



**MONTESSORI
PEAKS ACADEMY
Jeffco Public School of Choice**

Family Handbook

**DRAFT until Board review August 24, 2021*

2021-2022

/Address

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A Jefferson County Public Charter School and Tuition-Based Preschool Program

*This handbook is subject to change based on current COVID-19 policy changes or health mandates.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Vision Statement

Montessori Peaks Academy is an educational journey, preparing each child to uniquely contribute to our shared community.

Mission Statement

It is the mission of Montessori Peaks Academy to achieve high standards of individual excellence by guiding the whole student through an exceptional educational experience based on the educational philosophy of Maria Montessori.

Commitment to Nondiscrimination

Montessori Peaks Academy does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin or age in its programs or activities. Inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies should first be directed to the MPA Board of Directors' designated representative. Further inquiries should be directed to the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 1961 Stout Street 3rd floor, Denver, CO 80294.

Family Privacy and Access to Student Records and Public Documents

Montessori Peaks Academy follows the Jefferson County Schools policies regarding family privacy (FERPA—Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act). The school also follows Jefferson County Schools policy regarding the public's right to know, CORA (Colorado Open Records Act). These are detailed on the Jefferson County website, found on the Jeffco BoardDocs, <https://www.boarddocs.com/co/jeffco/Board.nsf/Public>. The Jeffco policy about family privacy is policy JRA/JRC, and the policy pertaining to public right to information is policy KDB.

Charter Schools Information

The Colorado Charter Schools Act was enacted in 1993 to enhance educational opportunities for students in Colorado by giving parents, teachers and community members an avenue “to take responsible risks and create new, innovative, more flexible ways of educating all children within the public school system.” The Act seeks to provide an atmosphere in Colorado’s public schools for alternative learning experiences.

Charter schools are non-sectarian, non-religious and non-home-based; schools governed by a group of parents, teachers and/or community members within a specified public school district. A “Charter” is negotiated between a Charter School and its school district, which allows a Charter School to operate free from certain specified school district policies and state regulations.

Charter schools are subject to the same or higher student performance standards as other schools in the district, as mandated by state law. Charter schools provide an effective means for more students to meet Colorado content standards by utilizing time, resources and instructional strategies in more effective and efficient ways.

History of Montessori Peaks Academy

In August 1996, a Steering Committee of parents was formed which researched, prepared and submitted a Charter Application to the Jefferson County Board of Education. In June 1997, the Charter Contract was approved. Montessori Peaks Academy was Jefferson County’s first public Montessori Charter School, opening its doors in September 1997.

The school is now housed in its own specially designed building, completed in the Fall of 2003 with an 11,000 square foot addition completed in September 2007. Our Charter was renewed by the Jefferson County School Board in 2015 for five years.

MPA Board of Directors

The Constitution of the State of Colorado delegates authority to run public schools to the Board of Education of each local school district, with oversight by the State Board of Education. The Jefferson County School District, through the Charter Schools Act, has delegated most of the decision-making authority for Montessori Peaks Academy to its Board of Directors.

Montessori Peaks Academy is a corporate entity separate from the Jefferson County School District and operates autonomously under the direction of its Board of Directors. The Board of Directors of Montessori Peaks Academy in accordance with the school’s Charter contract with the Jefferson County School District is responsible for making all governance and policy decisions affecting the students and staff. The MPA Board of Directors is an elected board of 7 parents, one staff member elected by the staff and one community member appointed by the MPA Board.

Regular meetings of the MPA Board of Directors are held monthly. Notices announcing the dates, times and locations of Board of Directors’ meetings are

posted on the front door of the school 24 hours prior to the meetings and on the school website.

Special meetings and executive sessions addressing issues requiring confidentiality as provided for in the Colorado Open Meetings Law, may be called as needed by the MPA Board of Directors.

The Board meets once a month to discuss the various elements of school governance. These meetings are open to the public and open to any community member who might wish to attend. While the meetings are open, it is important to remember this is a formal meeting and the dialogue primarily exists between Board members as they discuss the various items on the agenda. However, there is a designated time for community members to share their thoughts with the Board during each meeting. This time is called "Community Comments," and you are welcome to sign up to speak during this time. A sign-up sheet for comments can be found on the lobby bulletin board of the school, along with the meeting agenda.

If you wish to share ideas or concerns with the Board, you are welcome to reach out to any Board member individually. Contact information for each member is found on the school website. The Board welcomes feedback from the community!

For reference, all corporate documents (i.e. by-laws, articles of incorporation, BOD policies, BOD Meeting Schedules, etc.) are located on the school website (http://www.montessoripeaks.org/mpa_board_of_directors/meetings_and_communication) and are also available in the front office and are available for public review upon request. The Board does not generally have access to confidential files of students, school personnel or other federally or state mandated confidential information.

The Montessori Model of Education

Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician, observed that children possess an intrinsic need to explore and learn about the world and a natural propensity to absorb knowledge and information provided to them.

Montessori philosophy is based on a deep respect for the individual child. A Montessori classroom environment is specially designed for specific multi-aged groups. The child has access to a variety of materials: equipment, activities and furniture appropriate for his/her age, interest and ability. Central to the environment is the trained teacher who assists the children in the unfolding of their individual personalities.

A Montessori program achieves a balance between a child's needs for freedom of movement and social interaction, and equally compelling needs for order, independence, concentration and challenge. Qualified, caring adults guide children to moments of discovery that give great joy and a sense of dignity as independent human beings. Children learn to think for themselves, collaborate with others and become actively involved in their own education. Children then take ownership of their knowledge, have confidence in their opinions and are better prepared to face the challenges ahead.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the Montessori process is that abstractions are not taught directly: instead the necessary components are provided so that the children can move from concrete to abstract concepts in their own time thus providing a longer-lasting impression. This means that children arrive at new and deeper knowledge through their own creative thought developed during their work. Children can achieve this through the exploration of hands-on materials which are arranged on the shelves sequentially in order and in degrees of abstraction and complexity. These manipulative materials are self-correcting and provide maximum potential for success.

VISITING THE SCHOOL

General

State and federal laws mandate that all visitors and parents must sign in at the administrative office before entering any area of the building. Unauthorized visitors are prohibited from entering the school. All visitors, including family or friends, must follow the school's procedures for visitors by filling out and signing the visitor log and obtaining and wearing a visitor name tag. Visitors may be asked to show proper identification and state the reason for the visit. The number of visitors at any one time may be limited as their presence could be distracting to the supervision of students.

Parents

Parents are encouraged to visit the school. This provides an opportunity to observe the work the children are doing, and gives insight into your child's relationship with others. Please schedule your visit with your child's teacher at a time when it will be most meaningful for you and your child. Lead teachers may limit the number of visits and time of visits in order to ensure that the educational program for each student is not disrupted. Visits should not exceed one hour.

To maintain confidentiality, parents are expected to speak to the Lead Teacher about their child only. Parents are expected to keep observations of other students' behavior to themselves.

Parents should never discipline another student when visiting the school. If a parent's child is involved in a behavioral situation with another student, the parent should contact the teacher for help sorting out the problem.

Siblings and Friends

Siblings and friends, including MPA graduates, visiting your child's classroom can be disruptive to both your child's and other children's educational experience. Please do not allow siblings and friends, including MPA graduates, to accompany your child to class or visit the classroom during school hours.

PROGRAMS AND HOURS

Educational Programs

Montessori Peaks Academy offers programs for children, age three through 6th grade. Preschool is tuition based. Kindergarten through 6th grade programs are tuition free, as we are a Jefferson County Public Charter School.

1. Primary:

3 year olds:	Half day or Full day	Mon.-Fri. or Mon.-Thurs.
4 year olds:	Half day or Full day	Mon.-Fri.
5-6 year olds -		
Kindergarten:	Full day	Mon.-Fri.
2. Lower Elementary: Grades 1, 2, 3
3. Upper Elementary: Grades 4, 5, 6

Before and After School Programs

1. Primary Level: 3 years old through 6 years old
2. Elementary Level: 1st through 6th grade

School Hours

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Elementary Program: grades 1 st – 6 th | 8:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. |
| 2. Full day Primary Program | 8:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. |
| 3. Half day Primary | 8:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. |
| 4. Before School Program | 7:00 A.M. to 8:00 A.M. |
| 5. After School Program | 3:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. |

6. Office Hours

7:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

**Before/After School Programs Coordinator: Lori Lubthisophon
303-972-2627 ext 135**

Students enrolled in the Before School Program can enter the building any time after 7:00 A.M. After School Program students must be picked up no later than 6:00 P.M. Supervision will be provided in the Before/After School Program(s) designated areas only. Therefore, **students must be signed in to the program each day and signed out each day by a parent, or other authorized person over the age of 18.**

Students in the Before and After School Programs are expected to adhere to the same behavior expectations as any Montessori Peaks Academy student. Failure to exhibit appropriate behavior in these programs will result in the student being removed from them. Students will be given three opportunities to change their behavior. Parents will be notified in writing if their child's behavior is in question.

