



HEART OF TEXOMA
MONTESSORI ACADEMY
EST 2022

2025-2026 Student Handbook

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to cultivate lifelong learners through the Montessori philosophy, preparing students ages 3 years through 12th grade for academic excellence, personal growth and meaningful contribution to the world.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is to be a model Montessori community that offers something truly unique in our region: a school where highly qualified educators provide consistency, depth and authentic Montessori education. We are set apart by our commitment to academic excellence, whole-child development and the intentional choice to be a school – not a daycare – where students are nurtured to reach their fullest potential.

Montessori Philosophy

As a Montessori educational facility, we believe in the power of collaboration. Our goal is to equip students with knowledge and training across various subjects. Our program aims to create a supportive atmosphere that helps each student develop as a whole person. Students are challenged to think and observe, coached to handle facts and interpret ideas, taught to interact appropriately with others, and encouraged to express their feelings and attitudes respectfully. These objectives can only be achieved through a collaborative partnership that involves parents, students, teachers, and the school. Each member of this community is an active participant and must accept their individual responsibilities and work together to ensure the success of our students, staff, and school.

Our philosophy is rooted in the Montessori method, which fosters self-motivated growth for children and adolescents in all areas of their development with the goal of nurturing each child's natural desire for knowledge, understanding, and respect. Our goal is to facilitate the development of the whole child so he or she may reach his/her full potential and achieve personal success and satisfaction throughout life. We strive to develop critical thinkers, independent learners, and problem solvers of the future. We also believe the relationship between the family and the school is essential for children's success, and we strive to keep open communication and partnerships with each of our families.

During the school day, our programs focus on the development of each child's full potential, facilitated by teachers specially trained in the Montessori method and philosophy. Our lessons are based on children's natural curiosity and love of learning, using both concrete lessons and activities through individual instruction. This allows our students to associate abstract concepts with hands-on learning. The three-year age range in each classroom provides numerous benefits that are immediately apparent when observing our classrooms. Our younger students have an opportunity to observe and imitate the older students as they work. In comparison, older students are provided opportunities to reinforce their education and mentor and assist younger students. Each child also has the ability to learn and develop at their own pace within a classroom that accommodates various levels of abilities and complexities.

Accreditation:

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy will strive to distinguish itself as one of the top Montessori academies in North Texas. We hold a 4-Star Texas Rising Star (TRS) rating, the highest level in TRS, and it was achieved on the first attempt. Our goal is to become a Montessori-accredited school for kindergarten through 12th grade, offering an accredited diploma recognized by colleges, trade schools, and other post-secondary institutions.

School Administration and Staff

Head of School / Director

Travis Johnson

Head of Primary School / Assistant Director

Lyndzy White

Teachers & Support Staff

Tedi Bearden

Katie Brinlee

Addison Cunningham

Shannon Drussel

Samantha Ellett

Sarah Giles

Angie Miles

Kellan Powers

Julie Sheikh

Mickinze VanHerpen

THE CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

Attending Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy is a privilege, and it is assumed that, upon admission, every student not only desires to attend Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy but also seeks to uphold and maintain its high standard of personal conduct. Parents and students are expected to realize that maintaining an orderly atmosphere in the classroom and school is critical to the learning process, and they should support the order and discipline necessary to succeed in the educational process. In our partnership with parents, the school administration and faculty are committed to addressing all patterns of student misbehavior and assisting parents in correcting problems in a positive and constructive manner. Thus, only a minimum of disciplinary action should ever be necessary at any time.

All Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy students must behave and conduct themselves in a way that promotes a positive learning environment, physical well-being, and personal character development. Students are expected to act like young ladies and gentlemen. The results of a student's actions and communication should always bring credit to their families, appreciation for, and admiration to Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy, and the community of Sherman.

Students are expected to come to school and be ready to work in the classroom. Students should focus on preparedness for learning — the ability to attend class consistently with the

proper preparation, correct textbooks, all assigned homework completed, and supplies. In addition, students are expected to demonstrate care for their school in the classroom, hallways, restrooms, playground, walkways, and throughout the campus at all times. Students should maintain neat, clean, and orderly work areas, desks, lockers, classrooms, and backpacks.

