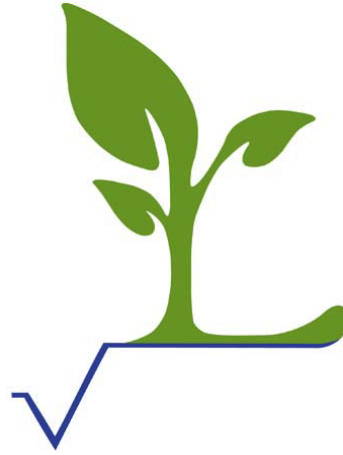




2026-27
La Crescent
Montessori & STEM
School Family
Handbook

La Crescent Montessori & STEM School Family Handbook

2026-2027

La Crescent Montessori & STEM School (K-12) is a tuition-free public charter school. As a Minnesota charter school, we are our own school district (#4054) and are governed by a board consisting of teachers, parents, and a community member. La Crescent Montessori & STEM School also offers a fee-based preschool program. Please contact the school office if you have any questions. We are happy to help! In an effort to reduce the length of this handbook, brief overviews of student focused policies have been included. All policies related to students at LMSS can be found linked below, or upon request from the office.

La Crescent Montessori & STEM School
1116 S. Oak Street
La Crescent, MN 55947
Phone: 507-895-4054
Fax: 507-895-4064
LMA4054@lacrescentmontessori.com
www.lacrescentmontessori.com

OUR VISION AND MISSION

The vision of La Crescent Montessori & STEM School is to develop self-assured, lifelong learners who positively impact the world.

Our mission is to provide authentic Montessori learning environments with integrated STEM education and rigorous academics, which foster independence, curiosity, and collaboration.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kate Garfin	Teacher	Kate@LaCrescentMontessori.com
Dean Chady	Community Member	Dean@LaCrescentMontessori.com
Bowman Webb	Parent	Bowman@LaCrescentMontessori.com
Katie Kabat	Teacher	Katie.Kabat@lacrescentmontessori.com
Luke Wahl Squared	Teacher	LWahl@LaCrescentMontessori.com

Staff Directory

Administration

Head of School	Naomi Kraus	Naomi@LaCrescentMontessori.com
Director of Operations	Tammy Stremcha	Tammy@LaCrescentMontessori.com

Children's House

CH Guide	Angela Rundhaugen	AVonMoos@LaCrescentMontessori.com
----------	-------------------	-----------------------------------

Elementary

E1 Guide	Katie Kabat	Katie.Kabat@lacrescentmontessori.com
E2 Guide	Melissa Johnson	Melissa@LaCrescentMontessori.com

Adolescent Program

AP Team		AP@lacrescentmontessori.com
Classroom Guide	Kate Garfin	
Classroom Guide	Luke Wahl Squared	
Classroom Guide	Bella Anderson	
Classroom Guide	Michelle LangeMi	
<u>School-Wide</u>		
SPED Director	Katie Zehowski	contact HOS
SPED Teacher	Tyanne Perry	Tyanne@LaCrescentMontessori.com
SPED Teacher	Alex Auby	Alex@lacrescentmontessori.com
SPED Teacher	Lee Honey	Honey@Lacrescentmontessori.com
Speech Therapist	Shainy Kaufman	contact HOS

STUDENT RELATED POLICIES OF LMSS

Attendance and Truancy (#503)	Overdose Medication (#516.5)
Dress Code (#504)	Student Disability Nondiscrimination (#517)
Student Discipline (#506)	Interviews of Students (#519)
School Activities (#510)	Student Tech & Internet (#524)
Benevolence Policy (#511)	Hazing (#526)
Promotion & retention (#513)	Pledge of Allegiance (#531)
Anti Bully, Harassment, Intimidation and Discrimination (#514)	Peace Officers & Crisis Teams (#532)
Student Data (#515)	Health & Wellness (#533)
Medication (#516)	Entrance & Lottery (#616)
Religious/Cultural Accommodation (#609)	Public School Fee Law (#712)
Bringing Montessori to Everyone (#617)	

THE MONTESSORI PROGRAM AT LMSS

GOALS

As a public charter school, La Crescent Montessori & STEM School is committed to meet the educational goals, objectives, and standards as determined by the Board and our authorizer, the Osprey Wilds. Staff and parents are committed to the full development of each child as healthy, productive members of the community and as independent learners.

Individual goals are determined by the needs and abilities of each child. Emphasis is placed on the development of independence, responsibility, and self-awareness. This leads to learning to be responsible and functioning members of a community, and ultimately to a greater understanding of the world and the universe.

Key concepts emphasized are respect for self, respect for others, and respect for the environment.

AN OVERVIEW

THE CHILD

The Montessori system of education is based on the developmental needs of each child. Children are introduced to specific concepts that relate to their physical development—intellectually, physically, and psychologically. Each child's unique ability and motivation to develop his/her potential and capabilities are recognized. Respect for the child is one of the most important tenets of Montessori education.

THE PREPARED ENVIRONMENT

The “prepared environment” in a Montessori classroom consists of an array of materials that allow children to proceed through increasingly difficult work at the pace of their development. The teacher assists each child by giving lessons on the materials, guiding progress, and checking for mastery. The prepared environment encourages independent learning, exploration, and inquiry.

Montessori materials make abstract and complex concepts clear. They are distinctive because:

- they span the range from concrete to abstract, simple to complex, in an orderly sequence.
- they embody many concepts within each piece for the child to discover.
- they foster “auto-education,” which permits the child to determine the correct approach.
- they attract children due to their beauty and craftsmanship.

Academic and cultural subjects are taught in a spiral of increasing complexity. Subjects are introduced through sensorial and concrete materials in Pre-K through grade 6. Work becomes increasingly abstract and complex in upper grades as students build on the foundation established in earlier years.

THE CLASSROOM

Montessori classrooms are self-contained. Instruction is designed for three-year student age spans for ages 3 to 18 years old:

- Children’s House, serving students 3 to 6 years old.
- Elementary 1 or E-1, serving students 6 to 9 years old.
- Elementary 2 or E-2, serving students 9 to 12 years old.
- Adolescent Program, serving students 12 to 18 years old.

Students may stay with the same teacher for three years. This structure allows for individual differences to be truly recognized. This creates a sense of community and lets children benefit from each other in a non-competitive atmosphere of confidence and respect. Children are looked at as individuals and are given lessons within the structure of the prepared environment and under the guidance of the teacher when developmentally appropriate.

As children become more self-assured and competent, they are more able to direct their own learning. As some children work individually or in small groups, the teacher is free to work with individuals and small groups of children. The teacher personalizes each child’s program and observes and guides each child toward completion. Careful recording of progress allows the student and teacher to plan each child’s work. As a public school, we provide this additional individualization while ensuring learning is aligned to state standards.

HOMEWORK

Homework may be assigned for spelling practice, completion of unfinished daily assignments, enrichment, or reinforcement of skills. Homework may also be project-based.

ASSESSMENTS

Student progress is assessed in several ways and is reported by written progress reports that are sent home two times per year. Parent-teacher conferences are also offered during the fall and spring to discuss progress. Standardized testing is done several times per year in accordance with our charter contract with our authorizer.

PARENT CONFERENCES

We believe conferences are an essential opportunity for our families and our goal is 100% attendance. Please talk to your child’s teacher about your child’s educational growth and needs. We will send scheduling information home with your child or via electronic communication.

