

APC School Expectations Statement

The Soldotna Montessori Charter School Academic Policy Committee supports and expects the implementation of these Montessori principles at SMCS. The monitoring of the implementation of these principles is the responsibility of the administrator. These principles will be reviewed, and possibly revised, annually. **In addition**, as a public school, SMCS is accountable to all state standards and mandated assessments.

Multi-age Classrooms

Our Montessori curriculum, with the exception of kindergarten, is delivered in three year cycles in multi-age classrooms.

Hands-on Learning

Our school emphasizes hands-on learning using concrete learning materials, including Montessori manipulatives.

Grace and Courtesy

Students learn to recognize and respect the rights and needs of themselves and others. Students are encouraged to solve problems using peaceful words and actions. School practices encourage self-regulation and conflict resolution.

Field Studies

Field studies encourage students to gain information and experience from the real world as well as apply their own knowledge in real world situations.

Understanding and Gaining Deep Respect for the Natural World

Our curriculum incorporates many opportunities to interact with the natural environment through instructional activities, research and field studies.

Global Understanding

Students learn about culture, global issues and the vast diversity of people and ideas in our world.

Follow the Child

Instruction is differentiated according to individual student readiness, academic performance and student interest.

Community Service

Students learn to make a contribution to others and to society through community service.

Student Investigation and Research

Students conduct class and individual investigations as a common method for acquiring curriculum knowledge. Technology, library archives, guest speakers and field studies support student research efforts.

Self-Direction and Student Accountability

Students in all grades gain experience in time management and work responsibility. Students develop self-direction and accountability in their day.

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Practical Life Skills

Children use Practical Life Skills to take care of the classroom, themselves and the environment. They also learn to properly utilize technology, manage time and organize effectively. Early practical life skills are also used to develop concentration skills, help develop fine and gross motor control and help develop impulse control. Practical life skills may also include learning to use technology, time management, and organization skills.

**Soldotna Montessori Charter School
Adopted: Spring 2014**

Attendance Policy

Attendance in school is the responsibility of the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and the student(s). During the times that school is in session, all students up to age 16 are required by law to attend school regularly and to be on time for classes.

Student absences will be considered either excused or unexcused. In order for an absence to be excused, the office must be notified by a telephone call on the morning of the absence. If a phone call is not practical, the student must provide a note upon returning to school. If at all possible, however, please phone in.

Parents or guardians of students who will be absent for an extended period of time should call the school office or provide a note to request that the absence be excused before they leave.

Parents of students who have over 15 days of absence per semester (with none of the absences pre-approved) will be asked to meet with an attendance committee to review future absence patterns. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss with the parent(s) the reasons for absences, to provide a plan for eliminating future absence and to provide suggestions to assist the family. An attendance/tardy contract outlining acceptable reasons for non-attendance or another tardy will be implemented for the student and parents.

Intermittent excused absences

Students have one day per day of excused absence to make up work that may be required by the teacher. It is the responsibility of the student and parent to obtain missed schoolwork from the teacher. Make-up work is to be done outside of regular class time.

Intermittent unexcused absences (truancy)

Unexcused absences may be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agencies and/or the Alaska Department of Family and Youth Services. Unexcused absences are ***outlined by the KPBSD attendance policy BP 5113 and AR 5113. Alaska Statute outlines and defines truancy as well.***

Suspension

If a student is suspended, it is the responsibility of the student and parent to acquire any work that will be missed. This work will be accepted only if finished prior to the student's return to school. Absences due to school suspension will be considered excused.

Involuntary Absence

Absence for emergencies such as illness or death in the family shall be considered involuntary. Arrangements for make-up work, if appropriate, will be made.

Releasing Students from School

For the protection of students and to prevent unauthorized persons from taking children from school prior to dismissal, the following procedures will be followed:

- No child will be permitted to leave with anyone other than the listed parent or guardian unless the permission of the parent or guardian is secured.

