to reach out to teachers and staff at any time. We are here to make sure families have all the information they need about their child. Teachers will respond to parent communication within 48 hours.

Student Performance will be shared in a variety of ways throughout the year:

- Communication formally four times a year – twice through verbal conferences and twice through a written report card (mid-year and end-of-year)
- Weekly newsletters will be sent in all classrooms with individual emails sent as needed
- IEP meetings and 504 meetings held as required
- “Watch Me Work” days twice a year with individual follow up as needed

Parent Engagement Opportunities at FSMA:

PTO Volunteers needed for Fundraising, Parent Engagement and Staff Appreciation
Field Trip Chaperones
Lunch Captains – volunteer to deliver lunches to classrooms
Classroom Volunteers and Mentors
Special Event Helpers – PTO events as well as school-wide events such as Vocabulary Parade, Winter Olympics, Field Day, Art Displays, Tours, etc.
Attend “Branches” meetings (PTO and Board Meetings combined)
Join Parent Engagement Committee

Parent Education Opportunities at FSMA:

Parenting Series – course offered throughout the year
“Watch Me Work” Days
“Coffee and Conversation” – topics vary as needed
Open House – school and teacher presentations
Information Sessions for special programs
Attend “Montessori Moment” portion of “Branches” meetings
Classroom newsletters contain information about Montessori and curriculum
Annual MTAD Parent Seminar held in October

Parent Responsibilities for Supporting Children's Learning:

Attend conferences twice a year and participate in student goal setting/review
Read and review student report cards twice a year
Complete homework activities and student work sent home as needed
Attend Open House
Review Family Handbook for Policies and Procedures
Support students by helping them to be at school on time and ready to learn each day
Choose one way to “give back” to FSMA each year

Visiting FSMA During the School Day

Scheduled visits: If you have scheduled a visit to the school (volunteering in classroom, conference, meeting, etc.) you will need to **sign in** at the main office. Teachers will let the office know you will be coming in during the day. Please be prepared to present your license to the main office in exchange for a visitor tag which will be returned when you return

If you visit the school to work on a special project (ex. PTO meeting, etc.) please ask the person leading the activity/event to leave a list of expected attendees.

Unscheduled visits: If you are stopping by the school unexpectedly, you will need to **sign in** at the main office. Upon signing in, a member of our office staff will **call the person** you are here to visit. If it is an unexpected visit, you will need to be **met in the lobby** by the person you are here to see. You may need to wait until this person is available. If you are dropping something off for someone in the building, the office staff will let that person know and they will come down to pick it up at their earliest convenience.

Volunteering at FSMA – Policies

Volunteers play an important role in the success of our students. It is FSMA's policy that all volunteers be screened before volunteering. If you plan to volunteer at any time during the school year, please complete the appropriate forms (listed below and available on our website). The forms authorize the school to complete a thorough background screening of prospective volunteers. Please understand this process is for the safety and protection of all students and staff while on school grounds and school sponsored field trips.

This applies to all school activities during the school day... the only exception is for when parents or adults are visiting the school as an audience member for a classroom or school presentation/event/birth and life celebration.

Required Forms for Volunteers:

- Volunteer Enrollment and Disclosure Form
- DOE Tuberculosis Health Questionnaire
- Delaware Child Protection Registry Request Form

*If you have a current (within 2 years) Fingerprint and Criminal Background Check on file with FSMA, you only need to submit the Tuberculosis Health Questionnaire

Forms must be turned into the FSMA office and processed prior to volunteering. All forms will be treated and stored confidentially by FSMA staff and the FSMA Board of Directors. Please allow at least 30 days for us to submit and process your forms. Some of these forms are submitted to outside agencies volunteering will not be allowed until forms are processed.

Additional Information:

For field trips that require personal, unsupervised contact and/or extend beyond the school day, a Fingerprint and Criminal Background Check will be required.



Daily Procedures

An Overview of the Important Things to Know about the Daily Operations

Daily Procedures: Arrival

FSMA opens for students at 8:10 a.m.

Car Drop-Off begins at 8:10 a.m. If you are driving to FSMA to drop off your child, you will pull up in the front of the school that your child attends, in the designated “Car Drop-Off Area.” (If you have children in both schools, you can drop off at the Lower School and they will be escorted to the Upper School). Staff members will be out front to meet your child. Please stay in your car and wait for an adult to meet you (children should be capable of unbuckling their own seatbelt so you do not have to get out of the car). This is a drop off location only, **if you need to get out of the car or come into the building, please park and walk with your child.**

Bus Drop-Off: Students will be dropped off in the front of the Lower School. Buses will be met by an FSMA staff member. If a child needs to go to the Upper School, they will be escorted across.

Any students not in the building by 8:30 a.m. will need to be escorted into the building by an adult and signed in. Children arriving after 8:30 a.m. are considered tardy.

Daily Procedures: Dismissal

Dismissal begins at 3:15

FSMA dismisses over 500 children each day and conducts multiple checks to ensure everyone gets home safely. Because of our triple check system, minimal dismissal changes is extremely helpful. In addition, *dismissal changes must be submitted in writing and only emergency changes should be called in during the school day. (Please do not email teachers dismissal changes as they are not always able to check email during the school day).*

Dismissal Changes: If you know your child is going home a different way than usual, please put it in writing and your child should drop it off at the office on his/her way in or give it to their his/her teacher. You can also call or email the main office – dismissal@fsma.k12.de.us **before 10:00 a.m.**

Emergency Dismissal Changes: If something comes up during the school day, please call or email the main office – dismissals@fsma.k12.de.us. We ask that all emergency dismissal changes be called in as early as possible and always **before 12:00 p.m.**

Bus riders are walked to their buses by a staff member and checked in to ensure they are on the correct bus.

Parent Pick-Up “Walker” Procedures:

If you work nearby or would like to park and pick up your child as your regular routine, you will need to bring your *Walker Pick-Up Tag* to the side door (on the left at 1000, on the right at 920). There will be a staff member waiting with our “walkers.” You will need to show your tag for the child to be released. If you do not have your tag, you will be asked to go to the office and bring valid identification so that we can verify you are on the “Student Dismissal List.” If you have children in the Lower and Upper School, you will need to pick up each child at their building.

Daily Procedures: Conferences and Report Cards

FSMA believes that a partnership with families includes clear and ongoing communication. It is a critical belief at FSMA that families have a clear understanding of their child’s academic and social skills as well as an understanding of general classroom curriculum and procedures. The plan for communicating with families will be designed by individual classrooms and will include:

Scheduled Conference Days – Throughout the year, families will meet with teachers twice in order to learn about their child’s performance, social and academic goals, classroom procedures, etc. Conferences will be scheduled for all students in both the fall and spring.

