



Breakthrough Montessori Public Charter School
Family Handbook
2016-17

July 1, 2016

(Updated version will be distributed prior to the first day of school)

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WELCOME

Welcome to the inaugural year of Breakthrough Montessori Public Charter School. We are delighted you have chosen BMPCS as an educational home for your child and, as this Handbook explains, just as pleased to be serving your entire family through a fully implemented, public Montessori option in Washington, DC.

This handbook is a further effort to work together in the interest of children and families. It opens with the Partnership Agreement. We hope you will take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with this document. It responds to two questions: “What can you expect of BMPCS?” and “What will BMPCS expect of you?” Our goal in leading with this document is to communicate as clearly as possible what we can expect of each other and to eliminate the frustration and disappointment that result when unstated expectations go unmet.

We invite you to familiarize yourself this Family Handbook and to use it as a reference tool. If you have questions, please ask. If you have suggestions, we welcome them.

We welcome you and your children to a year of discovery and growth.

Sincerely,

Dr. Keith Whitescarver
Interim Executive Director
Breakthrough Montessori PCS

THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Breakthrough Montessori is a family-centered learning community: we take seriously our commitment to serve not only children enrolled in the School but the entire family. Children thrive when home and school work in harmony, with both environments sharing the same educational values and expectations. Choosing to attend BMPCS means agreeing to a set of expectations related to the School's mission, operating principles, and policies. Likewise, BMPCS makes a similar commitment to welcome, nurture, and serve the entire family. These commitments and policies are described here.

Q. What can I expect of the School academically?

A. BMPCS aspires to fulfill its mission as a fully implemented public Montessori school.

As a Montessori school, we are different from conventional schools. Our first commitment is to the multi-dimensional development of your child. Montessori children amass a great deal of factual knowledge in school. However, our goal is for each child to be far more than a repository for this information: we guide each child to think for himself. 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 a great deal of freedom—within limits—during the school day. The choices a child makes, and the accompanying responsibilities, influence her emerging character. By choosing her own work, shaping it to a considerable degree, and following that work through to completion while working independently or in cooperation with others, the Montessori child identifies her interests and develops her individual gifts.

Significant emphasis is placed on community service. Younger children learn by serving their small community, e.g., classmates, classroom, and family. As they grow, children reach out to the larger community and experience the many rewards of helping others. The children gain awareness and appreciation of others, the challenges faced by others, and their own strengths and abilities to affect the world around them. Community service is an integral part of their lives and stays with them well beyond their BMPCS years. We treat each child with respect and expect that they will treat all others in the same manner. We treat each child as an individual and strive to develop each child's unique gifts. With freedom comes responsibility, and children learn to balance their personal freedom with a clear sense of responsibility to themselves, to others, and to the community as a whole.

Q. What can I expect in terms of communication from the School?

A. We aim to maintain open, honest, timely, and respectful communication with you about your child and about information affecting the community.

There are two regularly scheduled parent-teacher (or in the case of older students, parent-teacher-student) conferences each year, accompanied by written summaries, as well as a year-end written progress report. In the event of special concerns, your child's teacher will contact you to discuss these concerns by phone, by email, or in person. In addition to conference reporting, classroom teachers will communicate with you via classroom blogs and newsletters, emails, and short reports as needed for individual children.

Each BMPCS teacher is a well-trained professional, and his or her evaluation is confidential and based on direct observation of your child. Teachers will always offer their current best understanding of your child's progress, strengths, and needs, which may be augmented by input from the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and/or auxiliary staff. In addition to work sampling and observation, BMPCS adheres to Washington, DC standards related to assessment and standardized testing. We report the results of these assessments annually.

Regarding ongoing School-wide communication, BMPCS distributes a newsletter, Family Handbook, calendar, and other occasional letters and publications. We also expect you to attend quarterly School Home Association meetings.

Q. What can I expect of the environment?

A. We strive to ensure an environment that is physically and emotionally safe and supportive as well as aesthetically beautiful.

Dr. Montessori said that the classroom teacher's first responsibility is to prepare the environment. The learning materials should correspond to the developmental characteristics of the child at each level, and those materials must be attractive to the child: correct in size, aesthetically pleasing, well maintained, and complete. More broadly, the whole environment must appeal to the child and inspire her work.

Our community of children and adults comprises a social environment and culture that greatly influences your child's experience. We strive to make this environment emotionally supportive and safe for every child. This does not mean that there are no problems. It does mean that we will work with your child in developmentally appropriate ways to deal with problems as they arise, empowering him with social skills and aiding him in the development of emotional intelligence.

Q. What professional standards can I expect of the School and faculty?

A. BMPCS aspires to maintain the highest pedagogical standards of Montessori practice.

At a minimum, all lead teachers hold a bachelor's degree; a number have earned master's degrees as well. In addition, primary and elementary teachers have a post-graduate diploma

from a Montessori teacher training center. Our teachers have a sense of mission in working with children and demonstrate high standards for themselves and their students. The School promotes a culture of professional growth in a number of ways. Teachers work annually with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction to create a professional growth plan driven goals for professional development. Over a three-year cycle, Montessori school consultants observe each teacher and work with the School to maintain the highest standards of Montessori pedagogy. In addition, the School annually hosts workshops and conferences for professional development of faculty, administration, and board members.

Q. What can I expect of the School administration?

A. Integrity: a focus on the needs of the individual child in harmony with the life of the community, mission-driven decisions, good stewardship, responsible management, and an open door to your questions or concerns.

Administrative team members interface with all the constituencies of the School: students, parents, extended family, faculty, alumni, prospective parents, professional visitors, government officials, other schools and educational organizations, and the general public. In your interactions with the administration, you can expect professional, courteous, and business-like conduct, as well as mutually respectful communication. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction works closely with the senior leadership of BMPCS and DC Public Charter School Board. They often face decisions requiring a balance of competing priorities. Sometimes those factors are mutually exclusive; sometimes equally well-intentioned adults see matters differently. In making decisions, the administration will focus on the interest of the individual child in balance with the needs of the School.

Q. What is the School's most basic expectation of families?

A. We expect you to make continuing efforts to understand and embrace the Montessori approach and to work in partnership with the School.

We find that our most constructive relationships with families begin before admission. BMPCS expects parents to understand and embrace the mission of the School. To that end, we help parents learn about the Montessori approach by providing information and opportunities for family education as part of the admission process—so that parents can make an informed decision in choosing to enroll their children—and continue to provide more opportunities throughout a family's years at the School. Once children are enrolled, the School expects parents to attend parent-teacher conferences and parent education events and to familiarize themselves with BMPCS philosophy, policies, and procedures.

