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Guiding Principles of Nature’s Way Montessori School

The Montessori approach to learning is the educational framework at the Nature’s Way Montessori School. Maria Montessori recognized that “the process” itself was paramount in learning. We embrace this idea that learning is dynamic and welcome new ideas as we grow.

This document serves as a reference point for our thinking about learning at this time. We will review these ideas annually and as necessary to monitor how our choices reflect these ideals.

Introduction
We affirm that education begins at birth and continues throughout life. While our emphasis is on our children, we are a center of support for all of us to continue learning and developing toward becoming whole and healthy people.

Our goals for students are for them

- to be open-minded and compassionate
- to gain a sense of themselves and others
- to be well trained in the basic academic disciplines
- to fulfill their creative potential
- to gain satisfaction in their physical, emotional, social and intellectual development
- to love learning
- to value knowledge, creativity, and humor
- to understand that life is a process and engage in it fully
- to be challenged by difficulties and find joy in problem solving

Finally, we hope they will be responsible, critical, and caring members of society and recognize that they have the power and resources to effect change as well as the confidence to pursue their goals.

Mission Statement

- Every member of our community has a fundamental right to be treated with respect.
- Intelligence and wisdom can be cultivated.
- Self-esteem is crucial for the full expression of a person’s potential.
- The development of a whole being requires the nurturing of the spiritual, intellectual, physical, and emotional dimensions.
- The school is centered around the stages of personal development.
- The school seeks to provide a broad preparation for life.
- The school believes in flexibility in its methodology.
- Strengthening our connection with nature and the environment is an integral part of school life.
Program Overview

"The school should become the place where the child may live in freedom, and this freedom must not be solely the intimate, spiritual liberty of internal growth. The entire organism of the child, from his physiological, vegetative part to his motor activity, ought to find in school the best conditions for development."

– Dr. Maria Montessori

Dr. Maria Montessori based her method of education on observation of the child, which in turn yielded an understanding of fundamental characteristics of children at different points of development. Just as Dr. Montessori recognized that “the process” itself was paramount in learning, we embrace the idea that learning is dynamic and indeed a process.

The Adolescent Community staff is committed to Dr. Montessori’s ideal of ensuring that the adolescent’s needs and tendencies are satisfied appropriately through meaningful work. Whether through microeconomic activities, service in the community or lessons in the classroom, the prepared environment of the Adolescent Community strives to facilitate adolescents’ self-construction and formation of the personality while preparing them for entry into adult life and society.

The handbook provides a closer look at specific program elements. As described in Dr. Montessori’s book From Childhood to Adolescence, the “Plan of Study and Work” is both an overview of the program as well as an exploration of the kinds of work required by the adolescent. Also, there are descriptions of policy and procedures critical to the overall function of the school, sample forms, and other information.
Mission Statement of the Adolescent Community

“There are two needs of the adolescent: for protection during the time of the difficult physical transition, and for an understanding of the society which he is about to enter to play his part as a human…”

-Dr. Maria Montessori

Keeping this in mind, it is our mission to support the natural development of our adolescent students while providing them with a safe environment in which they can explore means of social and economic independence. We will do this by using the land as a point of departure for community engagement, experiences of production and exchange, self-expression, psychic formation and preparation for adult life.

Vision Statement of the Adolescent Community

Nature’s Way Montessori School will provide a rich environment rooted in the work of Maria Montessori, where our students can develop to their full potential and prepare to enter adult life. We will strive to assist the development of the adolescent with the following:

- Supporting the natural human development of the adolescent
- Connecting the adolescent to the land through scientific and historic studies
- Providing opportunities to explore a variety of social and economic roles
- Engaging both the head and the hands in purposeful activity
- Stimulating valorization through meaningful work
- Assisting the adolescent to become independent
- Promoting the moral development of the adolescent
- Encouraging self-expression and critical thinking skills
- Fostering a lifelong love of learning
- Learning what it means to make a contribution
- Understanding interdependency with the rest of the world
- Adapting to a variety of work demands for the sake of others; the beginning of social consciousness
- Understanding work as a product of commerce necessary to community life and leading to a beginning view of economic independence and interdependence
- Learning the meaning of rules and their importance to harmonious living
- Learning to live in domestic relations with others; to work through human problems

from David J. Kahn (in part)—The Hershey Montessori Farm School
Land Partnership at Murphy Springs Farm

“Work in the country [has] wide social connotations of productiveness and earning power. The observation of nature has not only a side that is philosophical and scientific, it has also a side of social experiences that leads on to the observations of civilization and the life of men.”

-Dr. Maria Montessori

Nature’s Way Montessori School is excited to continue developing the “farm” component of our Plan of Study and Work. Thanks to the generosity of Kevin Murphy of Murphy Springs Farm, the school is in its third year of a land partnership for educational and agricultural work.

