



Parent Handbook 2018-2019

1423 Julia Street
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034
p.904.261.6610 f.904.261.6196

ameliaislandmontessori.com

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Table of Contents

The History of AIMS	4
About Maria Montessori	5
Montessori Method and Philosophy	6
Mission Statement	7
SECTION 1 – SCHOOL ORGANIZATION	7
A. Governing Structure	7
B. Board of Trustees	7
C. Acronyms used in this handbook	7
D. School Staff	8
1. Administrative	8
2. Teaching	8
3. Specialists	8
E. School Improvement Teams	8
SECTION 2 – Daily Operations	9
A. School Hours	9
B. Morning Arrival	9
C. Tardy Policy	9
D. Dismissal	9
E. Attendance	10
F. Illness	10
G. Medication	11
H. Classroom Procedures	11
I. Restroom Procedures	12
J. Playground Procedures	12
K. Alternate Nutrition Plan	12
L. AIMS Uniform Policy	13
<i>Non-compliance of Uniform Policy</i>	14
M. Birthdays	14
N. Holidays	14
O. Sharing Time	14
P. Field Trips	14
Q. Transportation	15
R. Student Code of Conduct- Behavioral Expectations	15
S. Biting Policy	17
T. Anti-Bullying Policy	18
SECTION 3 – Communications	19
A. School to Home	19
1. E-Mail	19
2. Calendar	19
3. Website	19
4. Facebook	19
B. Relationships with Employees of AIMS	19
C. Conferences	20

SECTION 4 – Parental Responsibilities and Rights _____ 20

- A. Required Forms and Consent _____ 20
- B. Parental Responsibilities _____ 20
 - 1. Team AIMS _____ 20
 - 2. Parent Education _____ 21
 - 3. Volunteer Obligations _____ 21
 - 4. Court Orders _____ 21
 - 5. Buckley Amendment _____ 21
 - 6. Phones _____ 21
 - 7. Respect _____ 22
- C. Parental Rights _____
 - 1. Classroom Observations _____ 22
 - 2. Expectations – Amelia Island Montessori School Partnership Agreement _____ 22

SECTION 5 – Emergency Procedures _____ 23

SECTION 6 – Administrative Procedures _____ 24

- A. Student Support Team _____ 24
- B. Students with Learning Differences _____ 24
- C. Privacy of Student Files _____ 24
- D. Disclosures Without Consent _____ 25
- E. Student Records and Previous School Records _____ 25
- F. Records / Transcripts Requests _____ 25
- G. Transcripts _____ 25
- H. Tuition Payments _____ 26
- I. Accounts Receivable & Collections Policy _____ 26
- J. Child Abuse Policy _____ 27
- K. Smoking & Alcohol Policy _____ 27
- L. AIMS Grievance Procedure for Parents _____ 27

These Two Appendices support the Grievance Policy on Page 27

APPENDIX A: Form - HOS _____ 29

APPENDIX B: Form – BOT President _____ 31

The History Of Amelia Island Montessori School

In the spring of 1973, a group of parents decided they wanted a Montessori preschool education for their children. They visited other Montessori schools and studied the writings of Dr. Maria Montessori. The group approached the Amelia Island Company (AIC), the corporate name for the Amelia Island Plantation, who provided assistance, both in personnel and financing. The Amelia Island Montessori School opened in the fall of 1973 with 25 students.

The school remained housed in a rented trailer until January 1981, when the parent-run Board of Directors decided a permanent structure and location must be found. The school received a donation of a two-story office building on the Amelia Island Parkway. In June 1981, the Amelia Island Montessori School moved to its present location.

Expansion was now an option. In 1983, AIMS grew from one Primary (3-6) classroom to two classrooms with 25 students in each room. The After School Program was instituted in the same year, and the staff grew to two certified Montessori Directresses, two assistants, and two childcare aides. In December of 1984, the school received its first foundation donation. Annual gifts by the anonymous foundation opened the way for further grade level expansion. Responding to a parent survey, a Toddler program was developed in 1984.

In the fall of 1987, the Elementary Program was established. By the fall of 1993, this program required two full time Directresses and two assistants to handle the growing number of students. In June of 1995, ground was broken for a new Elementary building, and two months later its doors were opened for 50 students in grades 1-3.

In August 1997, the Upper Elementary class celebrated its inaugural year with 10 students. In the fall of 1998, the Upper Elementary class nearly doubled to 17 students.

Amelia Island Montessori continued to look forward to the future. In 2010, the Lower Elementary building was completely remodeled and renovated. In the summer of 2011, a part of the upstairs in Building Five was renovated for the Upper Elementary Class and in the Spring of 2014, the Board of Trustees approved to initiate a Middle School Program. In the summer of 2015, renovations again took place in the Upper Elementary environment, as their population had outgrown its space. Within one year, the Middle School program also enjoyed an increase in enrollment and expansion was necessary. AIMS is excited to now provide services to children from 18 months to 15 years of age.

Presently, Amelia Island Montessori School is a non-profit corporation, incorporated as Island Education, Inc. Our school is accredited by the Florida Council of Independent Schools, Florida Kindergarten Council, licensed by the Department of Children and Families and a full member of the American Montessori Society.

Maria Montessori: A Brief Biography

Maria Montessori was ahead of her time. Today, many educators realize that she is in fact, ahead of *our* time. She saw then what many schools across the country and world are trying to *now* implement. She was born in Italy in 1870 and was one of the first female physicians in Italy in 1896. In her medical practice, her clinical observations led her to analyze how children learn, and she concluded that they build themselves from what they find in their environment.

Page | 5

Shifting her focus from the body to the mind, she returned to the University to study psychology and philosophy and was made a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Rome. Her desire to help children was so strong, however, that in 1906 she gave up both her University chair and her medical practice to work with a group of sixty young children of working parents in the San Lorenzo district of Rome.

It was there that she founded the first Casa dei Bambini, or “Children’s House.” The Montessori Method of education was ultimately developed here, based upon Montessori’s scientific observations of these children’s natural ability to absorb knowledge from their surroundings and their tireless interest in manipulating materials. Every piece of equipment, every exercise, every method Montessori developed was based on what she observed children do “naturally,” by themselves, unassisted by adults. When put in a nurturing, well-prepared, organized environment with stimulating materials, children teach themselves. This simple but profound truth inspired Montessori’s lifelong pursuit of educational reform, methodology, psychology, teaching, and teacher training – all based on their dedication to furthering the self-creating process of the child. She observed, that when allowed freedom of choice, respect, independence and trust, the child will develop mental order and structure within their own mind.

Maria Montessori made her first visit to the United States in 1913, at the invitation of Alexander Graham Bell. During this time the Montessori Educational Association was founded at his Washington, D.C. home. Other strong American supporters were Thomas Edison and Helen Keller. In 1915, Dr. Montessori attracted world attention with her “glass house” schoolroom exhibit at the Panama-Pacific International Exhibition in San Francisco. On this second U.S. visit, she also conducted a teacher training course and addressed the annual conventions of both the National Education Association and the International Kindergarten Union. The committee that brought her to San Francisco included Margaret Wilson, the daughter of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson.

The Spanish government invited her to open a research institute in 1917. In 1919, she began a series of teacher training courses in London. In 1922, she was appointed a government inspector of schools in her native Italy, but because of her opposition to Mussolini’s fascism, she was forced to leave Italy in 1934. She opened the Montessori Training Centre in Laren, Netherlands in 1938, and founded a series of teacher training courses in India in 1939, with her son, Mario. Later, she founded the Montessori Center in London in 1947. She was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times – in 1949, 1950, and 1951.