Q. What contribution can I make to create a positive School community?

A. You can demonstrate respect for all adults and children, the School, and the School's programs.

Be a role model for your children. Show respect for them, their classmates, parents of classmates, teachers, and other School staff. Respect begins with civility and deepens into trust. Our most fundamental behavioral guidelines for the children are: “respect yourself, respect others, and respect the environment.” We expect the same from adults, parents, and staff. This includes speech and outward behavior. Support your child by speaking of her teachers, classmates, and School in positive terms. Respect and abide by the School’s policies and procedures. Honor your commitments. 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 their School, which they experience on a daily basis.

Q. How can I create consistency between home and School?

A. You can strive to parent according to Montessori principles.

Learn as much as you can about Montessori principles as they apply to the preparation of your child’s home environment as well as the way you, as a parent, interact with your children. This begins with the general principle: “Never do something for your child that he can do for himself.” Allow your child to engage in all of the simple tasks of practical life that a child can do for himself at each stage of development. Children develop a love of learning and become responsible, independent, and capable when parents’ values and expectations are consistent with those of the School.

Q. What are my responsibilities regarding communication between home and School?

A. We expect you to maintain an active, direct, and respectful two-way communication with the School.

Please read communications that are sent home. These may include letters, newsletters, and calendars. Inform the School in a timely fashion of pertinent changes in your child’s life. Active communication involves parents sharing observations and concerns about their child with the child’s current teacher. In matters large and small, remember the principle of respect: even when there is disagreement, disagree respectfully.

WHY MONTESSORI?

Social Reform in Action

In the early 1900's, Dr. Maria Montessori, one of Italy's first female physicians, was invited to develop a child care program as part of an urban renewal project in the San Lorenzo district of Rome. The program, located on the first floor of a low-income housing project, became known as the *Casa dei Bambini* or "Children's House." Within months, news of the success of the *Casa* spread, first throughout Italy and later across the globe.

Over the next fifty years, her "experiment," as she called it, evolved into a carefully organized, evidence-based approach to providing children at all developmental levels the opportunity to construct themselves. Based on observation of children, Dr. Montessori concluded that learning should be active and driven by interest. Learning should also occur in mixed-age classrooms where children at various stages of development can learn from and with one another. Her advice was always to "follow the child."

From the beginning, however, Dr. Montessori's revolutionary vision of optimal education was deeply linked to an equally powerful vision of social reform driven by the potential inherent in children. By following the child, attending to her needs, respecting his interests, and guiding (not dictating) growth, we come to see the possibilities of a better world.

It is this spirit of hope and possibility that animates the work of BMPCS and is exemplified in our integration of children's and family development.

The Method

The Montessori method is built on the conviction that children are intelligent, active, and purposeful beings who are deeply invested in their own formation. It is distinguished by three interconnected characteristics.

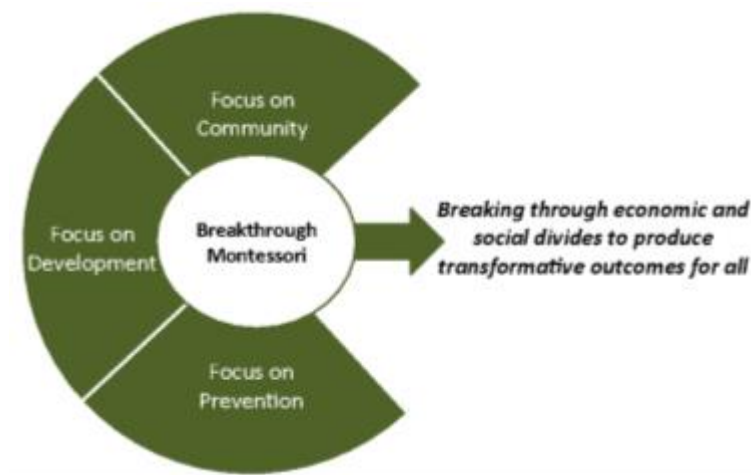
1. The main task of the teacher is to foster the child's development rather than transmit knowledge. Montessori educators are specially trained to observe children. They use these skills to monitor student progress, diagnose needed interventions, and plan future work.
2. The classroom is a rich, specially prepared and developmentally appropriate environment that invites the child to active, purposeful engagement with learning.
3. Finally, an abiding ethic of care flows from the first two. Within the prepared environment, children develop at their own pace, and teachers guide that development with quiet respect for the needs of the children and their emerging capacities as learners.

The method is a response to a universal plea among children: "I want to learn, but help me to do it myself." Through carefully orchestrated experiences guided by physical and mental

order, children acquire the inner discipline necessary to persist at their chosen tasks, to interact with the world respectfully, and to participate confidently in an increasingly complex world.

The Breakthrough Montessori Model

The mission of Breakthrough Montessori is to enable students to develop within themselves the power to shape their lives and the world around them. To achieve this mission, our model places students at the center and revolves around anticipating and responding to the needs of learners at every stage of development.



Our focus on early support and intervention enables us to address learning challenges before they become disabilities, and our intensive approach to engaging families, along with the wider community, situates our School at the center of a robust network of support, connection, and lifelong learning.

Maria Montessori's integrated vision of social reform, fueled by service to the child, animates all aspects of our program. From our intensive approach to engaging families, to the beautiful, developmentally appropriate environment that we create and maintain for all members of the community, we view education as an "aid to life" for learners of every age.

Guided by this optimistic vision of social progress, we believe that the purpose of education is to realize human potential, which enables transformative outcomes for individuals, families, and communities. That vision will be made visible in graduates who demonstrate superior capacities for creativity, adaptability, leadership, and compassion.

COMMUNITY, RESPECT, AND DISCIPLINE

General Expectations

Breakthrough Montessori is a peaceful community of families, students, and teachers. As adults in the community, we aspire at all times to model grace, courtesy, and a deep respect for our community. These values are visible in small and large ways: from cheerful morning greetings and handshakes to the care with which physical spaces are maintained to the manner in which older students assume responsibility for themselves and leadership for their younger peers.

Within this frame, discipline is highly valued as the skill of self-regulation. Maria Montessori distinguished between the “spontaneous discipline” typical of happily engaged children and adult-centered strategies for maintaining “control.” The ability to master oneself is a foundational skill for all subsequent learning. While this is a central goal of all our programs, it is in the primary program where developing the capacity to attain and sustain deep concentration is a focus.

Adults set limits through example. We try always to direct with positive rather than negative guidance. At no time may physical punishment such as spanking a child take place on BMPCS grounds. At all times patience, restraint, and respect for the child’s needs for sensitive intervention govern adult interaction with children.