Academic Integrity

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy students are expected to maintain high standards of personal and academic conduct. Students are presumed to pursue academic excellence by being disciplined, applying themselves, and cultivating the talents, opportunities, and abilities given to them. Teachers strive to teach in a manner that encourages and engages students to reach their full potential within a prepared environment conducive to academic growth and development. If a student chooses to compromise his or her integrity through deception or academic dishonesty, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy will address the academic misconduct, seek to reconcile the student with the misconduct, and rectify the situation. Teachers who have reason to believe that a student has engaged in cheating or any other act of academic dishonesty are required to communicate their suspicions to the student and the Head of School, who, after investigation, will recommend the appropriate action to be taken.

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Cheating is defined as copying from another student's written work, computer files, or material from devices, including the unauthorized use of cellular telephones, calculators, and other electronic tools. Cheating also includes knowingly buying, selling, stealing, or using the contents of a test or other unauthorized assignments and submitting the work as the student's original work. Teachers who have reason to believe that a student has engaged in cheating or any other act of academic dishonesty are required to communicate their suspicions to the student and the Head of School, who, after investigation, will recommend the appropriate action to be taken.
- Plagiarism uses another person's original thoughts, ideas, software, and intellectual property. It includes writing as one's own without crediting the actual author or creator. Universally, plagiarism is considered cheating or lying, and students who engage in plagiarism will be subject to a range of academic disciplinary actions that include, minimally, the loss of credit for the questionable work; the maximum penalty could result in the student's expulsion from Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy.
- Questionable Behavior: Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy believes everyone has unique perspectives and accepts different behaviors accordingly. However, in cases where specific practices are considered questionable, the school administration holds the authority and responsibility to decide the appropriate course of action if a behavior comes into question. The administration will review the behavior in question and take necessary disciplinary action, which may include the removal of any student who participates in the questionable behaviors. For this reason, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy expects all students to willingly abide by the school's rules, policies, regulations, and guidelines. Parental cooperation and student compliance are essential

to ensure that every student achieves the goals and objectives of the school mission statement to prepare our students for a life of purpose, integrity, and academic accomplishment. We do this by fostering independent learners, critical thinkers, and tomorrow's leaders.

Student Attendance

Regular attendance is important at all stages of school enrollment; therefore, attendance is a priority of Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy. We encourage students to arrive on time, as students miss a special part of the day when arriving late: classmates greet each other and choose their morning work, and the teachers greet the students as they enter. Not only does arriving late cause a student to miss those important events and disrupt the class when entering, but a student may feel awkward coming into a classroom after missing the regular routines of the school day.

Education requires continuous instruction, student participation, classroom interaction, learning experiences, and study for students to reach their maximum potential. Research shows that poor attendance, tardiness, and absence are directly related to unsatisfactory academic achievement. Students with good attendance records have a better chance of achieving higher grades, enjoying school, and learn the responsibilities necessary for independence and success in later life.

Student Dress Code

Beginning January 2026, Heart of Texoma Montessori will implement a school uniform policy.

Students are expected to wear:

- A collared shirt in blue, orange, or white, and
- Khaki or navy bottoms (pants, shorts, skirts, or jumpers).

Students granted a Uniform Exception (application and approval required) must follow the Dress Code Guidelines below.

Dress Code Guidelines (for Non-Uniform or Exception Days)

Students should dress comfortably for a full day of active, hands-on learning both indoors and outdoors. Clothing must allow free movement and provide appropriate coverage.

If leggings are worn, tops must cover the student's bottom. Clothing should be

weather-appropriate and labeled outerwear (jackets, hats, gloves, etc.) should be sent in a bag with the student's name.

Students may not wear revealing clothing, spaghetti-strap tops, short shorts, or miniskirts. Bellies, bosoms, and bottoms must remain covered.