Maria Montessori died in Noordwijk, Holland, in 1952 at the age of 82. Her teaching and method of “following the child” lives on throughout the world.

Montessori Philosophy

Dr. Maria Montessori found through her careful and tireless observations, that children possess within themselves the full potential of the person who they will become. In an environment that offers the opportunity for curiosity to be encouraged and satisfied, this innate potential may blossom to its highest possibility.

A Montessori environment includes carefully timed introductions within each academic area and freedom to make choices, as the child experiences new concepts. Each child is greeted at their developmental level, and carefully guided through the curriculum at their individual pace. The Montessori Directress weaves the experiences within the curriculum to develop the physical, intellectual and spiritual potential of the child to the fullest, allowing for freedom and self-correction, in a safe environment.

The well designed Montessori materials give the student a hands-on “concrete” approach to learning, which involves all of the senses, and engages all learning styles. The innate qualities of these materials develop order, coordination, concentration and independence. The child is shown each step of a lesson or skill and then given time for repetition of practice. This self-directed pace creates an ordered and sequential manner and they soon realize that they may indeed master what seemed too big a challenge, one step at a time. This process offers structure within the child’s mind.

Respect for one’s self and others is the main principle of this philosophy. Through the dynamics of trust and independent work, many opportunities arise to help another or ask for help, as needed. This creates a community within the class where considering others and communicating your own thoughts and needs are highly valued. The children in a Montessori class both act as role models and learn from those around them. It is through helping others, cooperating and finding solutions as issues arise, that the child may develop confidence within their place in the classroom, the family and the world.

The main premises of Montessori education are:

- Children are to be respected as different from adults and as individuals who differ from each other;
- The child possesses an unusual sensitivity and intellectual ability to absorb and learn from his/her environment that is unlike those of the adult, both in quality and capacity; and
- The most important years of a child's growth are the first six years of life when unconscious learning is gradually brought to the conscious level.

“The child has a deep love and need for purposeful work. He works, however, not as an adult for completion of a job, but the sake of an activity itself. It is this activity which enables him to accomplish his most important goal: the development of himself – his mental, physical, and psychological powers.”

- Dr. Maria Montessori

Amelia Island Montessori School's Mission Statement

Amelia Island Montessori School embodies a child-centered education grounded in Montessori philosophy and methodology, supporting the "whole child," inspiring independent thinkers and cultivating collaborative citizens.

Section 1 School Organization

A. Governing Structure

The school is governed by an elected Board of Trustees. Income is derived from tuition, fundraising events, donations and charitable gifts.

B. Board of Trustees - Biographies for BOT members may be found on the school's website.

Aaron Bell, President & Chair
aaronsarahbell@yahoo.com

Tom Harris
tharri01@gmail.com

Kevin Lin, Vice President
maximklin@yahoo.com

Jeremy Powell
jpowell@citrahealth.com

Mike Brooks, Treasurer
Mike.Brooks@cbcnationalbank.com

Martha McDowell
mcsandall@comcast.net

Diane van Lanen, Secretary
thevl4@me.com

Harsha Patel, AIMS Bookkeeper, Non-voting
harsha.patel@ameliaislandmontessori.com

Gayle Davis, Non-voting
tgdavis310@comcast.net

Diane M. Dodds – Head of School, Non-voting
diane.dodds@ameliaislandmontessori.com

C. Acronyms used in this handbook

BOT – Board of Trustees

HOS – Head of School

BSP – Before School Program

ASP – After School Program

TBD – To Be Determined

VPK – Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

D. School Staff

*Biographies may be found on the school's website.
Emails are firstname.lastname@ameliaislandmontessori.com*

Administration

Diane M. Dodds – Head of School
Harsha Patel – Finance & Operations Director
Linda Waldo – Compliance Coordinator
Deb Saul – Administrative Assistant

Faculty

Toddler Program

Sarah Mayes
Lisa Mohn
Kathy Aguilar

Primary Program

Tania Castro
Theresa Chanavier
Sierra Goltry
Paige Hefferon
Kati McClurg
Brittney Wilson

Lower Elementary Program

Debbie Hodsdon
Kim Philo

Upper Elementary Program

Melissa Ross
Beth Perkins

Middle School Program

Karl Schlobohm

After School Program

Jenn DeClementi,
Adam Dodds
Mary Wright

Specialists

Music - Abigail Poirier
Library/Technology - Jenn DeClementi
Art – Clay Times Art Center
Drama – Beth Perkins

Spanish – Tania Castro
STEM – Adam Dodds
Physical Education - Renaissance Youth
Amelia Fit

E. School Improvement Teams

School Improvement Teams will be developed as the Strategic Plan is developed and the BOT moves forward to implement the goals and objectives set forth for the school.

Section 2

Daily Operations

A. School Hours

	<u>Arrive</u>	<u>Dismiss</u>	<u>Tardy Pick-up</u>
ADMINISTRATION			
Head of School and Finance	8:00AM	4:00PM	
Administrative Assistant	8:00 AM	4:00PM	
Compliance Coordinator	8:30 AM	4:00 PM	
BEFORE SCHOOL PROGRAM	7:30AM	8:25AM	
TODDLER & PRIMARY – half day	8:30AM	12:00PM	12:10PM
TODDLER & PRIMARY- full day	8:30AM	3:00PM	3:10 PM
VPK (voluntary pre-kindergarten)	8:30AM	12:30PM	12:40PM
KINDERGARTEN	8:30 AM	3:00PM	3:10PM
ELEMENTARY (grades 1-6)	8:30 AM	3:00PM	3:10PM
MIDDLE SCHOOL (grades 7-8)	8:30 AM	3:00PM	3:10PM
AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM	3:00PM	6:00PM	6:10PM

B. Morning Arrival

- Children enrolled in the Before School Program (BSP) MUST be escorted by their parent/guardian to the Before School Program room.
- Any child participating in the BSP will be escorted by AIMS staff to their classroom.
- Any student arriving after 8:45am will be considered tardy.

C. Tardy Policy

- In order to prevent interruptions after class instruction starts, parents should make every effort to have their child arrive on time. When a child is tardy, they have missed important structure and routines that help their day to run smoothly. If a child will be late, the parent should notify the school's office. Students arriving after 8:45am must be escorted by a parent/guardian to the office and signed in. The student will be escorted by a school employee to their classroom.
- When parents/guardians are unable to pick up children at the designated dismissal, children will be escorted to the After School Program. Parents may pick up children in ASP from the playground or the Lower Elementary Building. Should the child remain in ASP for more than 10 minutes, a charge of \$6.00/hour will be invoiced. ***Please note that for pick up after 6:00pm, parents will be charged for an additional hour plus a late fee of \$25 per occurrence per child.***

D. Dismissal

- Florida State Law mandates the names of all persons with whom a child may leave must be on file at the school. This is not blanket permission. Each time a child's normal pickup schedule is changed, a written notice must be submitted. A note to the child's teacher is the most efficient manner to offer

this information. Emails to administration are acceptable; however, it is appreciated if notice is given by 1:00 p.m. Telephone notification will be accepted on an emergency basis only.

- Faculty members are not permitted to transport students to or from school.
- AIMS will require identification of anyone whom a parent has given permission to pick up a child if he or she is not familiar to our staff.