When students have difficulty with their responsibilities, a series of actions may be taken depending on the significance of an inappropriate behavior. Each student incident is treated individually, but the following staff responses may occur:

Less Serious

- Student redirected by teacher
- Problem discussed with student
- Other ways of handling a situation brainstormed
- Short time out within the classroom
- Assigned seating near the teacher for a period of time
- Work contracts
- Logical consequences
- Parent note or phone call

More Serious

- Removal from the classroom for a period of time
- Outside assistance from school personnel (such as the Executive Director)

- Family conference
- Development of an action plan for student, parents/guardians, and teacher

Unacceptable Behaviors

Experimental behavior is a predictable feature of all developmental levels, and we strive to regard such behaviors as indicative of a child's needs. However, because the community lies at the center of our approach to learning, any individual action that negatively affects the welfare of the community is considered unacceptable. As a result, BMPCS cannot allow the following:

- Language that expresses disrespect for another person
- Violent behavior, e.g., hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, throwing objects at a person
- Vandalism

Resolution Process for Unacceptable Behavior

The first instance of unacceptable behavior will be addressed by the witnessing staff member. The staff member will first stop the behavior. Then, depending on the child's age, they will discuss with the child privately why the behavior is inappropriate and suggest strategies for preventing its recurrence. Parents will be notified by telephone and in writing of both the behavior and its resolution.

The second occurrence will be addressed by the witnessing adult and the Executive Director and will result in the development of an action plan. All action plans are developed in consultation with the family and include concrete goals for resolving negative behavior.

Though we are confident that well-articulated and faithfully implemented action plans will enable the child to address difficulties, in rare instances efforts to correct the behavior fail. In those instances appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion will be considered.

Students with Disabilities and Manifestation Determination Meetings

In accordance with the IDEA §300.530(e), BMPCS will hold a Manifestation Determination Meeting any time a student is being removed from his or her placement for more than ten (10) school days in one school year.

During this review, a representative of BMPCS, the holder of the student's educational rights, the IEP Team, and a staff member who can adequately define the student's disability will be present. All parties will review all relevant information in the student's file and all relevant details of behavior.

The Manifestation Determination team will discuss the link between the student's behavior

and disability. If the team finds that there is no direct link between the student's behavior and disability, and the IEP was being implemented leading up to and during the behavioral infraction, the infraction is then considered ***not*** a manifestation of the student's disability, and BMPCS can move forward with processing the suspension, ensuring the student receives access to adequate educational supports during the suspension. If the team finds that there is a direct link between the behavior and the disability, or the IEP was not being implemented with fidelity leading up to or during the behavior, the behavioral infraction is considered a manifestation of the student's disability and the student will return to his or her current educational placement. BMPCS will schedule an IEP review meeting to update the student's IEP to accurately reflect the student's current level of functioning within 30 days.

Due Process and Appeals Procedure for Parents

Due process will be followed for all disciplinary actions. Before imposing a short-term suspension, the Executive Director shall immediately notify the parents or guardian in writing that the student may be suspended from school. This notice will be in their dominant language and provide a description of the incident(s) for which suspension is proposed. It will inform the parents or guardian of their right to request an immediate informal conference with the Executive Director. The parents or guardian of the student and the student shall have the opportunity to present the student's version of the incident and to ask questions of the complaining witnesses indirectly through the teacher or the Executive Director. The Executive Director's decision to impose a short-term suspension may be challenged by the parent(s) or guardian. The Board of Trustees serves as the final appeal for families dissatisfied with a school-level decision.

Before any expulsion, the Executive Director will consult the Board and immediately notify the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) in writing, in their dominant language. Long-term suspensions or expulsions will only be imposed after the student has been found guilty at a formal hearing. The hearing shall include the Executive Director, staff members involved with the incident, and the student with his/her parent(s) or guardian(s). The student shall have the right to be represented by counsel, question witnesses, and present evidence.

FURTHER READING

To learn more about Montessori education, we suggest the following:

Books by Maria Montessori

Most books available by Dr. Montessori are actually transcribed lectures from her many training courses. *The Montessori Method* and *Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook* were prepared especially for readers interested in learning about her pedagogical approach. Most titles are available through commercial booksellers; others can be obtained through the North American Montessori Teachers Association.

- *The Absorbent Mind*
- *The Secret of Childhood*
- *The Discovery of the Child*
- *Education and Peace*
- *Education for a New World*
- *To Educate the Human Potential*
- *From Childhood to Adolescence*

Books Related to the Montessori Experience

- Michael Duffy, *Math Works: Montessori Math and the Developing Brain*
- David Kahn (Ed.), *Montessori Talks to Parents*
- Rita Kramer, *Maria Montessori: A Biography*
- Paula Polk Lillard, *Montessori Today: A Comprehensive Approach to Education from Birth to Adulthood*
- Lynn Jessen and Paula Polk Lillard, *Montessori from the Start: The Child at Home from Birth to Age Three*
- Angeline Stoll Lillard, *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius*
- Aline Wolf, *Peaceful Children, Peaceful World: The Challenge of Maria Montessori*

Recommended Books on Childrearing and Family Life

- Robert Evans, *Family Matters: How Schools Can Cope With the Crisis in Childrearing*
- Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk; Siblings without Rivalry: How to Help Your Children Live Together So You Can Live Too*
- Jane Healy, *Failure to Connect: How Computers Affect our Children's Minds – And What We Can Do About It*
- Wendy Mogel, *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee: Using Jewish Teachings to Raise Self-Reliant Children*

- Jane Nelson, *Positive Discipline: The Classic Guide to Helping Children Develop Self-Discipline, Responsibility, Cooperation, and Problem Solving Skills*
- Sally Shaywitz, *Overcoming Dyslexia: A New and Complete Science-Based Program for Reading Problems at any Level*

Libros en Español

por Maria Montessori

- *La mente absorbente*
- *El niño: secreto de la infancia*
- *Formación del hombre*
- *La educación de las potenciales*

Otros autores

- Silvana Montanaro, *Un ser humano: La importancia de los primeros tres años de vida*
- Mario Montessori, *La educación para el desarrollo humano*
- Aline Wolf, *Cómo cultivar el espíritu del niño en un ambiente laico*
- Aline Wolf, *Una guía para padres al aula Montessori*

For these books or for assistance in locating other books in Spanish, contact:

Rittchell Yau, Consejo Interamericano Montessori 1203 Pacific Drive, Davis, CA 95616 530-758-6340; cite@pacbell.net.

Useful Catalogs

The Michael Olaf Montessori Company publishes beautiful and informative catalogs containing Montessori-compatible books, toys, clothing, and other materials.