Report Cards – Families will receive a standards-based mid-year report and an end-of-year report. These report cards will include student growth toward the Common Core State Standards as well as characteristics of Lifelong Learners.

Promotion and Retention information can be found on page 15 in the Student Rights and Responsibilities section of this handbook.

Daily Procedures: Extracurricular Activities/Field Trips

FSMA believes in creating many opportunities for children outside of the classroom. Throughout the school year, children will be given opportunities inside and outside of the school to enhance their learning. Many of these will have a fee associated with them and we will work with families to make these opportunities accessible and want to make sure all children have access to afterschool activities, field trips, and special programs.

Field Trips: Permissions slips must be turned in at least one day prior to the field trip. Children are required to travel with the class to and from the field trip unless special arrangements have been made and approved by the Head of School. If a child is ordering a bagged lunch to be provided by the school, the order must be placed at least one week prior to the field trip.

*FSMA is offering a one-time permission slip that will allow your child to attend all on-site and off-site activities that occur within the school day (trips that extend beyond the school day will require a specific permission slip).

Extracurricular Activities: FSMA offers a variety of opportunities outside of the school day through clubs and sports. When participating, all children must display appropriate behavior or participation may be discontinued.

The Student Rights and Responsibilities are applicable to all field trips and school sponsored activities. FSMA may request a parent/guardian accompany a student to ensure a positive experience for everyone.

FSMA's nut-free policy is in effect for all school sponsored activities (on-site and off-site)

Daily Procedure: Food Services

Please note that FSMA is a “nut free” school. This is a school-wide expectation and one that we take very seriously. We understand that it can be an inconvenience, but for the safety of all of our students we ask that you do not send any nut products to school. Our school nurse or your child's teacher can suggest snacks for classroom events if needed.

Lunches brought from home should be nutritious and well-balanced. Students may not bring candy or caffeinated beverages to school. Lunches should be brought in an insulated bag/box with an ice pack as students do not always have access to a refrigerator. A microwave is available for use but limited time is available so please only bring in items with a short heat-up time.

Each month, you will receive a form to fill out to order breakfast and lunch. You will choose between and hot and cold option. By ordering, you are also committing to pay for the meals at the price you qualify for (free, reduced, full price).

School meals are brought in from a nearby School Food Authority. We ensure that all meals are not only appealing to children, but also meet the national guidelines.

To pay for breakfast and lunch meals, visit www.k12paymentcenter.com.

If you already have an account, simply log in with your username and password. To register a new account, you will need each student's ID number. You may obtain this number from your classroom teachers or by calling our main office (302-576-1500).

Unpaid Meal Policy: FSMA may stop meal ordering services for children (who do not qualify for free/reduced rates), when a balance is over \$25.00. In addition, FSMA may withhold report cards (in the middle of the year and at the end of the year), until a payment plan is created to resolve any unpaid balances accrued over time. FSMA will work with individual families to create a plan that works for everyone.

Daily Procedure: “Healthy” Homework Policy

Every family comes with different ideas about homework and what they would like to see for their child. We encourage families to supplement as needed and communicate with teachers to make adaptations. The goal is for homework to be a positive experience for all.

Do Montessori children benefit from homework? Yes, Montessori children benefit from homework but it is different from traditional school homework. We accept the research that suggests that traditional homework does not increase student learning, nor does it increase student motivation. However, our goal in Montessori is to inspire in children a sense of purpose in their lives. This is not traditional homework. We want students to pursue things that interest them -seeking information, skills, and insights on their own to build their knowledge. Montessori homework includes opportunities to read and write. Reading is usually established as a suggested time to set aside for reading whatever children find interesting, and writing might be in a journal or freely chosen creative or expository writing. Also, Montessori's goal is to prepare students for life... so homework may include practical opportunities to develop life-long skills.

Homework is not meant to take hours out of a family's time together. We recognize that children lead busy lives. Family time is important and we strive to create a balance that allows families enough time to engage in valuable interaction and activities and not feel burdened by excessive homework demands.

Important to Note: Because not all children are at the same place in their learning and their readiness for independent work, homework may look different for different children... if we accept that children's work at school should be individualized, and that homework should be an extension of schoolwork, then we need to individualize homework, too. Also, sometimes a child do the “practice” part of a lesson at home helps to solidify concepts that would allow them to move on in their learning to a new lesson in school.

Our Procedures:

1. In the first weeks of school, before any homework is assigned, we will talk with children about homework (how they feel about it, what they need to do it successfully, etc.)
2. Classrooms brainstorm effective ways of managing homework
3. Staff will share with parents the homework policy and expectations about homework philosophy and procedures
4. Continued conversations with parents and children to make this a positive experience for all

What types of things can you expect?

- Daily reading activities
- Writing prompts or journal activities related to areas of interest or areas of classroom studies including playwriting, letter writing, interviewing and biography writing, book reviews, directions for a game, etc.
- Projects such as creating a model, creating a piece of art, doing experiments, developing materials, preparing a timeline, etc.
- Games and activities that involve the whole family
- Practical life activities such as planning and preparing a meal, teaching someone a trick, planting a tree, performing an act of kindness, participating in organizing or clean-up of a household area, help with a garage sale or lemonade stand, etc.

Summer Homework: Each grade level will determine the expectations for summer practice activities to keep skills sharp and help children maintain the progress they made during the school year.

Typical activities include reading, math practice and practical life suggestions. These activities are presented in a fun way with lots of flexibility to allow children to find ways that are meaningful to them to prevent summer learning loss.



Student Rights and Responsibilities

***Policies and Procedures
that Students and Families Need to Be Aware of and Follow***

ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

Forming responsible habits regarding attendance and promptness is important. Parents are expected to support the goal of punctuality by having their children arrive on time, remain in school for a full day, and schedule appointments after school hours.

MINIMUM ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS: As per Title 14, Chapter 4, a violation of the attendance requirements set forth by FSMA may result in dismissal at the end of the school year. FSMA's attendance requirements are:

- Attendance for 85% of the school year

- No more than 12 unexcused latenesses or early dismissals

§ 407 Duration of enrollment in receiving district. (a)(1) A pupil accepted for enrollment in a school or program pursuant to this chapter shall be entitled to remain enrolled therein until graduation from the school or completion of the program provided that the pupil continues to meet the requirements for such school or program, provided however, that upon the concurrence of the boards of both the district of residence and the receiving district, a pupil's right to remain enrolled may be terminated prior to graduation from or completion of the program where such termination is based upon the pupil's:

- a. Failure to continue to comply with the receiving district's requirements for attending school or class, or
- b. Multiple violations of, or one or more serious violations of, the receiving district's student code of conduct.

Maximum number of absences permitted in a school year: 25 absences

Note: Excused absences are included in the maximum number of absences permitted to meet the Delaware Department of Education's requirement of attendance for 85% of instructional time to qualify for promotion to the next grade level.