On the farm (as it is now called at Nature’s Way), students will use the space as a “limitless field for scientific and historic studies” as described by Maria Montessori. This may include the cultivation of row crops for sale to the community for the microeconomy, and use in Science Occupations and Humanities classes. The farm also has several historic outbuildings (barns, springhouses, cabins) and a home constructed in 1847 that was recently renovated with accurate historical preservation in mind. The home has also been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Students may work not only on the land but also with Murphy Springs Farm to study local history, genealogy, and more.

In addition to Murphy Springs Farm, the Southland Realty Group has given its permission for the school to access its property, adjacent to the northern side of the nature preserve. White’s Creek runs through this land, which also contains sinkholes, small caves, and other forms of Karst topography. Students have used this space for a number of Science Occupations classes.

Adolescent Community Curriculum Map:

The Plan of Study and Work

“This means there is an opportunity to learn both academically and through actual experience what are the elements of social life.”

-Dr. Maria Montessori

The curriculum at Nature’s Way incorporates both manual and intellectual components. Dr. Montessori stated that any approach to teaching adolescents, or what she called “Erdkinder” (“Children of the Earth”), must provide experiences with a wide variety of disciplines, social interactions, and practical life work. The following “Plan of Study and Work” guides the curricular approach in the Adolescent Community as described by Dr. Montessori.
Cycles of Work
Each year there are four cycles of work and a short mini-cycle. A regular cycle is approximately eight weeks long, while the mini-cycle is four weeks long (see “Mini Cycle”). Humanities and Science Occupations classes will rotate every 3-4 weeks. Mathematics, Spanish, and Language Arts will meet each week in every cycle of study; Humanities and Science Occupations do not take place during the Mini-Cycle. Please see the “Daily Schedule” below for a regular cycle of study.

Daily Schedule

<table>
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<tr>
<th>MONDAY/LUNES</th>
<th>TUESDAY/MARTES</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY/MIÉRCOLES</th>
<th>THURSDAY/JUEVES</th>
<th>FRIDAY/VIERNES</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30-8:45</td>
<td>Morning Gathering</td>
<td></td>
<td>Community Forum</td>
<td>Morning Gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:45-9:30</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Personal Work Time</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:35-10:20</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Language Arts/Book Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:25-11:10</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Self-Expressions I</td>
<td>Math Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15-12:00</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>Self-Expressions II</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-1:00</td>
<td>Lunch/Free Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-1:15</td>
<td>Reflection Time</td>
<td>Seminar Prep</td>
<td>Reflection Time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:15-1:45</td>
<td>Advisor Group</td>
<td>Managerial Group Meetings</td>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td>Advisor Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:45-3:15</td>
<td>Humanities/Science Occupations</td>
<td>Humanities/Science Occupations</td>
<td>Community Work</td>
<td>Humanities/Science Occupations</td>
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<td>3:15-3:30</td>
<td>Daily Restoration</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30-4:00</td>
<td>Dismissal/Free Time/Tutorials Available</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dismissal/Free Time</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00-4:35</td>
<td>Study Hall</td>
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*Workshops are designated for committee meetings, microeconomy work, managerial group meetings, Humanities/Science Occupations follow-up work, specific instruction for a particular topic, etc. They are not used for personal work time. Individual Community Service takes place from 9:00-10:20 or 11:30-12:00 on Mondays and Thursdays.
Mathematics

“Without development and education in mathematics it is impossible to understand or take any part in the special forms of progress characteristics of our times.”

-Dr. Maria Montessori

Early adolescents are developing their sense of self and relation to the world, including their identity as mathematicians and relationship to the world of math. The Adolescent Community mathematics program provides a safe environment for students to encounter new ideas in mathematics, identify a personal learning and problem-solving style, build individual confidence and achieve mathematical mastery. Students will come to understand the central role of mathematics in modern life through hands on, applied and interdisciplinary lessons and by exploring connections between advances in mathematics and human progress.

Over a period of two years, students in the Adolescent Community will engage with the content strands covered by the 7th and 8th grade Tennessee state standards at their own pace and depth, with the opportunity to advance through Algebra 1 and Geometry as they are ready. Students will be empowered to engage with math in the way that best fits their personal learning style and mathematical mind. Through regular formative evaluations and individual conferences, the Mathematics Guide will work with students to identify those methods that help the student advance most efficiently in their conceptual understanding and mastery of mathematical skills. Such methods may include:

- Self-paced Montessori mathematics curriculum,
- Interactive and hands-on lessons,
- Individually paced and personally designed lessons and practice,
- Online instruction, assessment and practice tools,
- Printed texts and practice materials,
- Small group workshops and instruction,
- Individual instruction and tutorials as needed.