E. Attendance

Daily attendance and punctuality is the responsibility of the parents and the student. Proper attendance assures the greatest potential for learning opportunities for your child. In the event that your child is absent, please call the school office. *If a child did not attend morning classes, they will not be permitted to attend ASP, Studios, or other school events.*

- Florida Law states that children between the ages of 5 and 16 must attend school with only excused absences of illness, death in the immediate family and other extreme explanatory circumstances. AIMS recognizes the following circumstances:
 - a. Medical reasons
 - b. Death in the family
 - c. Legal reasons verified by a lawyer or a court
 - d. Circumstances as approved by the Head of School.

Excessive absences may place a child in academic jeopardy for progression to the next grade level.

- Students missing excessive days (more than 10%) will have their cases reviewed by a school committee comprised of their Directress, the Head of School, and other appropriate staff. The committee will review the attendance data and documentation, provide the parent/guardian with an opportunity for explanation if necessary, and determine whether an exception is to be granted.

F. Illnesses

We know that you want your child protected from illness as much as possible and so we ask your cooperation in helping us protect all children and staff from undue exposure. Parents must err on the side of caution when sending their child to school. All children who have an illness should be kept home. Determination of your child's health will be based upon the following :

- *Temperature above 100.4 degrees (normal is 96.6 - 98) by the axillary (armpit) method*
- *Conjunctivitis (pink eye)*
- *Skin rash other than a localized diaper rash*
- *Vomiting*
- *Diarrhea*
- *Any evidence of lice infestation or nits*
- *Continuous nasal discharge that is unclear in color*
- *Sore throat*
- *Persistent cough*
- *Earache*
- *Anytime that the child is not feeling well enough to tolerate a normal school day, whether it be due to illness, lack of sleep, or a disruption in the usual family routine.*

Please follow the stated guidelines. Should you have questions, please ask your teacher.

1. Students who have a contagious disease/condition should be kept at home. A student who has/had a fever, has/had diarrhea or has/had vomited within the previous 24 hours, or has a cold or cough which

causes discomfort or fatigue should also be kept out of school for at least 24 hours after the last episode or the fever has broken. If your child has/had strep throat, he/she may return to school after antibiotic treatment has rendered the condition no longer contagious, but no less than 24 hours. If your child has/had conjunctivitis (pink eye) he/she may return to school 24 hours after medical treatment has begun. Parents should notify the school to report a health related absence.

2. Please know that certain viral conditions (such as contagious viral pneumonia) are very serious in the classroom environment. Coughing, especially at night, difficulty breathing, difficulty sleeping, nasal congestion (with or without discharge), diarrhea, and fatigue and/or tiredness are some of the symptoms. Bacterial pneumonia, while not as contagious can also be very serious and does not necessarily carry a fever. Sensible concern should be given to attendance of a child with any of the above. The child is extremely uncomfortable and the conditions are easily spread to other children and staff. The same guidelines as stated in number one should be followed.
3. When a student becomes ill during school hours, parents or the emergency contact person will be called to take the child home as soon as possible. Prior to that time, the child will be isolated and kept under adult supervision.
4. To be excused from participating in Physical Education activities, parents must provide a written note from a physician.

G. Medication

Most medications can be put on a schedule by your pediatrician that does not involve school hours. Families who have children on medications that must be given during school hours need to consult with the office for permission to have a faculty member administer medication. Medications must accompany a parent/guardian signed permission form and be in the original bottle/packaging from the pharmacy with the doctor's dispensing instructions clearly marked on it.

Non-prescription medication, such as diaper rash ointment, benadryl, or herbal/homeopathic remedies must follow the same protocol as the prescribed medicine. A medical log is kept securely in the student's classroom and then filed in the child's cumulative folder at the end of the school year. *Children are not allowed to bring any medicine/remedies to school in backpacks or lunchboxes.*

H. Classroom Procedures

The following list describes the structure of the classroom and how the children are expected to work within the environment. By using these guidelines in the home, not only will you reinforce AIMS procedures, but your child will feel a sense of structure and security in his/her life as well.

- Be respectful of self, others and the environment.
- Walk when inside the classroom.
- Speak in a quiet tone of voice.
- Carry one thing at a time, using both hands.
- Put work away when finished.
- Roll up the work rug slowly and tightly, keeping the ends even, and put it away.
- Push chairs in when leaving tables.
- In circle, keep legs crossed and hands to self.
- Raise hand to talk.
- Walk around the work rugs.
- Respect other students' work.
- Clean up whatever is spilled or dropped.
- When the signal is given, stop, look and listen.

I. Restroom Procedure

All students should be age-appropriately trained in personal hygiene habits which include; urinating in the commode, flushing, washing hands, and disposing of hand towels in the trash can.

The following describes how the children are expected to utilize the bathroom facilities.

- Receive permission from the Directress to leave the room.
- Flush the commode after each use.
- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Put paper towels in the trash can.
- Return directly to the classroom.

J. Playground Procedures *(our playground is only open when an AIMS staff member is present)*

Our staff adheres to the following guidelines to ensure consistency for the child and his/her knowledge of what is allowed when using the playgrounds.

- Walk to and from the playground on the sidewalk.
- Go only UP the steps and DOWN the slide.
- Climb using two hands. Toys are left on the ground while climbing.
- Respect others who are climbing.
- Swing keeping the chains straight and sit forward in the seat.
- Stay on the swing until it stops, then get off.
- Stay clear of people while they are swinging.
- Throw balls to people on the ground and only when they are aware the ball is coming.
- Stay away from the fence.
- Play gently with others.
- Keep the sandbox toys in the sandbox or in the storage container, and return equipment to its proper place.
- Keep portable toys off stationary toys.
- Hazardous natural objects (such as sticks and limbs) on the playground should be cleared to outside the gate. Mulch must remain on the ground.
- A child must be capable of mastering the equipment without adult assistance before it is safe for him/her to use the equipment.
- Bend knees when jumping.
- Sit on the seat of the picnic tables.
- Protect the flowers and the gardens.
- Ask permission to leave the playground; wait for an adult to open / close the gate.

K. Alternate Nutrition Plan

1. **Please advise, in writing, of any food allergies and/or diet restrictions your child may have.**
2. To comply with the Department of Children and Families (DCF), parents must sign the “Alternate Nutrition Plan Agreement.”
3. Please do not pack foods that could be a choking hazard such as hot dogs, popcorn, nuts/seeds, whole grapes, chunky peanut butter, raw vegetables, chunks of meat and cheese, etc. for children ages 4 and under.
4. Children in the full-day program should bring their lunches in bags or lunch boxes labeled with their names. Lunches should consist of a protein, fresh fruit and a vegetable. Sandwiches can be meat, cheese, egg, etc. Other items may be included at the parent’s discretion with the exception of candy, frosted desserts and gum. The children will be encouraged to eat the nutritious foods first. Milk or water should also be included. Please do not include any kind of soda.
5. At the end of the lunch period, the children are directed to rewrap any substantial amount of uneaten food. This will help you determine the quantities to send for your child/children and also their likes and dislikes of food packed for them. Allowing your child/children to help choose and prepare his/her lunch not only builds independence, but encourages them to eat the food he/she has chosen.
6. Please be mindful of recent studies of certain food additives affecting the behavior of the children.

L. AIMS Uniform Policy

AIMS believes that wearing uniforms is beneficial for the student for the following reasons:

- Helps academic success
- Places emphasis on learning, not clothing
- Reduces peer pressure and social stigmas
- Facilitates security by identifying outsiders
- Encourages distinction of character and personality, instead of appearance
- Allows for cohesive presentation as a group
- Enhances school spirit
- Lowers long-term clothing costs

Monday – Thursday:

PANTS / SHORTS / SKORTS / SKIRTS

- Pants should be navy or khaki colored chinos- elastic waist is acceptable.
- Yoga pants or leggings are not acceptable unless paired with a jumper or skirt and must be a solid color of white, light blue, royal blue, navy or red.
- Shorts should be navy or khaki colored and knee (Bermuda) length - elastic waist is acceptable.
- Gym shorts or sweatpants are not acceptable.
- Skorts or skirts should be navy or khaki colored and knee length - elastic waist is acceptable.