EXCUSED ABSENCE: An excused absence is for one of the following reasons listed below and for which the required documentation (see above) has been submitted:

1. Illness of child
2. Scheduled appointments to a physical or mental healthcare provider, including, but not limited to, a physician, dentist, orthodontist, and psychologist
3. Contagious diseases within the home of a student subject to regulations of the Division of Public Health and Department of Health and Social Services
4. Death in the family or of a close friend
5. Legal business requiring the student's presence
6. Observance of religious holidays
7. Medical diagnosis and/or treatment
8. Absence, pre-approved by the administration, to participate in other educational experiences or authorized school activities
9. Emergency situations as determined by the Head of School
10. Suspension or expulsion from school

DOCUMENTATION OF ABSENCE: When a student is absent, upon his/her return to school and **no later than the fifth school day**, a parental written note of explanation must be presented to the office in order for the absence to be excused. All written notes must have a parent signature. If a student has been to see a doctor, the student should return with a note from the doctor's office. Written notes may be faxed or e-mailed to the office with a scanned signature. A student's absence will be marked as unexcused until the parental note is submitted.

When absent, a student may not participate in any school activities that day. These include games, plays, or anything that is school sponsored. In addition, a student who is absent is not permitted to be on school property, except to acquire missed academic assignments.

PREARRANGED ABSENCE: A request for a prearranged absence should be submitted in writing to the Head of School, giving the full particulars of the absence. Approval for such absences should be sought, where practicable, at least two (2) weeks prior to the date on which the absence is to occur. In some cases, there will be the development of a plan by student and teacher for making up the assignments to be missed. The Head of School will determine if the absence as excused. Prearranged absences will not be approved during the state assessment periods.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE: An unexcused absence from school or class is an absence that cannot be explained by any of the reasons listed above and is not otherwise approved.

LEAVING SCHOOL: First State Montessori Academy is a closed campus. Students are not permitted to leave campus during school without parent permission and administrative approval. The “campus” refers to the school building, and outside areas utilized regularly during recess and physical education. Students arriving by bus, or other means of transportation are to proceed directly to the school. Students may travel between the two buildings but must be accompanied by a staff member.

TARDINESS AND EARLY DISMISSAL: All students are expected to be punctual to school. Classrooms open at 8:10 a.m. and students are expected to be in the classroom by 8:30 a.m. and remain until the end of the school day at 3:15 p.m. If a student arrives after 8:30 a.m., they are tardy. For safety reasons and accountability, a parent/guardian must accompany a tardy child into school and sign the child in at the main office. Reasons such as personal illness, medical appointments, and appearances in court will be considered as excused tardiness when verified by a note. Late arrivals are closely monitored by the student's teacher and the Head of School. Parents or Guardians will be contacted to discuss the student's tardiness. Families should recognize that a written explanation from home does not automatically cause the tardiness to be excused. Such reasons as car trouble, personal business, heavy traffic, home obligations, etc., while understandable, are not acceptable excuses and will be listed as unexcused.

Instructional time is lost when a student misses any portion of the academic day. After 5 unexcused late arrivals or early dismissals, a letter will be sent home. A conference with the administration may be requested after 10 or more unexcused later arrivals or early dismissals. When a student accumulates any combination of 12 unexcused late arrivals and/or unexcused early dismissals, a meeting with the Head of School will be required. *The Governing Board may recommend that the student not be invited to return to First State Montessori Academy for the following academic year.*

Compulsory Attendance Requirements

The following are mandatory school attendance requirements for public school students in grades K-12 (Delaware Code). These requirements apply at First State Montessori Academy:

1. Following the 10th day of an unexcused absence, the school shall immediately notify the parent(s)/guardian(s), and a visiting teacher from the school may visit the student's home.
2. Following the 15th day of an unexcused absence, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified by certified mail to appear at the school within ten days of notification for a conference and counseling.
3. Following the 20th day of an unexcused absence, the school shall refer the case for prosecution at Magistrate Court.
4. Following the completion of prosecution of the case, and the subsequent failure of the student to return to school within five school days thereof, the school shall immediately notify the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families requesting intervention services by the Department. The Department shall contact the family within ten (10) business days.

COMMUNICATION DEVICES

“AWAY ALL DAY” Policy:

Communication devices such as, but not limited to, cellular phones may not be used at school, on field trips, and/or on the school bus without permission of an FSMA staff member. Devices brought to school must be silenced and **kept in backpacks or lockers**. On the first offense, the device will be confiscated, and it will be returned to student at the conclusion of the school day. Subsequent violations will result in confiscation of device, which will only be returned to the student’s parent or guardian. First State Montessori Academy is not responsible for lost, stolen and/or damaged property. Parents/Guardians should be aware that it is not the school’s responsibility to go to extraordinary effort to locate lost or stolen communication devices.

Students in Possession of Other Distracting Devices

Students are prohibited from bringing to school any electronic devices, including portable stereos, iPods, iPads, laser pens, laser pointers, toys, or any other items that are inappropriate or distracting to the educational atmosphere. If a device is being used for an educational activity such as a presentation, pre-approval should be sought from the school administration prior to the device being brought to school. Violating this policy will have the item confiscated, and it will be turned over to the Head of School who may return the item/s to the student or parent at a later date. Subsequent violations may result in parental contact, and/or additional serious consequences.

DRESS CODE

The FSMA dress code is established to help ensure an atmosphere conducive to learning. Wearing inappropriate dress to school can have a negative influence on the educational process and the educational climate of the school. Each student, with the advice and counsel of his or her parents or guardian, should dress in a manner which is appropriate for the school and its related activities.

The following are guidelines for determining whether or not a student’s attire is appropriate:

- The student’s dress, apparel, ornament (jewelry), or grooming is not detrimental to the health and safety of the student or other students.
- The student’s dress, apparel, ornament, or grooming is free from words or pictures, which contain vulgar or offensive writing, racial slurs, suggestive pictures or emblems.
- Shoes must stay securely on student’s feet (for safety reasons). Flip-flops, and other backless shoes are not permitted unless a clear exception is made for a special seasonally appropriate event. Sneakers must be worn on gym day.

All clothing is to be worn appropriately and in the manner for which it was designed. Likewise, clothing should be seasonally appropriate for the safety and welfare of students. General Dress Code rules that apply include the following:

- Outer clothing which resembles loungewear, pajamas, or underwear is prohibited.
- See-through/ mesh clothing is prohibited
- Proper underclothing, which insures modesty, is required.
- Shoes must be worn at all times—sneakers on the days students have physical education
- Clothing that is too tight, so as to be immodest, is prohibited
- Clothing which has holes cut or torn, which may expose the seat or parts of the body unique to the male or female, is prohibited/ in addition armholes cannot be so large that undergarments can be seen
- Torso must be covered – no bare midriff
- Halter tops, backless blouses, strapless blouses and dresses, spaghetti straps and short-shorts are prohibited
 - Tank tops must have at least 1 inch straps
 - Shorts and skirts must cover to 3 inches above the knee
- Hats and hoods are not permitted to be worn in the classroom, exceptions can be made for religious purposes.