During weekly math seminars, students will advance their mathematical understanding and practice verbalizing concepts, presenting mathematical arguments, exploring problem-solving methods and working with others to solve challenging problems.

In addition to dedicated mathematics classes, students will regularly encounter math in an interdisciplinary context, including projects related to farm tasks, microeconomy business ventures, connections within the Science Occupations curriculum, and exploration of the history of ideas, technology, and scientific and mathematical thought.
Science Occupations
Science occupations are project-based science classes in which students study a problem or complete a task within the community. Students learn scientific concepts in order to understand a problem or address the task at hand. The goals for the class are to learn the science behind the occupation and make an authentic and meaningful contribution. Science occupations combine manual and intellectual work, both of which are integral to the development of the whole person.

Science occupations occur according to the needs of the land, the season, the community, and the student. The course offerings incorporate several disciplines, such as studying chemistry through soapmaking or cell biology by caring for chickens. Students at Nature’s Way have the opportunity to learn about core concept areas according to their interest. Each cycle of study has a life, earth, or physical science as the core emphasis. Students at Nature’s Way will take a minimum of four (4) life sciences, one (1) earth science, and three (3) physical sciences. This structure also acknowledges the curricular requirements suggested by the Tennessee Department of Education.

Humanities

“The study of the history of mankind…should be treated as far as possible as a complete whole, from which special periods can be chosen for individual study.”

-Dr. Maria Montessori

The Adolescent Community Humanities curriculum spans the whole of human history each year. It tells the story of what it means to be human both thematically and chronologically, incorporating history, geography, literature, art, music, philosophy and more. As students examine the creation of human culture throughout time, they are able to think critically about the past and work toward constructing their own selves for the future. Montessori concepts drive the curriculum and scope, as each study addresses the following key themes:

- History as a scholarly pursuit
- Self-expression through music, drama and art
- Nature vs. supranature (humanity’s alteration of the natural world for its benefit)
- Elements of production and exchange
- Discoveries, inventions and explorations
- Migrations and invasions

The class also acknowledges Tennessee state social studies standards and addresses world, United States and Tennessee history accordingly. The Humanities curriculum is organized into four primary themes. All students receive the same key lessons on a given topic before engaging in individualized work. The themes, shown below, also include examples of specific course offerings. Only one topic will be available for any given cycle each year. These offerings are subject to change due to the needs and interests of the community.
Language Arts

"Actual writing is an external manifestation of an inner impulse. It is a pleasure that comes from carrying out a higher activity and not simply an exercise."

-Dr. Maria Montessori

In our Language Arts class, students learn fundamental concepts pertaining to the study of language, such as mechanics of writing and speech, composition, grammar, vocabulary, and more. Students explore literature in book groups and refine literary analysis techniques together. Additionally, the class allows students to collaborate on projects related to current studies and share them with each other. Each student works on various writing tasks at his/her own pace.

Spanish

“In the past one language was enough, but today it is a social convention that education should include the ability to read and write correctly in several languages."

-Dr. Maria Montessori

All Nature’s Way students engage in the study of Spanish, with the Adolescent Community working towards a practical use of the language. The theme-based class involves both group activities and individual work focusing on interpersonal, interpretive and presentational communication skills. Vocabulary and grammar topics are incorporated throughout. Students also examine themes covered in other classes through the lens of the Hispanic world, gaining a broader perspective of the people who speak the language they are learning. In addition to fostering communicative competence, emphasis is placed on cultural understanding through the use of authentic texts, music and artifacts.

Self-Expression Classes

The self-expression classes nurture the adolescent’s tendency toward creative work and provide activity and variety in the weekly schedule. The classes run for approximately nine weeks in three sessions: one in fall, winter and spring. Options include art, crafts, theater, music, physical education, writing, debate, and more. Students have the opportunity to choose self-expression classes based on their individual interests. Each class will fit one or more of the following categories: Musical, Physical, Creative, or Life Skills. Although students may choose classes, each student must take at least one class in each category over the course of his or her time in the AC.

Workshops

Workshops are a time for committee meetings, managerial work, class-related workshop intensives, specific instruction on particular topics, and microeconomy tasks. This work is a critical component to the curriculum and offers essential opportunities for community growth and individual contributions.
Committees
Students and adults form committees on an as-needed basis throughout the year to meet needs in the community. Committees may work on AC guidelines, plan for an upcoming event, coordinate service outings, or accomplish some task for the school or greater Knoxville community.

Seminar
The Adolescent Community will continue the use of formal seminar discussions in all classes, as well as one seminar in advisor groups each week. Seminar is a chance for members of a group to share questions and insights about a text, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding of each other and the content. Students will learn the proper procedures for active listening, building upon and appreciating others’ ideas, and sharing ideas in a group setting.