JUMPERS / COLLARED DRESSES

- Jumpers should be navy or khaki colored or plaid (primarily blue) and knee length.
- Jumpers must be embroidered with AIMS logo and worn with a collared blouse or polo shirt underneath. Accepted shirt colors are white, light blue, royal blue, navy or red.
- Collared dresses must be white, light blue, royal blue, navy, or red and must have AIMS logo.

SHIRTS

- All shirts must be collared and embroidered with AIMS logo. No T-shirts.
- Accepted shirt colors are white, light blue, royal blue, navy, or red.

SWEATSHIRTS / SWEATERS

- Sweatshirts and sweaters worn in the classroom must be white, light blue, royal blue, navy, or red and in solid color with no markings (e.g. stripes) or brand names (e.g. GAP).
- Pullover, buttoned or zippered styles are acceptable.

SHOES

- Closed toe shoes, sneakers, or sandals - no light up shoes.

Friday – Dress Down Day

- Comfortable clothes which are easy for the child to dress him/herself, such as elastic waists.
- Shoes should have backs and soft soles, suitable for the playground. No crocs, flip flops or cowboy boots. Indoor shoes are to be worn inside the building.
- Label your children's clothes and belongings.
- Younger children will require an extra set of clothes in a zip lock bag labeled with your child's name.
- Leggings worn under skirts must be solid in color.
- No tank tops with spaghetti straps. Three finger wide straps are acceptable.
- Shorts, skirts and skorts must be knee length.
- Hair should be neatly groomed, natural in color and secured with elastic bands if needed.
- No clothing covering the face, such as ski hats and hoodies.

Non- Compliance of Uniform Policy:

<u>First Occurrence:</u>	Teachers will remind parent/guardian of the policy.
<u>Second Occurrence:</u>	School will call home to have the parent bring in clothes.
<u>Third Occurrence:</u>	Parent is notified to pick child up from school.

M. Birthdays

- In the Montessori classroom, every child's birthday may be celebrated in a special way. It is called the "Walk Around the Sun." To celebrate the children's years on Earth, the child carries a globe (which is one of our works) as they walk around the sun (a candle). The child walks around the sun one time for each year of life. We talk about how the Earth goes around the sun and every time it goes around once, that it is the same as one year or 365 days. The months are laid around the sun. The child then starts and stops at their birthday month. This celebration is great for learning the months, the concept of the Earth revolving around the sun, the concept that we live on Earth, and it's great for counting! It is nice when parents provide a photograph for each year of their child's life, along with a description of any special event that occurred during that year (a trip, a new sibling).
- Parents who wish to provide a special snack should make arrangements with the Directress at least one day in advance. The celebration takes place before lunch so the servings should be small and a breakfast item, e.g., bagels, muffins, fruit, carrot cake, banana bread, etc.
- Children's birthdays can be a source of joy and pain. Parents should only bring invitations for the Directress to hand out or put in other children's backpacks when ALL of the children are invited. If only a few select children are desired, parents are asked to handle their child's party invitations by mailing them from home or with a phone call. Please help your child develop an awareness and sensitivity for the feelings of others by being discreet about party plans.
- Parents are always welcome to commemorate the day by purchasing a favorite book for our library. The books you purchase will be dedicated in your child's name.

N. Holidays

The Directress structures all holiday observances. Assistance from a room parent is always appreciated. Those classrooms without a room parent may wish to use sign-up sheets for help with tasks and supplies. Observed holidays include, but are not limited to: Maria Montessori's Birthday, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Valentine's Day, St Patrick's Day, Easter, Passover, Earth Day, and Memorial Day.

O. Sharing Time

Children often wish to share special things and bring various items to school. Items of educational interest are welcome i.e. flowers, musical instruments, objects and dolls from foreign countries, things from nature, postcards, and photos. A note of explanation enables the Directress to help the child in the presentation. Children may bring something on their assigned day of the week. Toys, treasures, money, play jewelry, etc. are to be left at home. Children are not permitted to play with them at school as they are easily lost.

P. Field Trips

On occasion, AIMS will sponsor and conduct field trips for the educational enrichment of the students. Participation in field trips is a privilege. Students are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct – School Trips. No student may participate in a field trip unless a signed parent/guardian permission slip (provided by the school) for the specific event is submitted to the School. Some field trips require a fee. Teachers have extensive directions regarding field trip procedures.

In order to drive on field trips, parents are required to have on file:

- (1) "Affidavit of Good Moral Character" form
- (2) Volunteer Affidavit
- (3) Volunteer Emergency Information sheet
- (4) A copy of a current driver's license, and proof of current insurance.

Q. Transportation Policy

Because of the heavy auto traffic during arrival and departure times, children are not allowed to be in the parking area. Each parent or legal guardian is responsible for their child's observance of this policy until the child enters the school building.

Florida State Law mandates the names of all persons with whom a child may leave must be on file at the school. This is not blanket permission. Each time a child's normal pickup schedule is changed, a written notice must be submitted. A note to the child's teacher is the most efficient manner to offer this information. Emails to administration are acceptable; however, notice must be made by 1:00 p.m. Telephone notification will be accepted on an emergency basis only.

Page | 15

Faculty members are not permitted to transport students to or from school.

It is suggested that parents use the following car seat **guidelines** from the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles while driving with a child in your vehicle:

Children 7 years old or younger must be secured in a federally approved child restraint system.

- Children 3 years old and younger must use a separate car-seat or the vehicle's built-in child seat.
- Children 4 to 7 years old must sit in either a separate car seat, a built in child seat or a seat belt, depending on the child's height and weight.

Birth to 1 year old and at least 20 lbs.

- Use a rear-facing child car seat in the back seat of the car.

1 year old and 20 lbs. – 4 years old and 40 lbs.

- Use a forward-facing child seat in the back seat until they reach the weight and height limits recommended by the manufacturer.
- Switch to a booster seat in the back of the car

4 years old and 40 lbs. – 8 years old or 4 ft. 9 inches tall

- Use a booster seat in the back seat until your child is big enough to use the car's seat belt..

8 years old or 4 ft. 9 inches tall –12 years old

- Have your child sit in the backseat with a seatbelt.
- At 13 years old, your child can sit in the front seat of your car.

R. Student Code of Conduct – Behavioral Expectations

Students of Amelia Island Montessori School (AIMS) are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the school's mission, goals, and beliefs. Students are encouraged to consider the safety of themselves, the safety of others, and the care of materials and property. Students are taught to consider whether or not a behavior is *kind, helpful, destructive or unsafe*. Montessori operates on the principle of freedom with boundaries. Every program has its own set of expectations which differs from age to age, but is always based on core Montessori practices as well as respect for each other and for their environment. Students who fail to abide by these general behavioral expectations may experience one or more of the following consequences :

- Isolation from other students;
- An Incident report sent home outlining the inappropriate behavior;
- A scheduled meeting between student, parent, teacher and possibly Head of School to discuss the inappropriate behavior and a design a behavioral plan for change;
- Required outside professional counseling/intervention for student;
- Reassignment of their classroom;
- Restoration of damages;
- Completion of community service;
- Assignment of in-house suspension;
- Suspension from school premises and activities;
- Expulsion; or
- Involvement of police or legal action.