Students who are found to be in violation of the dress code are subject to disciplinary action. The Head of School's actions may include:

- Counseling/warning the student
- Calling parents to bring a change of clothes
- Having the child change into school provided clothes (if available)
- Placing the student in in-school suspension for the remainder of the day
- Recommending suspension (for flagrant or repeated violations)

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

In order for a student to be promoted from one grade to the next the student must:

- a) Successfully complete requirements as determined by teacher assessment of student performance, on instructional outcomes, and on the judgment of the teacher(s) in consultation with the Education Director.
- b) Receive a passing grade in grade level Reading/ English Language Arts & Mathematics and/or any course required by the Board or the Department of Education for the particular grade level. Grade level is defined by state performance indicators in English Language Arts and Mathematics.
- c) Receive instruction for at least 85% of the time established by the School Calendar in a given school year. For any student who receives instruction for less than 85% of the time established by the School Calendar in any given school year, the Education Director must review indicators of academic success to determine whether the student should be

retained one school year. Instruction can be in a regular or alternative school or by homebound instruction provided by FSMA.

d) Except for students receiving special education under Title 14 of the Delaware Code, Chapter 31, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (the “IDEIA”), the Education Director will make the decision to retain or promote the student based upon the requirements set forth above. For students receiving special education under Chapter 31 and the IDEIA, promotion and retention decisions shall be made by an IEP team.

Specific Requirements for Promotion

Elementary School: Grades K-6 Promotion decision shall be based upon performance recorded on the standards-based report card and with input from the student’s teacher(s) and parent(s) in consultation with the building principal, if necessary.

Middle School - 7th and 8th Graders must take the following each year:

- 1 /English Language Arts
- 1 Math
- 1 Science
- 1 Social Studies
- 3-6 additional courses depending on full year courses or semester courses

FSMA may establish requirements over and above the minimum number of credits required by the State Department of Education

Failure to Meet Promotion Requirements:

If a student fails to meet promotion requirements at any grade level, Administrative Assignments may be made, as determined by state or federal law or regulations, for:

- a) LEP students whose progress is impeded by a language barrier
- b) Students receiving special education services under Chapter 31 of the Delaware Code
- c) Students who have already been retained for 2 years for academic reasons.

Appeals

Parents have the right to appeal the Education Director’s decision on the promotion of their children. Appeals should be made in writing to the Head of School, with a copy of the appeal made to the Education Director. A copy of the placement/Retention Appeal Form is available. The Head of School shall establish procedures consistent with this policy and state law and regulations to process promotion and or retention decisions.

TECHNOLOGY

FSMA's internet is filtered through the State of Delaware's firewall, which blocks inappropriate sites from being viewed. While FSMA employs these safeguards, it is not guaranteed that students cannot find their way around a filter. In order for a student to utilize technology and internet access, students and parents/guardians must agree to the following guidelines:

1. Students must receive permission from the teacher before each use of technology including internet access.
2. The use of hardware, software and internet access is a student privilege that may be revoked by the FSMA staff at any time for misuse. Such conduct would include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Using technology to harass, bully, or hurt someone
 - b. Using the account for commercial purposes
 - c. Seeking unauthorized access, damage, misuse of files, data or information of any user
 - d. Sharing or compromising personal or other user's account information
 - e. Damaging FSMA hardware or software through the use of food, drink, or other methods
 - f. Placing unlawful or damaging information on the system
 - g. Using or accessing obscene, abusive or otherwise objectionable public or private messages or websites
 - h. Downloading or installing unauthorized software
 - i. Accessing social network pages (i.e. Facebook)
 - j. Copying others work or breaking copyright laws
3. The FSMA staff has the authority to monitor any students' activities through the use of computers, telephones, or tablets including any use of home e-mail accounts on school computers. FSMA reserves the right to examine any items stored in files to which students have access.
4. All activity on a school account or using school technology associates the transmission with First State Montessori Academy. Therefore, the account should not be used in any way that would reflect poorly on the school, its educators, or its students.
5. First State Montessori Academy and its employees are not responsible for the content or language of any information obtained through the internet. Additionally, you release First State Montessori Academy and its employees from any and all claims of any nature that might result from your child's use, or inability to use, First State Montessori Academy technology.
6. Students are expected to immediately report any abuses they might notice to FSMA staff.

TRANSPORTATION

BUS TRANSPORTATION:

First State Montessori Academy contracts bus service for its students. The bus is an extension of the school day. The Family Handbook remains in effect anytime a student is on a school bus (including the bus to and from school, aftercare bus, field trip buses, etc.). Riding the school bus is a privilege for each student. If the following rules and regulations are not followed, the student may no longer be given the opportunity to ride the bus. If the privilege to ride the bus is suspended or revoked, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be responsible for transporting their child to and from school. While riding the bus, students are to adhere to the following rules:

- The bus driver is in charge of the bus and students are expected to follow all instructions given by the driver.
- Students must remain properly seated at all times (back to back; bottom to bottom), keep voice volume low, and keep hands and arms inside the windows.
- Students are to keep their hands and feet to themselves (no fighting, horseplay, etc.).
- Students may engage in ordinary conversations in a normal tone, however, the driver has the authority to prohibit any conversation.
- Students are to conduct themselves on the bus in such a way that will not distract the driver. (Distracting the driver puts everyone on the bus at risk. Students who do not follow the reasonable requests of the bus driver jeopardize their riding privileges.)
- Students are not to eat or drink while on the bus.
- Students are not to throw objects of any kind inside, outside, or around the bus.
- Students should keep the bus clean, sanitary, and orderly. They must not damage or abuse bus seats or equipment.
- Students are not to use abusive language or profanity, obscene or rude gestures, or spit while on the bus.
- Students are not to leave the bus without the driver's permission, except on arrival at their assigned bus stop or at school.

Minor bus misbehaviors will result in a warning and parent contact. Subsequent minor bus misbehaviors will result in suspension of bus riding privileges for a period of time determined by the administration and the bus company. **Third offenses for bus infractions may result in permanent revocation of bus riding privileges.** Any major disruptive behavior such as fighting, vandalism, etc. will result in immediate suspension of riding privileges for a period of time determined by the School Leadership Team and could result in permanent revocation of riding privileges and other consequences.

