



making a difference ~ one student at a time

Student & Family Handbook

75 Foundation Avenue

Haverhill, MA 01835

Phone: 978.521.2616

FAX: 978.521.2656

www.hillviewmontessori.org

The mission of Hill View Montessori Charter Public School is to provide a grade K-8 public education that promotes academic excellence using the Montessori philosophy.

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ABOUT US

Who We Are

Hill View Montessori Charter Public School (HVM) is a public school serving students primarily from Haverhill, Massachusetts. HVM was established by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) under the Educational Reform Act of 1993. The purpose of the organization is entirely educational, operating in full compliance with all laws and regulations governing charter schools.

Mission

The mission of Hill View Montessori Charter Public School is to provide a grade K-8 public education that promotes academic excellence using the Montessori philosophy. In partnership with teachers and parents, children will attain high levels of academic, personal and social achievement and so prepared, become constructive contributors to our community.

HVM was awarded its charter in 2003 and opened the following year with 120 students in grades K-3. Each subsequent year an additional grade was added so that full enrollment of 296 students with a K-8 grade span was reached in 2010. The school was founded by a volunteer group of educators, parents and city activists who had met through their children's pre-school. The founding group believed in the value of Montessori education and worked earnestly to make public Montessori education available to all children in Haverhill regardless of socioeconomic status or educational background.

As a Montessori school, HVM offers its students differentiated curriculum and instruction in multi-age classrooms. Learning is maximized by teaching to student's individual academic level and by leveraging each child's unique learning style. Classrooms are stocked with a complete complement of scientifically-designed Montessori manipulatives and resource materials to facilitate inquiry and provide a concrete understanding of abstract concepts. HVM is also committed to character education and integrates this into the Montessori classroom with ongoing lessons in grace, courtesy, respect and responsibility.

Students enroll in HVM by means of a public lottery with preference first given to siblings of currently attending students and then to residents of Haverhill. Finally, non-residents are offered admission if there are no siblings or residents on the waitlist and there is space available.

For the school's Enrollment Policy, see the HVM website.

Core Values

The HVM core values are drawn from the mission statement and are used as guiding principles to direct the work of the school. The core values are organized into four overarching categories as listed below.

Preeminent Public Montessori

- Provide a free Montessori education enhanced to ensure alignment with the MA Curriculum Frameworks
- Promote high levels of student achievement
- Measure achievement in multiple ways and use assessment data to inform instruction
- Promote a school wide culture of respect, open and honest communication, high expectations, and continuous growth through self-reflection

- Welcome learners representative of the diversity in Haverhill, including socio-economic, cultural, and learning needs and styles

Holistic Student Development

- Support students' personal, social, and academic development
- Engage students in activities that teach them how to be competent, caring contributors to our community
- Model and promote Montessori values of grace, courtesy, respect, and responsibility
- Teach cooperative learning and conflict resolution skills
- Respect each student's unique learning style by individually tailoring learning supports
- Foster students love for learning
- Encourage students to take ownership for their academic and personal development

School-strengthening Collaboration

- Create teacher-parent-student partnerships to support student learning
- Involve and vest parents, teachers, and students in the school's decision making process and volunteer efforts
- Develop partnerships with local agencies, community service organizations, and businesses to enhance children's health and learning (e.g. internships, service learning, etc)
- Share information and best practices with other educators and community members

High Quality Staff

- Require lead teachers to hold Montessori certification and to obtain highly qualified status
- Educate all staff regarding Montessori philosophy and HVM curriculum, culture and processes
- Maintain high standards for accomplished teaching and learning, and provide adequate compensation

About MA Charter Schools

Charter schools are public schools started by parents, teachers, businesses and/or community leaders. Massachusetts charter public schools, authorized by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, are public schools that operate tuition-free for students residing in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In Massachusetts there are two types of charter public schools: Commonwealth Charter Schools and Horace Mann Charter Schools. Both operate independently of the local school system but Horace Mann Charter Public Schools must have approval of the local school committee and teachers' union in order to open. Commonwealth Charter Public Schools, of which HVM is one, have a Board of Trustees which functions independent of the local school system. Commonwealth charters do not typically operate with a teachers' union. All Massachusetts charter public schools are governed by a board of trustees.

The application process for charter public schools is rigorous. It is during this application process that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education determines whether a charter school application is thorough, thoughtful and executable. If awarded a charter, the grant is for a five year period. At the end of five years, charter schools must apply for re-chartering.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HVM

Where did the Montessori Method Originate?

Maria Montessori was born in Chiaravalle Italy in August 1870. She became the first female physician in Italy upon graduation from medical school in 1896. Through her medical practices and clinical observations she analyzed how children learn and concluded that children “build themselves from what they find in their environment”.

In early 1900, Montessori shifted her medical career and returned to school to study psychology and philosophy. In 1906 she began working with sixty young children of working parents in the San Lorenzo ghetto of Rome. Here she founded the first “children’s house” or Casa dei Bambini. Through scientific observation of these children and note of their ability to easily absorb knowledge from their surroundings and manipulative materials, Maria Montessori’s methodology was born.

Her vision and innovative techniques, known as the Montessori Method, have produced positive results throughout the world. In the US there are approximately 5,000 Montessori schools of which about 500 are public.

The Montessori name is not a trademark and is associated with many organizations. Unfortunately, there are schools that are “influenced” by Montessori but that actually bear little resemblance to schools that have a closer lineage to Maria Montessori’s intended methodology.

The HVM Learning Environment

The HVM learning environment is premised on the Montessori Method and emphasizes the development of the whole child. It recognizes that children have a desire to learn and, given the proper environment, they develop intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically. This “prepared environment”, as Dr. Montessori called it, includes not only the classroom and materials, but the social setting or atmosphere as well as preparation of the adults who guide the children. The educational characteristics that support HVM’s mission and distinguish this school are:

Individualized, Differentiated Instruction

Montessori education is built upon the tenet that all learners are individuals - in style, pace, and interests. At HVM, classrooms and class work are structured so that teachers can deliver instruction individually or in small groups. This maximizes curricular options so that students can progress at a rate that meets their needs and challenges their abilities. HVM’s individualized curriculum allows children to strive for their own personal best.

Concrete Representation of Abstract Concepts Using Didactic Materials

Montessori instruction progresses from concrete explorations and concept development to abstract understandings. Elementary classrooms have an abundance of carefully sequenced Montessori materials to support this learning progression. A majority of the materials are didactic, or self-correcting, and allow for greater autonomy of the child, provide opportunities for the child to learn by making corrections; and reduce the emphasis on competition to learning. As children progress toward middle school and develop higher-level thinking, Montessori materials are increasingly reinforced by research and reference materials and information technology used to pursue independent research projects.

Prepared Environment

HVM teachers facilitate learning by carefully observing each child's behavior and growth, then guiding each child using changes in the environment, invitations for inquiry and direct instruction. Teachers work to create and sustain a classroom and school culture where demonstrations of respect, initiative, risk-taking and persistence in learning are the norm. In the younger grades, teachers work with individuals or small groups of children. In middle school, teachers provide more whole class instruction, and continue to challenge and extend the self-directed habits of the elementary years as students begin to direct the development of their progress and pursue research and service learning projects.

Mixed-Age Classes and Looping

Students are grouped into mixed-age classes that span three years in the elementary program and two in the middle school program. Mixed-age classrooms provide numerous benefits including a greater range of curriculum options and reduced competition. Older children teach younger children, which builds confidence and competence and encourages leadership. Peer tutoring also promotes cooperation and a sense of community. In addition, students remain with the same teacher for three years (in lower and upper elementary; two years in middle school). The process of "looping" allows teachers to begin the school year without lost time determining students' academic strengths and weaknesses and their learning styles.

Character Education

Character education is integral to the Montessori classroom and curriculum. Children are given opportunities to grow personally and socially. Classroom life emphasizes the Montessori values of grace, courtesy, respect and responsibility. Teachers and staff members model these values throughout the school and expect them from students and parents as well.

Community Connection

As children grow, they learn in and contribute to increasingly expansive and diverse human and environmental communities. Students at HVM first come to understand the world and their part in it by discovering community within the classroom, then by contributing to the life of the school and caring for the surrounding plant and animal habitats, and finally, by supporting the improvement of the larger community beyond the school. As a result, community service and service learning are important parts of the curriculum throughout HVM

Integrated Teaching and Learning

Montessori education emphasizes interdisciplinary teaching to encourage connections across the curriculum and to students' personal lives. Emphasis is placed on projects that require open-ended research and in-depth study using primary and secondary resources as well as other materials. When students understand the purpose for and connection among their activities, they become motivated learners.