Definition of these terms

Isolation: A student is supervised with minimal to no peer interaction at an individual table or work space in the classroom. They may be removed from the classroom and taken to the offices.

Incident report: A written report documenting the details of the student's behavior breach, sent home on the day of the event. Names of other students are not by law allowed to be included in the report. Parents will be required to sign and date the report at pick-up.

Behavioral plan: An action plan identifying what needs to change and the goals that need to be reached in order to define a successful change in behavior. This likely will require follow-up meetings.

Community service: A student will be given specific duties in and around the school campus, during free time, before or after school, which may include picking up trash, emptying recycle bins, sweeping or raking, or assisting younger children with their work.

In-house suspension: A student will spend their school day working and completing assignments directed by the regular classroom teacher in a designated study area outside of the student's classroom. Parents will be notified if this assignment is warranted and will not exceed 3 days.

Suspension: This suspension will introduce a temporary exclusion (up to 9 days) from classes and school. Parents will be notified and asked to meet with the faculty and Head of School. Students assigned suspension must complete any work assigned by the teacher and return the completed work to the teacher on the day of return. Before returning to school, the student and parent(s) may be required to meet with the Head of School again to discuss a behavior modification plan, the code of conduct, and a request for restoration. Students who are suspended are not allowed on school property for the duration of the suspension. Note that these suspensions become part of a student's educational record.

Expulsion: Expulsion is the permanent withdrawal of a student's enrollment at AIMS unless the Board of Trustees reinstates the privilege of attending the school. Expulsion is an extremely serious sanction that may be imposed only by the Board of Trustees.

The discipline policies outlined in this behavior code of conduct is consistent with general expectations for any school-sponsored activities. Disciplinary decisions will be made by the administration taking into consideration the age of the student, past incidents, the nature of the incident, and any special needs that students may have. All incidents will be reviewed discreetly between the student(s) and the faculty member(s) present.

The following behavior rubric will be implemented according to IDEA regulations and in certain circumstances or situations the Head of School (HOS) may impose consequences that deviate from the behavior rubric. Disciplinary practices exclude corporal punishment, severe humiliation, and withholding of food, rest or toileting.

If an adult has not witnessed the offense and there is a question or are questions of which student(s) is(are) at fault, both or all students will be considered involved in the incident and will be assigned a consequence equivalent to the behavior rubric.

If the offense is severe enough, as determined by the administration, the student may be immediately suspended from school, sent before the board for an expulsion hearing, and/or legal authorities will be called. At no time will corporal punishment be used.

Behavior Rubric

BEHAVIOR	FIRST TIME	SECOND TIME	THIRD TIME
<u>Level one</u> Off task behavior, e.g., loud talking, not following safety rules, habitual tardiness, out-of uniform, homework not turned in, chewing gum	Verbal Reminder	Incident report to home	Written report home Parent/Teacher Meeting Student consequence Behavior plan set up
<u>Level two</u> Cheating/Plagiarizing, breach of cyber rules/policies, rudeness or disrespect to staff or adult in charge, continued disruptive behavior, carelessness with one's body or an object leading to injury, repetitive non-compliance with a procedure, leaving class/campus without permission, swearing	Incident report Student consequence	Parent/Teacher/HOS meeting In-school suspension Student consequence Behavior plan set up	Parent/Teacher/HOS meeting In or out of school suspension Behavior plan set up Behavior contract signed Professional consultation may be recommended
<u>Level three</u> Aggressive behavior, unnecessary roughness during sports, hitting, grabbing, inappropriate contact (hitting, kicking, pinching, slapping, obscene gestures or threatening looks), throwing an object, repetitive disruption of class, bullying or harassment of another student, blatant disrespect of staff or adult in charge, possession or solicitation of weapons, prescription drugs, or any type of illegal substance	Incident report Student isolation Parent/Teacher/HOS meeting Police may be called In or out of school suspension Student consequence Behavior plan set up Behavior contract signed Professional consultation may be recommended Restricted school activities Suspension goes in file	Formal disciplinary hearing before a school board with possible expulsion	
<u>Level four</u> Any severe action or illegal (drugs, alcohol, firearms) behavior that could result in harm to self or others	Student isolated from other students until Parent/Teacher/HOS meeting held Police may be called Out of school suspension May go immediately to formal disciplinary hearing before a school board with possible expulsion		

S. Biting Policy

While biting is considered a normal stage in childhood and rarely done with the intent to hurt another child, it can disrupt the peaceful classroom environment. The faculty of AIMS works hard to reduce the number of biting incidents through teethers, food prep work, and verbal communication. If several biting incidents occur in one day, the child's parents will be called and a parent will have to pick up their child from school. The child is permitted to return to school the next day. Should biting incidents continue for a prolonged period of time, we will request a meeting to set goals and discuss the possible use of a shadow to help

remediate the behavior. Every effort will be made to support the child and their family as well as balance the needs of the other children in the environment.

T. Anti-Bullying Policy

Amelia Island Montessori School is committed to providing an educational setting that is safe, secure and free from harassment and bullying for all of its students and employees. This includes students bullying students, adults bullying students, adults bullying adults and students bullying adults.

Classic “*Bullying*” behavior occurs when one person is exposed, repeatedly, and over time, to the negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, with a noted power differential. The target of the behavior is chosen, specifically due to the real or perceived power imbalance in the relationship rather than due to ordinary social conflict. Bullying behavior is misbehavior, and can be manifested in many forms, both passively and overtly.

It is important to note that while passive and overt behaviors can be very common, and developmentally appropriate, misbehaviors that children exhibit as they learn to navigate social dynamics. The identifying component in the bully/victim relationship is rooted in the power imbalance. Specific steps, requiring direct intervention, are used to effectively address the power differential when true bullying behavior occurs. With each situation, we will consider the age and developmental level of the child(ren).

Sample Plan for Bullying Behavior:

- Increase supervision by adults
- Meeting with parents of both children, outlining classroom plan and support needed from home
- Separation of students (direct or indirect)
- Individualized support plan for child exhibiting victim behavior that includes, but is not limited to:
 - Accessing immediate adult support
 - Development of communication and assertiveness skills
 - Establishment of buddy system
 - Adult support in conflict resolution
 - Class meetings
- Individualized support plan for child exhibiting bullying behavior
 - Establishment of clear expectations for behavior and logical consequences
 - Development of communication skills in resolving conflict and receiving peer messages
 - Development of needed social skills for making connections
 - Support and redirection to positive power and social responsibility
 - Class meetings

Section 3

Communications

A. School → Home

1. E-Mail

It is essential that parents check your e-mail daily and open all communications from the school.

All newsletters, individual family monthly tuition invoices, and other notices are sent home via e-mail. Communications via e-mail are sent on an as needed basis. **It is essential that parents/guardians be attentive to each of these communications as many questions are answered within these communications regarding the life of the school and necessary requirements for your child.** Should paperwork be necessary, it will be sent home in the backpack or handed to you personally at drop-off / pick-up by a staff person.

2. Calendar

The annual calendar is posted on the website. Reminders of upcoming events will be sent as timely as possible. Please note that some dates and activities may change; however, parents will be notified ahead of time of any significant changes.

3. Website

All current information will be posted on the website and can be viewed at www.ameliainslandmontessori.com.

4. Facebook

We encourage all parents, staff, alumni and supporters of AIMS to join and like our Facebook group, Amelia Island Montessori School and the Team AIMS Facebook group. There will be no individual classroom Facebook pages – faculty members should not have personal connections with parents of children in their class through Facebook. As far-reaching as Facebook can be, this policy is intended to protect children and staff members. Personal connections may be made after children (or upcoming siblings) are no longer a part of the school community.