An Overview of our Approach to Discipline

The successful operation of a school requires the cooperation of many people. By enrolling at First State Montessori Academy, we expect that our students, their families, and staff will abide by our philosophy and policies. The guidelines provided apply to all students in the school and are applied in a developmentally appropriate manner. First State Montessori Academy will abide by all state and federal regulations related to behavior issues and regulations will pertain to all special education students. Due process will always be followed in the event that the discipline situation is related to the disability. It is expected that the guidelines articulated in this document will be followed at all times on school property, while on field trips, and other school sponsored events, and when riding the bus to and from school.

FSMA's goals in discipline are to:

- Establish a calm, orderly, safe environment for learning
- Foster an appreciation for the roles of rules in school
- Help children develop self-control and self-discipline
- Teach children to be responsible, contributing members of our school community
- Promote respectful, kind, and healthy teacher-student and student-student interactions

Based on the **Responsive Classroom Approach**, discipline at First State Montessori Academy is viewed as an aid to learning responsible, social behaviors and is not considered a punishment. Our approach does not rely on punishment or rewards to "get students to behave" but instead offers clear expectations for behavior, actively models and teaches behaviors to children, and provides opportunities for children to practice and internalize the rules and expectations. Children are always treated with respect in a pleasant, non-competitive, and purposeful environment. Corporal punishment and humiliation (intimidation, mental mistreatment or embarrassment) are not allowed under any circumstance. When students break rules, teachers incorporate natural and logical consequences to help students learn from their mistakes. Teachers also incorporate other strategies for resolving problems such as class meetings, problem-solving meetings, and positive time out.

Maria **Montessori** initially discovered that children involved in deep, uninterrupted concentration did not disrupt or misbehave. In Montessori terms this is called "normalization" and is a natural and predictable result of training students in self-regulation and attention. Research shows that children who have the capacity for self-regulation decrease their negative attention getting behaviors. First State Montessori Academy uses activities with the aim of helping children develop self-control, understand what socially responsible behavior is and learn the value of such behavior.

Responding to Misbehavior

First State Montessori Academy recognizes that even with our best attempts at being proactive in our teaching of discipline, children will still make mistakes, test the limits, and misbehave.

When responding to misbehavior, our goal is to:

- Maintain safety and order
- Help students recognize and fix their mistakes
- Help students develop internal control of their behavior

Protocol for responding to misbehavior:

(This is not a step by step process but rather, choosing which protocol will best address the issue)

- Address the misbehavior when it starts (reminding or redirecting language, nonverbal signal, move closer to the child)
- Use a non-punitive consequence (reparation, increase structure and supervision, move the child, take away object, narrow the choices, take a privilege or responsibility away, positive time-out, buddy teacher time-out)
- Provide more intensive supports if needed (re-teaching, role-playing, feedback, simplify procedures, increase teacher role, collaborative problem solving through meeting or conference.
- Have the child leave the room or school for an extended period of time (extended time out in another classroom or space – in school suspension or sending the child home – at home suspension)
- Consultation with administration/school resource team for situation analysis and recommendation

Students who are making it unsafe for others, physically or emotionally, will immediately be removed from the classroom.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

FSMA feels it is very important for families to understand what types of activities could result in suspension or expulsion. A family always has the right to appeal a decision. An appeal should be submitted in writing within 48 hours of the suspension and will be reviewed. A determination will be made and if the suspension has already occurred and the appeal determines that the offense should not have resulted in a suspension, the absence will be counted as an excused absence and the student's records will be updated to remove the suspension.

FSMA believes that some behaviors require a break from school in order for a child to regroup and be ready to re-enter the classroom appropriately. Suspension is not meant to be a punishment but rather an opportunity for reflection and plan-making to re-engage appropriately at school.

Suspension can be designated as in-school or out-of-school.

In-School Suspension: Students will remain in the building but will be in a designated, supervised area. Students assigned to in-school suspension are not permitted to participate in any extracurricular activities during the length of their suspension.

Out-of-School Suspension: Students must remain out of school, off of school property during the length of their suspension. It is the parent/guardians responsibility to arrange for their care. Students assigned to out-of-school suspension are not permitted to participate in any extracurricular activities during the length of their suspension.

DISCIPLINE REVIEW BOARD

The Discipline Review Board convenes with parents/guardians and the student, whenever a Level 3 offense has been or may have been committed by the student or when referred by the administration for repeated classroom misbehavior and/or violations of school regulations. A serious offense is one that can result in a dismissal. A student is suspended from school from the date of administrative action until the date of the Discipline Review Board determination meeting. The Discipline Review Board evaluates the facts, reviews the student's cumulative performance, and recommends specific action to the Head of School.

Any expulsion action taken by the Head of School may be appealed to the school's Board of Directors. While an appeal is pending, the Head of School's expulsion action is not considered to be final. However, the student will remain suspended until the final determination of an appeal. The appeal must be made in writing to the Head of School within five business days of the hearing. It must include the grounds for the appeal. Within one week, a committee of no less than three members of the Board, selected by the Chairman of the Board, will meet with the parents, student, and school officials. After the hearing, the committee, by majority vote, will determine whether or not to affirm the dismissal.

In addition to any action taken by school officials, the school will comply with the notification requirements of House Bill 322 that includes notification of police.

Level 1, 2 and 3 Offenses and the Required Action Associated with Each Offense.

FSMA recognizes that clear and consistent consequences are important. We balance this with the need to look at each case individually and determine the best course of action to help the situation improve.

We recognize that consequences and required action are just one piece. Suspension does not help a child learn the necessary skills to make a better choice in the future however, sometimes students need time away from a situation in order to move forward. Suspensions give children a break from the environment or situation and allow them to regroup and re-enter with a plan for changing the behavior or making reparation.

In addition, please note that off-campus, non-school activity conduct which shows disregard for health, safety, and welfare of others including, but not limited to, violence, weapons, and drug offenses may subject a student to disciplinary action as indicated below.

Level 1 Offenses	<p>Inappropriate Language – any profane or derogatory, disrespectful comments</p> <p>Disruptive Behavior – language, gestures, or actions that produce distractions and disturb the effective functioning of the teacher, another student, a class or a school activity</p> <p>Defiance – refusal to comply with a reasonable request from school personnel</p> <p>Arguments – when two or more children engage in negative problem-solving even when redirected by a staff member. (Physical altercations are Level 2 +)</p>	<p>Required action: <i>First Offense:</i> Teacher/student conference</p> <p><i>Second Offense:</i> Administration/student conference Parent/guardian notification</p> <p><i>Subsequent Offenses:</i> Removal from the classroom for a period of time / Suspension</p>
------------------	---	---