***** Enrollment and Registration**

1. Eligibility: The MPA Before and After School program is open to students ages three to twelve years of age who are enrolled at MPA.
2. Orientation: Before students can participate in the Before and After School Programs, parents/guardians must review the Before and After School Program Handbook from the MPA website. Parents/guardians are required to submit the Handbook Acknowledgement form to the Coordinator. This form can be found on the documents page of the Before and After School webpage.
3. Registration Procedure: The required Registration/Emergency Care Form, the Handbook Acknowledgement form, a Health Appraisal form and the Monthly Calendar must be submitted before a student may attend the program. These forms can be found on the document page of the Before and After School webpage. Parents are required to inform the Before and After School Program Coordinator of any Health Plans on file with the school.
4. Late Pick-up Fees: It is important that we have additional contact phone numbers if parents cannot be reached. We understand that emergencies do arise, and it may become impossible to get to the Program on time. If this happens, we expect a call from the parent/guardian. A late fee of \$1 per minute, per student is assessed after 6:00 P.M. payable to the staff member on duty at the time of pick-up. Late

pick-up fee must be paid prior to your student returning to the program. After the third occurrence per semester, this fee is doubled. Continued abuse of late pick-ups will result in discontinuation of participation in the program.

If parents cannot be reached and a child is still at the Program at 6:30 P.M., the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department will be called.

AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT CLASSES

A variety of enrichment classes are offered to MPA students after regular school hours. Participation in these classes is optional and is based on a contractual agreement between the parent and the instructor. The classes are fee-based, payable directly to the enrichment instructor. Background and fingerprint checks are conducted for all enrichment class instructors. This information is kept on file in the main office. Students are always under direct supervision during enrichment class activities. **Any communication regarding the enrichment classes should be directed to the instructor or the administrators of the program.**

Parents of students attending after school enrichment activities should send a note to the teacher so that their students can go directly to the After School program and be picked up by the enrichment class teacher. Otherwise students will be sent to car pick-up and be late for the enrichment class.

Snacks may not be provided by the enrichment providers, so plan accordingly. **Be prompt in picking up students from their enrichment classes at their designated location—students not enrolled in the After School program will not be taken to that program if you are late.**

ATTENDANCE

Attendance Policy

Daily attendance is critical to a student's continuity of learning and is the combined responsibility of the parents, the school and the student. The Colorado School Attendance Law requires compulsory school attendance for children age seven to sixteen. This law makes parents responsible for their children's attendance, and requires schools to keep accurate records of daily attendance and to report annual attendance. Regular attendance makes it possible for teachers to meet the goals of the school and the District. The school cannot teach students who are not present.

Students are expected to attend school for all days of the established school calendar. When illness, family emergency, or family business requires your child to be absent, parents/guardians are expected to call the MPA attendance line at 303-972-2627 by 8:00 A.M. Students who are not called in by 8 A.M. will be given an unexcused absence until contact has been made. When calling, please leave the following:

1. Student's name
2. Student's teacher and grade level
3. Date and reason for absence
4. Parent's name
5. Telephone number where you can be reached during the day

Absences resulting from temporary illness, injury, extended disability of the student or family, or emergencies will, under normal circumstances, be excused.

Any other absences must be excused through prior arrangement with the school office and with notification to the principal and teacher. A Pre-Arranged Absence Form must be filled out, submitted, and approved by administration at least three days prior to the absence. **Personal vacations taken during regularly scheduled school sessions are discouraged. Supplemental work will not be provided by the teacher or school prior to a vacation.**

Following an absence, it is the **student's responsibility to request make-up work**. "Make-up work should reflect class assignment missed during an absence, and a reasonable amount of time should be allowed for work completion. Time allowed to make up work is twice the number of classes or days missed (two days allowed for make-up work for each day of absence); however, an extension of this time limit may be approved by school administration." Jefferson County Public Schools Conduct Code, page 32. Students are expected to keep up with current work while completing the make-up work.

Testing periods are especially crucial times for student attendance. We ask parents to plan for students to be present during standardized state testing and other testing periods and to make appointments and other scheduled absences after school or before or after testing. See "Academic Standards" section (page 14) for approximate times for standardized testing and the school's yearly calendar for detailed information. Testing dates will also be published on the school website.

A parent whose child has significant absences (four or more absences in a semester or seven or more absences in a school year) may be subject to legal proceedings. Parents of students with 10 or more absences due to health

concerns will be required to submit a letter from their child's physician for any subsequent absences.

Tardiness

On time arrival at school is very important to a student's academic achievement and successful school experience. The school day starts at 8 A.M. Tardy slips will be given to students at 8:10 A.M. Parents are asked to call the school to report if a child will be arriving late.

If a child is late on a day that a field trip is scheduled and the class has already left for the field trip, he/she will be added to another classroom as student/teacher ratios allow until the class returns from the field trip. Students, especially at the elementary levels, with excessive tardiness may be asked to make up missed work during recess.

Authorization for Student Check-out and Pick-up

The school requires parents to inform the office and the teacher if someone other than a parent will be picking up their student. Students will only be released to individuals who have been authorized by their parent/guardians on the "Authorized Persons to Pick Up" form and are at least 18 years of age for picking up students in Primary or Aftercare. Copies of this form are on file in the front office and with the teacher.

Persons on the Authorized Persons to Pick Up form can pick up students only if a phone call or email has been received by school personnel. A note can be made on the Authorized Persons to Pick Up form which indicates. When the individual picking up the child arrives they can pick up the student without further notice. Persons picking up students that are not on the Authorized Persons To Pick Up form are required to have Parents send an email or written note to school personnel to give a one-time permission for pick up of their child by this person. New people can be added to this form at any time during the year by coming to the office and adding the information to the form.

Drivers' License identification will be checked by the staff for those people picking up children other than the usual person. If a staff member has any question about the person picking up, he/she may send the person into the school for an ID check.

If a **change for a specific day's pick-up** must be made, parents will notify the school secretary in person or by email of the change, or send written notification directly to the teacher. The office will be sure that the teacher has been notified of

the change. This would include play dates, parties, or other occasions which would involve a different pick-up arrangement.

A **request for the student's early dismissal** should be made in writing to the teacher and the front office. The request should include the date and time the student will be picked up.

1. The adult picking up the child for early dismissal must come to the office.
2. The Secretary calls **Elementary** student's class and notifies the staff that the child should be released for early dismissal. The student will come to the office to be signed out and released.
3. The Secretary calls the **Primary** class to notify the staff the student is to be released for early dismissal. The person picking up the student will be sent to the classroom to pick up and sign out the student EXCEPT
 - **On Fridays when Kindergarten students have Specials classes**, the School Secretary calls the Specials class to notify the staff member that the student will be released early.
 - The person picking up the student takes a form from the School Secretary and goes to Specials classroom to pick up the student.
 - The student returns to his/her classroom to get personal items and be signed out.

Other than emergency situations, classes and students should not be interrupted for early dismissal. Any student leaving the school for early dismissal *must be signed out by a parent or guardian either in the office (Elementary Students) or on the classroom roster by the Primary/Kindergarten classrooms*. Student safety is very important to MPA.

Students are never permitted to leave school during regular hours, or if enrolled in the Before or After School Program, without permission. No student may go off-campus alone during school hours.

Excessive Weather and School Closure/Delay Due To Inclement Weather

Students do not go outside to play on days when the temperature is above 100 degrees Fahrenheit or below 25 degrees Fahrenheit. The outdoor play time will be adjusted accordingly to the temperature. Students should be prepared to participate in outdoor activities on a daily basis.

School is closed only at the discretion of the school principal or the president of the Board of Directors. Every effort will be made to give parents maximum advanced notice of any school closures.

In cases of inclement weather we will follow Jeffco policy and practice. Montessori Peaks Academy will be closed if **all** Jefferson County Public Schools are closed and will have a 2 hour delayed start if Jefferson County Public Schools declare a delayed start. Because Jefferson County is so large and weather conditions can vary in different parts of the County, there may be instances when only schools in certain areas may be closed and Montessori Peaks Academy may or may not be affected.

Any changes in open/closed status for Montessori Peaks Academy will be announced, just like any other public school on all major TV stations and through a District wide phone notification system or email. If it is announced that Jefferson County Public Schools are closed, Montessori Peaks Academy will be closed. If it is announced that Jefferson County Public Schools will observe a 2 hour delayed start, Montessori Peaks Academy will observe a 2 hour delayed start,

RE-ENROLLMENT, EVALUATION, WITHDRAWAL

Re-enrollment Procedures

1. By January, parents of students currently attending MPA will need to provide an intent to return via the Jeffco Enroll system. Deadlines for providing this intent to return are consistent with Jeffco Enroll deadlines for all Jefferson County Public Schools.
2. The Jeffco Student Placement Lottery is held by the school district. See Jeffco website for specific dates. MPA will follow the Jeffco District guidelines to include the specific dates.
3. Vacancies will be filled by siblings of currently enrolled students and then by students or staff members, followed by the students on the Enroll Jeffco site.