THE CURRICULUM

The Montessori curriculum at La Crescent Montessori & STEM School can be described by grouping instruction into several major areas.

Math - using distinctive Montessori materials to move the child from concrete to abstract learning of whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions and decimals, geometry, and advanced mathematics.

Language Arts - an integration of all subject areas, emphasizing reading, writing, and listening skills. Students also study literature and do beginning research in the lower elementary grades leading to expanded research in the upper grades.

Science - exploring and understanding the life sciences of biology, zoology, botany, physics, and chemistry through observation and research. Students gather data, measure, classify, analyze, and perform experiments.

Cultural Studies - exploring the prehistory and history of human beings, and answering questions about their needs and relationships through experiments and research. Students trace human culture through ancient civilizations, the Middle Ages, the Age of Discovery, and the Renaissance.

Geography - researching the geological history of the earth, discovering the physical properties of the earth, and how laws of the universe affect the earth and its people. Students consider several structures and systems—physical, political, social, and cultural—and become familiar with maps of the world. Advanced study includes resource-agricultural-economic geography.

Art - will incorporate exploring creative expression through a multitude of art media. The elements of design are studied from a sensorial introduction through to mastery of technique. Art is woven throughout the curriculum.

Music - experiencing and studying music as a reflection of history, culture, and the spirit of people. Music theory and instrumental exposure are included.

Media - developing research skills and the ability to use technology appropriately as a tool for research, reporting, and creating.

Physical Education - engaging in physical activities in a cooperative, self-competitive setting which will promote the development of a philosophy for lifelong health, wellness, and fitness.

GRIEVANCES

Any questions or concerns you may have may be brought to the Head of School. Contact information for this position can be found in the earlier pages of this handbook in the Board of Directors and Staff sections.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION

Charter schools are created to give parents and educators independence: the independence to create schools based on the visions and shared values of the school community. La Crescent Montessori & STEM School is a charter school created by families and educators working together to build a community of learning. Our school is enriched by the values, skills, resources, and dedication that each LMSS family brings to the school community. At LMSS we come together out of love for our children to

give them an education based on Maria Montessori's vision of the great potential found in every growing child.

It is only as an involved community of families and educators that we can bring the school to its fullest potential for our children and future generations. We encourage all families to be involved through volunteerism and participation in school events.

ATTENDANCE

REPORTING ABSENCES

School starts at 8:00 a.m. **Parents/guardians MUST notify the school office by phone or in person, no later than 8:30 a.m.** if a child will be absent or to report a tardy. Individual emails to teachers may not be checked in time to ensure accurate reporting. If school is not notified by 8:30 a.m., the parent or guardian may be called by the office staff or an automated phone call. If there is a planned excused absence for a future date, communication with teachers and admin is preferred over phone call, but notification must be made and an additional email is then appreciated. Multiple tardies and/or absences may result in notification to Human Services of Houston County for a truancy referral.

DROPPING OFF/PICKING UP STUDENTS

Class begins at **8:00 a.m. and ends at 2:50 p.m.** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Every Wednesday, school hours are from **8:00 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.**

Please drop off your child at school between 7:50 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and pick up your child between 2:50 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. We cannot guarantee supervision for children before or after these times. The Student Entry **Door is not unlocked each morning until 7:50 a.m. We ask that parents/guardians do not enter the building during drop-off and pick-up.** Once the doors are locked at 8:00 a.m., all late arrivals must enter through the main door.

Your family can choose to park on the street and walk or utilize our Drop off/Pick Up line as pictured below. The 'outer' lane is for students to enter and exit their vehicles. The 'inner' lane is the driving lane. At drop off and pick up, the parking lot should only be used for long-term parking. Remember, a wait time of 5 minutes is to be expected in the line up. School staff will motion you through if there is a hold up. Plan ahead, respect the time of others, and be patient.

Should I get out of my car?

- No, unless you are in a designated parking spot.
- LMSS staff will be lined up in the Child Walkway to assist with the transition from car to school/ school to car.
- If your child needs assistance buckling in, please park your vehicle in a parking space, not in the pick up/drive lanes.

What happens if I'm early?

- You can either pull up to the first spot near the exit sign and wait there
- Or, you can utilize street parking until you'd like to enter the lineup.

What if I'm in a hurry?

- You can utilize street parking and walk to pick up your child if necessary.

What if I have to meet with a teacher after school?

- Please get in the lineup until you have entered the parking lot; then, you can slide into a spot (see parking on diagram)

Drop off and Pick up Process



1
Enter through the north entrance of the parking lot

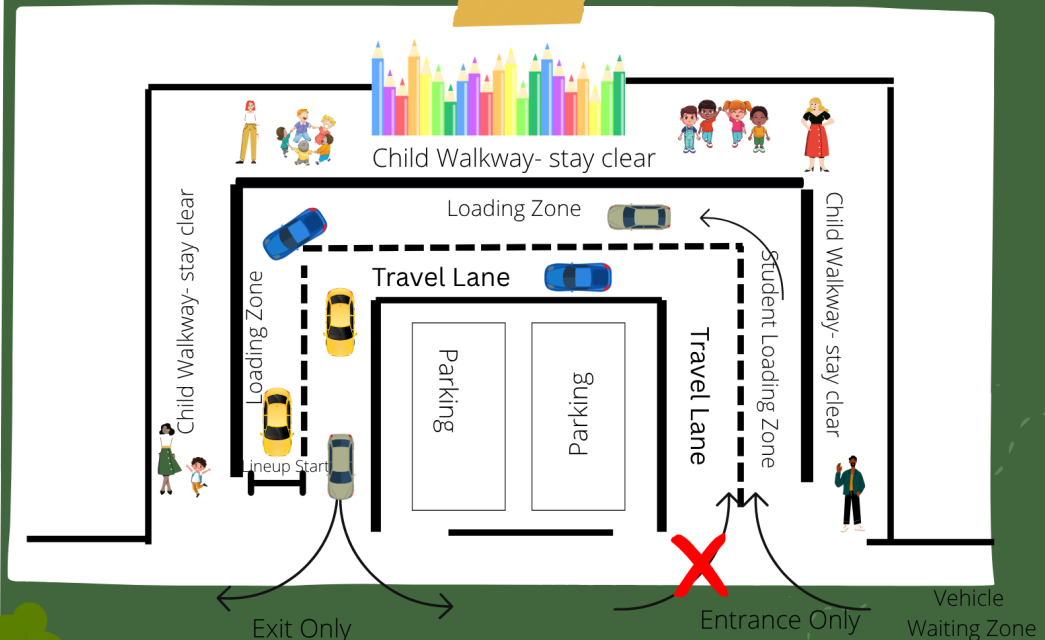
2
Pull forward to the "Lineup Start" or nearest car in the lineup

3
Once your child has exited your car or is buckled safely, you may pull forward and exit

4
If you are not at the front of the line, do not pull forward until the car ahead of you has moved forward

"It will be safest and fastest for your child(ren) to enter and exit the vehicle on the passenger side of the car"

We understand this will take time, patience, and organization. We appreciate your feedback and cooperation in the quest to make our parking lot safe for our students :)



We are vigilant about safety during student drop-off and pick-up times. Students may only be picked up from parents/guardians or those with permission we have on file. If a child misses a bus or is not picked up on time, a staff member will contact the parent/guardian and review plans for pick up. We frequently remind students about safety rules and ask parents to watch carefully for children in the parking lot.

