



# *Family Handbook*

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Holiday concerts in December may appropriately include music related to Christmas and Hanukkah, and religious music should not dominate. Dramatic productions should emphasize the cultural aspects of the holidays. Nativity pageants or plays portraying the Hanukkah miracle are not appropriate in the public school setting.

Students may be excused from classroom discussions or activities related to particular holidays. CMP acknowledges that some holidays considered by many people to be secular (for example, Halloween and Valentine's Day) are viewed by others to have religious overtones. Excusal requests will be granted for holidays that are marked by classroom parties and similar non-academic activities.

In addition, some parents and students may choose to make requests for excusals from discussions of certain holidays even when treated from an academic perspective. Such requests may be granted as needed on a limited, specific discussion, in order to strike a balance between the student's religious freedom and the school's interest in providing a well-rounded education.

Students may be allowed a reasonable number of excused absences, without penalties, to observe religious events within their traditions. Students may be asked to complete makeup assignments or examinations in conjunction with such absences.

### ***Family/School Community Partnership, Parent Participation & Parent Education***

The California Montessori Project strives to partner with parents and guardians to best serve the needs of the children. This is accomplished through parent education and orientation, frequent and positive communication between staff and families, and regular parent involvement.

#### **Parent Education and Orientation**

CMP provides a variety of parent education opportunities and events throughout the year. Within the first few weeks of school, an orientation Back-to-School Night will take place. This is a very important evening to provide parents with information about the curriculum, classroom schedule, field trips, and other pertinent policies.

Within the first month or two of school, a parent information evening will be scheduled which focuses on preparing parents for their volunteer duties both in the classrooms and on field trips. This is especially important for new families, but does vary in content each year to encourage all parents to attend.

Later in the year, teachers may schedule curriculum informational evenings, as well as Watch Me Work evenings when children demonstrate to their parents the special materials they use each day in class.

Information about these events will be provided in the campus calendars and weekly newsletters. At times, CMP will also arrange for educational professionals to provide workshops or presentations for families and teachers. Parent participation hours will be credited for attendance at any of these Montessori classes and functions.

### **Parent Participation is a CMP Priority**

CMP recognizes that parents are the most important educators in their children's lives. Studies show that children whose parents are involved in their education perform better in school than children whose parents are not involved. This is why we encourage parents to be active with their children's school at all grade levels.

CMP encourages and welcomes parents to work with their school Campus Advisory Council/Board and standing committees. These committees have been formed to support the school, staff and students. Information on how to sign up for these committees is available in the campus newsletters and from the office staff.

CMP also encourages parents to be active with their children's learning at home. *Read to them regularly. Ask them about their day and listen. Enjoy dinners as a family.* Parent involvement can easily be woven into even today's busy schedules. Parents and guardians are encouraged to schedule visits to their child/ren's school.

*All enrolled CMP families are expected to contribute 40 hours of non-paid service to the school (70 hours for two or more enrolled children) for the purpose of participating in the ongoing development of the school and its academic goals.*

Parents are responsible for keeping track of their hours of service and reporting to the school office.

A variety of service opportunities exist and include: Working in the classroom with our Montessori staff, providing office help, chaperoning field trips, and serving on campus committees to enhance the learning community. Work can be done at the campus or at home. Parent education nights, fundraising, school events, and parent workdays provide enough additional opportunities to assure a comfortable level of participation. CMP is grateful for the contribution volunteers make on behalf of the school and in the lives of all of our students.

It is our goal to work with each family to best meet the needs of the families and school. Projects done from home or at the campus during non-school hours can be arranged. One half of the commitment may be bought out at \$20.00 per hour (based on the average hourly earnings from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). Parents requiring a waiver for a full hourly commitment must present their case to the campus principal in writing at the time it is determined the participation commitment cannot be met.

### **Parents can offer Special Units of Study: an Important Part of our Montessori Curriculum.**

If parents, relatives, or family friends have special talents or training, please let us know so that we may schedule some time for you to participate in the appropriate curriculum unit. Students often enjoy the opportunity to share their special adults with their classmates.

### **Student Safety: Livescan Fingerprinting and TB tests**

Student safety is a priority at CMP. In an effort to provide the highest level of safety for our students, all CMP staff and contractors and volunteers who interact with students are required to successfully complete an electronic fingerprinting process known as a "livescan" report through the Department of Justice. Under California Health and Safety Code 121545, volunteers who are