Each new sibling must have a completed application for the following academic school year by the date of the first lottery, usually mid-January.

Evaluation and Dismissal from Program

We, as a school, are committed to providing every opportunity for students to feel comfortable and to make a positive adjustment in the classroom environment.

However, there are times and circumstances when a student may experience difficulties, such as:

1. The student is not fully toilet trained and independent with bathroom skills.
2. The student is not making the adjustment in the classroom environment.
3. The student's behavior is inappropriate over an extended period of time.

The principal, in consultation with parent(s), staff and appropriate professionals, will determine a course of action which would include making accommodations. If the accommodations do not achieve the desired result, the parents may be asked to withdraw their child and seek a more appropriate educational environment. **Preschool parents sign a school readiness agreement indicating their child is ready for school in a Montessori environment.**

Withdrawal of a Student

A student may be withdrawn from MPA by notice provided by parent/guardian at least thirty days in advance of the withdrawal date. The parent/guardian should contact the school secretary to obtain appropriate paperwork. Parents are responsible for any outstanding invoices.

CHARGES AND BILLING

The Montessori Peaks Academy Primary, and Before/After School Program tuition is based on an academic year and is paid on a 10-month payment schedule. Students are admitted for the full academic year.

The obligation to pay the agreed tuition is not subject to adjustment for illness, absence or any other reason. If it becomes necessary to withdraw your child, written notice is required THIRTY DAYS PRIOR TO WITHDRAWAL. Withdrawal will not be accepted after April 15th.

Tuition is due by the 16th of each month, August through May. August tuition is due at August student registration, along with each student's materials fee. If a student is enrolled after the school year has begun, the first and second month's tuition is due on or before the first day the student begins school. If a student is withdrawn during the school year, no prorated refund for tuition will be made for the month in which the student leaves the school. The paid activity fees will be prorated to the student's last day of attendance. No refunds for either tuition or fees will be considered after April 15th for the current academic year. A \$20.00 late fee will be charged for any outstanding invoices 10 or more days past due.

Children of parents/guardians who have not paid invoiced tuition and/or other applicable fees will not be accepted into the Montessori Peaks

Academy tuition-based programs until a zero balance is achieved. Any family desiring to continue enrollment must have a zero balance before the first day of the month. Special payment arrangements can be made with the Business Manager and must be approved by the Administrator. Montessori Peaks Academy may use all legal remedies in collecting past due amounts. The parent/guardian agrees to pay late fees, collection costs, attorney fees, and court costs reasonably incurred and associated with the collection of unpaid invoices/statements. All tuition and/or other applicable fees must be current and paid in full prior to the following yearly registration.

Questions regarding billing should be directed to the Business Manager, who is in the office from 8:30 until 4:00 during the school year.

PARENT SUPPORT

Parent Participation

Research shows that strong parent participation has lasting and beneficial effects on a child's education and correlates with student achievement as well. Becoming significantly involved in a child's education and school can produce effective results and add to the strength of our community.

Parent participation is highly encouraged and critically important to the success of Montessori Peaks Academy, and to the educational experience of its students. Charter schools are mandated to allocate (return) 5% of all Per-Pupil Revenue back to the District. Also charter schools do not receive any funding from Jeffco School District for building acquisition, utilities, insurance, and building maintenance, creating an increased financial burden. Therefore parent involvement is even more crucial for the success of our program.

Volunteering at Montessori Peaks Academy

Parents are encouraged to become involved in the school at all levels. Each family is asked to contribute 50 volunteer hours (25 hours for single parent families) per academic year. This equates to approximately 5 hours per month. Each family will be asked to log in their volunteer hours using the form on the Montessori Peaks Academy website or by logging in at the office if volunteer efforts take place on school grounds. It is very important that we keep track of volunteer hours at MPA, as many grants make decisions based partially on the volunteer commitment at our school. Being in attendance at school functions (parent/teacher conferences, musical productions, etc.) does not count toward volunteer hour commitment. The only exceptions to this rule are attendance at parent education nights and Board meetings.

To maintain confidentiality, parents are expected to speak to the Lead Teacher about their child only. Parents are expected to keep observations of other students' behavior to themselves.

Community Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement

As a community volunteer assisting at Montessori Peaks Academy, you have been authorized by the Principal to act as a school official, subject to the direction and control of the school administrators and teachers.

As a volunteer you may have access to student information including educational records, observations of behavior, and personal interaction. Student educational records include all records, files, documents and other materials that contain personally identifiable information on any student, as well as the personally identifiable information itself (including student grades).

You agree to maintain the confidentiality of all student educational records, which you generate and to which you are given access as an authorized community volunteer. This means that you agree not to disclose student education records or personally identifiable student information. It also means that you will report observations and/or concerns to the educational staff and not to other parties including the child's parents.

You understand and agree that your failure to maintain the confidentiality of all student educational information to which you are given access may disqualify you from further service as a community volunteer at Montessori Peaks Academy.

Volunteer Release

You will be signing an agreement at registration, which states the following:

In consideration of my voluntary participation in the Montessori Peaks Academy building and grounds, and or related activities, I understand I hereby release and discharge Montessori Peaks Academy Charter School, the Jefferson County School District and their/its successors, heirs, assigns, directors, officers, employees, supervisors, agents, attorneys and representatives, from any and all actions, causes of action, claims, demands, losses, damages, costs, attorney fees, judgments, liens, indebtedness and liabilities whatsoever, known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected past present or future, with regard to all matters that could have been raised in an action on the merits regarding the aforementioned activity in which I have elected to voluntarily participate.

Volunteer Opportunities

Many volunteer opportunities are available to parents. Check with your student's lead teacher for classroom volunteer needs.

Accountability Committee

The Accountability Committee serves in an advisory role to the Board of Directors of Montessori Peaks Academy. The committee is charged with helping to approve, implement and monitor an annual school improvement plan, as well as administer and evaluate all surveys. The committee works with Administration and the Board to help the school meet its educational goals.

MPA Board of Directors Committees

The MPA Board of Directors welcomes all MPA communities to attend and participate in the various committees created by the MPA Board. These committees provide valuable feedback and insight which affect board decisions and activities.

MPA Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of Montessori Peaks Academy in accordance with the school's Charter contract with the Jefferson County School District is responsible for making all governance and policy decisions affecting the students and staff. The MPA Board of Directors is an elected board of 7 parents, one staff member elected by the staff and one community member appointed by the Board. Regular meetings of the Board are held monthly.

Classroom Volunteers

Parents come to the school and work under the direct supervision of classroom teachers, helping with classroom chores and working with students. Parents volunteering are expected to sign a Volunteer Confidentiality agreement, which outlines the responsibilities of volunteers to respect the confidentiality of the classroom and students. The school will perform a background check for parents who volunteer regularly and/or frequently. Parents who breach this trust may not be permitted to work with students in the classroom.

Volunteer involvement is at the discretion of the Lead Teacher and may not disrupt the learning environment.

Hot Lunch Helpers

Volunteers assist the Hot Lunch Coordinator in serving school hot lunches to students, managing lists and District paperwork, and cleaning up at the end of lunch. Sign up at registration or see the Hot Lunch Coordinator to participate.

Morning Car/Drop-off Volunteers

In the morning, parents are needed to assist with kindergarten and elementary drop-off. The arrangements are informal—just show up at 7:50 until 8:05 and join the other volunteers at the hug and drop curb. This job is very important and truly appreciated, supporting the safety of our students!

PTA

The MPA PTA sponsors activities such as the Book Fair, teacher appreciation activities, fundraisers, school social events, and more!

THE MONTESSORI EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Teacher Qualifications

Lead Teachers at MPA are Montessori trained and certified and must be designated “highly qualified” by the Colorado Department of Education.

Assistant teachers are present in all our classrooms. Most assistants have previous experience in school or childcare settings. Many of our assistants have taken Montessori overview courses.

Primary teachers and assistants also hold or are in the process of acquiring an Early Childhood Teacher Qualification Verification Letter from the Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care.

Montessori teachers strive to:

1. Awaken a child’s spirit and imagination.
2. Encourage the child’s normal desire for independence and high sense of self-esteem.
3. Help children develop the kindness, courtesy and self-discipline that will allow them to become a full member of society.
4. Help the student learn how to observe, question and explore ideas independently.