Thank you for helping us keep all the children safe!

SIGNING YOUR CHILD OUT OF SCHOOL/RELEASE OF STUDENTS

VISITING SCHOOL

Any time that someone other than an LMSS staff member enters our school, they must sign in and out at the office and pick up a Visitor Badge before they enter the school for any reason. The sign-in sheet is in the office.

RELEASE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Any time you wish to pick up your child from school during the day, you should notify the office at least one hour in advance. Parents must sign their child out in the office before the student will be released from the building.

RELEASE TO OTHERS

We will not release students at any time without parent/guardian approval. No child will be released from school without the consent of the custodial parent/guardian; alternative arrangements may be made with the administration in writing. Please keep your contact phone numbers updated as we may call you for verification.

SEVERE WEATHER SCHOOL CLOSINGS

If the La Crescent-Hokah School District (ISD 300) closes due to severe weather, La Crescent Montessori & STEM School will also be closed. School closure information is posted on local radio and television stations, and you can sign up for local text alerts through the television stations. LMSS will also publish school closures on the LMSS Facebook page.

If ISD 300 schools close early, LMSS will close also.

It is important to have a family emergency plan BEFORE the first snow falls. Your child will need to know where to go (or where to find a key) if the school is closed and they need to be at home or return home early. You will be required to provide this information on the Student Transportation Plan form in your registration packet.

Outdoor Play/Recess

Outdoor play is an important part of a child's day. It supports physical health, mental health, focus, social skills, and emotional well-being. LMSS provides outdoor recess to all classes everyday excluding days of severe cold temperatures or heavy rainfall. LMSS provides rainsuits for CH and E1 students so they can continue to be outdoors during light rain. LMSS utilizes the following graph to determine length of outdoor time during cold weather. Final determination of reduced or canceled time outdoors will be made by the Head of School. Students must be properly dressed for outdoor play. If your family needs assistance providing appropriate weather apparel, please reach out to the Director of Operations. Funds are available to ensure all students have the ability to access outdoor play everyday.

GES Cold Weather Guidelines for Planning Outdoor Activities											
Wind Chill Chart		"Feels Like" Temperature (degrees F)									
Windspeed (mph)	CALM	-25	-20	-15	-10	-5	0	5	10	15	20
	5	-40	-34	-28	-22	-16	-11	-5	1	7	13
	10	-47	-41	-35	-28	-22	-16	-10	-4	3	9
	15	-51	-45	-39	-32	-26	-19	-13	-7	0	6
	20	-55	-48	-42	-35	-29	-22	-15	-9	-2	4
	25	-58	-51	-44	-37	-31	-24	-17	-11	-4	3
	30	-60	-53	-46	-39	-33	-26	-19	-12	-5	1

Frostbite can occur in	> 30 minutes:	regular outdoor activities, subject to supervising adult's judgement
Frostbite can occur in	~ 20-30 minutes:	no regular recess; limited (<20 min) outdoor activities at teacher discretion
Frostbite can occur in	~ 10-20 minutes:	no regular recess; minimal (<10 min) outdoor activities at teacher
Frostbite can occur in	~ 5-10 minutes:	discretion school will likely be canceled or delayed; no outdoor activities

E-LEARNING DAYS

LMSS may utilize E-learning days to reduce the impact of lost instructional time due to inclement weather. If LMSS chooses to utilize an E-learning day, you will be notified at the time of the closure. Additional information will then be provided by each classroom teacher.

TELEPHONE CALLS/ ELECTRONICS

If you need to talk to your child's teacher during the school day, please call and leave a message or send an email. Otherwise, please wait until after 2:50 p.m. to contact your teacher, as they are working with students from 8:00 a.m. until 2:50 p.m. You may also call the office and staff will deliver a message as soon as it is possible. If you have questions regarding your child, the teacher/staff member will return your call as soon as possible.

If you need to speak with your child, please contact the office at 507-895-4054. Cell phones, and personal use electronics, including but not limited to tablets and smartwatches, need to be turned off and kept in the designated area determined by the classroom teacher(s) until the end of the school day. This is based on the honor system; if it can't be followed, electronics will be taken away and parents will be required to pick up the item at their earliest convenience.

Please do not call with messages for your child unless it is an emergency. Students may use the school telephones with staff permission in emergency situations.

ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF LEAD IN THE DRINKING WATER TESTS RESULTS

LMSS is required to test for lead in the drinking water every five years. LMSS tested 19 taps that could be used for cooking or drinking in the spring of 2024. All 19 samples resulted in less than 1.00 ppb (essentially meaning lead was not detected). No additional steps are required at this time. The LMSS Lead in Drinking Water Plan and results can be found on the website:
<https://lacrescentmontessori.com/about-us/school-board-documents/#reports>

ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS

LMSS shall give parents of students currently in attendance and eligible students currently in attendance annual notice by such means as are reasonably likely to inform the parents and eligible students of the following:

1. That the parent or eligible student has a right to inspect and review the student's education records. The request must be made in writing, and specify what record is being requested to the Head of School. LMSS will attempt to honor the request as soon as possible, or within 10 school days from the date of request;
2. That the parent or eligible student has a right to seek amendment of the student's education records to ensure that those records are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. The amendment request must be made to the Head of School in writing, must identify specifically the item believed to be inaccurate, incomplete or misleading, and specify the requested correction;
 - A. If LMSS does not amend the record(s) as requested by the parent or eligible student, LMSS will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. That the parent or eligible student has a right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable

information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that federal and state law and the regulations promulgated thereunder authorize disclosure without consent;

4. That the parent or eligible student has a right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education regarding an alleged failure by the school district to comply with the requirements of FERPA and the rules promulgated thereunder. The name and address of the federal office that administers FERPA and receives complaints is:
Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605
5. The criteria for determining who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest for purposes of disclosing education records to other school officials whom the school district has determined to have legitimate educational interests is if the person needs the data to provide service that will ultimately provide a better educational experience for the student; and
6. That the school district forwards education records on request to a school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled as long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer and that such records may include suspension and expulsion records pursuant to the federal Every Student Succeeds Act and, if applicable, a student's history of violent behavior.

LMSS contracts with various software vendors to provide record keeping for educational data. The following programs are used, and the data elements are listed:

SpEd Forms: Individualized Education goals and behavior plan; name, grade, assessment results

JMC: Student assignments and grades; name, email, grade, courses, grades, discipline, birthdate, address, guardians, health information, student identity, attendance.

Transparent Classroom: Student assignments; name, grade, birthdate, lesson assessment

Fastbridge: Student assessments, name, grade, assessment data

Google Classroom: Student assignments; name, email, grade, assessment data

Pearson: Student assessment; name, grade, school, assessment data

GoGuardian: Student name, email, assignments, online searches, online communication

Typing Club: Student name, email, assignments

Lifetouch Portraits: Student name and grade. Parent name, email and address.

If you have any questions about these contracts or services, please reach out to the office.

This document provides basic information to help parents/guardians make informed decisions that benefit their children, schools, and communities.

Why statewide testing?

Minnesota values its educational system and the professionalism of its educators. Minnesota educators created the academic standards which are rigorous and prepare our students for career and college.

The statewide assessments are how we as a state measure that curriculum and daily instruction in our schools are being aligned to the academics standards, ensuring all students are being provided an equitable education. Statewide assessment results are just one tool to monitor that we are providing our children with the education that will ensure a strong workforce and knowledgeable citizens.