- ***Mathematics***

Math is initially presented through manipulative materials with the student progressing from the concrete to the abstract concepts when he/she shows readiness to do so. Further, the study of mathematics includes real-life word problems and applications.

- ***Language Arts***

English/Language Arts emphasizes reading skills and includes fluency, comprehension and vocabulary as well as the etymology of words, syntax and formations of words. The writing process exposes students to a variety of writing forms including composition, creative, expository, persuasive, descriptive, technical, informational, and narrative. It also includes oral forms such as debate, speeches and group discussions.

- ***Cultural Studies***

Social studies and science are called Cultural Studies in the Montessori curriculum. They integrate anthropology, astronomy, biology, chemistry, economics, geography, geology, government, history, philosophy, physics and sociology.

Enrichment and Specials

Art, music, and fitness are part of the HVM curriculum and are planned to correlate with classroom studies as much as possible.

Art and music classes are held weekly. The format addresses both individual interests and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Children are encouraged to pursue their own strengths and to explore multiple mediums for expanding their talents. Fitness classes are held twice a week. The program focuses on cooperative games, team sports, individual sports, aerobic activities, and fitness. Physical education is also blended into the curriculum in a variety of ways.

Elective Block

For students in the lower and upper elementary program, electives are offered during school hours in eight week blocks three times during the year. Students have the opportunity to attend a variety of enrichment programs within the school and locally in the community. The purpose of this program is to introduce students to interests outside of the traditional academic areas and reinforce the Montessori philosophy of exposure to the world. A majority of the elective blocks are made possible through the generosity of volunteers who share their expertise with HVM students. Middle school also offers electives to its students and has its own schedule for such.

Classroom Configurations

Kindergarten is a single aged classroom of 5-year old children. HVM has two kindergarten classrooms with a lead teacher and assistant teacher and no more than eighteen students.

There are four lower and four upper multi-age elementary classrooms of approximately 26 students each. Each class has a lead and assistant teacher or co-teachers, providing a student-teacher ratio of about 13 to 1.

- *Lower Elementary* classes include grades 1, 2 and 3; students are referred to as first year, second year or third year students.
- *Upper Elementary* classes include grades 4, 5, and 6; students are referred to as fourth year, fifth year or sixth year students.
- *Middle School* classes include grades 7 and 8.

In middle school, there are approximately 65 seventh and eighth grade students with four subject teachers as well as additional support personnel for a student teacher ration of less than 15:1.

Parent/Guardian Involvement

HVM considers all caregivers vital partners in the education of their children. Therefore, parents are welcome at HVM and are given many opportunities for participating in and setting the direction of school life. All parents and school volunteers are required by law to have a criminal records check (CORI) and be CORI-approved by the school. Please see the Personnel and Operations Director to fill out the CORI paperwork.

In conjunction with teachers, parents discuss current progress academically, socially and emotionally during parent teacher conferences. In an individual setting, parents can express concerns and communicate their commitment to doing their part at home to ensure their children's success. In an effort to protect student confidentiality, parents are asked not to share private information about their child in an email. Parents are also afforded the opportunity to attend community partnership (CP, HVM's version of a Parent-Teacher Organization) and board meetings. At these meetings, teachers offer Montessori lessons as part of a commitment to exposing and informing all to Montessori materials and the method.

Field Trips and Going-Out

Teachers will periodically conduct field trips to provide cultural, scientific, social or educational experiences. Notices will be sent home in advance describing the objectives of the field trip and requesting drivers, if needed. Parents who volunteer to chaperone for field trips are expected to adhere to chaperoning guidelines and be CORI approved. *Visit the HVM website for Chaperoning Guidelines.*

Families for whom the expense of a fieldtrip is a hardship are encouraged to speak to the school and financial assistance can be provided.

“Going-out” is a term unique to the Montessori approach. It is a mini-fieldtrip, usually involving four to six students who have a particular interest in a certain area. The children plan all the details and arrange the logistics of the trip. These excursions encourage individual interests and responsibility for learning. They provide research opportunities that are an integrated extension of the curriculum. At the beginning of the school year, we request that parents/guardians sign a general permission slip that will cover goings out for the year.

Board of Trustees and Governance

HVM is governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees. The Board has ultimate responsibility for the success of the school and is accountable directly to the Massachusetts Department of Education (DESE). The Board sets policy for the school and hires and supervises an Executive Director, who, in turn, hires the staff of the school. Working through the Executive Director, the Board ensures that all laws and regulations are being followed and that day-to-day operations are consistent with the mission of the school. In consultation with the Executive Director, the Board develops and approves the budget for the school

The Board of Trustees performs most of its work through committees. These committees consist of trustees, parents, and members of the community. The Board has regular monthly meetings that are open to the public. The dates and times of all meetings are posted at the school and city clerk's office and listed in local papers and the school's Wednesday Notes which are sent home weekly. The Board discusses issues, sets policy, and conducts business for anyone to observe; public comment is invited at the beginning and end of the board meetings. *See the HVM website for current Board of Trustees meeting dates, membership and contact information.*

Accountability

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education through charter school law, holds charter schools accountable for what they do. During every year of a charter school's existence, it is monitored via an oversight and evaluation process that includes the establishment of an Accountability Plan, annual reporting on goals identified in the school's accountability plan, and site visits. In addition, every five years a charter school must undergo a more rigorous accountability process during which time is "reapplies" for its charter. If a charter school is determined to be underperforming, it can be closed. This high level of accountability is accepted by charter public schools in exchange for the "freedom" to structure, organize, and create their own mission and academic programs.

The annual accountability process requires the school to reflect and provide evidence on the following three questions:

1. Is the school academically successful?
2. Is the school a viable, stable organization?
3. Is the school faithful to the terms of its charter?

See the HVM website for a copy of the school's Accountability Plan and its annual reports.

Administration of State Mandated Assessments

As a public charter school, HVM is required to give the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests and to track the results over time as one way of determining academic success. The results of the school's performance on MCAS tests are available on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website at www.doe.mass.edu.

Funding

HVM is funded by a yearly allotment from the State of Massachusetts that is based on per-pupil expenditures from the sending district where the student resides. For each child that enrolls at HVM, HVM receives a tuition amount from the State equal to the per-pupil amount that the child's sending district funds the local school. The State then deducts the same amount from the sending district's state aid account. Like other public schools, charter schools are eligible to receive federal and state grant funds including Special Education, Title 1, and Safe and Drug Free Schools funding.

While per pupil charter tuition covers basic operational expenses, it does not cover the school's facility costs nor the complete costs associated with an authentic Montessori program. As a result, the school is committed to ongoing annual fundraising and grant writing. Direct solicitations for support to both the parent body and the greater HVM community will include invitations to support the annual appeal and attend special events such as an auction, etc.

The Community Partnership Organization

The Community Partnership (CP) organization is a body of parents and school educators united in helping HVM students have a successful school experience learning in the Montessori Method. The CP is much like a traditional school might have a PTA or PTO.

The CP performs a number of functions including fundraising (administering Box Tops for Education, Square 1 Art and the SCRIP program for example), hosting events and supporting school staff.

Community Partnership Mission Statement

The Mission of the CP is to act as a resource to aid students in their goals of a Montessori charter education through high levels of academic, personal, social achievement using the Montessori Method of teaching.

Its purposes are several:

- To provide a forum for open discussion with each other;
- To sponsor family-oriented activities and programs to support and enhance parental involvement;
- To inform on issues about which we have particular knowledge and experience;
- To enhance the capacity of parents, educators and caregivers to guide, support and nurture all HVM students;
- To ensure continued financial support and aid in maintaining the high quality of education of our student population;

For CP meeting dates and times and CP contact information, please visit the HVM website.

ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

Enrollment Policy

Hill View Montessori accepts applications from any child meeting the school's age requirements and residing in Massachusetts. We do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, creed, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, ancestry, athletic performance, special needs, proficiency in the English language or in a foreign language, academic achievement, or town of residence within the school's chartered region. In addition, Montessori experience is neither required nor used as a selection preference. HVM grants enrollment preference to siblings of currently enrolled students in an effort to keep families together in one school.

In general, the school offers admission only to students in the Kindergarten level. However, older students may be offered admission if space is available. *See the HVM website the school's Enrollment Policy.*

Applications

During the annual enrollment period, HVM recruits its students through broad outreach and multi-media advertising. We also hold public information sessions in order to help families understand the school's Montessori philosophy and methods before applying for admission to the school.

The school holds an annual recruitment period for the following academic year, including publicizing the lottery date, starting in January and ending in mid-March. Currently enrolled students who are returning need not reapply. At the end of the posted application period, if there are more applications for any given grade than openings in that grade, the school conducts a lottery.