Curriculum

Montessori Peaks Academy has adopted the Montessori curriculum. The Montessori curriculum focuses on child-centered, individualized learning and is a precise, content-rich and stimulating instructional program designed to assist students in developing a strong academic foundation of both knowledge and

skills. Students at Montessori Peaks Academy make smooth transitions from concrete learning to abstract thinking, attain mastery of basic skills and knowledge, and develop strong proficiencies in problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

Montessori Peaks Academy incorporates appropriate teaching methodologies at all levels, to ensure that students remain challenged and strive to reach their potential in all areas. Montessori Peaks Academy further enriches its curriculum with “specials” classes in art, music and physical education at the K-6th levels. Education in these areas helps develop the whole child, providing students with extended opportunities for creative self-expression, physical activity, cooperative learning, teamwork and exposure to other cultures. The art, music and physical education teachers also work closely with your child’s classroom teacher to integrate elements of the classroom work with the “specials” activities.

Learning Environment

The Montessori program places children within learning environments that span multiple years of academic and social development, creating a more natural learning community for students. Montessori teachers are well trained to accommodate a wide range of abilities and needs within the multi-age classroom, and students benefit from interaction with a more diverse group of peers.

Each of the classrooms at Montessori Peaks Academy is prepared for meeting the intellectual, physical, emotional, and social needs of each child as an individual. Specially designed and sequenced manipulative materials, especially at the lower grade levels, help isolate skills to be learned and direct the child through the curriculum to mastery, building self-confidence along the way. Although there are both large and small group activities throughout the day, the child’s academic instruction is frequently individually presented. As a student progresses through the curriculum, he/she is presented with academic skills and knowledge from an increasingly vast array of reference materials. Each classroom has its own classroom library and technology, as well as access to resource materials.

The classrooms are divided into specific learning areas that include practical life, sensorial, language, mathematics, geography, history, science and the arts. To foster self-motivation and self-discipline, students are expected to choose any material for work that has been introduced to them by their teacher. They may repeatedly work with the material on their own so that they have the opportunity to discover the underlying concepts and to attain mastery of skills contained in the particular work.

Serving Students’ Learning Needs

Each individual child's academic, emotional, social, artistic and physical progress is observed, assessed and fostered by the classroom teacher. In reporting to parents, teachers will measure the student's progress based on the Montessori approach, as well as Jefferson County's expectations and the student's individual abilities, development, and personal motivation.

Montessori Peaks Academy welcomes learners of all abilities and learning styles. However, the Montessori teaching method may not be appropriate for all students. **Parents of students who are staffed for special education prior to enrollment at MPA must provide the school with a copy of the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), Individualized Literacy Plan (ILP), Advanced Learning Plan (ALP), or 504 Plan.** If there is a question about the ability of the MPA program to accommodate the recommendations contained in the above plans, a properly constituted staffing team will be convened to determine whether MPA is an appropriate placement for the student and, if so, the manner in which the above plans will be implemented at MPA.

MPA has a fully staffed Learning Lab with intervention and special education services for kindergartners through 6th graders. An Individual Educational Plan (IEP) requires the coordination of service providers, teachers and administration. After evaluating your child's needs, special educational professionals and classroom teachers work in a collaborative effort in providing assistance to the special needs child. An IEP is a formal plan that outlines the educational strategies and modifications required for children with exceptional needs and is part of the federally regulated special education process. Services are delivered through a variety of instructional means including, but not limited to individual and small group instruction, alternative classroom seating and/or placement, behavior contracts, modifications of assignments and testing procedures, instructional pace and classroom teacher support. The District's referral process is used to identify and staff students whose performance indicates they may require special assistance. Preschoolers are evaluated through [Child Find](#), who will then make preschool-based recommendations.

Educational Resources

The **MPA Library** is located on the lower level of the school just beyond the elevator. It is available for student use. Elementary classroom groups are scheduled at the teacher's discretion, based on each classroom's individual needs. Preschoolers have two time slots during the week in which they may attend the library with their parents after their school day. Kindergartners attend library one time per week. Parent volunteers who are working with individual students are welcome to sign up for library times as well, but will need to work around classroom schedules.

Students may not be in the library without direct adult supervision. This includes before school, after school, evenings and off-days. Students may not come to the library without an accompanying adult during parent/teacher conferences or other meetings.

Misconduct in the library will result in students being sent back to the classroom and losing library privileges for a period of time.

Books and other media items may be checked out for two weeks, with renewal possible two more times, as long as the item is not on hold. Parents and guardians may also check out items from the student library or the parent library for two weeks at a time. Students having overdue materials may not check out another book until the overdue item is returned or reported lost or damaged by a parent.

Once a book has been out of the library for two months or more, the family will be invoiced for the cost of the book plus a processing fee. Parents may not purchase the book from an outside source and replace the book themselves

Information about the missing book is sent to the business manager, who will then invoice the family. Once an invoice has been sent out, it will not affect the student's ability to check out materials. If an invoice goes unpaid for more than 60 days the child and/or parent will not be allowed to check out any more books from MPA's library until the invoice is paid in full.

Montessori Peaks Academy is committed to providing its students access to **technology** to support students' learning and academic success. The use of electronic devices in the classroom is growing and expanding. Students can now have access to the internet, podcasts, digital note taking, eBooks, and countless educational applications via their cell phones, iPads, netbooks, laptops, Chromebooks, and their iPods. While not a requirement or expectation, we want to embrace the future and reach out to our 21st Century Digital Learners by incorporating this technology into our classrooms. In order to do this, we ask that you and your child have a clear understanding of expectations.

1. Electronic Devices may be used during class **ONLY** with teacher approval.
2. If an electronic device is out during class without the teacher's approval or is being used in a way that is not part of a teacher directed activity:
 - a.) The first time the student will be reminded to put it away
 - b.) The second time it will be taken from the student and delivered to the office. A parent must pick it up.
 - c.) On each subsequent offense it will be taken and a parent must come in to pick it up.

- d.) Students may use office phones to contact their parents. At no time should a student leave the classroom and use their cell phone.
3. Some teachers may decide to use electronic devices for an activity during class and others may not. It is up to the teacher to decide if and when its use fits into their lesson plans.
4. As always, if an electronic device is brought to school it is the students' responsibility. Teachers and Staff of Montessori Peaks Academy are not responsible for the safety of personal items.
5. All computers, tablets, Smart phones and other technology having Internet access must be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical, and legal manner. Consequences for misuse are outlined in the Jeffco Code of Conduct and the form, "Student Use of the Internet."

In order to use MPA computers and **Computer Lab**, students must have on file signed copies of Jeffco's Student Use of the Internet and the MPA Electronic Devices Use Contract. These forms outline expectations and consequences for misuse.

At the appropriate levels, instruction includes basic computer literacy, keyboarding, multimedia presentations, research application, problem solving, and support for math, reading and writing. The MPA Computer Lab is located in the west end of the MPA Library and is for school-related work only. Students found doing other things will be sent back to the classroom and may lose computer lab privileges for a period of time. **Students may not be in the computer lab without direct adult supervision. Having the librarian in the room doesn't count as direct supervision.** If students are using the computer lab at an unscheduled time, an adult from the classroom or a parent volunteer must be present. Students who are using the computer lab unsupervised will be asked to return to their classrooms and may lose the privilege of using the lab.

Academic Standards

Montessori Peaks Academy is a public school and participates in all state and federal mandates regarding student achievement. MPA students are expected to achieve or exceed high academic standards, including those established by the Jefferson County School District and the State of Colorado. Mastery of such proficiencies will result in acceleration to higher-level material, enabling students to further maximize their learning potential. Those students who are unable to meet such standards receive additional teacher assistance and specialized support as appropriate. Parents may select resources at their own cost to assist their student in particular areas of growth.

A strong assessment package includes student bodies of evidence and standardized testing starting in kindergarten. Student progress is documented throughout the year. Parents are encouraged to review student progress with the students' lead teacher at conference sessions, held in the fall and the spring of each academic year.

MPA and/or the Jefferson County Public School District students take the following assessments at the following approximate time frames each academic year:

ACCESS to assess emerging English language skills for second language learners

MAP (Measuring Academic Progress) for kindergarten through sixth grades—computer administered language arts and math assessments for interim assessment given August, December and May

CMAS (Colorado Measures of Academic Success): April - Social Studies Grade 4 and Science Grade 5

CMAS/PARCC—English Language Arts and Math: April - Grades 3 to 6

DIBELS Next (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills): Grades K – 3rd throughout the year

CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) each October for 2nd graders

Parents who have questions concerning the assessment programs should contact the student's lead teacher or the principal.

Student Progress/Parent Conferences

Ongoing evaluation and assessment assist teachers in determining the educational and developmental needs of individual students. Teachers monitor student progress on a continuous basis, and convey information to parents on both a regular and "as needed" basis.

Primary teachers hold fall and spring parent conferences to discuss the students' academic progress and physical/social development. Mid-year and end-of-year report cards are written for kindergartners and progress reports are written for preschool students..