- The Joyful Child, for Birth to Three
- Child of the World, for Age 3-12 +

Useful Websites

- www.montessori-ami.org
- <https://amshq.org/>
- www.montessoriconnections.com
- www.montessori.namta.org
- www.public-montessori.org
- <http://www.michaelolaf.net/>

BMPCS GENERAL INFORMATION

Mission

The mission of Breakthrough Montessori is to enable students to develop within themselves the power to shape their lives and the world around them. BMPCS is a racially, ethnically, and economically diverse school community deeply committed to realizing the inherent potential of all children.

Leadership and Governance

The Montessori model recognizes the importance of teamwork, the need for a community of practice, and the value of heterogeneous groupings.

The executive director is responsible for the operational performance of Breakthrough Montessori. The ED reports to the board of trustees and is responsible for the daily operations of the school, including student assessment and related data analysis. The ED meets on a monthly basis with leadership of the School Home Association.

The director of curriculum and instruction focuses on daily implementation of the curriculum and serves as a pedagogical coach, working with teachers formally and informally to improve instructional practice and adherence to the Montessori curriculum.

The director of operations oversees the school's finances, facilities, compliance, human resources, and daily operations.

The director of community engagement interfaces with the community, including the School Home Association, and works with the board to manage the school's fundraising, grant writing, and development activities.

School Home Association

The School Home Association (SHA) is composed of parents/guardians and school staff. The purpose of SHA is to promote robust, reciprocal connections between the families and the School. Feedback from the SHA will inform decisions related to family and community engagement, fundraising, and other areas of the School's life (with the exception of curriculum and instruction, which will remain focused on a high-fidelity implementation of Montessori pedagogy). The SHA will meet quarterly. The president of the SHA will hold a seat on the board of trustees, providing information and serving as a conduit to the SHA. The leadership of the SHA will meet monthly with the executive director to share information and provide feedback to assist in decision making.

Admission

Any student who is of appropriate age and grade level and is a resident of the District of

Columbia will be eligible for admission to BMPCS through the My School DC Lottery. The only limitation to admission will be the number of slots available in a given grade. Mid-year spaces will be filled through the My School DC Lottery waitlist, if applicable, or through open enrollment. Prospective students will be admitted without regard to aptitude, achievement, ethnicity, nationality, gender, disability, language proficiency, sexual orientation, or any other basis prohibited by law.

Admitted families wishing to enroll their children in BMPCS must complete an enrollment packet that includes the BMPCS enrollment form, My School DC enrollment form, proof of residency, and a home language survey (among other documents). In addition, prior to the first day of school, enrolled families must submit a DC universal health certificate, oral health assessment form, release of records, special education status (if applicable), 504 service agreement (if applicable), and a free and reduced lunch form (optional). In addition, families must attend a one-on-one or small group meeting with the executive director or delegated school representative to sign an agreement committing parents/guardians to being an active participant in their children's Montessori education. At this meeting, an individual orientation for each child will be scheduled for a date prior to the start of school that will introduce the child to his teacher, school culture and discipline expectations, etc.

Calendar

Central to the BMPCS's model is extending time for learning. As such, BMPCS offers an extended academic year. We also offer an all-day Montessori school day from 7:30 am – 6:00 pm for all students.

Key Dates

- July 18: First Day (Teachers)
- August 22: First Day (Pre-K 4 Students)
- August 29: First Day (Pre-K 3 Students)
- June 29: Last Day

No School

- September 5: Labor Day
- October 10: Indigenous People's Day
- October 24-25: professional development/teacher work days
- October 26-28: fall break
- October 31: half day
- November 4: parent/teacher conferences
- November 11: Veteran's Day
- November 23-25: Thanksgiving Break
- December 22-January 1: winter break

- January 16: MLK Jr. Day
- January 27: professional development
- February 17: professional development
- February 20: President's Day
- March 20: half day for students
- April 7 (tentative): parent-teacher conferences
- April 17-21: spring break
- May 29: Memorial Day

School Day Schedule

7:30 am	Children arrive for early morning activities, including breakfast
8:30-11:30 am	Morning work period (integrated, hands-on experiences in language, math, geography, arts, music, and practical life)
11:30 am-1:30 pm	Outside time and family-style lunch in classroom
1:30-3:30 pm	Afternoon work period and napping for younger children
3:30 pm	Transition to extended day activities or dismissal
3:30-6:00 pm	Extended day activities in the Montessori environment, including practical life, gardening, cooking, music, and arts
6:00 pm	Evening pick-up

Arrival & Dismissal Schedule

Early morning program arrival	7:30 am to 8:15 am
Car-line drop-off (arrival)	8:00 am to 8:30 am
Late arrivals (please go to school office)	8:31 am
Mid-day dismissal	1:30 pm
Afternoon dismissal	3:30 pm
Evening dismissal	3:30 to 6:00 pm

Arrival Procedures

Early Morning program

Students may arrive at School anytime between 7:30 and 8:30 am. During this early morning period, breakfast will be served family style in the classroom.

Car-line Drop-Off

Students may be dropped off in front of the school between 8:00 am and 8:30 am. Members of our staff will open car doors, greet children, and escort them into their classrooms.

Please:

- Arrive at school between 8:00 and 8:30 am each day.
- Drive slowly into the drop-off lane next to the curb.
- Come to a complete stop in front of the school doors and wait for one of our BMPCS staff members to open your car door and accompany your child inside.
- Please do not park in the drop-off lane and walk your child inside.

Late Arrivals

If your student is late, arriving after 8:30 am, you will need to bring her to the school office, and a staff member will escort your child to the classroom. In the event of an emergency, kindly call the school office.

Transitional Items

A key to independence is the ability to transition from home to school in a calm manner. We have found the process to run most smoothly when drop-off is swift, confident, and focused on school. Dolls, stuffed animals, pacifiers, trucks, and trains actually delay this process. Kindly help your child separate from you by leaving favorite items at home. A struggle at the school entryway is difficult for everyone involved. We will be glad to offer suggestions if necessary. Please also refrain from giving your child food to ease the transition.

Dismissal Procedures

Regular dismissal

As with morning drop-off, faculty will escort children to the car and open car doors. Please:

- Enter the pull-through lane next to the curb and line-up behind the other cars waiting to pick up children.
- Pull up as far forward as possible to allow the maximum number of cars. This will speed up the line for everyone.

Extended Day Program

Students may be picked up from extended day activities by parents. Please enter through the main doors.

Pick-Up and Naptime

Please refrain from picking up your child during naptime (between 1:30 pm and 3:30 pm) unless it is an emergency. Specific information on naptime is available through the school office. It is difficult for children to have their regular sleep schedule interrupted, and it significantly impacts the napping group.