Level 2 Offenses	<p>Major Disruption - language, gestures or actions that disturb the class or a school activity and negatively impact the educational atmosphere</p> <p>Bullying or Cyberbullying – defined in subsequent sections</p> <p>Loitering - Unauthorized presence in any school area</p> <p>Abusive Language – written or spoken gestures that are considered offensive, obscene or vulgar</p> <p>Repeated misconduct and/or continual disregard of school regulations – intentional or unintentional behavior that may cause injury or damage</p> <p>Cheating/Plagiarism – copying, unauthorized use of materials during a test, presenting someone else’s work as your own</p> <p>Substantial Defiance – refusal to comply with a reasonable request from school personnel including a verbal or non-verbal display of disrespect that causes a substantial disruption</p> <p>Forgery – falsely signing or altering a document</p> <p>Tobacco related offenses - Smoking in the building or on school grounds / Possession or use of tobacco and tobacco related products</p> <p>Misuse of Technology – any violation of computer use policy</p> <p>Threats – when a person makes a statement of intent to do harm to a person or object whether able to follow through or not</p> <p>Offensive Touching – when a student uses their body or an object to harm another person (student or staff) intentionally or with force</p> <p>Defamatory or demeaning actions – actions or statements made with the intent to harass, annoy or alarm another person</p> <p>Stealing – taking something that belongs to another student/person</p> <p>Vandalism – destruction of property</p>	<p>Required action: <i>First Offense:</i> Administration/student conference Parent/guardian notification</p> <p><i>Subsequent Offenses:</i> Removal from the classroom for a period of time/ remainder of the school day Suspension (1 – 3 days)</p>
------------------	---	--

Level 3 Offenses	<p>Drugs - Any involvement with drugs or alcohol at school or at a school-sponsored activity</p> <p>Weapons - Any possession of a weapon at school or at a school-sponsored activity</p> <p>Lighters - Bringing any kind of lighter to school, or starting a fire</p> <p>Offensive Touching – multiple assaults</p> <p>Harassment (physical, sexual, or verbal harassment)</p> <p>Stealing (depending on circumstances; severe cases included items over \$100 and property of a staff member)</p> <p>Destruction of School Property – (see School and Personal Property)</p> <p>Fighting (depending on the circumstances)</p> <p>Terroristic threatening - when a person makes a threat knowing that the statements may cause serious inconvenience or evacuation</p> <p>False Alarm - Turning in a false alarm</p> <p>Vandalism – permanent or substantial damage</p>	<p>Required action: Suspension</p> <p>These violations are dismissable offenses. They will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the Discipline Review Board but may likely result in dismissal from FSMA as per Title 14, Chapter 4 § 407</p>
------------------	--	--

In addition, the Gun Free Schools Act (GFSA) prohibits firearms on school property. Violation of the GFSA will result in mandatory expulsion.

Further Clarifications/Definitions related to FSMA's Offenses/Violations:

BULLYING - Bullying refers to any intentional violent or hostile acts or actions through written, electronic, verbal, or physical means against another student, school employee, or school volunteer. Violent or hostile acts or actions include: placing a student, employee, or volunteer in reasonable fear of substantial harm to his/her emotional or physical well-being or substantial damage to his/her property; creating a hostile, threatening, humiliating, or abusive environment due to the pervasiveness or persistence of actions or due to a power differential between the bully and the target or; interfering with a student having a safe school environment that is necessary to facilitate educational performance, opportunities or benefits; or perpetuating bullying or inciting, soliciting, or coercing an individual or group to demean, dehumanize, embarrass, or cause emotional psychological or physical harm to another student, school employee, or school volunteer. According to Delaware state law and Department of Education regulations, when a situation rises to **actual bullying** it must reported to the appropriate authorities.

CYBER BULLYING: Neither the school's network nor the broader internet (whether accessed on campus or off campus, either during or after school hours) may be used for the purpose of harassment or demeaning and inappropriate interactions of any kind. All forms of harassment in cyberspace, often called cyber bullying, are unacceptable. Cyber bullying includes, but is not limited to, the following misuses of technology: harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another person by sending or posting inappropriate and hurtful e-mail messages, instant messages (including text messages), or web site postings (including blogs). Often the author (sender or poster) of the inappropriate material is disguised (logged on) as someone else. Students who feel that they have been the victims of such misuses of technology should not erase the offending material from the system. They should print a copy of the material and immediately report the incident to the Head of School. All reports of harassment in Cyberspace will be investigated fully.

DRUGS - A drug shall mean any controlled substance or counterfeit substance including narcotic drugs such as heroin or cocaine, amphetamines, anabolic steroids, and marijuana, and shall include any prescription substances that has been given to or prescribed for a person other than the student in whose possession it is found. ***Drug-like substances are*** any non-controlled or non-prescription substances capable of producing a change in behavior or altering a state of mind or feeling - some over the counter cough medicines, certain types of glue, caffeine pills, and diet pills all count as drug-like substances. This definition does not include tobacco or tobacco products; tobacco products have their own definition. ***Drug Paraphernalia*** means includes all equipment, products and materials such as roach clips, miniature cocaine spoons and containers for packaging drugs. Use, possession, or distribution of drugs, look-alike substances, and/or drug paraphernalia at First State Montessori Academy is absolutely forbidden.

FALSE ALARMS/STARTING FIRES – If a student turns in a false alarm or maliciously pulls a fire alarm, the student will be immediately suspended and reported to the police and to the proper fire authorities. If a student starts a fire or is in possession of a lighting device (matches, lighter, etc.) in any part of the school building, grounds, or school bus, the student will be immediately suspended and reported to the police and to the proper fire authorities.

FIGHTING - Fighting shall mean any violent and aggressive physical altercation between two or more individuals. Fighting in school will result in both parties being sent to the Head of School's office. During this time, the administration will attempt to ascertain who was at fault and will contact the parents of the involved parties. If the fault can be determined, further action could result. In addition, depending on the severity of the fight, a longer suspension period, parental contact, and police contact may result. Referral to a police agency may be required for students who intentionally, aggressively touch a staff member who is attempting to break up a fight or who is attempting to keep a student from injuring him/herself or others. Recommendation for expulsion may be considered.

MISUSE OF TECHNOLOGY - Misuse of technology means soliciting, using, or sending pornographic or obscene material, accessing unauthorized email, downloading and/or installing files with or without malicious intent, and/or damaging equipment within the school environment. Misuse of technology (severe clause) shall mean situations in which a student (or students) deliberately tampers with, damages, alters, accesses, crashes, or corrupts the computer/communications system within the school environment resulting in the loss or corruption of information, the ability of the system to operate, or the disruption or degradation of the school's technological infrastructure. Computer-related activities and equipment are to be used exclusively in support of educational activities and objectives. First State Montessori Academy does not support or tolerate any damage, misuse, vandalism, or modification of its hardware and/or software configurations by students. All students and parents will be required to sign an Acceptable Use Policy.