Why does participation matter?

A statewide assessment is just one measure of your student's achievement, but your student's participation is important to understand how effectively the education at your student's school is aligned to the academic standards.

Students who do not participate will receive a score of "not proficient."

- Students who receive a college-ready score on the high school MCA are not required to take a remedial, noncredit course at a Minnesota State college or university in the corresponding subject area.
- Educators and policymakers use information from assessments to make decisions about resources and support provided.
- Parents and the general public use assessment information to compare schools and make decisions about where to purchase a home or to enroll their children.
- School performance results that are publicly released and used by families and communities are negatively impacted if students do not participate in assessments.

Academic Standards and Assessments

What are academic standards?

The [*Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards*](#) are the statewide expectations for student academic achievement. They identify the knowledge and skills that all students must achieve in a content area and are organized by grade level. School districts determine how students will meet the standards by developing courses and curriculum aligned to the academic standards.

What is the relationship between academic statewide assessments and academic standards?

The statewide assessments in mathematics, reading, and science are used to measure whether students and their school and district are meeting the academic standards. Statewide assessments are one measure of how well students are doing on the content that is part of their daily instruction. It is also a measure of how well schools and districts are doing in aligning their curriculum and teaching the standards.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)

- Based on the Minnesota Academic Standards; given annually in grades 3-8 and high school in reading and mathematics; given annually in grades 5, 8, and high school for science.
- The majority of students take the MCA.
- MTAS is an option for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for English Learners

- Based on the WIDA English Language Development Standards.
- Given annually to English learners in grades K–12 in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.
- The majority of English learners take ACCESS for ELLs.
- Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is an option for English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Why are these assessments effective?

Minnesota believes that in order to effectively measure what students are learning, testing needs to be more than answering multiple-choice questions.

- To answer questions, students may need to type in answers, drag and drop images and words, or manipulate a graph or information.
- The reading and mathematics MCAs are adaptive, which means the answers a student provides determine the next questions the student will answer.
- The science MCA incorporates simulations, which require students to perform experiments in order to answer questions.

All of these provide students the opportunity to apply critical thinking needed for success in college and careers and show what they know and can do.

Because test content represents the academic standards as completely as possible, preparing for and taking the assessments uses the very same knowledge, processes, and strategies included in the standards.

Are there limits on local testing?

As stated in 120B.301, for students in grades 1-6, the cumulative total amount of time spent taking locally adopted districtwide or schoolwide assessments must not exceed 10 hours per school year. For students in grades 7-12, the cumulative total amount of time spent taking locally adopted districtwide or schoolwide assessments must not exceed 11 hours per school year.

In an effort to encourage transparency, the statute also requires a district or charter school, before the first day of each school year, to publish on its website a comprehensive calendar of standardized tests to be administered in the district or charter school during that school year. The calendar must provide the rationale for

When do students take the assessments?

Each school sets their testing schedule within the state testing window. Contact your student's school for information on specific testing days.

- The MCA and MTAS testing window begins in March and ends in May.
- The ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs testing window begins at the end of January and ends in March.

When do I receive my student's results?

Each summer, individual student reports are sent to school districts and are provided to families no later than fall conferences. The reports can be used to see your child's progress and help guide future instruction.

How much time is spent on testing?

Statewide assessments are taken one time each year; the majority of students test online. On average, the amount of time spent taking statewide assessments is **less than 1 percent of instructional time** in a school year. The assessments are not timed and students can continue working as long as they need.

Why does it seem like my student is taking more tests?

The statewide required tests are limited to those outlined in this document. Many districts make local decisions to administer additional tests that the state does not require. Contact your district for more information.

administering each assessment and indicate whether the assessment is a local option or required by state or federal law.

What if I choose not to have my student participate?

Parents/guardians have a right to not have their student participate in state-required standardized assessments. Minnesota Statutes require the department to provide information about statewide assessments to parents/guardians and include a form to complete if they refuse to have their student participate. This form follows on the next page and includes an area to note the reason for the refusal to participate. Your student's district may require additional information.

A school or district may have additional consequences beyond those mentioned in this document for a student not participating in the state-required standardized assessments. There may also be consequences for not participating in assessments selected and administered at the local level. Please contact your school for more information regarding local decisions.

Parent/Guardian Refusal for Student Participation in Statewide Assessments

To opt-out of statewide assessments, the parent/guardian must complete this form and return it to the student's school.

*To best support school district planning, please submit this form to the student's school no later than January 15 of the academic school year. For students who enroll after a statewide testing window begins, please submit the form within two weeks of enrollment. A new refusal form is required **each year** parents/guardians wish to opt the student out of statewide assessments.*

Date _____ (This form is **only** applicable for the 20_____ to 20_____ school year.)

Student's Legal First Name _____ Student's Legal Middle Initial _____

Student's Legal Last Name _____ Student's Date of Birth _____

Student's District/School _____ Grade _____

Please initial to indicate you have received and reviewed information about statewide testing.

_____ I received information on statewide assessments and choose to opt my student out. MDE provides a *Parent/Guardian Guide to Statewide Testing* on the [MDE website](#) (Students and Families > Statewide Testing).

Reason for refusal:

Please indicate the statewide assessment(s) you are opting the student out of this school year:

_____ MCA/MTAS Reading _____ MCA/MTAS Science
_____ MCA/MTAS Mathematics _____ ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs

Contact your school or district for the form to opt-out of local assessments.

I understand that by signing this form, my school and I may lose valuable information about how well my student is

progressing academically. As a result, my student will not receive an individual score. Refusing to participate in statewide assessments may impact the school, district, and state efforts to equitably distribute resources and support student learning; for the purpose of school and district accountability calculations, my student will not be considered 'proficient'.

If my student is in high school, I understand that by signing this form, my student will not have an MCA score, that could potentially save time and money by not having to take remedial, noncredit courses at a Minnesota state college or university.

Parent/Guardian Name (print) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

To be completed by school or district staff only.	Student ID or MARSS Number
---	----------------------------

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education services are available to eligible students. If you have a concern, please contact our Special Education Team at (507) 895-4054 **as soon as possible**. If your child has had any special services such as special education, an IEP, or a 504 Plan, let us know immediately so that we may plan with you to meet your child's special needs.

504 PLAN AND TITLE IX

LMSS does not and will not discriminate against any employee, student, volunteer, or member basis of which the Office of Civil Rights enforces civil rights statutes including mental or physical disabilities or sex. Sexual harassment is a form of sexual discrimination and is not tolerated at LMSS. The Title IX Coordinator is Tammy Stremcha, and the 504 Plan Coordinator is Naomi Kraus. If you would like to file a grievance, coordinators can be reached at 507-895-4054. Write to them at 1116 South Oak St. La Crescent, MN 55947.

HEALTH

WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME

Keep your child home if they have had an elevated temperature (100.4 degrees or higher), vomiting, or diarrhea. Symptoms must be gone for 24 hours (without the aid of medication) before they can return to school.. This will help reduce the spread of infections throughout the school. It is important to notify the school of any contagious conditions your child may contract, such as strep throat, pink eye, head lice, or scabies so that staff will be able to take appropriate measures to protect other students. LMSS must post or give notice to parents of an exposed child of reportable diseases such as (but not limited to) streptococcal (strep throat), influenza, or chickenpox. In addition, if your child is too sick to go outdoors for recess, please keep him/her at home. Your cooperation is essential!