Lottery

If the annual recruitment period produces more applications than there are openings in any grade, the school runs a public lottery, a random selection process that results in a completely unbiased ranking of applicants within each age/grade.

The school offers admission to the age/grades for which there are openings in the following sequence:

1. Those on the sibling list;
2. Those on the general list; and
3. Those on the non-resident list.

Wait List

Each year's lottery draws are added to the bottom of the existing wait lists. Should openings occur over the course of the year, the school will offer admission in the same order described above, using a consistent and documented process. Applicants remain on the list until they are offered admission, until they request in writing to be removed from the list, or until repeated attempts to contact them regarding their desire to stay on or be removed from the list have failed over a reasonable period of time, as specified in the school's published application procedures.

GOING TO SCHOOL

School Year *See the HVM website for the current school calendar.*

School Day	7:30 a.m. to 8:25 a.m.	Before Care
	8:40 a.m. to 3:40 p.m.	School Day
	3:40 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.	After Care

Arrival

School starts at 8:40 a.m. The staff is ready to receive children at 8:20 a.m.

The following procedures apply for students who are dropped off at school:

- Arrive at the school no earlier than 8:20 a.m.
- Upon arrival, pull to the rear of the school and follow traffic into the designated driving areas.
- **Do not park** or drop off in the front of the school. (This space is reserved for school buses.)
- If you have business in the school, pull around back into the designated travel areas and continue around the side of the building to park in visitor spaces or park in the designated parking area in the back of the school (heeding indication of the play area).

Dismissal

School ends at 3:40 p.m. and the dismissal process ends by 4:00 p.m. (12:15 p.m. on half days with the dismissal process ending at 12:35 p.m.)

For Students Being Picked Up From School

- Arrive no earlier than 3:30 p.m. to pick up your child. Drive to the designated pick-up area in the rear of the school. Staff will escort children out of the building and students will typically be waiting outside.
- There are four designated pick-up spots. Staff will direct you and your child to ensure the swiftest dismissal possible.
- A family ID tag (provided by the school) with the student's last name should be made visible. If your child is being picked up by someone else, please transfer the ID tag to that vehicle. Alternatively, if you need additional ID tags, please contact the front office at 978.521.2616 extension 121.

- If someone other than the designated pick-up person picks up and does not have the ID tag in their possession, the school needs to be notified ahead of time and the person must show identification to staff.
- If you need to speak with a staff member, please do so at another time as doing otherwise drastically slows down the dismissal process.
- If a child is picked up more than 15 minutes beyond the end of dismissal time, families will be billed. For parents who are late between 1 and 15 minutes, the charge is \$5.00; between 16-30 minutes, the charge is \$10.00.

For Students Using Bus Transportation

Bus transportation is available only to those students who reside in Haverhill. Families from outside of Haverhill must provide their own transportation. Bus routes and schedules can be obtained from the Coppola Bus Company 978.373.9891 or on the HVM web site.

On early dismissal days, buses will pick up students at HVM at 12:15 p.m.

Expectations for conduct on the bus are the same as when children are at school. It is particularly important that students are quiet and respectful so the driver can concentrate on safely delivering the passengers. Violations of bus etiquette can result in loss of bus privileges and/or other consequences.

Attendance Guidelines

It is commonly believed that student attendance rates impact student learning and affect a school's culture. The Department of Elementary and Secondary education believes attendance to be so important that it requires public schools to report on student attendance three times per year and in fact, there are regulations allowing schools to assess fines for student truancy and tardiness. Excused absences, as defined by the DESE, are only those that occur due to a death in the family, religious holidays, court appearances/subpoenas, family emergencies or documented illness. All others are considered truancy.

Montessori philosophy requires that we respect the concentration and follow the level of development of each child. Teachers spend time and energy preparing curriculum and lessons for each day. Students are expected to attend school *on time* each day of the school year unless there is an emergency or a personal illness. Please help to ensure the development of your child's social and academic progress by avoiding unnecessary absences, tardiness and early dismissals.

The policy around attendance is as follows:

- When a student is absent seven times, a meeting will be held to evaluate what impact the absences are having on the child and the school.
- When a student is tardy or dismissed early five times in a month, a meeting will be held to evaluate what impact the missed time is having on the child and the school.
- For any student who is absent eighteen times, or more, at yearend, a meeting will be held to determine whether the student should repeat the grade and/or should attend summer school (at the parents' expense).

Absence Procedures

When a child is absent, the parent/caregiver must notify the school before 9:00 a.m. by calling **978.521.2616 ext. 200**. Upon returning to school from any absence, the child must bring a note written by the parent/caregiver explaining the absence. All absences must be of an "excused" nature (absence

types are described below). Extended excused absences, those that are more than five days, may require a note from the doctor before the child can return to school.

- Unexcused absences include oversleeping, missing the bus, car problems, family trips/vacations (which are considered unexcused by state law) or absences for illness for which no note was sent to the school. Excessive unexcused absences are subject to reporting to the district court.
- Excessive absences from school can, in some cases, be considered child neglect. As mandated reporters for the State of Massachusetts, HVM is required to report excessive absences to the Massachusetts Department of Child and Family Services (DCF).
- In situations in which the office staff has not been notified of an absence, a notification will be sent to the parent/guardian. (Typically this will be sent via email.)

Absences during Testing

Attendance during standardized testing is expected and necessary. These tests are required by HVM's Accountability Plan and mandated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Federal Government under the No Child Left Behind Act. We need the participation of all students in order to meet objectives specified by the Adequate Yearly Progress reports.

Please have your child in school during the regularly scheduled testing periods unless there is an emergency. Studies indicate that students perform better in familiar surroundings with their classroom teachers administering tests. When a child is absent from a testing session, it creates a hardship for the child and the school to make up the test. The child is taking the test in an unfamiliar space with a proctor he or she may not know. From the point of view of the school, we do not want to take teachers out of classrooms to proctor customized make-up sessions for students who have been out of school during test times.

Tardiness

The first half hour of class is very important, as that is when teachers and students discuss their plans for the day. Missing this time is problematic as it can have a negative impact on the child's whole day. HVM has a process in place for dealing with excessive tardies. Any child who arrives at school after 8:40 is considered late. The child must go to the front office, accompanied by the parent/caregiver, to obtain a late pass. Students cannot enter class without a late pass.

If a student is tardy five times in a month, a meeting will be held to evaluate what impact the tardies are having on the child and the school. If a child arrives at school after 12:00, the child will be marked absent for the day.

Early Dismissal

Ideally children should be in school during all school hours. Please arrange appointments after school hours or on half days. If it is necessary to make an appointment during school hours, please be sure to send a note to school. In order to dismiss your child to someone other than a parent or other authorized person, the person must provide photo identification.

For safety reasons, children cannot be dismissed between 3:25 and 3:40 unless there is an emergency. After 3:25, all families must pick up children following the standard dismissal process.

Before Care and After Care

Recognizing that families have needs for their children beyond the hours of the normal school day, HVM has a fee-based before and after care program. Registration is required for both Before and After Care and is limited to HVM students only.

Before Care

HVM provides an on-site before school program with the same philosophical basis as our Montessori classes. Before Care is staffed by HVM staff members and begins at 7:30 a.m. It includes (weather-permitting) outdoor playtime as well as indoor time. Breakfast is available during Before Care, if purchased in advance. There is no before care available on days with a snow delay.

For more information about the Before Care program, contact the HVM front office at 978.521.2616 extension 121.

After Care

After Care services are provided by the Haverhill YMCA to HVM students only and primarily on the HVM school grounds. After Care begins immediately following the end-of-the-day and is available until 6:00 p.m. and includes an afterschool snack. On some afternoons the YMCA shuttles students to their downtown Haverhill facility where children can take advantage of the many programs and services there, including rock climbing, swimming and gymnastics.

The YMCA provides care on most half days and offers programs at the YMCA during school vacation weeks. During school-wide scheduled conferences (two times a year), free child care is available for HVM students.

For more information about the YMCA After Care program, visit www.northshoreymca.org. For fee After Care fee information, contact the YMCA directly at 978.374.0506. The YMCA offers financial assistance for families in need.

Returned Check Policy

HVM has a returned check policy to curtail the financial impact of receiving “non-negotiable” check payments. In the event that three or more checks are returned by the bank and deemed non-negotiable (insufficient funds, account closure, etc.), the presenting individual or organization will be requested to make all future payments in the form of cash, money order or bank check. At the discretion of the Executive Director, services may be withheld until payment has been received in full or denied on a permanent basis. This policy may apply to all services provided by HVM regardless of the service to which the payment applied.