Late Pick-Up

BMPCS closes daily at 6:00 pm. It is important that each parent adhere to the departure schedule made in the family's enrollment agreement with BMPCS. Late pick-ups place a strain on our staff and your child who is eagerly awaiting a reunion with you. If late, a fee of \$5.00 per minute per child will be assessed for the first five minutes. Thereafter, the fee rises to \$10.00 per minute per child. Repeated failure to pick your child up on time may jeopardize your child's enrollment in our Montessori program.

Out-of-the-Ordinary Departure Plans

Please send in a note for out-of-the-ordinary departure plans. As the school is responsible for your child during school hours, we must have written permission from you before we can release your child to another person.

Separation and Reunion

As a family-centered community, the importance of drop-off and pick up extends beyond getting your child in and out of the building. The processes of separating in the morning and reconnecting in the afternoon are crucial to your child's sense of security. A peaceful arrival sets a positive tone for the day. Likewise, a successful reunion increases the odds that your evening family routine will run smoothly. To make the transition process run as smoothly as possible we suggest the following:

- Prepare your child for morning drop-off by situating his car seat on the curb-side of the car.
- As soon as she is able, encourage independence by allowing her to unbuckle and exit the car with the help of a staff member.
- Reassure your child that you will see him later in the day.
- Refrain from talking on a cell phone at all times while on school property, especially during drop-off and pick-up.
- When re-uniting, make eye contact, say you are happy to see your child and are looking forward to a pleasant afternoon/evening.
- The teacher's focus during arrival and departure is on assisting the child (and you) and making the transition to and from school. If you have question about the child's day or wish to have a conversation with a teacher, please contact the teacher directly to make an appointment.

Authorized Student Release

BMPCS will only release a child to:

- The enrolling parent(s) or guardians.
- Individuals authorized by parent(s) or guardians on the enrollment form.

- Persons listed as a child's emergency contact when a parent does not arrive by BMPCS closing time (6:00 pm).

For all other instances, please fill out a parent note form in advance if possible. Forms are available in the school office.

Unexpected Early Pick-up

Please go to the school office and check your child out.

Change in Pick-up Plans

If a parent calls BMPCS with a change in pick-up (due to traffic delays or other circumstances), the message will be referred to the child's classroom. In the interest of timely communication, please call BMPCS before 5:45 pm if possible. Anyone designated to pick-up a child needs to be at least sixteen years of age. For the safety and security of your child, we will request identification of persons unfamiliar to the staff. Please inform persons on your emergency pick-up form that they will be asked for identification.

Attendance

Consistent attendance is important. The children who benefit most from the prepared environment are those who attend regularly. A consistent routine provides security for children, and a sense of security enables children to learn more readily. A child's experiences in the classroom and with the materials are cumulative; consistent attendance bolsters learning.

Your own commitment to your child's presence in school affirms the importance of school and learning. If you often invite your child to stay out of school for different activities, you implicitly undermine the importance of school in her mind, which can affect her performance when she is present.

Intermittent attendance or periods of long absence can affect your child's adaptation to school and his learning. Please make every effort to ensure your child's regular attendance. We specifically request that you:

- Schedule family vacations and trips to coincide with school holidays.
- Schedule appointments with doctor, dentist, orthodontist, or other professionals outside of classroom hours.

Please note that Breakthrough Montessori reports absences, late arrivals, and early dismissals to the Public Charter School Board and Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). A student who is absent for one day without a valid excuse is considered truant. A student who is absent from school without a valid excuse for 10 or more days within a single school year is considered a chronic truant.

Breakthrough Montessori upholds the following Attendance Policy:

- 3 tardies are equivalent to 1 absence.
- All absences will be reported as unexcused absences unless the school receives proper documentation within 24 hours for valid excused absences. Proper documentation includes parent notes, court documents, and doctor's note.
- Parents/guardians of students with 5 or more excused or unexcused absences in one advisory period will be requested to participate in a conference.
- As required, students with 10 or more unexcused absences will be referred to Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA).

Appropriate Dress

BMPCS does not require a uniform. However, we do provide the following guidelines for appropriate dress:

- Clothing should be chosen to allow freedom of movement and comfort. Children should also wear clothing they can take off and put on independently. This guideline extends to footwear, so only children who know how to tie shoes should wear shoes with laces. Otherwise, shoes should be slip-on or Velcro. Unless a child can fasten accessories themselves, belts, suspenders and the like should be avoided.
- In accordance with Montessori principles of simplicity and beauty, clothing should be free of any designs, characters, decals, themes or written messages.
- We emphasize care of clothing and use aprons, but spills can happen, so "special" clothing should be avoided.
- If children wear skirts, shorts should be worn underneath in order to avoid inhibited movement.
- Children should dress for the weather and expect to go out every day, except for in inclement weather.
- Slippers are worn in the classroom and should also be free of themes. For children age 6 and under, leather soled, ballet-type slippers are easiest for function.
- Please clearly label all clothing (jackets, gloves, hats, boots, shirts, pants, socks, undergarments) and personal items with your child's name using a permanent marker. Children should have 3 complete changes of weather-appropriate clothing at all times, including socks. If your child is developing bathroom independence, several spare sets of clothing including underpants and socks are necessary. Should an item become misplaced, please check the lost and found basket in the school office.

OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Overview

Breakthrough Montessori aims to cultivate every child's own natural desire to learn. Grounded in Maria Montessori's theory of human development, our classrooms support each child's development according to his readiness. Each child is free to explore within a specially prepared environment and with the guidance of Montessori-trained teachers. Designed to be beautiful, orderly, and calm, each classroom is a community of peaceful, purposeful, and developmentally appropriate activity.

Mixed age classes provide a real-world experience for the developing child, as peers learn from one another and work together to maintain their community. Within an environment that intentionally balances freedom and responsibility, children learn to recognize the needs of others while also developing life-long skills of persistence, critical thinking, and independence.