Microeconomy

“The essential reform is this: to put adolescents on the road to achieving economic independence.”

-Dr. Maria Montessori

Dr. Montessori thought it essential for adolescents to participate in experiences of production and exchange as they prepare to enter society as adults. We provide for this activity through the Microeconomy. All students take part in the real, adult-like work of maintaining the garden, preparing animal byproducts (eggs and honey), creating art, baking and more. They also market and sell these products during afternoon pickup times and special events. Funds are generally re-invested into this aspect of the program, meaning that the Microeconomy is not intended as a fundraising campaign.

In order to provide an economic experience that allows students to make real decisions and real contributions, the Adolescent Community Microeconomy exists separately from the overall school budget. The students have a separate bank account with First Tennessee to handle real-life financial operations. Animal feed, seed for the garden, ingredients for products and other materials necessary for the operation of the Microeconomy and its related businesses will be paid for with sales of products made and produced on-site (as much as possible).

Managerial Groups and Leadership Positions
All students work as members of managerial groups. These groups fill important needs in the community and contribute to the school’s microeconomy. Students have the opportunity to take on leadership positions or contribute to the group in other ways.

Students who wish to become managers follow an application process. Student managers work with the Land Manager or appropriate guide as they assume overall responsibilities for the operation of their respective areas. They also collaborate with other group members on financial and management decisions concerning the entire microeconomy and community well-being.
Examples of managerial groups might include:

- Chickens and Bees
- Farm and Gardens
- Compost
- Hospitality
- Business and Marketing
- Arts and Crafts

**Mini-Cycle**

During the Mini-cycle, each student completes a research project based on the topic of his or her choice. These projects are designed to match the skills, abilities, and interests of each student. There is opportunity to do basic, intermediate, or advanced level projects.

Students work with their advisors and parents to narrow down ideas and to pick a topic that is academically and developmentally appropriate. Each student is then responsible for conducting research, writing a research paper, and preparing visual aids to accompany each individual project. During the last week of the Mini-Cycle, students share what they have learned by presenting their research to the class. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend the presentations.

**Community Work and Care of the Environment**

Adolescents have a developmental need to experience real, meaningful work in a wider social context. This involves both work of the head and the hand. Because of this need, manual work is an integral part of the Adolescent Community experience. Students learn directly that their contributions are essential to the successful functioning of the community.

While there is important work that needs to be addressed daily, Wednesday afternoons are set aside for “Community Work” in order to take on larger projects. These initiatives are wide-ranging and include such things as building projects, canning vegetables, clearing trails, cleaning out the chicken coop, planting, cultivating, harvesting, making crafts, laying out the newsletter, baking and more.

At the end of each day all students contribute to the restoration of the environment, which is necessary for keeping the classroom spaces clean and orderly. The students rotate through different jobs in all spaces throughout the year. Guides assist and encourage these jobs to be done with care and attention to detail.

**Community Service**

Adolescents are involved in community service at Nature’s Way and beyond. At school, students participate in a weekly community service mentor program where they work in other classrooms and areas throughout the school. They work alongside guides to keep classrooms organized, to tutor younger students, and to help out with paperwork and class events. Students choose which classroom they work in by applying for several community service positions within the school. They maintain the same weekly position throughout the year.
Service work is important for adolescents; it allows them to become aware of their communities and the people in them, to feel valued for their services, and to work on a positive self-concept. Throughout the year the Adolescent Community participates in several service activities in greater Knoxville. These events are planned with input from the students.

*These are examples of students' involvement in various communities.*
Observation and Evaluation

Advisory Program
Each student is assigned to an advisory guide. The advisory program offers each student and guide a special advisor/advisee relationship. The advisor is an advocate for the student on a variety of levels—personal, social, and academic. The advisor is responsible for monitoring the overall progress of advisees throughout the year and is the main contact person for the student, parents, and staff. This includes the two-year curriculum tracking process, where the advisor ensures that the advisee meets the requirements of exposure to various disciplines. Therefore, a student will have the same advisor for both years in order to strengthen the working and personal relationships as well as ensure consistency for the student.

As part of the advisory program, meetings occur throughout the week with advisor groups. Students use this time to work on organization, time management, character education, leadership skills, social development and conflict resolution. Advisor meetings are also used to share stories, plan events, and make announcements. Advisory meeting activities focus on developing a trusting relationship between each student and adult advisor. Meetings help enhance each student’s sense of belonging as well as provide academic and social guidance and support.

Advisors also supervise and communicate with students throughout the day, particularly during personal work times. Students are responsible for working productively during these work times while guides ensure that the environment is suitable for students to engage in work.