School Closings or Delays

The Haverhill Public School District provides transportation for HVM students. When the district schools are closed or have a delayed opening due to bad weather, HVM is also closed or has a delayed opening. School closings can be heard on Channels 4, 5 & 7, on WBZ radio and are listed on the HVM website www.hillviewmontessori.org. HVM also utilizes an emergency notification system which sends out an automated message informing of closings and delays. In addition, families can arrange to have a message sent to a cell phone from WHDH Channel 7 News. To arrange for this service, visit www.whdh.com/stormforce/closingbell.

During delays, breakfast will still be provided to students and parents will still be charged for the meal.

Snacks, Lunch and Celebrations

Some classrooms are peanut/tree nut free at HVM. Teachers and staff make their best efforts to monitor lunches, snacks, and foods brought in for celebrations but it is not feasible to say that no nuts will ever enter our building. We ask that parents check labels for nuts or nut ingredients. However, please note that many foods have “hidden” nut ingredients and most people are not properly trained to read food labels for these hidden ingredients. Any so-called “safe” food manufacturer can change ingredients without warning so providing “safe” food lists is not appropriate. HVM may occasionally provide a list of healthy snacks but this list is not meant to be considered a 100% nut-free product list. It is only a guide for parents to assist them in choosing healthier snack options. We encourage students not to share foods with each other for a variety of reasons.

We also have children with other food allergies in our school. When bringing food into the school (other than packing lunch), please be sure to check with the classroom teacher or school nurse to ensure an appropriate selection is made.

If your child has a food or other allergy, contact the school nurse for information on how an individualized plan can be developed for your child to keep him/her as safe as possible while at school. Any medications that your child’s doctor has prescribed for the treatment of food allergies should be kept in the Health Office.

Snacks

In keeping with HVM’s commitment to supporting the optimal growth and development of the whole child, the school urges parents and caregivers not to send sweets such as candy and soda into school to be eaten as a snack. Instead, please send students with healthy snacks only. HVM defines healthy snacks as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and other items that have limited sugar, salt and fat content. If a classroom teacher believes that a snack is unhealthy, the student will be asked not to consume the snack at school, a note will be adhered to the snack and it will be sent home with the child.

Procedurally, each classroom has its own time and set-up for snacks. Throughout the year however, the teacher may choose a more managed approach for snacks to better accommodate classroom academic activities.

Breakfast and Lunches

Breakfast is available to be ordered and is served from 8:20-8:40 am. For students who arrive later than 8:40, students will bring their breakfast and eat in the classroom.

For lunch, students can either bring their lunch or purchase it from the school’s hot lunch vendor. Hot lunch must be ordered and prepaid monthly when the order is placed. Every month, breakfast and lunch menus and order forms are sent home. HVM is committed to educating the whole child and as such has contracted with a food vendor that minimizes salt and sugar additives, offers whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables and utilizes recyclable food containers.

Breakfast and Lunch Ordering Procedures:

- Fill out the appropriate menus for the month.
- Keep the menu at home and return the order form to school by due date.
- Be sure to have child’s and teacher’s name on the order form(s).

For current information about lunch and breakfast programs contact the front desk at ext. 121. Refunds for meals are only given for school cancelations and not for absences.

Celebrations

We discourage traditional classroom celebrations of birthdays, holidays, etc. where, for example, Valentine or “Secret Santa” notes and gifts are exchanged, students dress-up for Halloween, sweets are sent in to be shared, etc. We do this for a number of reasons; some students have differing religious beliefs that prohibit celebratory activities; we seek to minimize the consumption of sweets and encourage healthy eating habits; and we are committed to educating students about mass marketing/consumerism.

As an alternative, we advocate for celebrations that teach tolerance, peace and an understanding of multicultural differences. Please contact your child’s classroom teacher to determine the individual classroom policy around celebratory activities.

Green/Recycling

HVM develops students who are stewards of the earth and cognizant of the impact we, as humans, have on the planet. In this regard, we encourage families to minimize waste by packing lunches in recyclable containers. We, as a school community, will continue to pursue options to reduce our impact on the environment

SCHOOL CULTURE

One of the keys to our success as a school is the ability to balance freedom with responsibility. As students grow and mature, they are expected to take an active and independent role in their own learning; they are expected to be responsible and respectful toward other people and their environment, as well as to have a positive attitude toward their work.

Social Events

Throughout the year, the members of our school community come together for many different reasons, such as educational meetings, student performances, open houses, and fundraisers. We usually plan for a part of these gatherings to have a social component, so we can make new acquaintances and see our children’s friends and their families.

Whenever we have these events on school grounds, **we ask parents to be responsible for their children** unless the child is under the supervision of a staff member. Further, we ask everyone to respect the classroom learning environments by not touching classroom materials unless it is a part of the program. A Montessori classroom is a carefully prepared environment and the sequential order of the materials is important for the child and the materials are costly.

Appropriate Dress

The general atmosphere and environment of the school must be conducive for optimal learning. Dress can affect behavior and influence both the atmosphere and learning environment. As the Montessori philosophy is a hands-on learning process, students are often working on the floor. This should be a consideration when students dress each day.

The following items of apparel are not allowed:

- Clothing with vulgar, indecent, obscene or insulting messaging;
- Any dress, skirt, blouse, shirt, or trousers of any length or fabric that is suggestive, overly tight, or revealing;
- Hats and hoods. These items can be worn outside but should not be worn inside the school building during the school day.

The teacher or administration reserves the right to address the student if he/she believes that the clothing is inappropriate. Students not in compliance with the dress code will be asked to change their apparel or they will be sent home to change.

Cell Phone Policy

HVM discourages students from bringing cell phones to school. However, the school recognizes that for some families this is a necessity. HVM will not be responsible for phones that go missing due to theft or lost.

During school hours:

- There will be no use of cell phones for any purpose.
- Cell phones must be turned off during school hours.
- Cell phones must remain in student backpacks during school hours, including during recess and field trips.

If a student chooses not to follow the conditions outlined above, his/her phone will be confiscated. In order for a phone to be returned to a student, a parent or legal guardian must speak *in person* with the teacher who confiscated the phone.

Personal Property

- Students are not to bring electronic devices to school. Therefore, there will be no use of electronic devices at any time while on school property. This includes, but is not limited to CD players, other music listening devices, gaming devices, pagers, etc.
- Students are not to use trading cards and collectable card games such as sports cards, Pokémon, Magic: the Gathering and other trading/gaming cards at any time while on school property.

Violation of these guidelines will result in confiscation of the items. We are not responsible if the items are broken, lost or stolen.

Library Use

Library time is provided primarily by volunteers and is offered at the discretion of the classroom teacher. Students manually check out their own books on the honor system. Two students at a time, at the discretion of the classroom teachers, use library passes to visit the library. Students may also visit the library as a whole class with their classroom teacher.

Computer Use

Most classrooms, with the exception of kindergarten, have access to computers and the internet. The Internet is compatible with the Montessori philosophy as a teaching resource because it allows students to become familiar with the global nature of information and to form links with children around the world. Nonetheless, access to computers and the Internet is a privilege. HVM expects that all of its

students will use the computer resources responsibly, respecting the rights of other computer users and keeping in mind that the school's computers are there to support the educational goals of the school.

It is important that students understand and abide by the school's technology usage rules in order to use HVM computers. As such, parents are required to discuss with their children and sign off on computer usage rules. Violation of any of the rules can result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension from school in certain instances, at the discretion of the school leaders.

Note on Computer Supervision and Monitoring: HVM, its network administrator and other authorized individuals monitor the use of information technology resources to ensure that uses are secure and in conformity with school policy. Administrators reserve the right to examine, use and disclose any data found on the school's information network to further the health, safety, discipline or security of others and/or to protect property; may share findings with law enforcement and use it to determine disciplinary actions.

Video Taping/Photographing

Videotaping/photographing is occasionally done in the classroom to support staff and student development, as well as the promotion of the school. This includes photographs taken by local news sources and published locally. At the beginning of the year, HVM asks parents to sign-off to allow their child to be videotaped/photographed. If you do not want your child photographed, please inform the school.

Code of Conduct

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

Dr. Montessori integrated a code of conduct into her curriculum emphasizing grace and courtesy. At Hill View Montessori Charter Public School, our approach is to lead children towards self-discipline. We try to avoid spending unnecessary time responding and reacting to behavior problems. The Montessori Method addresses the need to change towards positive behavior through lesson planning or teaching whenever possible. Discipline is more a learning experience and less a punitive experience.

At Hill View Montessori Charter Public School, it is important that the child clearly understands the rules and possible consequences for violating rules. Through nurturing and sensitivity, we hope to prepare them to attain high levels of academic, personal and social achievement so that they will become constructive contributors to our community. With this in mind, it is important that these goals are reflected in methods of discipline used at school.