POSSESSION OF A FIREARM* OR WEAPON/DANGEROUS INSTRUMENT OR LOOK ALIKE WEAPON/DANGEROUS INSTRUMENT - Possession of a firearm, weapon/dangerous instrument or object designed or intended to look like a firearm or weapon/dangerous instrument, and/or conspiring to conceal or hide a firearm or weapon/dangerous instrument is absolutely forbidden and punishable by law. A firearm or lookalike firearm is defined as any instrument from which a shot may be or is meant to be discharged. A weapon/dangerous instrument includes a knife of any sort (switchblade knife; box cutter, razor), a slingshot, or any other item commonly used or designated to inflict bodily harm, others, or use in an aggressive and threatening manner. A student violating this policy will immediately be suspended from school, and the police will be contacted. In addition, the student will be required to appear before the Discipline Review Board.

*Possession of a firearm(as defined by Federal and/or State law), or deadly weapon (as defined by State law) on school property, in a school bus, or at any school-sponsored event or activity, shall result in expulsion for a period of not less than one year. The possession of a BB gun or knife will require a recommendation for expulsion. The Head of School may modify such expulsion requirement to the extent a modification is required by Federal and State law. This provision is in compliance with Federal Gun Free School Act of 1994. Section 921 of Title 18, United States Code, and Possession of a weapon in a Safe School and Recreation Zone, Section 1457 of Title 11, Delaware Code.

SCHOOL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY -Students are responsible for the proper care of books, calculators, computers, supplies, and all other school property. Students are responsible for the replacement cost of any school property that may be damaged, lost, or stolen. First State Montessori Academy is not responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen personal property.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN A SCHOOL SETTING

Definitions:

Sexual Harassment – A form of discrimination based on sex that may encompass sexual abuse and misconduct. Included are objectionable comments, or conduct of a sexual nature, that may affect a student's personal integrity, discomfiture, security, or the school environment.

Objectionable behaviors may include mocking or threatening comments or conduct that are not overtly sexual but nonetheless cause personal embarrassment to a student, based upon that student's gender.

Sexual Abuse – Sexual or sexualized verbal or physical conduct to include:

- Touching (for a sexual purpose, directly or indirectly, with a part of the body or with an object) any part of the body of a student
- Invitation or engagement in sexualized contact
- Sexual exploitation
- An indecent act
- An exposure of private body parts
- A sexual assault or other crime that may affect the personal integrity, security of any student, or the school environment

Sexual harassment and sexual abuse offenses may result in suspension and /or dismissal (expulsion). In addition to any action taken by school officials, the school will comply with applicable notification requirements to the Department of Education and/or police.

TERRORISTIC THREATENING - Terroristic threatening is when a person threatens to commit any crime likely to result in death or serious injury to a person or property, or when a person commits an act with intent of causing an individual to believe that he/she has been exposed to a substance that will cause personal death or serious injury. ***Terroristic threatening or security threats*** also apply when a person makes a false statement or statements knowing that the statement or statements are likely to cause the evacuation of a building, place of assembly or facility of public transportation; knowing that the statement or statements are likely to cause serious inconvenience; or in reckless disregard of the risk of causing terror or serious inconvenience. Terroristic threatening will result in suspension and a report will be made to police and/or fire authorities. **Referral to a Police Agency is required for students upon showing of intentionality or malice for terroristic threatening against a staff member. Recommendation for expulsion may be considered.**

VANDALISM - The school will not tolerate vandalism of any kind. If guilty of vandalism, the student/s will be required to pay for the damages and be referred to the administration for further disciplinary action. If the vandalism is significant, the student will be suspended and potentially dismissed. If necessary, the matter will be referred to the police.

DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

FSMA requires all staff to review the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004). When a child with disabilities is enrolled, the family will be required to review and show understanding of FSMA's Family Handbook. Disciplinary action for a student with disabilities will be no greater than the disciplinary action levied on a student without disabilities.

Given that each student with disabilities is unique, case-by-case determinations will be implemented to help choose the best course of discipline. Factors taken in consideration include, but are not limited to - Disciplinary history, Student's ability to understand consequences, Student's ability to express remorse

Following the IDEA 2004 Discipline Rules guidelines:

- Students with an IEP can be disciplined in the same manner as any other student for 10 consecutive school days or less if the student violates FSMA's Family Handbook.
- If the student is disciplined for more than 10 consecutive school days within the same school year, school staff must conduct a functional behavioral assessment and implement a behavior intervention plan before the end of the 10th day, or before moving the student to an interim alternative educational placement. In many cases, a student with an IEP will already have a behavior intervention plan as part of the IEP in order to support learning and the achievement of his goals. In fact, a student's IEP must include a behavior intervention plan if the student's behavior impedes his own learning.

Parents will be continuously informed of disciplinary actions to allow for feedback and understanding. Additionally, open communications will allow patterns to be identified and assessed to revise a student's IEP, and to protect a parent's right to appeal decisions made regarding interim alternative educational settings and placement.

However, serious offenses, whether or not related to a student's disability, may require moving the student to an interim alternative educational setting and does not require the parent permission or agreement and does not require involvement by a hearing officer or other impartial third party. These offences are:

- The carrying or possession of weapons (on way to or at school, or on school premises, or at school function)
- The possession of illegal substances for use, sale or the solicitation of sale (at school, or at school function)
- The infliction of serious bodily injury to another person (at school, or on school premises, or at school function)

FSMA will maintain a discipline record for children with disabilities in accordance with 14 DE Admin. Code 252. If a child with a disability transfers from one (1) school to another, the transmission of such child's records will include both the child's current IEP and discipline record in accordance with 14 DE Admin. Code 252.

Additionally, the following rules will apply to the discipline of students with disabilities:

A. For disciplinary reasons, the Head of School may change the placement of a student with a disability to an alternative school/program for up to ten days or suspend such a student, if the total days suspended in the current school year do not exceed ten school days, in accordance with guidelines for disciplining students without disabilities.

B. The Head of School may also change the student's placement to an alternative setting selected by the student's school-level individualized educational plan (IEP) team, for up to 45 days if:

1. The student carries a weapon to school or to a school function; or
2. The student knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of controlled substances while at school or a school function.

C. The administration may seek the determination of an impartial hearing officer that a student with a disability should be removed from First State Montessori Academy. A hearing officer may order that the student be placed at an alternative school/program for up to 45 days if the officer determines that maintaining the student at his/her current school is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or to others.

D. If the school contemplates expulsion, alternative placement (with or without expulsion), or suspension (inside or out of school) of a student with a disability in excess of ten (10) school days cumulatively in one school year, an IEP team meeting at the school will be convened to discuss the student's discipline. The meeting may be held up to ten (10) days after the removal of a student from school under paragraphs A or B above.