Advisees and advisors work together throughout the year to solve problems and resolve conflicts. If a student has a problem (academic, social or personal) the advisor is available to help resolve the situation. The advisors will also conference with their advisees and parents throughout the year. All Nature’s Way staff and students are asked to take responsibility for reporting any conflict with a student in the Adolescent Community to the advisor. This includes any inappropriate behavior, problems with peer interaction, or other situations that should be addressed. Issues can be reported by filling out and submitting a “Communication Form,” emailing an advisor, or by scheduling a conference with staff. The advisor will review the report and work out an appropriate way for the student(s) to talk about possible solutions for the situation.

The advisor is the main contact person for students, parents, and staff. If students or parents have questions, concerns, or need to share information, the student’s advisor is the person to contact. Please notify the student’s advisor and the office for early or late dismissal. Also, please schedule conferences through the child’s advisor. Nature’s Way staff will direct any concerns about a student in the Adolescent Community to that student’s advisor.
**Planners and Organization**

Organization is critical to the establishment of an ordered life. As the adolescent assumes more responsibility with emerging social roles, practice with organizational skills becomes increasingly important.

To develop this skill, students fill out a planner to keep track of class assignments and compile their work into binders. Students must take care with the completion of their daily planners. Advisors assist students with prioritizing, planning, and categorizing work if needed. Students take time each day to organize their work binders, check their planners, and restore their personal spaces.

**ThinkWave and Status of Work**

Students, staff, and parents use the ThinkWave online record-keeping program. This means that guides can track and record the status of work for each student on a rolling basis. Guides will indicate whether work is complete, incomplete, missing, or has remedies for each assignment. Parents and students can log in to the site and check the status of any work at any time for all core classes. Please check the Dashboard page of the website upon accessing ThinkWave first, for teachers will post the time of their most recent update to class pages. Periodically, students and parents will receive an emailed summary of student progress. This is to help students see their progress as well as plan to complete any missing work.

Each 7th grade student will see corresponding classes labeled as “Work Status.” Although ThinkWave assigns percentages to an assignments individual status, **7th grade students should disregard any assigned grades or percentages.** All 8th grade students receive grades. Therefore, each 8th grade student will have a “Work Status” page showing the status of each assignment as well as a “Grade” page. The “Grade” page reflects the current letter grade of the student, not the “Work Status” percentage. All AC guides adhere to the Knox County Schools grading system.

**Homework**

Students have scheduled times during the week that they are expected to use wisely to work on assignments, conduct research, and obtain assistance. Papers and projects are assigned from time to time and often require a student to spend time away from school conducting research, writing, studying, etc. It is reasonable for AC students to complete unfinished work and/or practice work at home. It may also be necessary to have weekend work. The time needed to complete work at home will vary from student to student based on individual study habits, skills, and abilities. When a student organizes her or his time well, she or he is better prepared for class, able to juggle outside activities with school work, and able to fulfill obligations inside and outside of class.

It is important that students learn how to discipline themselves to work at home after school. This is a skill necessary for high school and future learning. Students who use their personal work time at school appropriately may not have much homework. An hour to an hour and a half of homework each night is a normal average. If a student is coming home with a disproportionate amount of homework, parents may want to schedule a conference to discuss the matter. Also, it is our expectation that parents provide an appropriate time, place, atmosphere and the supplies necessary to allow the student to complete high-quality work at home.
End-of-Cycle Evaluation
At the conclusion of each cycle, the AC staff will provide your child with several evaluations, including a Community Service evaluation (Cycles 1 and 3), Academic Summary, and End-of-Cycle self-evaluation. Students will also compile folders with all work from each subject. Within each subject folder, guides place “Objectives for Evaluation” detailing the corresponding skills and concepts addressed in the class. Students will present their work from Cycle 1, Cycle 2, and Mini-Cycle in student-led conferences (see p. 19). Work from Cycle 3 and Cycle 4 will be sent home with the student for review.

*An End-of-Cycle Evaluation is both a self-evaluation for the student and a way for the advisor to share his/her feedback on specific skills or qualities, including “responsibility,” “honesty,” “helping others,” etc.

*Guides or staff who supervise an adolescent during weekly Community Service periods at school complete a Community Service evaluation. This form evaluates a student’s work ethic, approach, attitude, participation, and more during their community service work.

*An Academic Summary is an evaluation of student work with the following categories and numerical gradations:

The evaluations use a 1-4 numerical system to indicate the progress in specific areas. The AC staff provides an Academic Summary, comments on the End-of-Cycle Evaluation, feedback on work as it is submitted and returned, assistance for student-led conferences, and more as ways to provide a clear picture of the student’s development and progression. Guides are also available upon request for conferences to provide more qualitative feedback on student progress.