WHEN WE WILL SEND YOUR CHILD HOME

When a child becomes sick (fever, vomiting, or other symptoms of illness), LMSS will isolate and supervise the child while staff immediately notify parents of the situation. Isolation may include the child being moved to a different room with supervision or remain in the classroom but separated from the other students to remain supervised. Isolation is used to help reduce the spread of illness.

HEALTH PROBLEMS/ALLERGIES

If your child has a health problem, such as a heart condition, a hearing or vision problem, or allergies, please note this on your child's emergency form and contact the school before the start of the school

year. Health information will be recorded on your child's health record including description, specific triggers, avoidance techniques, and symptoms of reactions, as well as procedures for responding to the health problem, including medication, dosage, and emergency contact information. Review and discussion for managing the condition at school will be held annually with staff, including lunchroom/recess staff and transportation staff as appropriate. If any changes in the health status of your child occur during the school year, please contact the office right away.

NOTIFICATION OF EXPOSURE

Should notification be required, families will be notified via electronic mail by the end of the business day that LMSS was notified. The information included with the notification may be: possible symptoms to watch for, possible actions to take, and when the child may return to school.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION/HEALTH PROCEDURES

Please be sure that you return the Emergency Information sheet and send notes updating phone numbers when needed during the year. **We must have a way to reach parents during the day, at home, at work, or through a neighbor or relative.** Please indicate if you provide the school with an unlisted number as these will be kept strictly confidential.

In case of an emergency, we will call the numbers listed on the Emergency Information sheet. If no one listed can be reached, we will take whatever action we deem to be the most appropriate:

- care for your child at school until someone picks him/her up; or
- call the doctor listed on the Emergency Information sheet, or
- transport the child to a hospital emergency room.

In emergencies, we may call 911. Your child may be transported via ambulance.

MEDICATIONS

Medications must be taken at home whenever possible. Medication prescribed three times a day can be given before school, after school, and at bedtime. If your child requires medication to be taken while under the care of LMSS, please request the Medication Policy and forms from the school office.

1. School personnel can only administer medications with the written order of a health care provider that is licensed to prescribe and the written consent of a parent/guardian (exceptions are listed below). A Medical Consent Form can be requested from the office.
2. Some students may qualify to carry specific non-prescription medications on their person. More information can be found in the Medication Policy, along with the form that is required.
3. Some students may qualify to carry specific prescription medication on their person. More information can be found in the Medication Policy, along with the form that is required.
4. Medications (prescription or nonprescription) that will need to be provided on a short term basis due to field trips also require a specific form to be filled out and submitted to the office.
5. School staff will not administer homeopathic or non-traditional medicines, including herbal remedies and dietary supplements
6. All guidelines must be followed by school staff, families and students to ensure compliance with the medication order.
7. Topical Sunscreen and insect repellent is exempt from the physician order requirement. Students are allowed to possess and apply these items during the school day.

Sunscreens and insect repellent will not be provided by the school or staff. Students must bring their own sunscreen/insect repellent if they would like to use it. Due to allergies, sunscreens and insect repellents are not sharable, without parent approval.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Minnesota state law requires full immunizations for all school children. To attend school in Minnesota, students must show they've had all the required immunizations. Please keep a permanent record of your child's immunizations and annually complete updated information to the school before the first day of school or admission will be denied. Exemptions to this law exist. For more information please contact the school.

HEARING AND VISION SCREENINGS

Hearing and vision screenings are provided to students based on grade level. These screenings are provided by utilizing local partners including but not limited to the La Crescent Lions, nursing programs, and volunteers.

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCES

Southeast Regional Crisis Center

The Southeast Regional Crisis Center (SERCC) is a new 24/7 walk-in mental health facility designed specifically for people experiencing a mental health crisis. The center provides a calm, safe and welcoming environment. You'll receive immediate help from compassionate staff who are experts in crisis, trauma, and mental health care.

SERCC is open 24 hours a day, everyday, to people of all ages in the 10-county region, regardless of your financial situation or insurance status. We help to stabilize your immediate crisis, and develop integrated plans for ongoing care you may need when you leave the center.

It is not only a place for individuals and their families to get immediate help, but SERCC will also serve as a valuable resource for first responders to help those in crisis get the expert mental health support they need and serve as an alternative to emergency rooms.

SERCC also houses short-term residential facilities for those that need longer care. With 16 beds, the center has separate units for adults and youth (ages 10-18), has nursing services, individual and group counseling, and care coordination upon discharge.

If you, or a loved one, are experiencing a mental health crisis, our doors are always open, to connect you with the care and compassion you deserve.

If you need immediate help, call the **Houston County Mobile Hotline 1-844-274-7472**.

The Southeast Regional Crisis Center is operated by Nexus Family Healing, experts in trauma-informed care, systemic family treatment, and mental health crisis care.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States.

Crisis Text Line

Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a volunteer Crisis Counselor.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Student Rights:

- Right to a safe environment
- Right to a Montessori education
- Right to support from parents and staff

Student Responsibilities:

- Responsible for own behavior; respect of self, of others, and the environment, at all times
- Responsible for own academics; work that is complete, on time, and of high quality
- Responsible for own attendance; Expectation-100% attendance, on time, every time, unless otherwise excused

Parent Rights:

- Right to a safe environment
- Right to a Montessori education; information on Montessori education and your child's progress
- Right to support from staff

Parent Responsibilities:

- Responsible for own behavior; respect of self, of others, and the environment, at all times in action and language; this includes staff, parents, and students
- Responsible for own support of your child's academics; prepared home environment, one-on-one support of your child's progress
- Responsible for assistance of your child's attendance; Expectation-100% attendance, on time, every time, unless otherwise excused

Staff Rights:

- Right to a safe environment
- Right to provide a Montessori education
- Right to support from staff, parents, and students

Staff Responsibilities:

- Responsible for own behavior; respect of self, of others, and the environment, at all times; this includes all staff, parents, and students
- Responsible for providing a Montessori & STEM foundation for students at LMSS; including distribution of information to families
- Responsible for own attendance; Expectation-100% attendance, on time, every time, unless otherwise approved

SCHOOL LOCKERS

LMSS provides lockers/cubbies for student use to store belongings during the school day. Lockers and cubbies are the property of LMSS, and the school retains exclusive control over them at all times. Inspections of lockers can be conducted by school authorities at any time, for any reason, without notice, consent or a search warrant. Searches of personal possessions inside lockers/cubbies are allowed if school officials have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover evidence of a violation of law or school rules. Students are not permitted to use a locking device on their assigned locker.

SCHOOL BUS

Bus service is provided by Ready Bus Line, through an agreement with the La Crescent-Hokah School District, and is available at no charge to students who qualify (K-12). On morning routes, LMSS students will change buses at the ISD 300 Elementary School. The one school bus will then leave the elementary school at approximately 7:50 a.m., to deliver all LMSS students to the school each morning. That bus number is determined every year by Ready Bus Line. All students who ride the bus home in the afternoon will load at the LMSS departure area. The school bus will then take the students to the La Crescent High School to change to the bus that will deliver them to their final location. No students will be allowed to walk to a different location to catch the bus home. This is for the safety and well being of the students. Bus routes are available through Ready Bus Line. Pick up and Drop off times are provided to parents in August each year. For specific route information, contact Ready Bus at 895-2349.