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- Persons picking up children are to report to the office and be prepared to identify themselves. Do not go directly to the classrooms to pick up children. Teachers have been instructed not to release children without authorization from the office.
- When using the telephone to request early dismissal for your child, please be prepared to establish your identity or to expect a call back so that we can verify you as the caller. It is requested you call the office before 2:00 p.m. if possible.
- Occasionally a parent must take a child from school early. Please keep this practice to a minimum. It is disruptive to closure activities and end-of-day class announcements.
- Please sign the alternate transportation form and turn it in to the office if you would like to designate persons other than parents or guardians to transport your child/ren.

Prearranged Extended Absences

Parents prearrange the absence at least one week in advance with the teacher and collect all assignments before leaving. The assigned work is due, in full, no later than one week after the return of the student to school.

Truancy

Truancy, depending on the circumstances, can be considered a major school infraction of the school enrollment policy. Students will be considered truant if they:

- Are absent from school without parent or guardian permission.
- Are absent from class or classes without permission, although on school grounds.
- Leave the playground without permission from the duty supervisor.
- Leave school without authorization or leave class without permission from the teacher.
- Obtain permission to leave school or class for a specified reason and do not comply with the specified reason.
- Leave school or class due to illness without reporting to the school office or nurse.
- ***Are not present at school and do not have an excuse deemed appropriate by school administration. Absences due to illness, medical appointments, travel to appointments and recovery from injuries will always be considered excused. Parents may be asked to provide documentation for extended absences over three school days.***

Truancies may be reported to the appropriate law enforcement and/or the Alaska Department of Family and Youth Services.

Tardy Policy

Students are allowed a combination of **ten late arrivals** or pick-ups per quarter. Late arrivals occur if the student is not in class in the a.m. and pickup after 3:50 in the p.m. The process to be followed by the SMCS administration and attendance committee regarding tardy arrival or pick-up is as follows:

Approved prearranged late arrival or early releases will not count in the total for students. Circumstances for these late arrivals and early release usually are of a unique nature. Parents may prearrange late arrivals or early pickups in advance if they are needed for medically related appointments or appointments that cannot be scheduled after school. The final determination for approval will rest with the school administrator.

When a child has a total, in any combination, of **six** late arrivals or pick-ups per quarter, a letter including this tardy policy will be sent to the parents.

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When a child has a total, in any combination, of **eight** late arrivals or pick-ups in a school quarter, the administrator will attempt to contact the parents by telephone and will send a written notice.

When a child has a total, in any combination, of **ten late arrivals** or pick-ups in a school quarter, the administration shall mail a letter via certified mail, with the school record attendance sheet detailing the dates that the student was tardy. **The letter will express the seriousness of the situation and will state that the attendance committee will conduct a review on this matter with the parent(s). The letter will provide a date for an attendance review meeting and state that the parent must contact the administrator or secretary of KSAS within three business days of receipt of the letter and if he/she wishes to request rescheduling of the review.** Rescheduling, in some cases, may not be possible especially due to meeting schedules.

The attendance committee shall be comprised of the classroom teacher, an APC member (teacher representative) and the school administrator. The intervention team chair or designee may be part of the review team as requested by the school administrator. The purpose of the review is to meet with the parent(s), discuss the reasons for the tardies, to design a plan for eliminating future tardies and, to provide suggestions to the family. An attendance/tardy contract outlining acceptable reasons for non-attendance or another tardy will be implemented for the student and parents.

Soldotna Montessori Charter School
Revised: Spring 2010

Special Services and 504 Policy

Students identified as needing special education receive intervention via the school's special education program at a charter school. Special education students, bilingual students and gifted students are serviced through both inclusion and pull-out services at the charter school as determined by the best interest of the student. Resource and related teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to ensure modification or differentiation of instruction and assessment in meeting student's needs. If a special services student or student with a 504 plan enrolls at a charter school, a review of the student's IEP or 504 Plan is conducted. The IEP/504 team then determines if the charter school can meet the student's individual learning needs via the methodology and curriculum materials available at the school. If it is determined that the charter school cannot adequately address the needs of the student then non- placement is disclosed to the parent and documented.