Footwear should be safe and practical—no flip-flops, clogs, high heels, or open-toed shoes. Hats, hoods, and sunglasses should be removed inside the building.

Change of Clothing

Regardless of age, each student requires one seasonal set of extra clothing. If your student is not reliably potty trained, please provide two sets of clothing. Any extra clothing worn from the extra set will be returned to parents and must be replaced with clean items on the next school day.

- Please send the following items that are season-appropriate in a labeled, large plastic zipper baggie that may be kept at school: shirt, bottoms, underwear, and socks.
- One pair of weather-proof rain boots is to be kept at the school throughout enrollment, so students may play outside when the ground is wet and/or muddy.
- Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy will not be responsible for any soiled or lost clothing.
- All items brought to Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy must be labeled with your student's name.
- Should water activities be planned, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy will communicate appropriate clothing requirements and procedures in a timely manner. We will never plan enrichment involving swimming pools.
- All items will be returned to the family upon the conclusion of the academic year.

Please deliver the extra clothes bag to the teacher on the first day of school and return the next day with clean clothes when sent home for cleaning.

Toys

We ask students **not** to bring toys from home. Students may have a difficult time sharing toys from home, and it may disrupt the classroom. Playing with guns and other weapons is forbidden. If your student does bring a special naptime friend, this item will be brought out at naptime only and stored away during the day. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy is not responsible for lost or broken toys.

Electronic Devices

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy prohibits students from bringing any electronic devices, such as MP3 players, iPods, or handheld games, to school. If such a device is brought onto campus, it will be held in the Head of School's office until dismissal. Cellphones and smart-watches must be in student backpacks and turned off during the school day.

Classroom Items Brought Home by Students

Small objects naturally fascinate young students and often end up at home. Be alert for little cubes, golden beads, puzzle pieces, models, and other objects brought home from your student's classroom. Be careful not to blame your student; just gently remind him/her that the item belongs at school and the students will need it for their work. Montessori materials are often expensive and sometimes difficult to replace, so please make sure even the smallest items are returned.

Field Trips and Off-Campus Activities

Teachers are required to have a parent-signed permission form for each student for all off-campus field trips. The form must contain the students' emergency medical information. There must be at least one teacher/adult per 10 students. All volunteers must complete a criminal background check before chaperoning a trip. Students must stay with the teacher and/or designated chaperones at all times.

Parents will provide transportation for field trips and off-campus activities. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy does not offer student transportation at this time.

School Books and Materials

School materials, including books lost or damaged by students due to negligence, may result in a fine or a replacement to be purchased by the parents.

Personal Possessions, Contraband, and Searches

Students are required to leave all personal possessions unrelated to learning at home. Students shall be free from unreasonable searches and seizures by school officials. However, school officials may search a student's outer clothing, pockets, backpacks, and/or other property by establishing reasonable cause or securing the student's voluntary consent. Parents will be notified of any searches and the established reason.

While anywhere on the Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy campus, students may **NOT** be in possession of any of these contraband items, including student vehicles:

Alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, marijuana, controlled or volatile substances, chemicals, glues, liquids, gels, aerosols, vapors that can be abused as a drug, ammunition, clubs, chains, guns, rifles, paintball guns, air guns, shotguns, stun guns, zip guns, short-barrel firearms, aerosol cans, electric shock equipment, explosives, fireworks, chemical dispensing devices, ropes, knives (including pocket knives), daggers, swords, razors, dice, playing cards, dominoes, laser pens or pointers, and any other devices that might be used to threaten or injure anyone.

Students found with any contraband may face disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion from school.

Food and Nutrition Policy

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy does **not** provide lunch or snacks. Our school encourages healthy, nutritious snacks and lunches. Students, parents, and caregivers, when preparing lunches and snack foods, please provide a variety of nutritional selections that support the ability to have a successful school day filled with activity and learning.

Desserts, candy, pudding, and sugary snacks are not allowed Monday-Thursday. A sweet treat as part of a student's lunch is permitted on Fridays.