Elementary teachers write mid-year evaluations on their students near the end of the first semester and final evaluations sent in the mail within two weeks of the

end of the school year. These evaluations are designed to maximize information about your child's progress.

Parents are expected to attend formal conferences twice a year. Times and dates are scheduled through your student's lead teacher. These conferences are approximately 20 minutes in duration, allowing teachers and parent's time to discuss the progress of their children.

THE CLASSROOM

Student Food & Nut Allergies

Jeffco Public Schools and Montessori Peaks Academy (MPA) recognize the growing number of students with potential life-threatening food and nut allergies in our classrooms today. Accordingly, it is our responsibility to provide as best as we can effective strategies for students, staff, and parents on how to prevent exposure to specific potential allergens along with training staff and students on how to recognize signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis. MPA believes a cooperative partnership between our families and our staff is the best way to achieve this goal.

Embedded in the "Montessori Way" is teaching and learning how to treat others with grace and courtesy as we become "family" in each classroom and as a school community. These concepts are paramount as we (students, staff, and parents) collectively and collaboratively create a safe learning and working environment for everyone at MPA and inform all of our students, as appropriate for the age, about allergy awareness for themselves, as well as, in care and support for their classmates who may have a life-threatening allergy.

It is important to note that in Jeffco School's Policy JLCDA, Students with Food Allergies, it states the following: "Reasonable accommodations shall be made to reduce the student's exposure to agents that may cause anaphylaxis." MPA's effort to address these reasonable accommodations will be to implement guidelines and protocols to limit and prevent exposure to food and nut allergies. It is understood that to be successful in these efforts will require the support of MPA's community of students and parents.

MPA is an Allergy Aware School. However, in our effort to ensure a safe learning environment, there will be some classrooms that will be designated as a "Nut Free Zone." Accordingly, a sign will be posted by the classroom's entrance door. Communication will be sent from the Principal to each of these classrooms stating that the classroom is a Nut Free Zone and asking for the full cooperation of classmates and parents to help maintain a safe and healthy classroom for students with a life-threatening allergy. Additionally, MPA staff will be trained on how to communicate and maintain a Nut Free Zone and to respond to a situation

requiring immediate medical attention. A review of food and nut allergies will be included with training on how to use an EpiPen with a delegation to administer medication as necessary.

Students and families can best support MPA as an Allergy Aware School and with classrooms that are designated as a Nut Free Zone by honoring the following expectation: Please refrain from bringing/sending any nut products in lunches, snacks, and other foods. This would include any lunch prepared for a field trip. A student will always have permission to eat what he or she brings to school. However, if the food/lunch that is brought would create a concern for classmates with a life-threatening allergy, the student bringing the allergen will be directed to eat in an area outside the Nut-Free Zone. A communication from school to home will ask for care and compliance in the future.

As a preventive measure, students are not to share or trade snacks and other foods at any time while at school under the care/supervision of an MPA staff member. Aside from this being a simple healthy practice, compliance with this rule will ensure that an allergen will not present a health concern to another student who is allergic to nuts and certain foods.

It cannot be overstated that the success of this practice to preclude the presence of these allergens at MPA will be directly dependent upon the support and efforts of students, parents, and staff alike. If you have any question(s) regarding everyone's role with this expectation/ practice, please contact the office.

Note: In August 2018, Jeffco School published the document [Managing Life-Threatening Allergies in School-aged Children: Guidelines and Practices Handbook](#). This document was referenced and used in this section of the MPA Family Handbook.

Snack Information

Primary parents are asked to provide a nutritious snack on a rotating basis for their child's class. Classroom snack schedules and suggested snack lists are sent home to parents in the Friday Folders or posted outside the classroom.

Elementary students bring their own snacks each day.

Lunch Information

Full-Day Primary Pre-K students bring nutritious "sack" lunches every day.

Full-Day Primary Kindergarten and Elementary Students provide for their own lunch each day, either by bringing a lunch from home, or by participating in the hot lunch program. Hot lunches are available for students in K-6th grade daily,

Monday-Friday. Snacks are available through the hot lunch program to students in 1st-6th grade daily, Monday-Friday.

Information regarding the online application for free or reduced lunches are available at registration. You can log on to www.applyforlunch.com to get started.

Birthday Celebrations

Student birthdays should only be recognized with non-food celebrations. Many schools already have similar policies in place and celebrate students through other types of fun recognition. This standard is in addition to the guidance on healthy celebrations and non-food rewards in the District Wellness Policy and Guidelines.

The Wellness Policy is based on federal requirements, community input, and addresses nutrition, allergy, and equity concerns. We will also be sharing ideas developed by Jeffco students on healthy ways to recognize birthdays. Thank you for creating healthy, equitable environments in your schools!

Personal Belongings

Students should not bring personal items such as money, toys, candy, or electronics. Check with your classroom teacher where necessary personal items (backpacks, extra clothes, jackets, lunches, school work, etc.) will be stored. Medicines, lip balm, sanitizer, or lotions will be held in the clinic. Ask Clinic Aide for appropriate paperwork.

Clothing

Parents' good taste and judgment are the keys in determining what constitutes acceptable dress/grooming for students. Students must wear clothing that is suitable for both indoor study and outdoor play. Behavior and attitude toward school are often related to appearance and manner of dress. Students may not wear any items that disrupt the educational environment or become a distraction from schoolwork. No clothing with offensive printing, graffiti or language including, but not limited to, alcohol, illegal substances, swastikas, confederate flags, violence, or criminal activity may be worn.

Sleeveless tops must have straps that are at least 1 ½ inches wide. T-backs are not accepted. Shorts must cover at least three inches or more beyond where a swimsuit would end. Midriffs or shirts tied above the waist are not permitted.

Students must dress sensibly, neatly, cleanly, modestly and comfortably. For health and safety reasons, shoes or slippers are to be worn at all times. Students must wear shoes appropriate for outdoor play. Flip-flops are not suggested. Hats and caps may not be worn inside the school building except by special permission of the teacher.

Students should be dressed appropriately for P.E. class: sneakers with laces or Velcro. Check with lead teachers for “Specials” class schedules.

During periods of inclement weather, students should have a change of clothes and/or shoes available at school. Students do not go outside to play on days when the temperature is above 100 degrees Fahrenheit or below 25 degrees Fahrenheit.

Bathroom Concerns (Primary Wing)

Like all Montessori preschool programs, our program requires a degree of independence from students in order for them to have a positive experience. Even though each of our Primary classrooms is well staffed with a lead teacher and an assistant, students need to be able to manage many self-care tasks on their own. All students enrolled in our program should be able to feed and dress themselves as well as be independent in the toileting process. By this we mean that students can manage their toileting needs independently and should be accident free prior to starting school. We understand that accidents do occasionally happen and these are handled discreetly. Each Primary student has to have a change of clothing. Our Primary program is licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services as a preschool. As such, we are not equipped to have diapers or disposable underwear at school – including rest time.

Registration Fees

A registration fee is charged for each student each academic year to cover the cost of consumable supplies. This fee is non-refundable. Waivers for the materials fee are granted by the principal for students eligible for free or reduced lunch under the National Income Poverty Guidelines-Board of Education Policy JQ. The material fee is voluntary and helps defer the cost of materials, services, and consumables.

Parents of students may be held liable for materials damaged in the classroom if the damage is the result of negligence and/or misbehavior.

Field Trips

1. Lead teachers are responsible for making sure field trip information and permission slips are handed out, signed by parents and returned to school. Paperwork should be handed out no later than a week prior to the due date for field trip paperwork. All permission slips must be signed and on file in order for a child to participate. Lead teachers are responsible for maintaining all safety issues on the field trip. Copies of attendance logs, emergency forms and any pertinent medical information are taken on the field trip, as well as medications and first aid kits.
2. Montessori Peaks Academy may use Jefferson County School District school buses from time to time for field trips. Students are required to adhere to Jeffco's Code of Conduct regulations while being transported in District buses. District bus drivers discuss emergency plans and behavioral expectations before each trip begins.
3. Transportation for field trips may also be provided by private family vehicles. Parents involved in transporting MPA students on field trips *must provide a copy of their current Colorado driver's license and current insurance information to lead teachers for each field trip.*
4. Office staff will retain field trip information regarding the destination and travel itinerary, times of departure and return, a list of students, lead teachers, other staff, and chaperones on the field trip, names of drivers providing transportation, along with their vehicle information and cell phone numbers.
5. Parents providing transportation are responsible for the safety of the students riding in their cars. They must sign an acknowledgement that they have read the guidelines for transportation safety on field trips. Parent drivers must be aware of the following safety rules and review them with students:
 - a. Students are not permitted to ride in the front seat of a vehicle.
 - b. **Students are to be securely buckled into an approved booster/car seat as required by law. This means all students under the age of 8 are required to use a booster/car seat.**
 - c. Students must keep seat belts properly fastened and adjusted.
 - d. Students must remain seated while the vehicle is in motion.
 - e. Their arms, legs and heads must remain inside the vehicle at all times.
 - f. Students must be loaded and unloaded out of the path of moving vehicles.
 - g. Students must never be left unattended in the vehicle.
 - h. Parents may not smoke in the presence of students.