B. Relationships with Employees of AIMS

School is an extension of the child's home environment. Therefore, we feel it is most important for the parent and Directress to openly communicate with each other. Parents can learn what their children are doing during the hours spent away from home. Directresses can learn about any factor that may be influencing the child. Any changes, whether positive or negative, can influence children's behavior. Grandparents visiting, the death of a pet, illness, divorce or separation, moving, etc., all contribute to changes in your child's daily routine. Please make your child's Directress aware of these changes so he/she can better meet the needs of your child.

Parents are requested to keep all employee relationships on a professional level. We understand and appreciate how much faith and trust you place in us. Employees are forbidden to accept gifts from parents in return for special treatment of a student. Employees are also forbidden to accept outside employment from you which include such services as tutoring and babysitting. Employees are subject to disciplinary action or up to and including termination if they engage in such activities. Please do not place an employee in the uncomfortable and possibly awkward position of rejecting your request for such services or favors. These behaviors do not further the professional partnerships that we are committed to and this intentional community that we hold so important to furthering our vision and mission in the world. To continuously offer the best education for your child, we must protect the instructional time and environment from interruptions. ***You are welcome to email or leave a message for your child's teacher in the business office.*** We will gladly relay the message and you should be contacted by the end of the day. If you are contacting your child's teacher by e-mail, please realize that it will be necessary that she email you back within 24 hours.

C. Conferences

- Parent-teacher conferences are an integral part of Montessori philosophy. The importance of communication is necessary for both parents and the staff at AIMS. Conferences will be held three times a year (Fall, Winter, Spring) or more frequently if necessary. Parents are encouraged to request a Directress conference should a need arise.
- These conferences allow parents to get to know the teacher, understand the academic curriculum and learn about the progress their child is making in the Montessori classroom. Appointments are made through the child's Directress or assistant. Keeping the lines of communication open with your child's Directress is an important part of the Montessori experience.
- Observations by the teacher and the parent are a key tool to assess student progress. Parents are welcome to schedule an opportunity to observe their child prior to the conference.

Section 4 Parental Responsibilities and Rights

A. Required Forms and Consent

The following is required for (re)enrollment:

- Birth Certificate (provided during the admissions process)
- Current Immunization Record and Current Health Record (updated yearly)*

**It should be noted that some students in our school community may not have current immunizations due to health or religious exemptions.*

The following forms require parent/guardian review and acknowledgement:

- DCF Know Your Child Care Facility
- DCF The Flu: A Guide for Teachers
- Emergency Procedures Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Alternate Nutrition Plan
- Illness Plan
- Attendance Policy
- Uniform Policy (Dress Code)
- Bug Spray & Sunscreen Permission
- Acknowledgement of Responsibility to Read Parent Handbook
- Ipad Agreement
- Media Release (photo and video)
- AIMS Directory Permission
- AIMS Partnership Agreement

B. Parental Responsibilities

1. Team AIMS

Our Team AIMS parent organization holds various roles in our school community. The major function of this team is to create a connection between the school and parents, i.e., organizing many school-wide activities, acquiring volunteers for school events, and providing the link for all stakeholders – BOT, staff, parents, students, community and alumni. *It is all parents' responsibility to respond as much as possible to this team when requested;* it is evident that many hands make light work of a heavy load. If you are interested in serving on this group's leadership team, please send an email to teamaims@ameliaislandmontessori.com.

2. Parent Education

Parents are asked to continue to develop an understanding of the Montessori education. Throughout the school year, there will be opportunities to attend educational occasions, such as Doughnuts with Diane, classroom showcases, program Open Houses, Orientations, Transition Meetings, or just to read articles. If parents need assistance or resources, please speak to your child's teacher or the HOS.

3. Volunteer Obligations

There will be many opportunities for each family to fulfill their required volunteer hours. Volunteer Work Parties are one method. They become wonderful social events hosted by Team AIMS while necessary maintenance and repairs to our school take place.

Each family is required to fill 20 volunteer hours at various projects during the school year. At least ten hours must be given to school wide projects. The remaining ten hours *may* be given in the classroom; however, if parents are unavailable during school hours to give time to the classroom, more hours may be given to school wide projects. Each family will receive a questionnaire during registration to indicate area(s) in which they would like to volunteer. Should there be an area of interest not covered, these hours must be preapproved by the HOS.

Volunteer hours are contracted to be met. In the event that volunteer hours are not met by May 1, planned arrangements must be made to meet this requirement or a \$20.00 fee per uncompleted hour will be assessed to the student's account. When you volunteer, it is very important to record your time through the "volunteer log" on our school website. This is how your volunteer hours are tracked for completion.

4. Court Orders

If there is a court order specifying the rights and responsibilities of individual parents, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the School with an official copy of the court order. The custodial parent should submit to the Head of School the "Custody Section" of the divorce decree if it contains information which may be useful to the School in fulfilling its obligations.

5. Buckley Amendment¹

Our School abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, AIMS will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and to other school-related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given to the non-custodial parent, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

It is essential to communicate the same information to both parents at the same time. Therefore, if possible, joint conferences will be held. If either parent is uncomfortable with scheduling joint conferences, he or she should contact the HOS to discuss the situation.

6. Phones

If you need to speak to a teacher, please call the school at 904.261.6610 and your message will be delivered to the teacher. Their full attention should be on the children in the classroom. Also, please be respectful and leave your cell phone in the car or turn it off completely (not just on vibrate) so that children's learning is not interrupted if you are visiting the classroom. Your child deserves your full attention while you are in his/her class.

¹ / Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, Ch. 1002, FS.

7. Respect

We expect that all persons involved at AIMS (to include employees, parents/family members, BOT, students, and volunteers) will treat each other with dignity and respect. Harassment will not be tolerated. Harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, sexual, or visual, that is based on a person's race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, or disability. If an allegation of harassment arises, the Head of School will promptly conduct a discreet investigation. If an investigation reveals that harassment has occurred, AIMS will take corrective action. At all times, AIMS reserves the right to refuse to serve parents whose behavior constitutes a hostile environment for AIMS employees.

C. Parental Rights

1. Classroom Observations

Parents are welcome at any time to observe their children. Amelia Island Montessori School also receives outside adult learners as observers throughout the school year. Upon arrival at the school, any observer will check in at the front office and be escorted to the classroom or to an observation window. Cell phones should be left in the car or turned off completely (not just on vibrate) as the children will be interrupted when a phone is checked in any method.

In order to have the best possible observation, here are a few tips for observing and interpreting what you see in Montessori classrooms.

- The children may come up to you. Please try not to engage them in conversation. A polite “Hello” and a direct response as to who you are is sufficient. Montessori children realize and understand that observers come to watch them work.
- If you have questions or concerns while observing, please write them down. The teacher is often unable to take time away from their classroom duties during the course of an observation. The teacher or administrator will be glad to answer these questions afterward either in person later, or by phone or email. It's best to check with the office to set up a mutually acceptable time.

For your observation to be thorough, it is best if you can stay at least an hour. It is easy to feel overwhelmed by the diversity of activity in a Montessori classroom. Try to differentiate between the types of sounds as the noise level rises and falls. There should be the normal classroom noise of children being together and the excited pitch of being excited about learning. There may even be a special peak of noise level as a discovery is made in their learning. Notice that children are learning in different ways. Some will be working cooperatively with the materials. Some will choose to work independently. Still others may walk around the classroom, seeming to not engage in anything in particular. This child, however, is absorbing and learning through observing his environment, the children, and the materials in the classroom. Through all this, you should see the self-gratification that the learning process affords each child. Listen to the way the children speak to each other. Listen for the level of respect as well as the “normal” childhood interactions. Watch the teacher-child interaction. Is it different from the traditional mode by which you were probably educated? Watch how the teacher corrects a child, and more importantly, when she does not. Listen to her tone of voice and her mannerisms. Notice the materials. Are they clean and neatly arranged? Are they attractive by color, placement, and quality? When a child chooses work from the shelves, do they carry it carefully, replacing it neatly when they are done?