*Candy and sodas (regular or sugar-free/diet selections) are always **prohibited**.*

Any food allergies must be documented using the TXHHS Allergy and Action Plan form that the school office may provide. Documentation of a student's food allergies will be required, as well as a healthcare provider's signature and completion of the proper form provided to you by the Head of School. Please label all lunch boxes, containers, bags, and cups with the student's full name. Be sure to include utensils and napkins. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy cannot heat or refrigerate food items.

Daily expectations:

- Filled, labeled water bottle/cup with lid: Please do **not** send juice or milk. Only water, please.
- Morning snack: recommendations are yogurt, cheese sticks, cereal bars, fruit, and/or vegetables.
- Lunch: please consider nutritious choices and avoid/minimize added sugar.
- Afternoon snack (for after-school care students only): recommendations are yogurt, cheese sticks, cereal bars, fruit, and/or vegetables.
- Please cut high-risk choking foods such as hot dogs, grapes, and olives lengthwise (longways) to eliminate shapes that could lodge in a student's throat.

Health and Safety Policy

Student General Safety:

1. Adhere to all health and safety guidelines and procedures.
2. Report any health and safety concerns or incidents to an administrator or teacher.
3. Participate in health and safety training as required.
4. Maintain a clean and orderly learning environment.
5. Ensure all equipment and materials are used safely and appropriately.
6. Follow emergency procedures for fire, medical emergencies, and other critical situations.

Health and Hygiene:

1. Practice good personal hygiene, including regular handwashing.
2. Use personal protective equipment (PPE) as required for specific activities.
3. Report any illness or health concerns to an administrator or teacher immediately.

Emergency Preparedness:

1. Familiarize yourself with emergency exits, fire extinguishers, and first aid kits.
2. Participate in emergency drills and follow instructions during actual emergencies.
3. Contact emergency services (911) if necessary and immediately inform an administrator or teacher.

Incident Reporting:

1. Immediately report all accidents, injuries, or near misses to an administrator or teacher.

Emergency Drills:

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy practices drills for fire, tornado, lockdown, and other emergencies. Students must follow all administrator and teacher instructions and take all emergency drills seriously. Fire drills are practiced monthly, and tornado and lockdown drills are practiced once a quarter.

Bullying

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a bully is a person who hurts, frightens, or tyrannizes those who are smaller or weaker. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines the act of bullying as the "abuse and mistreatment of someone vulnerable by someone stronger, more powerful, etc." Bullying occurs when someone decides to exercise dominance over another person by harming them emotionally or physically. Research has discovered there are three types of bullying.

The three types of bullying are listed below with examples:

- **Verbal bullying** is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:
 - Teasing
 - Name-calling
 - Inappropriate sexual comments
 - Taunting
 - Threatening to cause
- **Social bullying**, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:
 - Leaving someone out on purpose
 - Telling other students not to be friends with someone
 - Spreading rumors about someone
 - Embarrassing someone in public
- **Physical bullying** involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:
 - Hitting/kicking/pinching
 - Spitting
 - Tripping/pushing
 - Taking or breaking someone's things
 - Making mean or rude hand gestures

While general rudeness and other situations involving conflict can seem like bullying, the situation must meet three requirements to be considered bullying. These three major factors must be present for a situation to be considered bullying:

1. The person who is bullying someone else must be doing it intentionally.
2. The person who is bullying someone must have been bullying this person repeatedly for a significant amount of time.
3. The person bullying someone else must be stronger or in a higher position of power than the target.

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy takes bullying seriously. An investigation will ensue if a parent and/or student states a bullying situation has happened at school. Developmentally appropriate action will be taken to ensure that all students feel safe, connected, and valued while attending Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy. To resolve a bullying situation, follow these steps:

1. Parent and/or student reports bullying to a teacher and/or administrator
2. The report is first addressed by the classroom teacher
3. If further action is necessary, the parent and/or teacher requests assistance from the Head of School

During a bullying investigation, all parents will be contacted to discuss the situation. If necessary, the Head of School may suspend and/or expel a student for multiple or continual bullying of students.