BUS GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Bus Transportation a Privilege, Not a Right Minn. Stat. (Section 1,6). Section 6 states that riding a school bus is a privilege and not a right. A district may revoke a student's bus-riding privileges under a local discipline policy, which is not subject to laws governing suspension and expulsion. Section 1 specifies that a school district is not obligated to provide transportation for a student whose bus-riding privileges have been revoked due to violating the district's discipline policy or who fails to meet the student safety competencies. Provisions must be made for students with disabilities. Bus drivers are responsible for the care and protection of student passengers. They are directed and authorized to maintain order among pupils at all times and to report cases of disobedience, improper conduct or speech to the proper authorities.

As a bus passenger and student of District 300 (*note: also applies to District 4054*), I am expected to do the following:

1. I will remain seated, load, and unload in an orderly fashion, and be polite to my fellow students.
2. I will keep the aisle and emergency exit of the bus unobstructed at all times from my belongings or person.
3. I will keep the bus clean and will not bring any food or pop on the bus.
4. I will not bring guns, animals, skateboards, or dangerous objects on the bus.
5. I will not swear, fight, throw objects, and make loud noises, smoke, harass, or personally offend any of my fellow students.
6. I will follow all directions from my bus driver. (Each driver may have additional rules.)
7. I will pay for any damages caused by vandalism that has been committed due to my actions.
8. I will follow the LMSS code of conduct while waiting for, entering, riding, and exiting the bus.

Consequences for Infractions

Violation of these rules, or any additional rules dictated by the bus driver, may result in loss of bus privileges from one or more days, letters of apology written, conferences with parents/drivers/Ready Bus management, or any other such consequence deemed appropriate. The severity of the offense will dictate the consequence deemed necessary by school personnel.

Reporting Student Misbehavior on School Buses

1. School bus drivers will report student violations to Ready Bus Line Management or to the Head of School.
2. The school authority will complete the Student Incident Report Letter to the parent, assigning appropriate disciplinary action for the violation.

3. If a student violates two or more regulations or is cited for vandalism, it will be the responsibility of the Head of School to determine the necessary disciplinary action.
4. The Ready Bus Line will be notified of disciplinary action taken for each student cited for misconduct on a school bus.
5. Any student who willfully damages a school bus will be expected to reimburse the Ready Bus Line for such damages. Failure to make such payment shall be grounds for suspension of riding privileges.

If in the determination of the driver, a student needs to be removed from the bus immediately because of behavior problems, the local police may be called to help with the removal. If parents are not immediately available to transport their child home that student will be taken to the police station and held until parents are available.

HARDSHIP/BENEVOLENCE POLICY

Parents, caregivers, or families needing school-related financial aid (classroom fees, school supplies, field trip fees, etc.) are asked to contact the Director of Operations to request assistance. The administrative team will review the request and fund availability. ALL INFORMATION SHARED/DISCUSSED WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL. LMSS has a limited supply of funds that can be used to reduce the fees/costs from 0-100% for school-related expenses. Families that qualify for Free/Reduced Educational Benefits will receive priority funding. There may be deadlines associated with applying for hardship funds. Assistance may be denied or reduced due to lack of funding, reported income, or insufficient information.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

LMSS expects all students to maintain academic integrity and standards. Cooperation and collaboration are wonderful tools to be utilized by students when it is appropriate to do so, and the classroom teacher has given approval. Academic dishonesty, which can include plagiarism, cheating, copying, unauthorized technology usage, and others are prohibited. Consequences for committing academic dishonesty can include (but are not limited to) loss of credit on an assignment, parent notification, class suspension, loss of privileges, detention, or suspension.

LMSS PROPERTY

The use of LMSS property (not limited to computers and books) is a privilege. Any alteration will result in a student's loss of the privilege for any or all of the currently borrowed items. Alteration is not to be defined as a complete or total loss but can be defined as a partial loss or partial destruction. Any items that need to be repaired or replaced must be done so within 30 days.

TECHNOLOGY & INTERNET POLICY

Technology & Internet access are available to LMSS students for approved uses. These resources are provided to enhance student learning experiences. Students will receive orientation as needed. Settings are determined by LMSS and may not be altered, changed, or amended without the consent of the administration. Passwords are property of LMSS and may not be changed without the consent of the administration. These items are a privilege, and may be taken away due to willful misuse. Email addresses are assigned to students upon enrollment. Email addresses will be deactivated and deleted after 30 days after enrollment ends, either by graduation or unenrollment.

PUBLIC SCHOOL FEE LAW POLICY

The La Crescent Montessori & STEM School's School Board may require fees for:

- 1) Any program where the resultant product, in excess of minimum requirements and at the pupil's option, becomes the personal property of the pupil;
- 2) Admission fees or charges for extracurricular activities, where attendance is optional and where the admission fees or charges a student must pay to attend or participate in an extracurricular activity is the same for all students;
- 3) A security deposit for the return of materials, supplies, or equipment;
- 4) Items of personal use or products that a student has an option to purchase;
- 5) Field trips that are supplementary to or additional enrichment programs;
- 6) Transportation of pupils to and from extra-curricular activities conducted at locations other than school, where attendance is optional;
- 7) The Board requires students to furnish personal and consumable items, such as pencils, paper, etc.

LMSS Board *may* choose to waive any deposit or fee if any pupil or pupil's guardian or parent is unable to pay it.

LMSS Board will not charge for:

- 1) Textbooks, workbooks, art materials, lab supplies, or towels that are not written in, lost, destroyed or damaged in any way by the pupil. However, a fee will be assessed to replace items that are provided by the school and that have been written in, lost, damaged, or destroyed by the pupils. Replacement value will be used to assess the cost of such items.
- 2) Additional field trips that are a required part of the basic educational program;
- 3) Admission fees or dues for any activity the pupil is required to attend.

The LMSS Board will not withhold grades or diplomas for non-payment of student fees, but this provision does not prohibit the board from maintaining any action provided by law for the collection of fees LMSS is authorized to collect.

LUNCH

Students must bring a bag lunch from home. One - 8 oz. milk, will be provided per day, or children may bring their own beverages from home - ***no energy drinks, soda, or other caffeinated beverages¹***. When preparing lunches, please keep in mind the following:

- Do NOT send pop or candy.
- Please provide a cold pack/ice for any items that must stay cold. Lunches are kept in the classrooms, un-refrigerated.
- We encourage you to send hot foods in thermal containers. Children will have access to microwaves.
- Children must bring their condiments if needed.

LUNCHROOM BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

Behavior in the lunchroom should always be courteous and respectful. In addition, each student must observe the following rules:

1. Sit and remain seated until excused.
2. Eat your own lunch. The sharing of food is not allowed.
3. Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
4. Talk quietly and in a friendly way. Use "please" and "thank you."

¹ Please see the AP Addendum to this handbook for specific rules on caffeine and energy drinks for Adolescent Program Students.

5. Follow the directions of the staff.
6. Clean up your area including the floor.

Inappropriate behavior may result in the removal of the privilege of eating in the lunchroom. Repeated offenses may result in an alternative lunch location until the behavior becomes consistently acceptable.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICY

La Crescent Montessori & STEM School will provide a school environment that promotes nutrition, wellness, and physical activity. LMSS encourages all families to make the best choices for their child that is appropriate for their family. Having a well balanced breakfast and lunch helps students stay alert and focused throughout the day. Students are welcome and encouraged to walk or bike to school. LMSS is a recognized Bike Friendly Business, meaning we will accommodate the needs of students who choose to bike to school by providing storage for their biking accessories and/or a place to freshen up.