E. The special education team will determine whether the alleged conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability. The team will determine if (1) the alleged conduct was related to the student's disability; or (2) the student was inappropriately placed at the time of the offense and the likelihood that a change in the student's program and / or placement would alleviate the misconduct leading to the discipline proposed. If the IEP team determines that none of the above standards are met, the student may be disciplined according the Student Code of Conduct, except that a student eligible for special education or related services under the I.D.E.A. may not be denied a Free Appropriate Public Education. If any of the standards are met, the student may not be suspended, expelled or moved to an alternative placement for longer than ten (10) days in one school year, but may be disciplined in accordance, with the student's IEP, and the team should review the student's IEP or 504 Plan and placement.

F. A parent / guardian who disagrees with the IEP team's determination or if the Head of School's student has been placed in an alternative school / program, the student will remain in the alternative placement until the due process hearing officer renders a decision or for 45 days, whichever occurs first, unless the school and parent(s) / guardian(s) agree otherwise.

G. A student identified as disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and who is currently engaging in illegal use of drugs or use of alcohol, may be disciplined with regard to their use or possession to the same extent that students without disabilities are disciplined.

H. Nothing stated herein shall preclude an IEP team from placing a student with a disability, determined to have brought a firearm or weapon to school, in an interim alternative educational setting in accordance with State and Federal law.

APPENDIX

Bullying Policy and Procedures

Anyone may report bullying (staff, parents, students) by filling out a “Bullying Reporting Form available on our website or in our office.

When bullying is reported, a team will be identified to investigate the situation. Parents will be notified if their child is identified in a bully report, whether the allegation is substantiated or not.

After the investigation, communication with both parents will include any next steps that we will take to minimize the potential of future incidents and resolve the situation.

Crisis Assessment

Suicide: Staff are trained in the warning signs and when a concern arises, they follow a specific protocol and engage our Crisis Response Team.

Threat Assessment: If a staff member receives or observes a threat, they follow a specific protocol which involves engaging our Crisis Response Team.

With all crisis assessments, our team will carefully analyze the presented information and utilize our resources to determine the next steps which may involve safety precautions, communication, etc.

Statement of Inclusivity

FSMA is a community of learners who value, and are themselves strengthened by, the diversity of its members. In order to prepare students for living and leading in a diverse and complex world, all people – students, families, staff and board members – will conduct themselves in a way that is not only inclusive but honors and respects the differences we may have based on, but not limited to race, ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, mental or physical disability, family structure, and economic background.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) sets out the requirements for educational institutions to notify parents and students of their rights for the protection of privacy under section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act. Parents or eligible students have the right to: Inspect and review the student's education records; Seek amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights; Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the Act and §99.31 authorize disclosure without consent; and File with the Department a complaint under §§99.63 and 99.64 concerning alleged failures by the educational agency or institution to comply with the requirements of the Act and this part. Please contact the office if you require an appointment to review your student's records.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests

A FOIA request is a written request to inspect and copy the public records of the First State Montessori Academy (the School). FSMA complies with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), as required by Federal and State law. Individuals or agencies shall be granted access to the School's public records under the following terms and conditions:

- Requests shall be in writing, signed, and shall clearly identify the specific public record sought.
- Personally identifiable information shall not be available to the public.
- Review of the requested documents shall be during regular business hours and in the presence of a school employee designated by the Head of School.
- No original documents shall be removed from School property.
- Requested documents may be copied in existing form.
- The requester shall pay a reasonable charge for the copying. Such fees should be commensurate with local businesses that charge for copies.
- Documents may be provided in electronic format with the same per-page charge as copied documents.
- In non-routine circumstances in which a School employee with specialized technology skills must access information, a charge will be based on that employee's hourly overtime wages or an hourly rate based on an annual salary.
- Requests for documents shall not interrupt the normal operations of the School.
- Requests shall be kept on file for three years.
- Requests shall be processed (must either provide access to the records requested, deny requests, or state that additional time is needed) within 15 business days from receipt of the request. In case of delay, the Head of School shall approve an extension and shall notify the requesting party in writing of the reason for the delay and the day, date, and time on which the records shall be available.

Public records: Those records as defined by Delaware Code as those the School owns, made, used, retained, received, produced, composed, drafted, or otherwise compiled and collected relating in any way to public business, public purposes, or the public interest. Requests which require an employee to create a record from existing records are not subject to FOIA or this policy.

Responsibility: The Head of School shall serve as the school's FOIA Officer. The FOIA Officer shall be responsible for implementing the procedures and for updating the Board of Directors on any changes in FOIA laws or regulations.

Help for Families Becoming Homeless

When/If an FSMA student family becomes homeless, and the school officials are made aware of the situation, the following steps will be taken:

- 1) Contact with the parents will be made.
- 2) Parents will determine if they wish to continue their child's enrollment at First State Montessori Academy, or to move their child's enrollment to the district school in the attendance area where they will reside.
- 3) If the parents choose to enroll elsewhere, FSMA will make all contacts and records transfer necessary to the new school, to facilitate the student's move.
- 4) If the parents choose to remain at FSMA, the school may utilize Title I funds to assist with basic family needs and educational needs. FSMA will document the services being provided in the DOE Homeless reporting system in Eschool. These services are readily available for the Homeless Contact Associate at DOE to view. FSMA will follow any required protocols as advised by that office, including connections with related services.
- 5) FSMA will share with families resources for shelter and transportation as needed.

Title 1 at FSMA

What is Title 1? Title I programs are federally funded instruction that is in addition to core reading and math classes for students who are struggling to meet the state standards. The federal government gives funds to Delaware through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to divide among school districts based on their percentage of low-income families and participating schools. Title 1 is also focused on parent engagement and parent education.

Title 1 Funds: FSMA uses our funds to supplement the salary of our special education teachers. In addition to working with students, this teacher is part of a team that plans specific activities to increase parent involvement and education and is involved in a variety of parent engagement activities because Title I law requires a district to reserve a portion of its federal funds for parent involvement activities.

Parents Right to Know: Parents receive notification letters when their children receive Title I services and are taught by a non-highly certified teacher for four or more weeks consecutively.

FSMA's Title I Parent Involvement Goal is to create programs, activities, and procedures that increase meaningful parental involvement. We will hold an annual meeting to share Title 1 plans and activities and ask for feedback. In addition, FSMA will include parents, board members and other school administrators in the decision making process around how funds for parental involvement will be spent.

Wellness Policy Overview (full policy on our website)

First State Montessori Academy is committed to optimal development of every student. We believe that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success, we need to create positive, safe, and health promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year. Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. This policy outlines our school's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goal and procedures to ensure that:

- Students at FSMA have access to healthy foods throughout the school day---both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus—in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors
- Students have the opportunities to be physically active before, during, and after school
- Schools engage in nutrition and other physical activities that promote student wellness
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of FSMA in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits
- FSMA will establish and maintain an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.



Please don't hesitate to contact us!

Main Office Phone Number (302) 576-1500

Main Office Fax Number (302) 576-1501