Behavior Expectations:

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy believes that setting limits for behavior is essential for the safety and protection of all students, staff, and the learning environment. Consistency is important in helping students orient themselves in the world. Students have an enormous capacity for social learning, meaning they absorb information and social and cultural “cues”. Awareness of self, others, and the environment are vital qualities for all students to develop and live harmoniously. Discipline is a means by which students are helped to develop that awareness. Students should abide by the following principles.

Underlying Principles of Student Behavior Management:

- We respect ourselves and other people.
- We demonstrate kindness, patience, and age-appropriate expectations.
- We strive to self-manage our conduct and present our most exemplary selves.
- We care for our work and our friends’ work, and our belongings.
- We are respectful of insects, animals, and plants.
- We keep ourselves and our surroundings clean.
- We respect our school building and property.
- We will verbally communicate our feelings appropriately.

Student Conduct

Students are expected to exercise neatness and cleanliness in their use of the building,

classrooms, work, playground, and restroom areas. School property and furniture are not to be marked on or defaced in any way. No unauthorized posters, drawings, or pictures may be used to decorate student areas (inside or outside). The school administration reserves the right to periodically check or inspect student lockers or cubbies without prior notice. Students are expected to respect the teacher and other students and refrain from making any unnecessary and annoying disturbances. Mutual respect and maturity should characterize student-teacher and student-peer relationships.

Students are expected to treat all Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy administrators, teachers, and parents graciously, courteously, and with professional respect and respond appropriately and with good manners to administrators and teachers (i.e., to say “yes sir” or “no sir;” and “yes ma’am;” or “no ma’am”).

Students are prohibited from chewing gum anywhere on campus. This rule applies in all classrooms, the library, the gymnasium, the cafeteria, the playground, the parking lot, and the schoolyards.

Students are expected to demonstrate care and respect for all school resources, textbooks, library books, computers, equipment, appliances, and facilities, as well as to care for the property of others. Damages must be reported immediately to an administrator or teacher. Charges may be assessed to students responsible for damaging any Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy property.

Fighting is not tolerated at Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy. Students who fight may be suspended or expelled.

Social Media and Online Activities

All Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy students must be mindful of their character and reputation when socializing online. If communication of any kind posted by a student on the internet or their personal web pages is found to be questionable, offensive, and/or produce a negative reputation for them and/or the school, they may be suspended or expelled from school. Students also understand and agree that Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy shall have the right to monitor or examine any electronic device at the school or any Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy activity. Additionally, Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy may monitor or examine any postings on the Internet or other electronic medium, which includes but is not limited to text messages and postings on personal websites, social networking, for example, “Facebook”, “Instagram”, or other private or public domains. Such monitoring includes but is not limited to all verbiage, pictures, depictions, graphics, and videos.

Possession of pornographic materials in any form is inappropriate and unacceptable for Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy students. Students who use school computers to access the Internet for illicit purposes may be expelled.

Drug Policy

All Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy students are required to abstain from the use of alcohol, any form of tobacco, and any drugs not prescribed for them by a physician. Students at Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy are expected to abide by our no-drug use policy, which includes abuse of prescription and/or illegal drugs. The school is required by law to report any abuses or drug violations to the local authorities. No student may sell, distribute, administer, give to, or share any drug or medication with another student. If a physician prescribes any medications for a student, parents are responsible for informing the school, which maintains a record of such prescriptions in the main office. Any abuse or violation of this policy may result in the student's expulsion.

Suspensions and Expulsion

Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy has a zero-tolerance policy for violence and physical or emotional bullying behaviors. School staff will address all incidents along with the applicable parents and guardians.