Process for Dealing with Disruptive Behavior

Teachers will work with children to address all issues of misbehavior so that no further steps have to be taken; however, if no progress is being made, teachers will then follow the steps listed below to address these issues:

Step 1: When an incident occurs, the teacher explains or reviews the rules with the student and warns of possible consequences.

Step 2: If the incident occurs again, the teacher:

- a) verbally communicates with the child's parent(s)/guardian(s)
- b) applies appropriate consequences
- c) documents incident and parent communication

- d) informs Educational Program Director (EPD) of behavior through written communication

Step 3: If a third incident occurs:

- a) the student meets with the teacher and the EPD
- b) EPD sends a written report home and/or calls parents
- c) at discretion of EPD, a meeting with parents is scheduled to discuss behavior/incident as well as develop a behavior plan

Grounds for Suspension:

If the student continues to display disruptive behavior, at the discretion of the EPD, the student may receive an afterschool detention, a supervised community service project, or an in-school suspension. If the above actions are implemented, parents will be notified by EPD. The EPD will determine the length and location of an afterschool detention, community service project, and/or an in-school suspension.

For incidents involving unwanted, threatening or hurtful behavior as well as physical contact, at the discretion of the EPD, more immediate steps may be taken including suspension from school.

Examples of unwanted, threatening or hurtful behavior:

- unwanted physical contact
- physical intimidation
- fighting
- using an implement in any way that makes another student or staff member feel threatened.
- serious acts of insubordination

Grounds for Immediate Suspension:

For incidents involving an illegal act, the student will immediately be suspended from school pending a more thorough investigation. If necessary, the administration shall take steps to protect the reputation and rights of students under the law while fully cooperating with the police.

Illegal acts include:

- theft
- setting off the fire alarm
- vandalism
- use of cigarettes, drugs or alcohol
- using or possessing a weapon
- assault
- arson

Process for Dealing with Out of School Suspensions

Step 1: When an incident occurs:

- a) the teacher sends the child to the Educational Program Director's office with a completed incident report
- b) the parent is notified to pick up the child immediately
- c) the child receives a suspension (at the discretion of the EPD based on severity and intent)
- d) a mandatory meeting between the parent/guardian and the EPD is established prior to the child returning to school

Step 2: If the same incident occurs again:

- a) the child is sent to the EPD's office
- b) the parent is notified to pick up the child immediately

- c) the child receives a suspension (at the discretion of the EPD based on severity and intent)
- d) a mandatory meeting between the parent/guardian and the EPD is established prior to the child returning to school
- e) a planning meeting, with the appropriate faculty members, is held to establish a plan for re-entry
(failure to comply with the specifics of the re-entry may result in expulsion)

Process for Expulsion

- a team consisting of appropriate HVM faculty members including Executive Director, EPD, and school counselor will be established to discuss incident and determine expulsion
- team meets with parents to inform them of decision
- Board of Trustees is notified of expulsion

Chapter 71b Laws Governing Special Education Students and Discipline Situations

Federal Special Education Regulations (34 CFR 300.530-536) require the following discipline policies and procedures for special needs students:

- School personnel may suspend an eligible special needs student for up to 10 days.
- After a student with special needs has been suspended for 10 days in any school year during any subsequent removal, the public school provides sufficient services for the student to continue to receive a free and appropriate public education.
- A suspension of longer than 10 consecutive days or a series of suspensions that are shorter than 10 consecutive days but constitute a pattern are considered to represent a change in placement.

Prior to a suspension that constitutes a change in placement, the Team convenes to develop or review a functional behavioral assessment of the student's behavior intervention plan or develop an assessment plan:

- To identify alternative educational setting (s) and
- To determine the relationship between the disability and behavior, "a manifestation determination".

If the Team determines that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the disability, then the school may suspend or expel the student consistent with policies applied to any student without disabilities, except that the school must still offer an appropriate education program to the student with disabilities, which may be in some other setting.

If the Team determines that the behavior IS a manifestation of the disability, then the school takes steps (with parent consent) to correct the IEP, the placement, or Behavior Intervention Plan.

Regardless of the manifestation determination, the school may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (as determined by the Team) for up to 45 days:

- If the behavior involves weapons or illegal drugs or another controlled substance while at school or at a school function, or
- If the school provides evidence that the student is "substantially likely" to injure him/herself or others and a hearing officer orders the alternative placement, and
- The interim alternative education setting enables the student to continue in the general curriculum, to continue receiving services identified on the IEP, and provides services to address the problem behavior.

The school provides written notice to the parent of all rights to appeal and to an expedited hearing. If the parent chooses to appeal, during the appeal the student stays put in the placement on the last accepted IEP or the interim alternative placement, unless the parent and the school district agree otherwise.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Bullying and cyber bullying interfere with the educational process and can result in a hostile environment for students and teachers. As such, bullying, cyber bullying and/or retaliation will not be tolerated at Hill View Montessori Charter Public School (HVM). HVM will investigate reports and claims of bullying, cyber bullying and retaliation and take immediate action to eradicate the behavior and restore a sense of safety for all students.

HVM is committed to supporting the entire HVM community in its understanding of the expectations, implications and plans for dealing with bullying, cyber bullying and retaliation. As such, a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (BPIP) was created. The plan will serve two purposes. First, the plan meets the requirements as defined by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for the Public Law M.G.L. c. 71, §37O. Second, the plan represents the actions to be taken by HVM to conduct bullying prevention and intervention.

The plan is intended to address bullying behavior, including cyber bullying, on the part of students enrolled at Hill View Montessori Charter Public School at the time of the incident. The scope of the plan includes any activity (whether initiated within the classroom or other parts of the school building, on school grounds or the school bus, at school-sponsored or related activities or functions both on or off school grounds, or within the home) that has a demonstrated, adverse educational impact on a targeted child. It also applies to the use of electronic devices (including computers, the internet, cell phones, etc.) as well as the use of school or home computers, programs or networks.

The scope of HVM's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan does not include negative or disruptive behaviors not defined as bullying, cyber bullying or retaliation. Instead, behaviors that are not defined as acts of bullying, cyber bullying or retaliation are addressed through the school's educational program and code of conduct which integrate the teaching of tolerance, compassion and harmony between and among students.

See the HVM website for a copy of the school's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

Effective communication supports the Montessori triangle of child, school, and parent. HVM has put several structures in place to ensure ongoing communication.

Wednesday Notes

Each week families are emailed a newsletter called "Wednesday Notes," along with other relevant flyers, order forms, etc. The Notes contain information about upcoming events, school information, parent education articles and calendar information for the month. Families who do not have internet access may request hard copies.

HVM Website

The HVM website has additional information related to the school, including the original charter contract with the State. Use of the website is encouraged and serves as an invaluable means for ongoing communication. An event calendar is included on the web site and is updated regularly.

Parent Education

Each year, HVM provides parent education on topics pertaining to Montessori education and/or child development. Suggestions for topics are welcome from parents.

Parent Conferences

Parent conferences provide an avenue for parents and teachers to track and evaluate the progress of their child(ren). At the first conference in the fall, parents and teachers discuss the child's current performance and share ideas and plans to support the student over the upcoming school year.

Observations

HVM opens its classrooms for scheduled observations beginning in October. *See the HVM website for Observation Guidelines.*

Communicating with Staff

When a family has questions or concerns it is important that they be addressed as soon as possible. General questions related to busing, lunch, and other scheduling issues should be directed to the front office 978.521.2616, extension 121. Questions related to learning and the classroom should be addressed to the lead teacher either through phone or email. *See the HVM website for HVM Staff Directory contact information.* Should the lead teacher be unable to address a concern, it should be brought to the Educational Program Director. If the concern is still not addressed, it can be brought to the attention of the Executive Director.

For other concerns, not directly related to learning and the classroom, questions can be directed to the individual on the Administrative Team who has responsibility for the department/topic. The HVM Administrative Team includes the Executive Director (ED), the Educational Program Director, the Data and Development Director and Personnel & Operations Director.

Please refer to the following list of each administrator's responsibilities. The front office/administrative assistants are always available to assist you in directing your question or concern as well.