- i. Parents must follow Colorado State Law regarding the use of cell phones.
6. Parents are responsible for providing proper car/booster seats for the safety of their own children. **If a student does not have proper safety equipment they will not be allowed to participate in the field trip.**
7. If a student is late for school on a day that a field trip is scheduled and the class has already left for the field trip, he/she will be added to another classroom as student/teacher ratios allow until the class returns from the field trip.
8. If a student becomes separated from the class group, the lead teacher or another adult will make a thorough search of the area and enlist the help of local authorities before informing the following people:
 - a. Police
 - b. Custodial parent/guardian
 - c. Primary Coordinator and Principal
9. If an emergency occurs en route or on the return trip to MPA, the driver should:
 - a. Ensure that all students are accounted for and safe.
 - b. Assess the situation.
 - c. Call 911 if appropriate, and administer first aid as necessary.
 - d. Call the cell phone of the lead teacher in charge of the trip
 - e. The lead teacher then notifies the Primary Coordinator and Principal.
10. Lead teachers are directly responsible for the supervision of students and parents/chaperones on all field trips.

Classroom Celebrations

Classroom cultural activities and celebrations, holiday observances and parties are held at the discretion of the classroom teachers as approved by the school principal. Such activities shall be nonreligious, nonsectarian and shall not discriminate against any student on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, ancestry, disability or need for special education services. Parents must notify the classroom teacher in advance if they prefer their child not participate in a particular observance.

Lost and Found Items

Small “lost and found” items of value are to be turned into the main office. Areas containing other unclaimed articles are located near the front entrance of the school. **It is important to clearly label your child’s clothing and other belongings.** At various times during the school year unclaimed articles are displayed and, if unclaimed, are donated to worthy organizations. Please encourage your student to assume responsibility for all of their personal items during the school day.

Television/Video/DVD

On a very limited basis, age appropriate educational videos are viewed. The classes may show G rated videos, which will usually be scheduled in advance and parents will be informed of the date and title of the video. Only “G” rated movies/audio visual presentations will be shown in Preschool/Kindergarten classrooms. If a video with a rating other than G is being shown, parents may choose for their children not to participate and an alternative activity must be provided for the child. Appropriate staffing ratios and staff supervision will be maintained at all times.

Pictures Taken in Preschool/Kindergarten Classrooms

Students in the Preschool/Kindergarten classrooms may have their photos taken. These photos may be used in school publications or on the school website. If you do not want your child’s photo used, a form will need to be signed. MPA will send these permission forms to you and adhere to these preferences.

Elementary Students will give permission/not give permission to their photos being taken via JeffCo Connect. MPA will adhere to these preferences.

Montessori Materials and Breakable Items

The use of glass, **sharp**, and small **educational** items in a Montessori classroom are an important component to the Montessori philosophy, the development of the whole child, and the prepared environment. These materials provide an important principle of the prepared environment called “the control of error” which is a built-in quality that allows the child to notice a mistake. It provides feedback that allows the child to learn and improve their skill independently by engaging the senses. **These items might include glassware, sewing needles, pin punchers, scissors, and kitchen tools (such as developmentally appropriate knives, peelers, graters).** Children are supervised and given lessons on the use and safety procedures of these materials.

COMMUNICATION INFORMATION

We strive for open communication at Montessori Peaks Academy. We appreciate your thoughts and ideas and encourage you to discuss them with the appropriate person(s).

MPA Board of Directors and Principal

The MPA Board and Principal welcome community input. To contact the Principal, call, email, or drop in to talk or make an appointment,

To contact the MPA Board, send an email using the addresses found on the MPA website. You may also attend a Board meeting and sign up for Community Comments.

In addition, each year the Board directs the Accountability Committee to conduct a Parent Survey and present results to them at the June meeting. The Board encourages the community to use this opportunity to give feedback to improve and refine the MPA programs.

Classroom Communication

For most effective communication regarding classroom or individual issues, please talk to the child's lead teacher, not the assistant or another staff member or parent.

If you need to talk with your child's teacher, please do not hesitate to contact them or the office and leave a voicemail or email for the teacher. Please allow 24 hours for a staff member to respond to your communication. A child's school behavior can be affected in many ways by problems or changes at home. Please let the lead teacher know if anything of a stressful nature is occurring in your family life.

We ask parents to be respectful. Arrival and departure times are not appropriate parent-teacher discussion times. Please do not try to engage the teachers or students in conversations during this time. Teachers may still be preparing the classroom for daily activities or directing their attention to the students. Children separate from parents more readily and prepare themselves for the classroom routine if an efficient parental departure is practiced.

Teachers may contact parents with their personal cell phones. Please respect their privacy by contacting the teacher by school voicemail or email.

Weekly Folders/Electronic Notices

Weekly Folders are sent home almost every Thursday. They contain pertinent school information: Newsletters, notices, field trip sign-ups and teacher

newsletters; other communications may be received electronically or via the Weekly folders. **Teachers and staff request that the Weekly Folders be returned the following Monday with information, responses, etc. from parents.** MPA is trying to recycle and cut the usage of printing and paper, please be sure to keep the MPA office aware of any changes to email addresses.

Office Communications

Messages regarding illness, changes in your child's schedule and appointments need to be made through the office. Please call the office if your child is absent. **Please let the office know of changes in address, phone number and/or e-mail address. (You also need to update your information in Jeffco Connect.)**

MPA Website

Current information may be found on the MPA website, including calendars, school-wide newsletters, and access to classroom websites. Go to: www.montessoripeaks.org.

Electronic Communication: E-mail and Voice Mail

Parents are encouraged to communicate informally with all members of the MPA staff. During a busy school day, please feel free to leave a voicemail through the main office for teachers or correspond via email. All staff email addresses are listed on the school website. Check with your child's teacher for his/her preferred method of communication.

Family to Family Communication

MPA is unable to publish or give out any personal information about our families, including phone numbers, without the written permission from that family. If your family wishes to be listed in a class phone list, you must check the appropriate section online on Jeffco Connect giving us your permission.

To alleviate hurt feelings regarding birthday party invitations, please do not distribute party invitations through the school. Individual classes may supply a class directory for family communications only for those that have given permission to include such information in a class directory.

Parent Education

Parent education at MPA is sponsored by PTA and is an important learning experience for parents and guardians. Parents are given the opportunity to become familiar with the guiding philosophy of the Montessori Method, as well as topics of interest for parents.

Use of Phones

1. Parents: Please call to leave messages for your child ONLY in cases of emergency. Personal phone calls or messages for students create disruptions for your child and his/her classroom.

Please refrain from using your cell phone at carline. This creates a dangerous situation for your students and our staff.

2. Students: Students are allowed to use the school telephone ONLY in cases of emergency and with the express permission of their lead teacher or the main office.

Cell telephones are not to be used by students during school hours to make phone calls or to text. Any cell phone possessed by a student must be turned off and kept in the student's backpack during the school day unless permission has been given by the teacher for educational purposes. (see page 16 for further information). Any student not adhering to this policy may have a cell phone confiscated by a faculty or staff member to be returned to the parent or guardian. The school or its employees can not be responsible for any personally owned telephone or its operation. During testing, all cell phones are collected and taken to the office, to be returned after the testing sessions.

Parent Concerns

Parents or guardians who have concerns should first contact the classroom teacher regarding the situation. If no solution can be reached, then the parent should contact the principal and discuss the concern. The principal will arrange a conference as soon as practicable with the parent(s) and the teacher and/or other persons. The principal shall have 20 days to conduct the necessary inquiry and to respond to matters of concern. Parents may present pertinent information and documents relating to their concern to the principal for consideration.

If the parent(s) is (are) not satisfied with the decision of the principal, an appeal may be made to the MPA Board of Directors, by submitting a written request for appeal within 10 days after receipt of the decision for which review is sought. The request for appeal should include copies of all prior written decisions and a statement of the complaint and reasons for appeal.

The MPA Board may accept or reject the matter for review. The Board reviews written appeals. If the Board rejects the matter, the principal's decision will be final. If it accepts the matter, the Board's decision will be final.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY/BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

The Jeffco Board of Education and MPA Board of Directors recognize that appropriate student behavior is a major contributor to the creation of a positive and productive environment for all students. It is the further belief that the prime objectives of the discipline program should be to:

1. Assist the students in the development of the ability to make good choices.
2. Assist students in the development of behavior that is socially acceptable, respectful and mindful of the dignity of others.
3. Ensure the right of others to learn.