Each environment is prepared to meet the needs of children moving through successive phases of development; however several characteristics run through all Montessori classrooms. These are:

- *Large blocks of uninterrupted time for self-directed work.* The morning work period, from 8:30 to 11:30 am is especially important. It is critical that your child arrive at school in time to begin this period with the rest of his peers. For older children, an afternoon work period is also a feature of the day.
- *The teachers' intense focus on the children.* Successful Montessori teaching is based on detailed and ongoing observation of the children, both individually and as a group. Once the school day begins, guides are immersed in the work of the classroom, which means they are not able to give parents or other visitors attention. We support this element of the program by limiting interruption during the school day. Teachers are available after school for conferences or telephone conversations.
- *Consistency in routines and order in the physical environment.* Children, especially those between three and five, are sensitive to routines and order, and they respond positively to consistency in their daily lives. An orderly classroom environment (everything has its place and everything is in its place) fosters independence as children are given lessons in caring for their environment and share responsibility for its maintenance. Daily jobs such as helping younger friends put on their coats, feeding classroom animals, or setting the table reinforce a predictable pattern of expectations. Because of the presence of routines and order, there is very little adult "correcting" of students' behavior.
- *Meticulous attention to grace and courtesy.* At all times we aspire to model good manners and sociable interactions. You should expect to be greeted with a cheerful

“good morning” or “good afternoon” during arrivals and departures. Mealtimes are opportunities to practice table manners, and lessons in making an introduction, offering refreshments, and solving problems peacefully are a regular part of the curriculum.

Primary

The primary program, also known as the Children’s House, serves children from approximately three to six years of age. The environment is carefully prepared using Montessori principles that allow the children to choose work according to their interests and developmental level. The Montessori teacher initially presents the specially designed Montessori educational materials. Each child works at his own pace, repeating activities, making choices, and developing abilities through exploration of his work. Indirect learning occurs as children observe the work of others and in turn share what they have learned with their classmates. In this way, children explore concepts of literacy, numeracy, geography, music, art, and care of self and the environment.

Experience in Nature

Exposure to a variety of outdoor educational experiences is an integral part of the child’s total development and a vital aspect of the Montessori curriculum. The goals of BMPCS outside time are to:

- Help the child explore and appreciate the natural environment and her relationship to the natural world
- Provide close and friendly social interaction and a sense of group and community awareness
- Build on skills learned in the classroom by transferring and adapting them to the outdoors through observing, recording, listening, identifying, and comparing
- Allow children to practice in problem-solving situations
- Encourage each child to show different skills in outdoor environment
- Foster a sense of active creativity by integrating the arts, literacy, numeracy, and science in a new environment

Assessment

BMPCS fosters the development of integrative thinkers who see and make connections within and among the disciplines. Powerful learning experiences are relevant, rigorous, and coherent. BMPCS’s program transforms learning by supporting and encouraging self-directed reflection, inquiry, and self-assessment. Teachers evaluate progress on a daily basis, keeping careful record of lessons presented and skills and concepts mastered. In addition, Montessori teachers compile three observational assessments each year (an assessment accompanies each parent-teacher conference with a final assessment provided at the end of the year).

Student Placement and Transitions

Continuity is a hallmark of the Montessori experience. Mixed age classrooms allow students to develop stable relationships with adults and peers over a two to three-year cycle. The stability enables security and growth, as the child's role within the group evolves over time from being among the youngest to a community elder. Mixed age grouping also honor the unique pace at which each child develops, a process which does not always correspond to chronological age.

Because we appreciate the importance of continuity and consistency in healthy human development, we take special care in supporting the child as she moves through several key transitions during her time at BMPCS. Transitions are always monitored by BMPCS staff in consultation with you.

Entering BMPCS

The first transition takes place when the child leaves home to become a member of his first classroom. We assist families in establishing a trusting relationship with our teachers. For most children this takes place between 30 and 36 months. Independent care of self (toileting, dressing, feeding) are signs of readiness for the primary program. We also look for signs of emerging independence and sense of order. Independence is evident in the child's ability to separate from his parents and to choose work in the classroom; order is seen in the child's handling of classroom materials.

Extended-Day/Afternoon Work

Midway through a child's time in primary, we anticipate a transition to the extended day program. This usually occurs between the ages of 4.5 and 5, when children have given up their afternoon nap. To be ready for afternoon work, a child must have the stamina and maturity to work comfortably through a full school day. She must be able to take oral direction and regulate behavior in order to work harmoniously in a group.

Many children benefit from spending an additional year in primary to gain greater social-emotional maturity and to hone academic skills. This "gift of the fourth year" provides a student the opportunity to truly assume a leadership role prior to entering the more complicated elementary environment. Because there is overlap between the materials and lessons in the primary and elementary classrooms, students who elect to spend additional time in the primary classroom continue to progress at their own pace. When a student is considered a good candidate for a fourth primary year, families are consulted by December of the third year, and the decision is made collaboratively between the guide, the family, and the BMPCS leadership team.

Parents should be aware that placement and transition to a new division of the program at BMPCS might not precisely replicate a graded program in traditional education.

FAMILIES: A VITAL PARTNERSHIP

Being a parent at Breakthrough Montessori assumes both a major investment and a major commitment. A Montessori education extends well beyond the basics of literacy and numeracy into the social and spiritual aspects of life. This applies to parents as well as children. Children thrive when home and school work in harmony, with both environments sharing the same educational values and expectations.

We build our most productive relationships with families who understand and embrace the mission of the school. To this end, we help parents learn about the Montessori approach by providing information and opportunities for parent education as part of the admission process—so that parents can make an informed decision in choosing to enroll their children—and continue to provide more opportunities throughout a family’s years at the School.

Parents often ask for help in creating consistency between home and School, and much of our communication with you is aimed at supporting this goal. This begins with the general principle: “Never do something for your child that he can do for himself.” Allow your child to engage in all of the simple tasks of practical life that a child can do for himself at each stage of development. Montessori education may also entail learning a communication style different from the way in which we were parented. In general, Montessori teaching relies on “showing” rather than “correcting.”

We understand that the school/home partnership is vital to successful Montessori education. It begins with honest, open inquiry and deepens into trust. We invite you to let us know your thoughts, questions, and concerns, as we are committed to working together to serve the child.

Getting Involved

BMPCS has a talented family community. We depend on the support of these adult volunteers throughout the year. When you donate your time and talents, you make a valuable contribution to the children of BMPCS, and you get the opportunity to meet other parents and guardians. Adult volunteers help to build community spirit and provide needed (and appreciated!) help to our faculty and staff. You can volunteer during the year in a variety of ways:

- Assist with parent education, including planning programs and participating at events
- Work in the school office
- Assist with fundraising projects
- Participate in beautification projects around the school
- Introduce elements of your cultural heritage or professional expertise to your child’s class. Contact the teacher to discuss your ideas.

We also ask that you participate in as many events as your schedule permits. For details on each event, see the calendar as well as upcoming newsletters.