Position	Department Duties
Executive Director Ruthann Goguen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School wide issues • Board of Trustees interface and policy implementation • Foundation Board interface • Department of Elementary and Secondary Education interface (charter adherence, accountability) • State and federal laws (monitoring and adherence) • Financial oversight of the school • Long-term facility needs • Development (act as community ambassador, connect with private funders) • Hiring and supervision of administrative staff and finance director
Educational Program Director Lori Klucznik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight of curriculum • Educational program operations including oversight of Title 1, Special Education, ELL and all DESE reporting • Entitlement Grants to DESE • Discipline and associated state reporting • Teacher development and mentoring • School schedules • Student services (Learning Differences, 504, Title I and ELL) • Oversight of internal assessment development, and internal and external assessment administration • Community Partnership liaison • Enrollment & Insight Tours • Hiring and supervision of all educational program staff
Business Manager Beth Jutras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of HVM accounting records and related financial reports on an accrual basis • Maintenance of HVM Foundation accounting records and related financial reports on an accrual basis • Preparation of monthly and quarterly reports for the Finance Committee and the Board of Trustees and the Foundation • Completion and submission of DOE and other State financial reports in a timely manner • Provision of assistance to the auditor in conducting annual audit and development of any necessary corrective plans outlined in the management letter • Management of the long term financial planning process • Serve as staff representative to the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees • Ensure accounting records of: bills, outside contracts, payroll, CORI's, personnel records & policies, employment contracts, employment benefits, employment attendance records • Main contact for HR Consultants/Telemon • Oversight of food vendor contract

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures spending aligns with board approved budget
<p>Technology/Data Manager</p> <p>Michael Petersen</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology and Data Development • Marketing and public relations/ School Web page • State reporting (Annual report, SIMS, EPIMS, SCS,SIF etc.) • Free/reduced lunch qualification • Manages Rediker data base • Oversight of parent communications (Wednesday Notes, etc.) • Oversight of School Cancellations & Communication to staff/ parents via one call system/ web page • Technology (software and hardware including telephones) • Management of assessment data including progress reporting • Technology related grants • Professional Development for staff in area of Technology • Enrollment & Insight Tours • Maintains Emergency Contact list for students
<p>Front Desk Administrative Assistant</p> <p>Marti Crommiller</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First point of contact for families and visitors (phone and door) • Maintains “Parent Communication Book”- all class-wide and school-wide communications • Assists with parent communications • Places orders for school breakfasts and lunches, prepares deposits, communicates with vendor • Distributes incoming mail • Communicates with classrooms re: early dismissals • Logs tardy students • photocopying • Oversees email communications with Board of Trustees and maintains BOT records • Addresses fax machine problems • Files progress reports, student files, old IEP and 504 files, • Processes withdrawn students • Assists with Enrollment & Insight tours
<p>Administrative Assistant</p> <p>Kristen Sevene</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enters daily attendance into Rediker (student and staff) • Takes Sub calls, and sends email to staff daily on absences • Organizes information for Wednesday Notes • Create labels, mail merges for letters, etc. • Maintains class lists • Maintains emergency contact lists • Maintains staff phone list, snow chain • Provides clerical support for special events/programming • Special copying needs • Progress report programming • Covers Front desk when Front Desk Admin Asst is off; answers phones when front desk phone is busy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists ED, EPD, Business Manager, Technology/Data Manager • Assists with Enrollment & Insight Tours & Middle School transition to High School
<p>Consultant: Property Manager/Business</p> <p>William Hart</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Facilities Management Plan and monitor ongoing maintenance and upgrade of major building systems, including HVAC, electrical, plumbing and fire safety. • Oversee management and maintenance of school building and property on a day to day basis • Oversee all contracts for building maintenance and repairs, and general business operations • Assist Business Manger with school's business operations, including, but not limited to maintaining accurate payroll and benefit records
<p>Business Office Administrative Assistant</p> <p>Yazmin Bonilla</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point of contact with Bus Company (gets bus lists, makes changes, requests bus for field trips, electives, etc.) • Distributes paychecks and staff reimbursement checks • Prepares and distributes checks for field trips • Enters and edits student information in Rediker • Addresses copy machine issues • Prepares materials for Enrollment sessions • Maintains lottery/wait list info • Orders approved classroom supplies, printer ink cartridges, janitorial supplies, etc. • Create labels, mail merges for letters, etc. • Assist with tracking of donations, thank you letters, etc. • Tracks before care charges and prepares bills for families
<p>Student and Families Coordinator</p> <p>Nancy Modlish</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide social/emotional support to students • Act as liaison between student, families and relevant agencies in the community to support and protect the welfare of HVM students • Responsible for discipline issues, teacher support and communication with families in the absence of the EPD • Provide support for 51A filing • Act as HVM's Homeless Liaison • Act as School Attendance Officer • Support teachers who are challenged by student behaviors and/or parental needs • Coordinate 504 accommodation plans in collaboration with the EPD and school nurse • Support and model for students appropriate interactions with peers and adults in individual and small group setting

Grievance Procedures

Hill View Montessori Charter Public School places tremendous value on grace, courtesy, respect and responsibility. As such we encourage parents/guardians and staff to develop open lines of communication with each other for the benefit of the children attending the school. We acknowledge however, that from time to time, situations may arise that are upsetting. If a parent/guardian, student, staff member or other individuals or groups are not satisfied with a school decision, policy or act; or believes that HVM has violated or is violating any provision of Massachusetts General Law they should follow the process outlined in the HVM Grievance Policy. *See the HVM website for the HVM Grievance Policy.*

If after following the Grievance Policy the outcome is not sufficient, the complaint may be submitted in writing to the Commissioner of Education.

SUPPORT SERVICES

In accordance with state and federal regulations, students are ensured the right to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) within the least restrictive environment. The Montessori educational model is well-suited to the inclusion model because it assumes that all students have different needs and learning styles. Within a Montessori classroom there is an emphasis for all children to work at their own pace, using an individualized program and multi-sensory materials.

HVM provides instruction according to the inclusion model. Students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) receive extra assistance in the classroom and when necessary, direct services in the form of a “pullout” from class.

District Curriculum Accommodation Plan

Massachusetts Special Education Law requires that all school districts develop a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP). The purpose of the DCAP is to assist principals in ensuring that all efforts have been made to meet students’ needs in regular education. The intent of the plan adopted by HVM is to increase the capacity of the school to meet the individual needs of diverse student learners. The Educational Program Director (EPD) and staff are involved in implementing the DCAP for the school. See Appendix L for HVM’s District Curriculum Accommodation Plan or see the HVM website, click About HVM followed by Accountability and then DCAP.

Teacher Assistance Teams (TAT)

The Teacher Assistance Team is a group of general education teachers, specialists, and Title 1 teachers who meet with the Educational Program Director (EPD) on a weekly basis. They collaborate with staff members who need assistance problem-solving and generating ideas to address student(s) needs in their classrooms. They work with teachers to develop strategies, modifications, and accommodations to ensure that by all means possible the child’s needs are being met. The TAT Team meets on an ongoing basis to assess whether the developed action plan is successful. If no further progress is made with the given supports, the student may be referred to special education for further evaluation. This assistance team is a mandatory component of the school’s special education pre-referral process.

The TAT process is generated by the classroom teacher if a student presents with either a learning or behavioral problem(s) in school. The teacher requests assistance in written form with the TAT Team

Leader. The TAT Team Leader confers with the teacher and schedules a meeting of the TAT. At the meeting, the team makes recommendations about the types of accommodations that the teachers can try within the classroom for a specific length of time. A follow-up meeting is scheduled at which time additional accommodation recommendations may be made.

If accommodations are working, the TAT Team Leader will check in on an ongoing basis with the teacher to see if any further assistance is needed. If it is determined that the accommodations are not working and is supported by data, a request for evaluation will be entertained.

Special Needs

If a new special needs student comes into HVM with an IEP, a team meeting will be held as soon as possible with special education, the classroom teacher and parents/guardians to determine how best to meet the child's needs in the new school setting. The convened special education team will review the current IEP to determine how the agreed upon goals and services may be best delivered in the Montessori inclusion setting. The team may suggest amendments, further testing or other suggestions based on the findings. The special education team will reconvene as often as necessary to monitor the student's progress.

504 Plans

The requirements of American's with Disabilities, Section 504 define an individual with a disability as one whom: (1) has a physical or mental impairment that *substantially* limits one or more life activities; or (2) has a record of such impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such impairment. A 504 plan will be developed, as needed, to create specific reasonable accommodations to assist the student in the classroom.

Health Services

HVM employs a full time Registered Nurse who provides acute medical treatment, manages chronic health conditions and provides medication administration to students while in school. The school nurse develops comprehensive medical and emergency plans with input from parents, the child's physician, and the classroom teachers in order to accommodate learning and promote optimal levels of health for those children with chronic health conditions.

Mandated periodic screenings for vision, hearing, growth, and posture are done and/or supervised by the Registered Nurse according to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulations to detect any potential concern that may hinder the learning of the child in the classroom. Appropriate referrals are made based on the results of the screenings.

See the following Health Policy section for further details related to health services at HVM.