We realize that you will not be able to sort out and see all the intricacies of the Montessori classroom as listed above. It is very different from the traditional model that most of us are used to.

2. Expectations—Amelia Island Montessori School Partnership Agreement

Amelia Island Montessori enrolls families, not just students. Parents, guardians, grandparents, and all other family members play an integral role in each student's educational experience. The purpose of this agreement is to clarify expectations upon which we can agree. It does not mean that there will not be problems. It does mean that we will work together. No school can succeed in fulfilling its mission unless

parents share that commitment.

What can parents reasonably expect from the school?

- A commitment to the multi-dimensional development of your child. Cognitive development and a solid academic foundation are important, yet they represent only one dimension of our aspirations for your child. Equally significant is your child's social, emotional, spiritual, and physical development. Children are given choices and great deal of freedom-within-limits during the school day. The choices your child makes, and the accompanying responsibilities, influence the emerging character of your child.
- Every child will be treated with dignity and respect and be expected to treat all others with the same respect. Students will have a clear sense of responsibility to themselves, others, and to the community as a whole.
- Open, honest, timely, and respectful communication about your child and items affecting the school community. Parent-teacher conferences, newsletters, phone, email will be utilized on a regular basis. Our parent handbook and website provide a wealth of information about our school.
- Teachers are professional, well-trained educators who will utilize observation and confidentiality. Our teachers will always offer their current best understanding of your child's progress, strength and needs. They will demonstrate high standards for themselves and their students.
- The environment is physically and emotionally safe and supportive, as well as aesthetically beautiful. Learning materials will correspond to the developmental characteristics of the child at each level. The buildings and grounds will be physically safe, secure and well-maintained.
- Administrators will act with a sense of integrity, a focus on the needs of the individual child within the whole school community and a commitment to the peace, well-being, and success of the children and families of the school.

What does the school expect from parents?

- For parents to create consistency between home and school by making continuing efforts to understand and embrace Montessori philosophy and partner with the school in the education of your child.
- We need parents to contribute to a positive school community by demonstrating respect for all adults, children, the school and it's programs. Look for ways to make a positive contribution to the life of the school. Through your behavior, you contribute to your child's moral development and to the culture and climate of the school, which they experience on a daily basis.
- Please maintain active, direct and respectful two-way communication with the school. Read communications and inform the school of pertinent changes in your child's life. Active communication involves parents sharing observations and concerns. In matters large and small, please remember the principle of respect: even in disagreement, disagree respectfully.
- For parents to volunteer and contribute within the goals and objectives of Team AIMS parent group. (teamAIMS@ameliaislandmontessori.com)

Section 5

Emergency Procedures

Amelia Island has adopted an extensive Emergency Crisis Management Plan. Staff are fully trained and prepared. The school conducts drills from time to time.

Section 6

Administrative Procedures

A. Student Support Team

The student support team is designed to provide support to students and their families. There are several steps and options to assist students with academic, emotional, or social difficulties in our classrooms. An action plan, strategies, and timeline will be set up and then revisited over the course of 4 weeks. If a Student Support Team (SST) action plan has been deemed unsuccessful with no or little improvement, the school may decide that dismissal is in the best interest of the child(ren). The teacher, parents, and administration will have a final meeting to determine if there are any other possible follow-up educational or psychological resources, actions, or environments to seek and consider outside of school. Page | 24

B. Students with Learning Differences

In the event that a student appears to have a learning difference, learning needs or a recurring emotional, medical, behavioral, or disciplinary problem, the school will contact the child's family to communicate concerns in a timely, sensitive and thoughtful manner. Children with mild physical, mental, or educational difficulties are considered for admission if their needs may be met within the context of the Montessori program.

Initial and/or periodic assessment by qualified professionals may be required. AIMS reserves the right to ultimately determine whether continuation in AIMS or transition to another program is in the best interest of the child and/or school classroom environment. While the school works to respond to each child's specific needs, the school may lack the expertise to develop appropriate learning strategies for children with special needs.

Please be aware that a child may be able to function in one environment during a particular phase of development and not another. This does not presume that AIMS will be able to offer the structure, assistance and supervision necessary for optimal growth of the child in the next class. If a facilitator is required for a child with special needs, the facilitator must meet all the requirements and will be under the supervision of the Directress and the Head of School, in conjunction with the parent or guardian.

C. Privacy of Student Files

Student files are confidential records and are kept secure from unauthorized access. Each student file should contain a log (name, date, purpose) of those persons or agencies that have had access to the student's file. Parents or guardians may have access to the child's file by written request to the office at least 24 hours in advance. The file must be viewed in the presence of an AIMS staff member.

Officials of the State or County Health Dept. and the State Dept. of Education may have the right to review student files without the parents' or guardians' permission. However, with a written court order, other government officials may inspect the contents of a student's file without the permission of the student or parent/guardian, and the school will inform the student and his family in writing that such an inspection has been requested or made.

A copy of the student's file may be sent to an outside professional, such as a psychologist or educational diagnostician, if requested in writing by the parent(s), guardian(s), or student if he/she has attained the age of majority, with notation of pertinent papers to be sent.

D. Disclosures Without Consent

- Disclosures without consent can be made to school officials with legitimate educational interests.
- A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.
- A school official is a person employed by AIMS as one of the following:
 - an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff;
 - a person serving on the school board;
 - a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her professional responsibility.
- Under certain prescribed situations, disclosure can be made to state and local officers of the juvenile justice system.
- Notification of the existence of a subpoena from a federal grand jury is not required for parents and eligible students.
- If a court or other issuing agency issues a subpoena for a law enforcement purpose and orders the school not to disclose the existence or contents of the subpoena to the parent or student, the school shall not be required to notify prior to compliance with the subpoena.

E. Student Records & Previous School Records

Attendance records are retained for all children. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) requires that all attendance records include the date and time of drop off and pick up of each child. AIMS retains attendance records for 3 years. Attendance records for all students are detailed and filed in the students' permanent file.

The full cooperation of the parents is required regarding previous school records and/or test results. Test results, evaluations, report cards, etc. need to be submitted or obtained if applicable. Any professional recommendations (tutoring, therapy, etc.) must be provided to ensure the child's success. All evaluations and professional recommendations are at the parent's expense and must be shared with the school.

F. Records/Transcripts Requests

- All requests to access student records by parents shall be submitted to the Head of School or designee in writing.
- If a parent disagrees with any information in their children's record and requests a change be made, the request shall be submitted in writing. The Head of School will investigate the information in question. After such investigation, if the information in the students' record is deemed incorrect, the Head of School will make the appropriate change to the record. If the information is deemed correct, the Head of School will provide the parent a written statement explaining and justifying such decision.

G. Transcripts

- By written request, the parent/guardian or, upon attaining the age of majority, the student may ask that a photocopy of the student's file, along with completed recommendation forms, be issued to another school. Copies sent directly are marked "Official Transcript" and are noted in the file.
- Report cards and transcripts cannot be issued if a student has an outstanding balance on his or her account that is more than sixty days past due. They will be forwarded once the account has been brought up to date.
- According to Florida Law, Health and Immunization Records will be forwarded upon request.