Fundraising

A long-term financial objective of Breakthrough Montessori is to fully cover basic operating expenses through the annual per pupil allotment budgeted through the DCPCSB. At the same time, BMPCS is a non-profit organization that must rely on fundraising to close the gap between public revenue and the actual cost of a BMPCS education. Money raised through fundraising supports:

- Teacher training and faculty development
- Physical and programmatic enhancements and enrichment
- Capital expenses

The Breakthrough Montessori Fund

Donations to the BMPCS fund support every activity listed above. Breakthrough Montessori Fund contributions are tax-deductible. Gifts may also be eligible for matching funds from employers. Each family is strongly encouraged to give to its ability and to fulfill pledged commitments.

Fundraising and Community Events

In addition to direct gifts, each year BMPCS sponsors events designed to raise both awareness of and support for our programs. Public lectures, festivals, and/or house parties take place approximately once a month. If you have an idea for an event, please contact Emily Hedin at emily.hedin@breakthroughmontessori.org.

Store Rebate Programs

BMPCS endeavors to enlist the support of all parents, grandparents, faculty, staff, and other community friends in securing funds from a number of store rebate programs. Beneficiary organizations receive a quarterly check reflecting a percentage of the store purchases made by participants. The more people who participate, the more money the school is able to raise. Forms are available on the School's website, at the front desk, and in the development office. Please help us make the most of these programs by participating.

Communication

At BMPCS we strive to foster clear and robust communication between home and school. The chart below offers guidance regarding the proper channels to use for gaining information and solving problems.

Matter Related to:	First Contact
Child's progress Classroom activities Class procedures	Teacher

Behavior and discipline	
Facilities Legal matters Fundraising Public relations	Executive Director
Pedagogical issues Academic policy Admissions Parent education	Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Daily scheduling Student records Volunteer Opportunities	Director of Community Engagement

In addition to the above guidelines for channeling the flow of communication, we call your attention to the following elements of our program designed to enhance the school/home relationship:

Classroom Observation

There is no better way to gain an understanding of your child's experience here at School than by observing in the classroom. Knowing what is going on in the classroom provides a common point-of-reference for you and your child to talk about schoolwork. It also enhances communication with teachers. Beginning in October, our programs are open to anyone interested in observing the Montessori environment. In order to preserve the quiet atmosphere of the classroom, we limit visitors to one per day. Please schedule your observation time with the office.

Conferences

You may schedule a conference with your child's teachers at any time by contacting them through the School office, either by note, e-mail, or phone call. For primary children, conferences are formally scheduled two times a year, in the late fall and early spring. School is closed to accommodate these events, and parents arrange individual appointments through the office.

Progress Reports

All students receive formal progress reports. You will notice that these documents are notable for the level of detail they provide; they will tell you not only how your child is doing, but also

what your child is doing. Normally, progress reports are distributed prior to scheduled conferences, and we hope you will use these reports to prepare for any subsequent meetings you may have with your child's teacher. Like classroom observation, they provide a concrete point-of-reference for discussing the nature of your child's work. You will receive a final progress report at the end of the school year.

Parent Seminars

We offer regular parent seminars. These gatherings are usually organized around a Montessori-related topic. They are opportunities to share information about making the most of a Montessori education. These events will be advertised as we develop them; we encourage you to join us.

Notes & Reminders, Updates, and Newsletter

We distribute a weekly bulletin of notes and reminders featuring general information related to School and classroom events. Individually, classrooms remain in touch with families through a monthly update. Our newsletter is published quarterly (both electronically and in print).

Website

The BMPCS website contains the most up-to-date information about the School, including calendar updates. In addition, the site contains a special, password-protected section open only to current BMPCS families. Here you will find news related to individual classrooms. Our web address is: www.breakthroughmontessori.org

Telephone/Fax/E-mail

The office is open for calls 7:30 am to 6:00 pm each day. Please call BMPCS's general number, (202) 810-5603 during these hours. Teachers are not available for calls during School hours, but they will return calls as soon as possible after 3:30 pm.

BMPCS relies regularly on e-mail as a tool for sharing important information. We publish e-mail addresses in our school directory and broadcast information using a distribution list. We ask that all BMPCS families respect the privacy of individual members of the community and only use e-mail information for school-related purposes.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Emergency Records

It is mandatory that all health forms be kept current (required by OSSE). If you take your child to the doctor during the school year, please update immunization record as needed. If your child's health form is not kept current, your child may be denied admission until updated. All health forms **MUST** be on file before your child begins school.

Please keep the School informed of any changes in your child's enrollment forms. The School must have accurate phone numbers for home, work, and emergency contacts.

Please note that the safeguard of all student information (health, academic, and otherwise) aligns with FERPA.

Illness

Be considerate of others in your child's class. Do not send your child to school if she is "coming down with something." Children who are not feeling well are not able to participate in the classroom. Please inform the office that your child will not be attending due to illness. Your child may not return to school until he has been free of all fever, vomiting, diarrhea or other symptoms of illness for 24 hours. This policy is required by the Health Department and is in effect for the health and safety of your child as well as that of other children and staff.

In case of an absence due to a contagious disease or an illness of more than three days duration, a note from your child's physician is required before your child can be re-admitted to the classroom.

If your child develops a fever while at school or shows other signs of illness, you will be contacted and requested to take her home within an hour. If you cannot be reached, an emergency contact will be called to take your child home.

Please remember that children go outside daily except in inclement weather. If your child is unable to take part in outdoor activities because of illness, please keep him at home for the day since we cannot keep individual children indoors during these activities.

Medication

All medication must be given directly to the school office for proper storage: no medication may be left in lunchboxes or backpacks. If your child arrives before 8:15 am please give medication and forms to the senior staff member present. Your child's teacher will administer prescription OR non-prescription medication to a child only if the following criteria are met:

1. A medication order form is signed by the parent/guardian with the name and dosage of

- the medication, dates and/or times/conditions for administration clearly written on the form (forms can be found in the school office).
2. Prescription medication is clearly labeled by the pharmacy or physician, in the original container, and specifically for your child.
 3. Non-prescription medication will only be administered from its original container. If more than one dose is to be administered, a licensed health practitioner must approve the administration and dosage on the medication order form or a physician's prescription slip.

Sunscreen

Please note that sunscreen is considered a medication by the District of Columbia. Please follow instructions for non-prescription medication if you would like sunscreen to be applied (the parent must provide the sunscreen).

Food, Nutrition, and Community

We place a great deal of emphasis on all aspects of meal preparation and consumption at BMPCS. Primary children fix breakfast, bake, prepare snack, set and clear the meal tables. Community is built around meals, and part of the work of being a family is preparing food. From shopping, cooking, and setting the table to eating and clearing up, families reconnect at the dinner table. Children want and need to be included in the planning, the preparation, and the cleaning up of meals.

Breakfast

Primary children who participate in the early morning program prepare their own breakfast.