While a suspension or expulsion is the last resort for Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy for the safety and well-being of all students enrolled, we reserve the right to suspend or expel a student who is physically hurting, biting, and/or hitting other students and/or teachers. Knocking down furniture, physically destroying school property, demonstrating any other violent behavior, or exhibiting physical or emotional distress that cannot be resolved and is not typical for the student's developmental age may result in suspension or expulsion. By definition, "suspension" means removing a student from the campus and from ongoing instruction for assessment and resolution purposes for a determined amount of time. An "expulsion" means indefinitely removing a student from school and all school-related activities. There may or may not be a plan to re-enroll an expelled student.

If behavior is problematic and cannot be resolved, we will suspend them for one, three, or five days. If the behavior continues after the suspension, more time may be allowed for behavior modification, depending on the parents' plan or termination of our services with the family. We will work with any parent who is willing to support our efforts to help benefit their student's growth and development; however, it is our obligation to consider the entire school community, and any improvement plan must be a team effort and include the willingness of everyone to be supportive and open-minded.

General Procedures for Resolving Concerns

If either a parent or a teacher has a concern about a student's behavior, it is important they work together as soon as possible to outline and follow a consistent plan for the student. Agreement and cooperation among the important adults in a student's life help that student choose appropriate and positive behavior. Even with such efforts, penalties for misconduct must sometimes be assessed.

General Discipline Guidelines for Assessing Penalties

When administering discipline, administrators and teachers shall adhere to the following general guidelines:

- Discipline shall be administered when necessary to protect students, school employees, or property and to maintain order.
- Students shall be treated fairly and equitably. Discipline shall be based on a careful assessment of the circumstances of each case.

Factors that will be considered for student discipline and determining the length of any suspension or expulsion may include:

- The seriousness of the offense and frequency of misconduct.
- Student's age and attitude.
- Potential effect of the misconduct on another person and/or the school environment.

Serious offenses are those that substantially disrupt or interfere with the orderly process in the classroom, the school, or any school-related activity and may include persistent misbehavior or Level II or higher misconduct. Persistent shall be defined as more than one instance of Level II or higher misconduct.

Disciplinary Procedure

- 1st Incident – Student receives a verbal warning from an administrator and/or teacher.
- 2nd Incident – Parent notified verbally and/or in writing.
- 3rd Incident – Written warning and a one-day suspension.
- 4th Incident – The action taken is at the discretion of the Head of School after appropriate consultation with parents or guardians.

Levels of Offenses

Acts of misconduct are categorized into the following four levels of offenses:

Level I—Violation of Classroom Rules:

- Offenses that generally occur in the classroom and can be corrected by the teacher.

Level II—Administrative Intervention:

- Offenses that are more serious in nature or a continuation of Level I misconduct.

Level III—Suspension - A student may be suspended or removed from the regular classroom and/or placed in an alternative setting for engaging in the following conduct:

- Foul Language
- Fighting
- Continuous disruptive behavior in the classroom
- Display of disrespect towards school personnel, another student, or campus visitors
- Stealing

- Ignoring or disobeying school rules
- Any ethical or racial slurs
- Defacing school property or vandalism
- Offenses that seriously disrupt the educational process in the classroom, in the school, and/or at school-related activities, or a continuance of repeated Level I, II, or III misconduct.

Level IV—Expulsion for Serious Offenses:

- Offenses for which a student may or shall be expelled under state law include continued serious or persistent misbehavior that violates the school's Code of Student Conduct.

Staff members will use their professional judgment to determine the most effective way to correct student misconduct. Disciplinary actions apply equally to all students. If the parents, guardians, or students are dissatisfied with a teacher's decision or explanation, they can meet with the administrator to review the area of concern. If the parents or guardians are dissatisfied with the administrator's decision or explanation, they can make an appeal to the Board of Trustees.

Expulsions

Procedure: Before a student is expelled, the student will have an opportunity for a due process hearing that will include the following:

- At least three days prior written notice of the charges and the proposed sanctions to afford a reasonable opportunity for preparation, including a written invitation for the parent or guardian to attend the expulsion hearing. The notice will also include the date, time, and location of the hearing and the names of all witnesses who will present evidence at the hearing.
- Right to a full and fair hearing before the administration or Board of Trustees;
- Opportunity to testify and present evidence and witnesses in defense; and
- Opportunity to examine the evidence presented by the school administration and to ask questions about the evidence.