Tutorials
Tutorials are held each week for Math, Science Occupations, Humanities and Spanish to offer extra academic assistance. Students who desire further instruction or individual help can choose to attend tutorials. Tutorials are from 3:35 to 4:00 on Monday through Thursday and are open for any student who chooses to take advantage of this time. They are available for the benefit of students and are always optional. Parents should encourage students to use tutorials when needed. Guides will determine tutorial sessions each week per their availability. Specific help for Language Arts is offered during Wednesday morning Advisor Group.

Standardized Testing
Nature’s Way uses the Stanford Achievement Test each spring to assess all students in second through eighth grades. This is the primary document used as a record of achievement for students who transition from Nature’s Way to another school. Although test-taking is one form of practical life education, the curriculum at Nature’s Way is not designed to teach to the test.
Family-School Partnership
**Parent Participation**

A common belief in Montessori pedagogy is the importance of the “Triangle of Relationships” for the complete development of the child. It is clear that the child, the adults (guides and parents), and the environment should be prepared adequately for the good of the child. All three parts of the triangle must have strong relationships to one another.

![Triangle Diagram]

There are many opportunities for parents to be actively involved in the Adolescent Community. The staff strives to provide students with guest speakers; parents are encouraged throughout the year to talk to students about their professions or interests as they relate to activities in the community. Parents can also lead self-expression classes, which is a great way to share unique talents and interests with students.

Parents are invited to provide transportation, plan special events such as the 8th grade trip, and chaperone field trips when appropriate. If driving or chaperoning, please respect the educational and social environment and understand that there are expectations that we have of the adults who are in the presence of these young people. **Each parent chaperone/driver will need to sign a form acknowledging these guidelines, as well as submit a copy of his/her driver license and insurance to the office once each year.**

Parent involvement in school life is essential for the success of the students at Nature’s Way, and the staff is always grateful for parent contributions!

**Parent-Guide Communication**

Frequent parent contact is an important goal for the Adolescent Community staff. The AC staff recognizes that the parent is the primary stakeholder in the child's education and works to facilitate a parent-led team. This parent-led team then becomes a formidable force in supporting the work of the child.

Email is a valuable means for parent-guide communication. The school email address is natureswaymontessori@comcast.net The office will forward any email communication to an AC staff member; however, please feel free to contact the AC staff directly.

*Rebecca Gómez*
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Spanish and Humanities; Advisor
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Laura Coens
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Jenny Spatz
Science Occupations Guide and Land Manager; Advisor
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Nicole Griffin
Language Arts Guide
nicole.griffin@natureswaymontessori.com

Please remember that the advisor is the main contact person for students, parents, and staff. If students or parents have questions, concerns, or need to share information, please contact your child’s advisor, unless there is a specific question for another staff member. Feel free to contact any staff member with a question that you may have.

The Adolescent Community sends out a newsletter approximately once a month in addition to posting updates and news on the school website. This newsletter is a great way to share highlights of the week, make announcements, and keep families updated on classroom events. Please ensure the school has a record of your current email address. Those parents who are not already part of the Nature’s Way email group, please send a message to natureswaymontessori@comcast.net to be added to the group. Also, if your address has changed from last year, please send an email with the new address.

Conferences (Guide-Led and Student-Led)
Please do not hesitate to talk to your student’s advisor to sign up for a conference when the need arises. The best times for these meetings are from 3:35 – 4:30 p.m. from Monday through Thursday. Conferences may involve the student unless parents or teachers need to discuss issues privately. Adolescent Community staff will request a conference when students are having trouble keeping up with the work or are dealing with a repetitive behavior that needs attention. Also, some behaviors or concerns as listed in the Behaviors and Consequences section of the handbook may warrant a conference.

When appropriate, guides will always discuss concerns about behavior with students before talking with parents. If a behavior is serious in nature or recurring, parents may receive a Communication Form documenting an incident. If a child brings home a Communication Form, please discuss this matter with your child and sign the form to confirm that a discussion took place. If a parent desires more information or problem-solving, the parent can ask for a conference.
Beginning in November, students will lead short conferences about their work for the past eight weeks. This is a great opportunity to hear student viewpoints and perspectives and to celebrate accomplishments. Students will select pieces of work or other projects to display and discuss with their parents. The discussion also incorporates elements regarding goal-setting, planning, work ethic, engagement with work, and other related topics.

**Support for Parents**
Adolescents need more independence than elementary aged children, but they also need the guidance and support of adults.

> It’s easy to dismiss ten- to fifteen-year-olds as moody, baffling creatures. Yet, these years are perhaps the most critical time in human development, a juncture at which unmatched physical and intellectual growth, expanding creativity, emerging moral sensibilities, awakening sexuality, and maturing emotions converge. Early adolescence is a time when girls and boys may need the help of parents most—yet it’s often a time when they are most reluctant to accept it. And it may be a parent’s greatest opportunity to effect positive changes in a child’s life.