Lunch

Lunch is an important part of the children's workday. This meal provides an opportunity to socialize and renew energy while practicing grace and courtesy with the other children and staff.

BMPCS offers standard and vegetarian lunches each day. Each month, families will be notified of the availability of lunch, the menu, and the price. Certain dietary restrictions such as dairy-free may be accommodated. Check our website or with the front desk for the availability of different menu options. Some students may be eligible for the free or reduced lunch program. Whether you qualify for the school lunch program or not, please complete a lunch form.

If you choose to send lunch with your child, please note that BMPCS is a nut-free environment, and we therefore request that you do not send any foods containing peanuts or nuts in your child's lunch. This includes all foods prepared with peanut oil as well as peanut butter! We strive to provide only whole, unprocessed foods. Please do not send pre-packaged

foods or microwave meals, such as Lunchables or Chef Boyardee pastas since they often have additives and extra salt. Sandwiches, cheese and crackers, and rolled lunch meat (even cold pizza) are healthy alternatives. Fresh vegetables with a hummus dip are great additions. We recommend that fresh fruit suffice for dessert. Please do not send Trix or Danimals yogurt as they contain extra sugar. We recommend yogurts such as Yobaby instead. Milk and water will be provided, so please do not send other drinks. We will return the uneaten portion of your child's lunch so that you know what she has consumed and can make appropriate adjustments. Please include either a cold pack or thermos for items that must be kept cold. Please do not bring or send fast food/carry-out lunches for your child.

Home Guidelines

Involve your child in preparing his own lunch. Your child can slice cheese and put crackers into a container, choose and wash vegetables and fruit, and even help make a sandwich. Prepare the kitchen/dining room so your child can participate. Your child will want to pour her own milk or water, help with peeling vegetables, set and clear the table. You can make that process safe and fun by providing the proper equipment: a small glass pitcher, safe vegetable peelers, apple corers, egg cutters, scrub brushes, and child-sized mops and brooms.

Establish a daily routine. As much as possible, have breakfast, snack, and dinner at the same time each day. This will allow your child to anticipate, and therefore participate, in the rhythm of the household. Each afternoon, let your child get ready for the next day by emptying and cleaning the lunchbox (please wipe out lunch boxes daily). Upon returning from school, have a small pitcher of milk or water available on a low shelf in the refrigerator so that your child may prepare her own snack.

Snacks

Daily snacks are nutritionally balanced and often include foods prepared by the children. We ask each family to contribute snacks for their child's class; usually you will be asked to sign up to contribute snack on different days during the course of the school year. If you are unable to participate or have any last minute difficulties, please contact Emily Hedin (emily.hedin@breakthroughmontessori.org).

Getting Snack to the Classroom

You can leave your box/bag of snacks with a staff member at drop-off or bring it into the front office on Monday morning of the assigned snack week. Thank you for your participation in this important part in the life of your child's class.

Celebration Food

We seek always to promote health and well-being. Please do not send in sweet snacks or junk food (cookies, cupcakes, etc.) for birthdays or other holiday celebrations. Whole grain muffins and pizza bagels are examples of festive and nutritious celebration foods. Please inform your

child's teacher of any upcoming events and plan a contribution that will be enjoyable and appropriate for all. Please respect allergies when providing food for celebration. In some cases, they are a matter of life and death.

Food Allergies

Parents are responsible for providing all food, including lunch and snack, for their child in the case of food allergies. Please consult with your child's teacher to plan special foods on birthdays and holidays.

Car Seat Safety

BMPCS follows all applicable laws and safety guidelines for child safety seats. Please ensure that your child is in a safety seat upon arrival and departure from BMPCS. District of Columbia law requires children under 8 years of age be properly seated in an installed infant, convertible (toddler) or booster child seat, according to the manufacturer's instructions. Booster seats must be used with both lap and shoulder belts. DC continues to require that all passengers regardless of age wear their seat belts. There are significant penalties and fines for violations. Additional information is available in the school office.

Security

During arrival, the school's entrance is open but monitored by staff. At 8:16 am the door is closed and remains locked for the day. In order to enter the school, visitors must go to the main office and check in. If your child arrives after 8:16 am, you must sign in with the front office so we can take your child off the "absent" list.

As stated in the Arrival/Dismissal section, BMPCS is authorized to release a child only to those people permitted to pick up your child. If your child is going home with a friend, the School Office must have permission in writing from the parent. Last minute phone calls from a parent in an emergency are acceptable.

Emergency Preparedness

BMPCS has made extensive preparations for a wide range of emergencies, including on-site emergencies, local emergencies, and alerts issued by the National Homeland Security Office. Here are some guidelines to follow in the event of a crisis or emergency:

- A notice of procedures will be posted on the school's website (and emailed if possible). Follow instructions carefully.
- If feasible, you will be contacted directly by telephone. Remain calm and follow instructions.
- In some emergencies (a fire, for example) the children may be walked to a safe location where you can pick them up. This will be posted on the website, and an attempt will be made to call you.

- If we are required to “shelter in place” at the school, we have provisions and are completely prepared to do so.
- In some cases, FEMA may instruct BMPCS to leave the building or location, or we may be told to allow no one to enter our building. These are stressful situations. Please know that your child’s well being and safety are our top priority and that they will be carefully supervised until you can be reunited.
- It is critical that you keep all records up to date in our office—including cell phone numbers, email, and names of those individuals you allow to pick up your child. Consider carefully your list of those to whom we can release your child in a crisis/emergency. Please email any changes to emily.hedin@breakthroughmontessori.org.
- Respond immediately to any requests for items or information related to our emergency plan.
- Keep the school’s telephone number and website handy at home, work, and in your car.
- The school has a supply of emergency clothing and food for all the children in the school. If your child has dietary restrictions or medication requirements, please supply the school with a 3-day supply of special foods or medications.

BMPCS follows the Emergency Preparedness guidelines outlined on the DC Public Schools web site: www.dcps.org.

THE PARENT AGREEMENT PLEDGE

Parent's name: _____

Child's name: _____

As a BMPCS Parent, I have read and understand the principles and policies described above. To the best of my ability, I will abide by these expectations through my words and actions. Specifically, I agree to (please initial each item below):

- Attend all Parent-Teacher Conferences _____
- Attend at least four additional Parent Information Sessions during the year _____
- Ensure that my child attends school every day and arrives on time _____

Create a home environment that supports my child's development through:

- Establishing and maintaining regular routines _____
- Providing work/play and sleeping spaces that are orderly _____
- Whenever possible allowing my child to practice self-care and independence _____
- Limiting screen time (television, computers, hand-held devices) to no more than two hours per week _____
- Share information with BMPCS staff _____

Signature of parent/guardian

date