All students enrolled in Montessori Peaks Academy are subject to Jefferson County School District Discipline Policies as contained in the *Jeffco Public Schools Conduct Code*. **The Conduct Code is available online http://www.jeffcopublicschools.org/schools/code_of_conduct and must be read and understood by each MPA student and parent.** The student and/or parent must sign a declaration of understanding of the Jeffco Conduct Code each academic year. Failure to complete the statement of understanding will result in the student not being able to attend school.

General Guidelines of Behavior for Students at MPA

These guidelines are provided to easily acquaint parents and students with general behavioral expectations at MPA. They are not intended to supersede any provision of the Jefferson County Public Schools Conduct Code. In all cases, the Conduct Code will be followed and its provisions will determine the requirements, procedures and process involving student discipline.

1. Under no circumstances is a student to bring a weapon to school. Any item that could be used as, or construed to be, a weapon should not be brought to school.
2. Students must respect each other and each other's property. School property must also be respected and treated with care. Parents of students may be held liable for materials damaged in the classroom if the damage is the result of student negligence and/or misbehavior.
3. Any action between students that makes a student feel threatened or uncomfortable should be reported to a teacher or staff member

immediately. Students should never be encouraged to take matters into their own hands. Bullying is not tolerated at MPA. Bullying is defined in the Jefferson County Conduct Code.

4. Faculty and staff members are to be treated with respect. Students may not show disrespect to their teachers or other staff in their attitudes or actions. Reasonable instructions given to students by faculty and/or staff must be followed. Any conflict between students and faculty/staff will be reported to the Principal.
5. Appropriate language, tone of voice and vocal volume will be used throughout the school. Any use of language or gestures by students that is generally considered obscene and/or profane will not be allowed.
6. No drugs of any type including alcohol and/or tobacco are allowed to be possessed and/or used by students at any time while at school. These include any illegal or controlled substances, prescription drugs or over-the-counter medications. All medications the student must use for health purposes while at school are to be brought by the parent or guardian in the medication's original container to the clinic for distribution by authorized school personnel. Please refer to the Jefferson County Public School Conduct Code for further information.
7. Students will conduct themselves at all times in a manner that does not threaten the safety and welfare of other students or school personnel.
8. Students will promote the physical safety and personal security of all others. Students will conduct themselves with a high degree of self-discipline and will not engage in assaultive behavior which includes fighting or arguing with other students or school personnel.
9. Students will not engage in any behavior that discriminates against others on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability.
10. Students will practice and encourage honesty in academic work and all other behaviors.

Discipline Procedures at Montessori Peaks

1. Teachers and other staff document behaviors of concern on the "MPA Discipline Report". Parents may or may not receive a copy of the report and/or a phone call from the office staff.
2. Repeated offenses may be documented in the District Behavior tab in the Jeffco tracking system.

3. Continued discipline issues may be considered habitual, subject to disciplinary actions outlined in the Jeffco Code of Conduct, including suspension.
4. Behavioral consequences are based on the discipline issue. Serious offenses will have consequences outlined in the Jeffco Code of Conduct, including suspension and expulsion. Less serious offenses will be dealt with by the administration and the staff. The school supports the use of problem solving with and between students, as well as consequences that logically fit with the behavior. Community service is also a consequence that gives the student(s) an opportunity to give back to the school community.

ARRIVAL and DISMISSAL PROCEDURES (CARPOOL)

Drop Off and Pick Up

MPA Expectations of Carpool:

1. **No Cellphone usage:** for the safety of all, use of cellphones while in Carline is prohibited.
2. Parents (drivers are expected to proceed cautiously and act respectfully toward other drivers, parent volunteers and staff.
3. No backing up....only move forward cautiously.
4. Parents are responsible for transporting their children to and from school and we encourage the use of car pools.

Arrival—8:00 A.M.

Preschool (3 and 4 year olds)

All preschool students are escorted by their parents to their classroom and **signed in on the attendance sheet at the classroom.** This includes late arrivals. Preschool parents park in the northwest parking lot. For students enrolled in the Before and After school program, please sign their attendance book.

Full Day Kindergartners (5 year olds)

Kindergartners may be dropped off at the “hug and drop” car line in the morning or be escorted to the classroom by their parents. Parent volunteers will assist the students out of the car. **Teachers sign in kindergartners who are dropped off.**

Afternoon kindergartners are **escorted to the classroom by their parents and signed in on the attendance sheet.** P.M. kindergarten parents park in the northwest parking lot.

Elementary students (1st-6th graders)

Elementary students are dropped off at the “hug and drop” car line in the morning. Parent volunteers will assist the students out of the car. Teachers take attendance in the classroom.

Dismissal /Carpool Directions—3 P.M.

All Primary/Kindergarten parents must enter the property from the Kipling and Capri side. Staying in the right lane on Capri, turn right immediately into the northwest parking lot or kindergarten carpool line.

Elementary parents must enter the school property from the Jellison and Bowles side of the school. Turn left onto the school driveway, staying in the left lane to proceed to the two lines of sidewalk pick-up.

Cones will be placed at the school drive entry to divide Primary/kindergarten and Elementary lanes. **Parents who enter from the wrong direction will be required to drive through the carpool line following the above pattern.**

Preschoolers (3 and 4 year olds)

Parents meet their preschoolers at the classroom or After School Program at the end of the child’s day and **are required to sign them out on the attendance sheet.** This includes early dismissals.

Kindergartners

Kindergartners are dismissed for carpool or the After School Program at the end of the school day. Staff will put students into the car and **ask the parents to sign their students out.**

Elementary students (1st-6th Graders)

Elementary students are dismissed for carpool or the After School Program at the end of the school day. Elementary students with Kindergarten aged siblings wait at the Kindergarten pick-up area, and elementary aged siblings go to the youngest student’s class waiting area. Elementary students with Preschool siblings will stay with their own class for car pick-up. Staff will assist the students into the cars.

Students in the After School program (all ages)

Primary and Kindergarten students are escorted to the gym and signed in by After School staff. Elementary students are dismissed by their teachers and

checked in at the gym. For pick up, parents park, enter the building, and **sign their students out on the attendance sheet.**

MPA's Late Pick-up Policy

It is the policy of Montessori Peaks Academy not to leave children unattended on the school campus at any time. Therefore it is imperative that children who are **not** enrolled in the **After School Program or an After School Enrichment Activity be picked up on time.** School is over promptly at 3:00pm and teachers volunteer to stay with the children until 3:15pm if necessary. **If children are not picked up by 3:15pm, they will be supervised by a staff member. A late fee of a \$1.00 per minute per student will be assessed after 3:15pm. The fee will be payable to "MPA" and can be paid by cash, check or credit card in the office. If payment is not received on the day of the occurrence, an invoice will be sent home in the child's Friday folder. After the third occurrence per semester, the fee will be doubled.**

For our morning preschoolers, children who are not picked up by 11:15am will be escorted to the main office to wait until their parent arrives. Parents will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute per student. After the third occurrence per semester, the fee will be doubled.

STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY

General

Montessori Peaks Academy complies with all Jefferson County School District and The Division of Child Care, The Colorado Department of Human Services approved policies and regulations, and complies with all applicable federal and state laws concerning student welfare, safety and health without limitation. The school is also in compliance with Jefferson County School policies and laws addressing accident prevention and emergency/fire/disaster response, the reporting of child abuse, and any state regulations governing the operation of school facilities.

Emergency Information

Please keep your child's Student Information Form and Emergency Information Form up-to-date. In case of an emergency, we must be able to contact parents as quickly as possible. If a home, business or cellular telephone number is changed, it needs to be reported to the main office, 303-972-2627, immediately. Changes in address should also be reported to the main office in a timely manner.

Montessori Peaks Academy will follow the Jefferson County Public Schools District Safety Plan and Emergency Procedures. To view the most updated information and definitions please visit

https://www.jeffcopublicschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_627881/File/Jeffco%20PS/District%20Services/Security%20&%20Alerts/2017%20Emergencies%20in%20Schools%20COLOR%20version%20ENGLISH.pdf

Child Abuse and Neglect

In accordance with the Children’s Code of the State of Colorado, all staff must report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the Jefferson County Department of Social Services or the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Department. If a parent of Montessori Peaks Academy wishes to report suspected child abuse or neglect, they may do so by contacting:

Jefferson County Social Services
303-271-4357

Child Care Licensing

Montessori Peaks Academy is licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services. The license indicates that the school has met the required standards for a child care facility. If you have a concern about the child care services at this school, please contact:

Colorado Department of Human Services
Division of Child Care
303-866-5958 or 1-800-799-5876

Health

Clinic aides in our district schools are not required to have a nursing license or other medical certification to perform as a School Clinic Aide. MPA works with Jeffco Schools and Children’s Hospital Registered Nurses who provide consultation and training, and delegate duties, procedures, and other tasks to our Clinic Aide and other trained staff. A detailed description of the role of the Clinic Aide and the relationship with the Children’s Registered Nurses can be accessed in the school clinic.