Counseling Services

HVM employs a school counselor who provides support to students and families to facilitate students' abilities to perform and function effectively in the classroom. In addition to facilitating various social skills and support groups, the school counselor provides some individual counseling. The school counselor works with the EPD and other members of the HVM staff to formulate both specific behavior plans for some students, as well as to devise and implement a model for behavior for the school community as a whole. The school counselor is also available for crisis intervention as needed and is a member of the Crisis Team.

HEALTH SERVICES

School Physician

Paula Wright-Boulanger, MD, FAAP
Pentucket Medical Associates
One Parkway
Haverhill, MA 01830
978.521.3230

The role of the school physician is as consultant. No medical care of the students is provided. The school nurse consults with the physician on an as needed basis for advice related to school health issues and health and safety policies. Dr. Boulanger also provides standing orders for the School Nurse to administer emergency medications in school.

HVM employs a full time Registered Nurse to provide care to students and staff who become acutely ill or injured. The School Nurse also provides medical treatment for students with chronic health conditions requiring nursing services or medication in the school setting. Parents are notified of treatment by letter, form, or phone call if needed.

Mandated Periodic Health Screenings

In accordance with the Department of Public Health and Department of Education regulations, the School Nurse performs the following periodic mandated health screenings:

Screening Performed	Grade(s) Screened
Vision	K through 5 th and 7 th grades
Hearing	K through 3 rd and 7 th grades
Postural (Scoliosis)	5 th through 8 th grades
Height, Weight, and Body Mass Index (BMI)	1 st , 4 th , and 7 th grades

Screenings are NOT comprehensive exams but may indicate the need for further assessment by your child's doctor or a specialist. Parents will **ONLY** be notified by letter of above screening results of vision, hearing, and scoliosis screenings that are **not within normal limits**. Any concerns will require referral to a medical provider and then parents will communicate follow-up outcome to the School Nurse. Results of all growth screenings (height, weight and body mass index) are confidential and will be shared with parents by letter from the Health Office. Screening results are a part of your child's health record and are securely maintained by the School Nurse in the Health Office.

Procedures for Illness and Infectious Diseases

Our main concern when children become ill is the comfort, well-being, and readiness of the individual child to learn, as well as the health of the other children and members of HVM staff. The following guidelines should be observed by parents:

Please **DO NOT** send your child to school if they have:

- fever of 100.3 or greater
- vomiting within the past 24 hours

- diarrhea within the past 8 hours
- rash not previously diagnosed by your child’s doctor
- severe cold or cough
- conjunctivitis with drainage from the eye (may return after 24 hrs. of antibiotic treatment)
- impetigo (may return after 24 hrs. of antibiotics)
- strep throat (may return after 24 hrs. of antibiotics)
- any acute illness that does not allow them to fully participate in school activities.

If it is determined that your child develops any of the above at school, the parent, guardian, or a designated individual will need to pick your child up within an hour of notification.

The School Nurse and Administration may need to periodically revise any of the above guidelines based on local, state, or federal public health guidelines or mandates related to a public health outbreak.

The School Nurse will notify parents by a memo if there are any illness trends identified. It is important for you to notify the Health Office if your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness. If you have questions about a certain illness you may contact the School Nurse at any time at 978.521.2616, ext 110.

Physical Exam, Immunization, and Pre-school Vision Screening Requirements

In accordance with Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulations, each child is required to have a physical examination **upon entry** to school and then **every three to four years following entry**. We require updated physical exams for students entering kindergarten, 4th and 7th grades. If the child has a medical condition that requires continuous assessment by medical personnel, a physical will be required more frequently. Each child must be fully immunized or present written documentation of a medical or religious exemption.

The initial immunizations required prior to school entry are as follows:

- 5 doses of DTaP/DTP (Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus)
- 3 doses of Hepatitis B
- 4 doses of Polio
- 2 doses of MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
- 2 dose Varicella vaccine or physician-certified reliable history of chicken pox disease
- 1 dose of Tdap for those entering 7th grade

Source: Immunization Program website: www.mass.gov/dph/imm

Also required as documented by physician upon entry:

- Lead blood test for entering Kindergarten students
- Pre-school vision screening for entering Kindergarten students

Medication Administration at School

The Public Health School Health Services Department requires that certain procedures are followed with regard to the administration of medications to children at school. All HVM parents and staff/faculty must follow these guidelines and procedures. Medication is given **ONLY** by the School Nurse and requires the following:

1. **Written parental authorization** which indicates that the medication is for the specific child and filled out by the parent and submitted to the school nurse.
2. **Written order from the doctor** for all long term and “as needed” medications. Short term anti-biotic treatment may be given as defined by the original pharmacy. The labeled medicine container must include the child’s name; the name of the drug; the dosage (number of times per day and number of days the medication is to be administered); and the doctor’s name written by the pharmacist, The pharmacist may need to divide the medication into two bottles so that one can remain home and one can be sent to school. It is not convenient to transport this medication back and forth and may lead to missed doses.
3. All medication sent to the school **MUST BE** in their original container.
4. The School Nurse will maintain a written record of the administration of any medication. The completed medication record shall be made part of the child’s health record.
5. At HVM all medications will be stored locked in the health office out of the reach of children and under proper conditions for sanitation, preservation, security and safety. All unused medications shall be disposed of, or returned to the parent, when no longer needed.

Parents may **NEVER** send medication to school with their child. It must be handed to the school nurse or teacher from an adult.

In the event that the School Nurse or Substitute Nurse is not available, no medication will be given. The parent or guardian is required to come to the school and give the medication. This includes regular scheduled medication and over the counter medications. Epi-pens are an exception to this regulation. Massachusetts law allows trained staff members to administer Epi-pens in the case of a severe allergic reaction during the regular school day, at school sponsored events, and on field trips.

Medications on Field Trips

Special arrangements must be made to allow medication on field trips. Parents must contact the School Nurse so that accommodations can be made.

Allergy Awareness Policy

HVM is committed to the health, safety, and independence of all students and seeks to balance the freedoms of the school community with the needs of those who suffer from life threatening food allergies. As such, HVM has created an Allergy Awareness Policy that highlights the general guidelines, anticipated educational requirements, school-wide precautions, classroom practices and responsibilities of HVM community members in order to maximize the safety of those who suffer from severe food based allergies. It was created after considerable research and recognizes that it is impossible to create a policy that *guarantees* the safety of those who suffer from life-threatening food allergies.

Children with severe allergies that may lead to anaphylaxis, a severe, life threatening condition must have an **Allergy/Food Allergy Action Plan** in place at the school along with specific medications the child’s doctor has ordered for the treatment of this condition.

HVM has some peanut/nut free classrooms. Parents are notified yearly of this policy for his/her child’s classroom status. Please do not send in any products that contain nuts if your child is in a

Peanut and Tree Nut Free classroom. HVM teachers and staff do their best to monitor foods that come in to the school but we cannot guarantee that nuts or nut products will not accidentally enter our school. Students should not share food in the classroom because of this reason. Parents of children with severe life threatening allergies should stress this to their child to assist in avoiding an accidental exposure to a food they may cause a life threatening allergic reaction.

General Guidelines Regarding Peanut/Nut Free Classrooms

There are specific guidelines by level (i.e. Kindergarten, Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary & Middle School) based on ages of students, developmental appropriateness, and ability to assume responsibility for oneself. In general, older students will be expected to “take more responsibility” for their health and safety while at school and for their classroom community in general. All students with severe allergies will have written “Anaphylaxis Emergency Plans” developed by the nurse along with the students’ parents and physician. Allergy information and emergency plans will be shared with teachers and staff.

Students and staff will be educated annually with general information about food allergies (recognition, reactions and treatment), the importance of not sharing foods, and best practices with regards to proper hand washing, table and surface cleaning, and prevention of cross contamination of allergens. Student specific Epi-pens and the student’s “Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan” will be kept in “safety sacks” in the classroom for use by trained teachers and staff. Whenever possible, two Epi-pens will be kept at school: one in the classroom and one in the health office. Safety sacks containing Epi-pens and student information will travel with an adult whenever the student changes rooms for electives or specials, goes to recess, etc.

Parents will be notified which classrooms **do not** allow nuts or nut products.