H. Tuition Payments

The tuition scale (including fees and discounts) may be found at www.ameliaislandmontessori.com.

- Monthly statements will be issued via e-mail; it is essential that AIMS have the correct email address on file.
- Monthly tuition payments are due on or before the 1st day of each month. Semi-annual tuition payments are due July 1st and December 1st. Annual payments are due on July 1st. Late payment is considered after the 10th of the month in all payment plans.
- All payment plans will begin July 1st and end March 1st. The deposit made with the current contract will become April's payment.
- All contracts must be accompanied by an ACH (automatic) debit form; your designated checking or savings account is automatically debited on the parent-selected 1st, 5th or 10th of each month. In the event that the designated date falls on a Saturday, Sunday or a National Holiday, your account will be charged upon the next immediate open date.
- Should parents prefer their bank account to not be accessed, payment (check or credit card) in the correct amount must be delivered, via mail or in person, to the business office prior to the access date. *Please note:* Payments made by mail or through a payment service, *must arrive* by the designated date to the school.
- Please make checks payable to AIMS. A \$30.00 charge will be levied on all returned checks.
- A late fee of \$10.00 will be charged on the 11th of each month if payment is not received. Additionally, a finance charge of 1.5% of any outstanding balance will be charged.
- If you choose to pay by credit card, we accept all major credit/debit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover) for tuition payments. If you would like to pay with a credit/debit card there will be a Convenience Fee of 3.9% for each transaction. Also, there will be a \$30.00 charge levied for all declined cards.
- ASP contracts will be developed at the beginning of the school year and payment plans set forth at that time.

I. Accounts Receivable & Collections Policy:

This policy defines both the normal and optional procedures for the collection of funds due the school for services rendered. It does not provide for the collection of funds due from the sale of assets. It should be understood that in all matters concerning collection and other means of debt satisfaction, the concurrence of the President of the Board and the Head of School is required. All burden of proof of payment is upon the payee. All decisions are subject to Board Review per notification to its President.

1. Normal Collection Procedure: Tuition is payable by the first of each month. A \$10.00 late payment fee is charged after the 10th of each month and a 1.5% finance charge is assessed the last day of the month.
Any form of outstanding balances will be reviewed and categorized as 30-60-90 days past the due date. Each category will be handled in the following manner after the indicated time has elapsed and the amounts due have not been paid.
 - 30-Days: Another invoice will be sent to the family with late fee.
 - 60-Days: Invoice and a Notification of Delinquency will be mailed to the family.

90-Days: Notification of Intention to send to Collections if arrangements are not made with the Head of School and Bookkeeper.

2. Alternative Collection Procedure:

Payment Plan: arrangements can be made with the Head of School to set up a payment plan if the situation warrants.

3. Non-Sufficient Funds Procedure

For all returned checks and/or a declined credit card, a charge is levied. A certified check, money order or cash will be required within three (3) working days.

J. Child Abuse Policy

AIMS staff adheres to the child abuse policies and guidelines as written in the Florida State Legislation. The Florida Department of Children and Families requires that all early childhood personnel be trained to recognize and respond to suspicious situations. Suspected child abuse or neglect is reported by calling 1-800-96ABUSE.

K. Smoking & Alcohol Policy

Florida Laws: FL Statutes - Title XXIX Public Health Section 386.01 Sanitary nuisance: It is unlawful for any person to smoke tobacco in, on, or within 1,000 feet of the real property comprising a public or private elementary, middle, or secondary school between the hours of 6 a.m. and midnight.

No alcoholic beverages may be consumed at the school during regular school hours, when the After School Program is in session, or when children are present at the school. No open consumption of alcoholic beverages will take place during a school-sponsored event when minors are present.

L. AIMS Grievance Procedure for Parents

In order to assure grievances are handled properly, the following procedure has been implemented.

Although parents and other non-employees are not required to follow the following Grievance Procedure, if any AIMS employee or Board member (further known as representative) is contacted by a non-employee regarding a grievance, the representative shall direct the complainant to the Grievance Procedure in the Parent and Employee Handbook and direct them in proceeding to the initial step which may be taken in an attempt to resolve complaints confidentially.

Any representative contacted regarding such matter shall keep any and all information confidential and shall disclose such information only in response to an investigation conducted by the Head of School, Board of Trustees, or a Grievance Committee, or in response to a proper request made during legal proceedings regarding such matter.

If, and only if, the complainant's problem directly involves the Head of School, the complainant may skip steps 1-3 and may present his/her grievance in writing, on the form provided in Appendix A/B of this Handbook, directly to the President of the Board.

1. The complainant should schedule a first conference, as soon as possible, with the Head of School. If a specific incident has given rise to the problem, this first conference should be scheduled as close to the date of the event as possible.
2. If this first conference with the Head of School fails to resolve the problem, an official complaint should be submitted to the Head of School, in writing, on the form provided in Appendix B/C of this Handbook, within fifteen (15) working days following the first conference. The grievance form requires the complainant to describe in detail the problem and steps that have been taken to resolve

- it. Upon receipt, the Head of School shall date the grievance form and return a dated copy to the complainant.
3. The Head of School shall begin an investigation into the problem. The Head of School has ten (10) working days to complete the investigation. Upon completion of the investigation the Head of School shall meet with the complainant and inform him/her of the results of the investigation and what remedy the Head of School thinks is appropriate. This meeting is the second conference. The Head of School shall also provide an answer to the grievance in writing prior to the second conference. If the situation warrants, the Head of School may choose to bring the problem to the attention of the President of the Board at this time. If the complainant is not satisfied with the Head of School's investigation or suggested remedy, he/she may appeal to the President of the Board of Trustees by submitting a written complaint, on the form provided in this Handbook, within ten (10) business days following the second conference. Upon receipt, the President of the Board shall date the grievance form and return a dated copy to the complainant.

If a problem is brought to the President of the Board of Trustees, a Grievance Committee shall conduct an investigation into the complaint and shall respond in writing to the grievance within thirty (30) working days. The Grievance Committee shall consist of three members, including an educator, and an attorney, both from outside the school, as well as a former AIMS parent. Any decision made by the Grievance Committee shall be final and binding. The BOT President reserves the right to appoint a current board member to be part of this committee should it be warranted.

In order to preserve the integrity of this internal procedure, no employee is to take any matter to a member of the Board of Trustees or to any other person without first taking the appropriate steps laid out in the grievance procedure. Any conferences between faculty/staff members and Board members, or other non-faculty/staff members who are not directly involved concerning a grievance, which take place outside of the internal grievance procedure, are highly inappropriate and inconsistent with our goal of maintaining the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of employment information.



Appendix A
GRIEVANCE FORM
Head of School

NAME: _____

Date: _____

1. Please explain your grievance with specific details: (use separate sheet if necessary)

2. Date of first conference with Head of School _____

My grievance is not resolved because: (use separate sheet if necessary)

3. My grievance could be resolved by: (use separate sheet if necessary)

Received by the Head of School

Date: _____

Copy: _____

4. Response of the Head of School to the grievance after investigation:

Head of School

Date



Appendix B
GRIEVANCE FORM
BOT President

NAME: _____

Date: _____

Steps 1 - 4 have been completed with the Head of School. A copy of that form should be attached here.

5. A second conference was held with the Head of School to discuss the investigation of the complaint on _____

My grievance is not resolved because: (use separate sheet if necessary)

Received by President of the Board

Date: _____

Copy: _____

6. Response of the Board

Representative of the Board

Date