The school clinic is available to those students who become ill or injured at school, or who require medication during the school day. If a student has a fever or requires medical treatment, the parent/guardian is called to pick up the student as soon as possible. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached by phone, the next person listed as an emergency contact will be called. Minor bumps, bruises or scrapes are treated by our staff. Parents may be notified by phone from the

clinic if injuries are of a more substantial nature. We follow Colorado Emergency Guidelines for calling 911. Any accident involving a preschool/kindergarten student or a student attending the Before or After School Program requiring medical attention by a health care professional or admission to a hospital must be reported to the Colorado Department of Human Services within 24 hours. The school is also required to report these situations to Jeffco Risk Management.

Parents are asked to notify the Clinic Aide and the classroom teacher if an injury sustained at school required a trip to a health care professional.

Illnesses

Although we encourage and expect regular attendance, in an effort to maintain the good health of all students, please refrain from bringing your child to school if she/he is sick. This will reduce the overall number of illnesses among the students.

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms at school, a parent/guardian/emergency contact is notified by Office Staff **ONLY** to come and pick the student up within one hour of the call. Students should not call or text from the classroom at any time for medical reasons.

- * Deep coughing
- * Temperature above 99 degrees Fahrenheit
- * Red and/or irritated rash
- * Yellow or green nasal or eye discharge
- * Diarrhea or vomiting

Failure to pick up your child within an hour of notification may result in hospitalization of the child and notification of appropriate social services authorities.

Children may not return to school until they have been symptom-free for 24 hours.

Injuries and Illness Impacting Participation in Activities

A child who is too ill to play outside should not be brought to school. The School Principal may make exceptions to this policy on the recommendation of the student's physician for children with conditions such as cold-induced asthma.

Parents of students who have sustained injuries (concussion, broken bone, sprain, etc.) which impact their ability to participate in school activities, such as P.E., playground, field trips, etc., should send a written note indicating that the child cannot participate in such activities and for how long. MPA follows Jeffco's policies for concussion management. Physician's restrictions are followed until released by said physician.

Contagious Illnesses

Parents of children who have been exposed to or contracted a contagious disease may notify the school as soon as possible. Please follow the procedures for contagious illness so that exposure can be kept to a minimum:

- * **Chicken Pox** Children may not return to school until all blisters are scabbed over.
- * **Strep Throat** Medication (prescribed antibiotics) must be administered to the child for **24 hours** before he/she returns to school.
- * **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)** Prescribed medication must be administered to the child for **24 hours** before he/she returns to school.
- * **Vomiting** The child may return to school **24 hours** after the last episode.
- * **Diarrhea** The child may return to school **24 hours** after the last episode.
- * **COVID 19** CDC and CDPHE guidelines will be followed.

Communicable Illnesses

The diagnosis of communicable illnesses such as measles, mumps, hepatitis, diphtheria, rubella, salmonella, tuberculosis, meningitis, giardia, and shigella may be reported to the school.

Parents of students who have been exposed to communicable illnesses outside of school may inform the school of their exposure.

Colorado Immunization Law

Immunization requirements, as stated in Colorado law, are strictly enforced for all Jefferson County Public School students. Colorado law requires proof of immunizations or exemption prior to the first day of school. Noncompliance will result in suspension or removal from school. A student may be exempted from the immunization requirements due to religious or personal beliefs. Beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, if you wish to exempt your student from any vaccines, you will need to fill out the attached form AND have a health care provider sign it, OR you may do an online course and print the certificate and turn that in.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UdHc39zCBmuyeBBjxShHa15mG-Ea9yFG/view>

The online course is at the end of this document.

<https://cdphe.colorado.gov/vaccine-exemptions>

Medications

All medications must be checked into the Clinic and only administered by trained personnel as delegated by MPA's School Nurse Consultant. A **Medication Agreement** must be completed by the child's health care provider and the parent/guardian. Medications, including over-the-counter items, must be in the original pharmacy packaging. The student's name must be on the store packaging.

Prescription and non-prescription (over the counter) medications for eyes or ears, all oral medications, topical medications, inhaled medications, and certain emergency injections can be administered only with the written order of a person with prescriptive authority and with written parental consent.

Under no circumstances may any medication be given to a student to bring to school, to possess at school, or to be administered by the student at school. This is a very serious violation of the Jefferson County Public School Conduct Code and the Colorado Department of Human Services, Rules and Regulations. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary measures up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Essential Oils

Any type of essential oil or Cannabidiol (*CBD*) will be considered contraband and not permitted to be in a student's possession on campus. The exception would

be if an essential oil or cannabidiol was prescribed by a physician as a necessary medication for a student. In this case, it would be handled by staff as any other medication with a requirement to have completed the form Medication Administration in School or Child Care and stored/held in the school clinic.

Health Care Plans

Students having health concerns that may be life threatening, such as peanut, nut and food allergies, severe asthma, etc. may have a Colorado Department of Education Health Care Plan. **Please bring these issues to the attention of the Clinic Aide as soon as possible so that a plan can be developed and implemented in conjunction with our nurse consultant and your child's health care provider.**

Health Care Plans for any severe medical need are developed by our nurse consultant and your health care provider to assist us in assuring that the health needs of your child are met within the school environment. This information is strictly confidential. Staff will be advised on a "need to know" basis.

MISCELLANEOUS

Emergency Procedures

Montessori Peaks Academy staff are trained in Emergency Management Procedures by the Jefferson County School District. The Principal holds in-services with staff to cover emergency procedures.

Evacuation plans and meeting points are posted in every classroom. The school has a designated meeting point outside of the school zone. This area would only be used in extreme situations when it would be unsafe to remain inside the school building. Staff is equipped with walkie-talkies, cell phones and a "lock box" containing class lists and student emergency numbers. Parents would be notified through Jeffco Schools communication services as to the location for reunification.

Sun Protection

Parents are asked to apply sunscreen as needed to their children before coming to school. Parents whose children need reapplication of sunscreen should notify the child's teacher or the After School Coordinator.

The school must obtain the parent or guardian's written authorization and instructions for applying sunscreen to their child's exposed skin prior to outside

play. A doctor's permission is not needed. The sunscreen must be labeled with the child's first and last name and date provided. Children over 4 years of age may apply sunscreen to themselves under direct supervision of a staff member.

Community Use of Facilities and Equipment

Parents and other members of the larger community may apply for use of the MPA building (gym, server, classroom, etc.) by completing an Application for Building and Facility Use form. The form is sent to the office for approval. Approval must be obtained before the activity can be added to the school master calendar and the activity is promoted within the community. Additional events will be planned around classroom and school events, which have priority on the school master calendar. Fees are charged if MPA staff is needed for set-up and event clean-up. Forms should be submitted at least 30 days in advance of the event and blank forms can be found outside the office.

MPA equipment, including copiers, fax machines, computers, and printers are for school use only. Community members making copies for a school-related event must obtain and complete a Copy Usage Form, located by all copiers. When the job and form are completed, the form must be submitted to the Business Manager.

Parents are not permitted to use school equipment for personal business.

Bicycles

Due to the heavy traffic along Bowles, Kipling and Capri Avenues, **students are discouraged from riding their bikes to school.** Parents of students who would like to ride their bikes to school should contact the principal. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen or broken bikes.

Supervision of Students

Staff are responsible for knowing the number of students in their supervision at all times. Continuous head counts are made throughout the day, particularly at transitions. Students are never to be left unsupervised.

Student helpers (Upper Elementary students) may be given the responsibility of assisting in other areas of the building. When given this responsibility, the students must report to the classroom teacher that they are leaving and to the teacher they are helping that they are present. Student helpers must go directly to the assigned room. This job is a privilege, not a right.

If a student becomes separated from their group, one staff member searches the building and grounds while another supervises the group with the assistance of

administrative staff. If the student is not found within 5 minutes, the following calls are made:

- a. Principal and/or Office Staff
- b. Jefferson County Sheriff's Department
- c. Custodial parent/guardian

Before leaving for the day, each lead teacher must make a final check of their daily attendance sheet that all students have been signed out and/or accounted for.

At the end of the school day after the last student has been signed out of the After School program, the After School staff reviews the attendance sheets to ensure that all students have been accounted for. They will then sweep the building to be sure that no students have been left behind.

Policy Changes

Parents will be notified in writing of significant changes in service, policies, or procedures in order to determine whether the school continues to meet the needs of their child.

Please use this link to access the Family Handbook Acknowledgement form. This form is part of the registration process.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement Form [no link yet]

Appendices

This will include the Restart Plan from each level at MPA (Primary, Lower Elementary, and Upper Elementary) for information re: changes due to COVID. These are currently in process.