- Laura Sessions Stepp, *Our Last Best Shot*

Parenting early adolescents can be very challenging. Some parents might like more information on what is happening with their children and how they can continue to be a positive influence in their child’s life. Parents can browse and check out the many books located in the staff/parent library adjacent the office.

In the Parent Center of the school website ([http://www.natureswaymontessori.com](http://www.natureswaymontessori.com)) there is a list of books contained in the school library.

Staff are always eager to discuss a student’s progress with parents in addition to the students themselves (when appropriate). Please contact the advisor for a conference at any point throughout the year.
Policies
and Procedures
Attendance
Absences are an unavoidable part of school life. Please notify the school and advisor in the morning when your child is absent for that school day (unless for an extended absence). Students who are sick need to remain at home until the condition improves. If there is a planned absence, please inform the office and AC staff in advance.

Daily attendance, including timely arrival and dismissal, is very important for all students. Please schedule family trips to coincide with school vacations. Students who have missed school due to family vacations can fall behind, miss important concepts, or let down group members for group projects in progress. If time out of school cannot be avoided, please contact your student’s advisor as soon as possible. By giving advanced notice, teachers can work with the student to plan strategies to help deal with the workload.

For all absences, it is the student’s responsibility to complete assignments that were missed and meet with other students and guides regarding collaborative work. Parents should assist their children with planning and catching up on missed work, if required. Please give advanced notice that you want to pick up assignments for an ill child, and guides or students will strive to compile this. Guides will work with the student to modify assignments should the need arise due to illness.

All absences should be excused. Again, please notify the office and the student’s advisor in the case of an absence. If a student has 10 or more absences or 15 tardies, a conference or phone conversation will be scheduled.

Scheduling Appointments
Due to the collaborative nature of our work, students often cannot make up for time missed at school. Therefore, we strongly discourage the scheduling of appointments during school hours. Please make every effort to schedule medical and dental appointments outside of that time. If an appointment absolutely must be scheduled during school, please notify guides in advance to plan for the week. Also, upon your student’s return, please provide an excuse from the doctor/dentist office.

Arrival
The school day officially begins at 8:30 a.m. Adolescents can arrive at school as early as 7:30 a.m. but will need to enter the Extended Day room in the middle building for Early Morning Care (EMC) from 7:30 to 8:00 a.m. The upper building opens at 8:00 a.m. and AC students are invited to work or socialize quietly in the AC space or on the patio until the school day begins. Please remember that it is important for all students to arrive to school on time.

Dismissal
Students are dismissed at the end of the day at 3:30 p.m. From 3:30 to 3:35 an AC staff member will be on the AC deck to sign out students who are leaving immediately after school. After 3:35, all students must be signed out by a parent. The clipboard for signing out students can be found on the playground between 3:35 and 4:00, in Study Hall from 4:00 until 4:35, and in the middle building common room or on the playground from 4:35 to 5:30. Please note that if a student has not been signed out, then parents will be charged extended day fees (see next page). If you are picking up your child early, please notify the office in advance. Additionally, sign your child out and notify a staff member at the time of pick-up.
**Extended Day/Study Hall**
Students who do not go home immediately after school have a break from 3:30 until 4:00 p.m. unless they are in tutorial. Weather permitting, the break is spent outside and students have time for recreation and snack (brought from home). Additionally, tutorials are offered daily, and there are occasionally optional activities offered after school.

All students present from 4:00 until 4:35 p.m. attend a supervised Study Hall in the AC space. Study Hall is a time for students to engage in productive work. To ensure a quiet atmosphere is maintained, Study Hall is monitored by AC staff. At 4:35, any remaining students begin the restoration of the environment and assist the staff with closing down the space. Once the students finish restoring the environment, they move to the middle building to join other Extended Day students in the school. Please know that between 4:35-4:45 it takes a few minutes to transition the clipboard from the AC space to the Extended Day space.

Adolescents may remain at school until 4:45 p.m. without paying extended day fees. After 4:45 p.m. a fee is charged. The school closes at 5:30 p.m. Please note that after 5:30 p.m. there will be a late pickup fee charge of a dollar per minute. **Regardless of the time, please sign out your child from Study Hall or Extended Day. Any child that is not signed out from Study Hall will be charged for Extended Day on that day.**

**Release of Students to Persons Other Than Parents**
Please leave written instructions with the office or advisor on the day that your child is to be picked up by someone who is not included on the student’s Identification and Emergency Information form. In the event a parent finds it necessary to have his/her child picked up by someone else and has not given written instructions, please make a telephone call to the office giving permission for your child to be released. You will be asked to give the individual’s name and the approximate time the student will be picked up. Students must contact parents while at school if there is a change in plans and the person picking up the student is not on the Identification form. A guide or the office must speak to the parent to confirm this change before the student is released from school.