**Soldotna Montessori Charter School
Revised: No Data**

Home Schooling Enrollment Policy

Full-time Montessori families may take the district options to move their child into a home-schooling program during the school year. These families have the option, per district policy, to remain enrolled at SMCS for up to two courses. These courses include intervention, special education, music, PE, and academic topics that are self-contained within a homeroom classroom. Families electing to home school mid-year may not return to full-time status at SMCS in the same school year. These families may opt to reinstate their full-time status at the beginning the following year, pending review by the school administrator. The school administrator will consider class size and overall enrollment numbers when making the final determination. Re-enrollment will not be accepted after the first day of school in the new school year.

Families that do not elect to return to full-time status in the year following their enrollment in home-school will lose the option for full-time re-enrollment.

Exit dates must be noted when students enroll in a home-schooling program.

**Soldotna Montessori Charter School
Revised: No Data**

Holiday Observance Policy

SMCS gladly acknowledges that our families are unique and valued members of our school and have a wide variety of personal, political and religious beliefs. That being said, we do not alter our curricular or instructional approach based on any given family belief system. If a family is truly not happy with our approach they are free to enroll elsewhere although we certainly do not encourage or promote that.

We accommodate families by informing them of potentially conflicting activities so they can choose to have their child participate or not

It is always possible to present content around the holidays in an informational format rather than a celebratory one. However, each teacher will decide how that goes in his/her classroom and inform parents accordingly – taking care to communicate clearly and to exclude no one.

**Soldotna Montessori Charter School
Revised: No Data**

Family Medical Sabbatical Policy

Families may request a sabbatical leave from SMCS reserving the right for their student to return to SMCS after an extended absence due to a severe medical condition requiring long-term treatment out of state.

The intent of this policy is to support families experiencing a medical crisis requiring a temporary move out of state.

**Soldotna Montessori Charter School
Revised: No Data**

Family Educational Travel Sabbatical Policy

Families enrolled for a minimum of three years may request a sabbatical leave from SMCS reserving the right for their student to return to SMCS after a one semester or one year absence.

Sabbaticals will be granted for the purposes of family travel only.

No more than two students may be granted a Travel Sabbatical for any school year.

Families must submit a written request for a Travel Sabbatical no later than the lottery enrollment deadline prior to the year of travel.

Families will be informed of the Travel Sabbatical option via the school newsletter in August and September. If Travel Sabbaticals for more than two students are received a lottery will be conducted to determine which two students will be granted the sabbatical. This lottery will be held in conjunction with the regular school lottery.

The intent of this policy is to support families who wish to enhance the educational opportunities for their school-aged children via travel.

**Soldotna Montessori Charter School
Revised: No Data**

Montessori Model United Nations Participation Policy

The APC met to consider the pros and cons of sending SMCS students to the Montessori Model United Nations Conference in New York City. After a lengthy discussion the APC made a final decision to continue with the program on alternate years.

The APC considered the variety of factors involved. Perhaps the factor that received the greatest scrutiny from the APC was the student selection process and student participation criteria. The APC acknowledged that student participation in this project must be limited. It is possible that students who are motivated to participate, are capable of the rigorous preparation and have the knack for public speaking might not be selected.

It was also acknowledged that not all students are interested in the project and/or do not want to travel to NYC. Participation in the MMUN project will always be optional. However, all intermediate students are required (to) participate in the pre-selection activities due to the fact that persuasive writing, oral presentation and leadership development are part of our overall curriculum for all students. So, students may not opt out of the pre-selection assignments but they may opt out of the competitive selection process.

The APC further determined that criteria for student selection will be established by the upper elementary teaching team. The upper elementary teaching team will make all student participation selections.

Finally, the APC made the decision to establish a local action project to engage students not participating in the MMUN in meaningful work.

Last year, students not participating in the MMUN project engaged in researching local and global hunger issues. These students conducted quality research and sponsored an Oxfam Hunger Project Dinner for our families and the community. There were nearly 100 people in attendance. This project, or a similar project, will be conducted each year that SMCS participates in MMUN.

In addition, activities at school during the week of MMUN travel constitute a break in normal school routine for students who remain at school. A series of “camps” are offered. Students participate based on personal interest. The group also goes to the Nikiski Pool during the week.