Representative: At the hearing, a parent or legal guardian should provide guidance to the student. Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy may hold the hearing regardless of whether the student, parents, or guardians attend, provided the administration makes a good-faith effort to inform the student and the parents or guardians of the time and place of the hearing.

Evidence: The expulsion hearing decision may rely on hearsay evidence from school administrators investigating disciplinary infractions. This means that the school administration may present evidence or statements taken from students and staff without revealing the

identity of those interviewed.

Expulsion Order: The administration will deliver a copy of the student expulsion order to the responsible parent or guardian for providing adequate supervision for the student during the period of expulsion.

If necessary and not later than the second business day after the date an expulsion hearing is held, the administration will deliver a copy of the expulsion order to the authorized officer of the juvenile court in the county in which the student resides. The administration will also provide the students' and parents' names and addresses, names and addresses of any witnesses, and a complete statement of the circumstances surrounding the conduct to the juvenile board, as required by Family Code §52.041.

Guidelines for Terms of Expulsion: An expulsion may be for as brief as five school days up to one full year from the date of the order. The administration will use its best professional judgment, using the factors considered in all disciplinary actions, to set the term of expulsion. In some circumstances, an expulsion term may be longer than one year if, after a review, the administration determines that the student is a threat to the safety of other students or employees or that an extended expulsion would be in the student's best interest.

Effect of Withdrawal: Withdrawal from school does not affect the school's authority to schedule and hold a hearing on the student's conduct and enter an expulsion order, regardless of whether the student and/or parents are present. The order of expulsion will be included with the records transferred to a new school district, and that district will be empowered to exercise its authority to honor the expulsion. Disciplinary records will be sent to the next school, and that school has the authority to complete an expulsion process should one not be completed prior to the student's withdrawal.

Students who transfer out of Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy to another public or private school, including students who withdraw for the purpose of homeschooling, will be required, upon return to the Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy, to complete the term of expulsion before being allowed to return to the regular campus, unless the student's records indicate the student served the days of expulsion at another school.

Effect of Transfer into the District: If a student transfers into Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy from another school where the student was expelled, we may continue the expulsion under the terms of the order provided by the previous school. If a student transfers into Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy from another school in which the student was placed in the Juvenile Justice Disciplinary alternative education program, we shall continue the term of expulsion at the Juvenile Justice Disciplinary alternative education program under the previous school's order.

Emergency Expulsion: A campus administrator may order the immediate expulsion of a student if the administrator reasonably believes that the action is necessary to protect people

or property from imminent harm. At the time of the emergency expulsion, the student will be given oral notice of the reason for the action, which must be a reason for which the student could be expelled on a non-emergency basis. Formal due process will occur within a reasonable time thereafter.

Appeal of Expulsion to the Board of Trustees: A decision by the administration to expel a student may be appealed to the Board of Trustees. The request for appeal must be in writing and must be received by the school administration within three days of the date of the order of expulsion. The appeal will be heard at the next regularly scheduled board meeting. At the meeting, the Board of Trustees will review the record made at the expulsion hearing and will provide the parent and/or student with an opportunity to make a presentation. The administration may also be asked to speak. No new evidence, including witnesses or documents, will be admitted. The Board of Trustees may set reasonable time limitations for presentations. The student is expelled pending appeal.

HEART OF TEXOMA MONTESSORI ACADEMY
2025-2026
STUDENT HANDBOOK
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SCHOOL POLICY FORM

I have read the entirety of the student handbook and agree to follow all policies and procedures for as long as I am enrolled at Heart of Texoma Montessori Academy. Failure to sign and return or agree with the contents of this acknowledgment form does not exempt a student from compliance with the student handbook policies and procedures.

Print Student Name: _____

Only Required for Middle and High School Students

Student Signature: _____

Only Required for Middle and High School Students

Date: _____

Print Parent Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please sign and return this form to the teacher. Thank You!