Snack and Celebration Options:

LMSS compiled the following list as optional ideas for families to review and utilize for snack or celebrations. LMSS may choose to not serve items that are provided to the school from the Red Light list.

*Check with your child's teacher about possible food allergies.

*You can mix and match green & yellow light foods for tasty snacks like veggies with hummus, crackers with cheese, yogurt with fruit.

Green Light Foods (choose these foods most often)

Apples	Baby Carrots
Bananas	Blackberries
Blueberries	Canned fruit packed in juice or water
Cherries	Clementines
Cut broccoli, cauliflower, or celery	Cut cantaloupe
Cut Watermelon	Dates
Diced Mango	Diced mixed fruit
Dried fruit without added sugar (raisins, mango, prunes, etc.)	Edamame
Freeze-dried fruits	Fruit cups packed in juice or water
Grape tomatoes	Grapes – fresh or frozen
Guacamole	Kiwi
Oranges	Peaches
Plums	Raspberries
Raw green beans	Sliced cucumbers
Sliced peppers	Strawberries
Sugar snap peas	Unsweetened applesauce
Unsweetened squeezable fruit/veggie pouches	

Yellow Light Foods (Choose these snacks on occasion.)

100% whole grain crackers (Triscuit, ak-mak, etc.)	100% whole grain pretzels
--	---------------------------

100% whole-grain cereal (shredded wheat, etc.)	Air-popped popcorn
Commercially prepared hard-boiled eggs	Cottage cheese
Cream cheese	Cubed or sliced cheese
Granola (oats as the first ingredient, without artificial sweeteners or dyes, and less than 8g of sugar per serving.)	Greek or regular yogurt (choose yogurt without artificial sweeteners or dyes, and less than 8g of sugar per 2 oz.)
Hummus	Nut butters
Nuts (almonds, cashews, etc)	String cheese
Sunflower seed butter	Sunflower seeds
Unsweetened fruit strips or leather	

Red Light Foods

(Avoid these foods when possible. Save these snacks for special occasions at home.)

Animal Crackers	Baked Goods
Breakfast cereals	Cake
Chips or regular pretzels	Cookies
Crackers that are not 100% whole grain (goldfish, cheese its, etc.)	Fruit Snacks
Granola Bars	Homemade foods
Ice Cream	Popsicles
Pudding	Spreadable or squeezable cheese products

Non Food Celebration Ideas

A book to keep in the classroom	Bookmarks
Books	Bouncy balls
Bracelets, rings or necklaces	Bubbles
Capsules that become sponges in water	Card games or other small games like jacks
Colorful shoelaces	Coloring books
Craft Kits or DIY craft bags	Crayons
Crazy straws	Finger puppets
Flashlights	Frisbees
Fun cups	Hats or hair accessories (barrettes, etc)
Inflatable balls or animals	Jump ropes
Keychains	Magnets
Markers or highlighters	Nerf balls
Non-latex balloons	Notepads
Pencils, pens, erasers	Seed packets and/or small pots or cups
Sidewalk chalk	Silly eyeglasses with nose disguise
Silly putty	Slinkies
Stamps	Stencils
Stickers	Stretchy animals
Sunglasses	Temporary tattoos
Reusable water bottles	Yoyos

PRESENCE OF PETS/ANIMALS

A Montessori classroom may contain an animal or animals (e.g. rabbit, bird, fish, dog, etc.). Please notify the staff if your child is allergic to any animals. Please obtain prior approval from staff before allowing your child to bring an animal for special days.

CANDY/GUM/INVITATIONS/TOYS

Please keep all candy, gum, and food (other than lunches) at home. Do not send party invitations to school unless they include the entire class. Please do not allow your child to bring any aggressive toys, toy weapons, or electronic games to school—these are not allowed at recess either. Thank you for your cooperation. Additional toys/games/cards may be allowed or dis-allowed based on classroom teachers.

RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL ACCOMMODATION

La Crescent Montessori & STEM School (LMSS) shall neither promote nor disparage any religious or cultural beliefs, or non-beliefs. To support LMSS's educational goals and to be sensitive to individuals' religious and cultural values, holiday celebrations are not held during regular school hours. LMSS does recognize that it is important to accommodate the desires of its students and staff members to exercise their religious beliefs in a manner that does not substantially disrupt the school and work environment or infringe on the rights of others. As such, LMSS will make reasonable accommodations for students and staff members who have particular religious needs. Schools are not required to accommodate a religious request if granting such a request would place an undue burden on the school, or in the case of requests made by staff members, it would fundamentally alter the job duties of the requesting staff member.

LMSS encourages all students and employees to have respect and tolerance for one another's views. Inclusion of religious music, art, drama, and literature in the curriculum and school activities is allowable by LMSS provided that it is intrinsic to the learning experience and is presented objectively without sectarian indoctrination. The history, contemporary values, and origin of various religions, holidays, customs, and beliefs may be explained in an unbiased and non-sectarian manner. To the extent possible, special school events, such as public meetings, shall be scheduled at times, which are not likely to conflict with the observance of religious holidays.

MINNESOTA STUDENT SURVEY

LMSS participates in the Minnesota Student Survey: which is an anonymous survey that asks about a range of health topics: mental, physical, sexual, etc. This survey is for students in grades 5, 8, 9, and 11. The survey is administered every three years with the next survey being in 2028. Parents and guardians will be provided with paperwork the year of the survey if they choose to opt their child out of the survey. Students are able to skip any question they choose during the survey.

NAME AND PRONOUN CHANGE

In accordance with Title IX, Minnesota Human Rights Act, and Safe and Supportive Minnesota Schools Act, LMSS supports changes in pronoun use and names as requested by students and/or families. If a student would like to informally change their pronouns or name, they can request an Informal Pronoun/Name Change form from the office. This is *not* a formal or legal change of name. Transcripts, state assessments, and other legal documents will maintain the student's legal name. If there have been changes to legal name or gender, please share those documents with the office as necessary/appropriate.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE POLICY

La Crescent Montessori & STEM School waives the requirement to have the Pledge of Allegiance recited by students and staff for the 2026-2027 school year.

Instruction in proper etiquette toward, correct display of, and respect for all flags and patriotic exercises will be provided.

BULLYING, HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND DISCRIMINATION POLICY

LMSS believes that a safe and civil school environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards, as well as to foster healthy relationships. Bullying, harassment, intimidation, and discrimination causes physical, psychological, and emotional harm to students. It interferes with their ability to learn and grow as individuals. It is the goal of LMSS to foster a learning environment where students are protected from bullying, harassment, and intimidation so they feel safe and supported in their efforts to succeed academically and grow into whole and unique persons.