Parent education will be provided in the form of communications in Wednesday Notes or other mailings sent home as well as more formal trainings as needed. The school nurse will ensure direct contact with every parent/guardian of those students who are in nut-free classrooms to ensure their understanding of the requirements of the classroom as it relates to food products. The nurse will also attend back-to-school nights in the fall to provide information about the school allergy policy. Additional and directed education will be provided to those parents who volunteer to support the school via the hospitality committee

Kindergarten and Lower Elementary Level

These classrooms will be peanut or nut-free on a classroom-by-classroom basis depending on the needs of the students. **Classrooms that have students with severe peanut or tree nut allergies will not allow nuts.**

Upper Elementary and Middle School Level

These classrooms **will not automatically** be deemed peanut or nut-free but instead, will take special precautions to minimize cross-contamination of tables where peanuts and tree nuts could be consumed. Time will be allowed for proper hand washing before and after lunch and snack times.

NOTE: Hand sanitizer is **NOT** a proper way to clean peanut and nut residue off of hands. It only spreads it around on the hands.

Children with Asthma, Allergies, or any other Special Medical Needs

For children who have other allergies or special medical conditions which will require limiting exposure to certain foods, pets, etc., parents must notify the school and the classroom teachers as soon as possible. Parents are required to update this information every year and are required to let the school know during the year if such a situation becomes known.

Children with other medical considerations such as diabetes, asthma, seizure disorder, or any other chronic medical condition should have an Individualized Health Plan (IHP), Asthma Action Plan (AAP) or an Emergency Medical Plan (EMP) in place. Contact the School Nurse for assistance with this at 978.521.2626 ext. 110. The School Nurse will contact any parent or guardian who lists a special medical consideration or allergy on the enrollment or medical forms. All medical plans must be updated annually.

Copies of all health forms and plans will be kept in the Health Office and only shared with those who have a “need to know” in order to assist the child with day-to-day learning or health needs. Parents are required to sign a HIPPA/FERPA Privacy Release Form at the beginning of each year along with a health update and medication administration authorization.

Emergency Treatment Plan

Parents and Guardians are required to give Emergency Contact information to the school upon enrollment, yearly after admission, and whenever the information changes. It is *imperative* that school personnel be able to contact the parent/guardian in the event of an individual or school-wide emergency.

CPR and First Aid are offered to teachers at least annually and required of the Crisis Team. HVM has Emergency Protocols that are followed in any emergency situation.

In the event that Emergency Medical Services (EMS/911) is called, EMS personnel will determine the best place for the child to be transported for medical care. The medical facilities in this area are Merrimack Valley Hospital (Haverhill), Holy Family Hospital (Methuen), and Lawrence General Hospital (Lawrence). You may alert the school of your preferences and every effort will be made to honor your wishes but the final decision is made by the professionals that transport your child to the needed services.

Contacting the Health Office

The school nurse can be contacted any time with questions or concerns about the health and safety of your child or for clarification of any policies. The nurse can be reached at 978.521.2616, ext 110.

SCHOOL SAFETY AND EMERGENCIES

Safety of children is a top priority at HVM. The following procedures have been put in place to ensure staff and student safety:

Locked Doors

Entrances to HVM are locked at all times. Anyone wishing to enter the school must ring the doorbell at the front entrance and wait for a staff person to open the door. Once inside, the person must sign in.

Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Checks

All staff, volunteers, and parents who may be with HVM students in an unsupervised setting are required to have a CORI check. If there is a criminal history, HVM is required to notify the person of the findings.

CORI checks are valid for three years. HVM encourages all individuals to have a current CORI filed with the Personnel & Operations Director (POD). The POD has application forms for CORI checks. A copy of a valid form of identification (e.g., a license) must be attached to the CORI application.

Fire Drills

At the beginning of the year, classroom teachers review fire drill procedures with students. An exit plan is posted in each classroom. HVM works with the Haverhill Fire Department to hold fire drills throughout the year and is required to host at least three? each year.

Emergency Evacuation or Lock-Down

HVM has developed an emergency plan that deals with evacuations and lock downs of the building that are necessary due to weather, terrorist attacks or other emergency events. A copy of the plan is available in the front office. Preparedness drills are held at least once a year with staff and students.

Fire, Weapons, Illegal Substances and Tobacco

Possession or use of fire, weapons of any kind, illegal substances, or tobacco products within the school building, school facilities, or on school grounds or school buses by any individual – including school personnel, students, and parents – is prohibited at all times. For more information, see Massachusetts General Law Ch 71, 37H which relates to Expulsion for Assault Weapons and Controlled Substances.

Child Abuse and Neglect

If there is reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of eighteen years is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse inflicted upon him/her which causes harm or substantial risk of harm to the child's health or welfare, school personnel are mandated to notify the MA Department of Children and Family. Abuse includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect, including malnutrition.

Either prior to or immediately after the filing, parents/guardians will be notified of the action taken. HVM will provide support to families in this situation whenever it is appropriate.

Harassment and Discrimination

HVM is committed to protecting the rights and dignity of students, parents and staff. HVM prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying. Any actions that disrupt the safe learning environment of HVM will not be tolerated.

It is HVM's policy to provide equal opportunities for all current and prospective students, parents and staff regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, marital status, age, sexual orientation, or disability for all current and prospective school community members. Further, HVM will make reasonable accommodations for individuals with mental or physical disabilities in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Harassment of students, parents or staff occurring in the school or in other settings in which these groups may interact is unlawful and will not be tolerated. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about harassment, or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a harassment complaint, is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated.

HVM takes allegations of harassment seriously and will respond promptly to file complaints. If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has taken place, HVM shall impose such corrective action(s) as is necessary up to and including termination of employees and expulsion of students.

Examples of Harassment

- Verbal Harassment: Derogatory or vulgar comments regarding a person's race, gender, religion, ethnicity or physical appearance; suggestive or insulting comments, sexual epithets, jokes, reference to sexual conduct, etc.
- Physical Harassment: Infliction of unwanted bodily contact.
- Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances or comments, gestures or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Distribution of written, electronic or graphic material having the same effect. Also, the use of one's authority and power to coerce another individual into sexual relations or to punish the other for his/her refusal.

Complaints of Harassment

If any student, parent or staff member believes that she/he has been subjected to harassment, he/she has the right to file a complaint. This may be done in writing or orally to the Executive Director at 978.521.2616, extension 100.

Investigation of Harassment

All complaint allegations are investigated promptly and fairly. Investigators may include the Executive Director and members from the Board of Trustees. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent that it is practical under the circumstances. The process will include a private interview with the person filing the complaint, the alleged offender and any witnesses. When the investigation is completed, HVM will inform both parties of the results. If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, HVM will work to eliminate the offending conduct and when appropriate, impose disciplinary action, up to and including termination of any employees and expulsion of students that may be involved.

State and Federal Remedies

In addition to filing a complaint with HVM, a formal complaint may be filed with either or both of the government agencies listed below. Using our complaint process does not prohibit anyone from filing a complaint with these agencies.

The United States Equal Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

One Congress Street – 10th Floor

Boston, MA 02114

Tel: (617) 565-3200

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)

One Ashburton Place Room 601

Boston, MA 02108

Tel: (617) 727-3990

Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) Plan

The AHERA regulation requires each Local Education Agency (LEA) to conduct a re-inspection of all friable and non-friable known or assumed asbestos-containing building material in each building that they lease, own or otherwise use as a school building. The AHERA re-inspection is to be performed by an accredited inspector at least once every three years from the time of implementation of the original management plan.

In 2004, prior to the opening of school, HVM engaged Diversified Environmental Corp., 17 Accord Park Drive, Suite 200, Norwell, MA, to examine the building and develop an AHERA plan. That plan was filed with DESE and a copy is available for view at the school.

In January 2010, an AHERA plan for 75 Foundation Ave was developed by New England Environmental of Groveland.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to student's education records. These rights are:

(1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Educational Program Director a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

(2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the Educational Program Director, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to privacy of personally identifiable information in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

1. *Consent* before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)
2. *Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of*
 - Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
 - Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
 - Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
3. *Inspect*, upon request and before administration or use protected information surveys of students; instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

**Parent/Guardian Handbook
Sign-Off Form**

September 1, 2011

Please acknowledge that you have had an opportunity to review the Hill View Montessori Charter Public School Student and Family Handbook which includes important information. Included in the handbook is information pertaining to attendance, field trips, school closings, school policies, computer use, code of conduct, bullying prevention and intervention, disclosure of student information, grievance procedures, dress code, etc.

The handbook can be found on the school website at

<http://hillviewmontessori.org/index.php/families/general-information>.

Alternatively, if you need a paper copy of the handbook, please contact the front office and one will be provided.

As required by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Hill View Montessori Charter Public School is requesting documentation of its dissemination of this handbook.

Please sign below to acknowledgment your awareness of and opportunity to review the 2011-2012 Student and Family Handbook.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

By the signature below, I am acknowledging my opportunity to review the Hill View Montessori Charter Public School Student and Family Handbook.

Date: _____

Name (please print): _____

Students attending HVM: _____

Signature: _____