LMSS will not accept bullying, harassment, intimidation or discrimination from or to any student. Malicious and sadistic conduct will not be tolerated. Definitions are:

Bullying: intimidating, threatening, abusive, or harming conduct that is offensive and:

- 1) there is an actual or perceived imbalance of power
- 2) the conduct is repeated or forms a pattern
- 3) materially or substantially interferes with a student's education

Cyber-bullying: using technology or other electronic communication to bully

Harassment: a single incident of physical or sexual assault, stalking, nonconsensual dissemination of private sexual images or repeated incidents of intrusive or unwanted acts, words or gestures

Intimidation: to make a person feel timid or fearful as if threatened

Discrimination: the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things

Malicious and Sadistic Conduct: creating a hostile learning environment by acting with the intent to cause harm by intentionally injuring another without cause or reason or engaging in extreme or excessive cruelty or delighting in cruelty

Every student, parent, staff member, contracted service provider, and volunteer has an ethical and moral obligation to intervene (when safe to do so) in an effort to limit the harm from such actions. Reports of such incidents must be reported to the Head of School as soon as reasonably possible.

HAZING PROHIBITION POLICY

LMSS students, employees, volunteers, contracted service providers or families shall plan, direct, encourage, aid, engage, permit, condone or tolerate in hazing. Hazing is committing an act against an individual(s) or coercing them into committing an act that creates a substantial risk of harm to others or themselves in an effort to be initiated into or affiliated with an organization, or for any other purpose.

STUDENT DISABILITY Non-Discrimination

LMSS protects disabled students from discrimination on the basis of disability. Staff will identify and evaluate learners who, within the intent of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, need special services, accommodations, or programs in order that such learners may receive a free appropriate public education.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

(For your convenience, a shortened version is provided in this handbook; the entire policy can be requested from the school office.)

Introduction

La Crescent Montessori & STEM School takes a progressive educational approach to the issue of a safe and peaceful school environment. Starting at the earliest ages and whenever a student first enters the school he or she is provided not only with the skills necessary to learn basic safety rules but to interact with his or her classmates, teachers, and the larger school community in positive and constructive ways. This type of education intends to foster the development of inner discipline in the child. Inner discipline consists of four components:

- A distinct knowledge of safety rules.
- A clear awareness of responsibility.
- A respectful attitude toward members of the classroom community and the school environment.
- Preparation for the proper way of acting under different circumstances.

Teachers at all age levels provide lessons in suitable classroom and school behaviors, students learn to solve difficulties between themselves, and clear guidelines are posted in every room, based on three major propositions: “respect for self, respect for others, respect for the environment.”

While the school is fortunate that unwanted behaviors are uncommon, it is a simple fact of life that on occasion children will make poor choices of such a nature that the school must take action.

Consideration is taken for children with special needs and the discipline policy follows all applicable state and federal guidelines.

Discipline will range from a private conversation (lessons to be learned) up to and including expulsion. The consequence will be in direct correlation with the conduct that instigated the consequence. The safety and wellbeing of all people within our walls is the first priority. LMSS follows the regulations set forth by the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act.

DRESS CODE POLICY

Students should dress appropriately for a school environment. They should be clean, neatly groomed, and fully clothed. Please use good judgment in the choice of clothing so that it in no way distracts from the educational process. Keep in mind that this is a learning environment where there is a wide range of ages in the school community.

Clothing may not depict, advertise or advocate the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or other controlled substances. Clothing may not depict pornography, nudity, sexual acts, or feature profanity. Clothing may not use or depict hate speech targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or any other protected groups. Undergarments (excluding bra straps) and intimate parts must be covered. Students in CH, E1, and E2 will wear rubber-soled slippers or inside shoes while in the classrooms for safety, comfort and cleanliness.

Students will be outside on a regular basis if weather permits. Please have students dressed according to the season (jacket or sweater in fall and spring; warm jacket, snow pants, boots, hat, mittens in winter).

If a student's clothing is deemed to be inappropriate in the educational environment, the student may be asked to change into something more acceptable to continue their learning day at LMSS.

YOE & FIELD TRIP BEHAVIOR POLICY

All students participating in an LMSS Field Trip and/or YOE (Youth Outing and Explorations) event as part of the curriculum at La Crescent Montessori & STEM School will be expected to conduct themselves ethically and respectfully. Inappropriate language, destruction of property, physical aggression, failure to tell staff where you are, and disrespect for yourself, others, and the environment are some examples of behaviors that will not be tolerated. Any child who exhibits unethical, disruptive, or disrespectful behavior at any time will be given a warning promptly. If the warning does not result in immediate corrective action by the student, parents/guardians will be notified to come and pick up their student who will be dismissed from the remainder of the Field Trip or YOE. Please discuss these expectations with your child so that everyone is aware of this behavior policy.

Teachers will notify parents of any scheduled field trips that require bus transportation and add trips to the school calendar two weeks (or more) prior to the trip. Parent notification for all overnight field trips will be made 1 month (or more) prior to the trip and added to the calendar at that time. Parents may be asked to assist. Fees for the trip and transportation may be charged. We try to keep these fees as low as possible. Please reach out to the HOS or DO if financial hardships would affect your child's ability to participate so that LMSS may be of assistance. Parents will be asked to sign a permission slip for all walking field trips and each trip requiring transportation that may occur throughout the year at the time of enrollment. Staff will bring Emergency Information sheets for each child along on each field trip. Inappropriate behavior on any field trip or Youth Outings and Excursion (YOE) may result in a permanent suspension of this privilege.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION POLICY

The State of Minnesota and the LMSS School Board expect all students to achieve an acceptable level of academic proficiency and state-required credits to be promoted to the next grade level and to graduate with a diploma. Parental assistance, remedial programs, student-teacher counseling, extended due dates, and other appropriate services shall be coordinated and utilized to the greatest extent possible to help students succeed in school.

- A. Promotion: Students who achieve at levels deemed acceptable by local and state standards may be promoted to the next grade level at the completion of each school year. Students who achieve at levels deemed acceptable by local and state standards may also be promoted to the next grade level on a per-class basis during the school year. Teaching staff may request grade promotion based on student progress, recent achievement, and outstanding academic effort.
- B. Retention: Students who are unable to achieve at levels deemed acceptable by local and state standards may be retained to the same grade level at the completion of the school year. Students who are unable to achieve at levels deemed acceptable by local and state standards may also be retained to the same grade level or a previous grade level on a per-class basis during the school year.

Retention of a student may be considered when professional staff or parents feel that it is in the best interest of the student. In addition to academic achievement, physical development, maturity, and emotional factors shall also be considered.

VISITING FRIENDS AFTER SCHOOL

If a student has permission to visit another student's home after school, the parent or guardian must give a note stating permission to the teacher. If permission involves a student riding a bus they do not

normally ride, the parent must also send a note that can be given to the bus driver indicating permission. Students will not be permitted to change after-school plans without permission from their parent. Notes may be checked for authenticity.

ENTRANCE AGES POLICY AND LOTTERY PROCEDURE

To be admitted to preschool, a child must be at least three years old by September 1 of the year in which he/she applies for enrollment. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

To be admitted to kindergarten, a child must be at least five years old by September 1 of the year in which he/she applies for enrollment.

Enrollment begins January 1 of the calendar year for the following school year. The lottery is held February 1st (or the first school day following).

LMSS does not discriminate based on race, color, creed, religion, gender, national origin, or disabilities. Special education services are available to those who qualify.

PRESCHOOL INFORMATION

PRESCHOOL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All children whose parents agree with the goals of La Crescent Montessori & STEM School Preschool are welcome regardless of race, sex, color, creed, or ethnic background. Requirements:

- Child must be at least 3 years old by September 1st of the current school year
- Child must have an initial physical examination, not more than six months before, nor later than one month after admission to the school and every two years thereafter.
- All immunizations must be kept current and recorded with the school office.
- Parents must sign a fee payment contract.