**Emergency Closings**
Nature’s Way Montessori School announces its own closings on local TV broadcast stations WATE (ABC), WBIR (NBC), and WVLT (CBS). If the announcement is not broadcast before 10:00 p.m., it will be broadcast before 6:30 a.m. If school is delayed for an hour or closes early Early Morning Care and Extended Day programs will not be available. **Remember, the announcement for closings or delays will read Nature’s Way Montessori School.**
**Medication**
Parents should notify staff of any major or minor health concerns. Also, parents should give any medication that their child needs while at school directly to a staff person. It must be accompanied by a Medication Form. This form is available from the office and in every classroom. A copy is at the end of this manual for your reference. Please be reminded that you need to fill out a Medication Form if your child is taking a prescribed or an over-the-counter medicine, whether or not the medicine is given at school. **Students may not keep medication in their possession (pocket, backpack, purse, etc.) while at school, regardless of the type of medication.**

Prescribed medicines are given for various reasons, and common over-the-counter medications to help with allergies, colds, coughs, and other minor ailments on a regular basis or periodically often have side effects in children. Since observation is a critical component of a guide’s role when working with students, it is important to know all medications taken by a child should a change in behavior occur.

**If a child is on a regular medication that is designed to affect attention or mood, please notify the AC staff of any change in dosage and/or the timing of doses.** Also, please ensure that the staff knows about any other medical conditions, including allergies. If you would like to give the AC staff permission to administer ibuprofen, tylenol, or other common medications, please indicate this on the Medication Form and submit it to the staff. Otherwise, an AC staff member will need to contact a parent before administering any medication.

**Accidents and First Aid**
Accidents most certainly happen frequently during adolescence. The AC staff is prepared to provide necessary care to students at school and on field trips. All AC staff have some degree of first aid/CPR knowledge, with two of the staff currently certified by the American Heart Association.

Should an accident occur, the staff will provide immediate care depending upon the situation. Minor cuts and scratches may warrant a band-aid or similar bandage; the staff ensures that students wash any cut with soapy water, dry the area with a clean cloth, and applies a clean bandage as necessary. Also, the staff can administer an antiseptic spray (Neosporin or equivalent) on a wound or provide an ice pack for bruises or sprains.

Furthermore, the AC staff will document all accidents requiring care or first aid, as well as those deemed noteworthy due to the situation. Students and parents will receive a copy of an Accident Report Form should an accident happen at school. The staff will also call parents should an emergency or serious situation arise. Any accident that does not require first aid and shows no sign of emotional or physical trauma or damage, such as tripping and falling onto the ground without a cut or bruise, will not be documented.
Supplies
At the beginning of each year, the AC staff sends a list of necessary supplies to each family. **Students are responsible for purchasing and maintaining their own school supplies, including rain gear and boots for work on the farm.** They should not depend on other class members or teachers to provide pencils, pens, or other needed materials. However, students do have access to an art cache and other group art supplies for certain projects.

Projects are an integral part of the AC program. During every cycle, students will complete at least one project designed to further their understanding of the cycle’s material. Often students choose to work on projects at home; however, if they plan to do the project at school, they need to be responsible for providing their own supplies (poster boards, adhesives, etc.).

Lunches, Snacks, and Drinks
It cannot be stated strongly enough how important it is for students to have nutritious lunches and snacks, especially during adolescence. Early adolescence is a time for rapid growth, second only to infancy. Adolescents need to give their bodies fruits, vegetables, protein, grains, and other sources of vitamins and minerals. In order to foster maximum alertness and sustained focus at school, students should be eating high-protein, fresh, whole foods.

AC students are expected to follow the same food guidelines as the other classroom communities at Nature’s Way. Please help students to bring a healthy lunch and snacks each day. Students need to have snacks that can be eaten easily throughout the day. Microwaves are available for lunches, but snacks should be non-microwavable. Students who stay after school especially need to bring extra snacks.

Junk food such as chips, cookies, candy, fast food, and other sources of empty calories are not acceptable for snacks or lunches. Please do not send dessert items as a snack or with lunches. If the first, second, or third ingredient is listed as a sugar product, then please consider it a dessert. Gum and candy should not be brought to school.

Healthy drinks are also important. We encourage students to drink water. Students may also drink 100% fruit drinks or milk and should stay away from powdered sugar drinks. Colas, coffee, and other caffeinated beverages may not be consumed at school. Also, in order to reduce waste, students should avoid packing juice boxes in their lunches.

Please feel free to ask us about any item that you are uncertain about. If you begin the school year by telling your child that certain kinds of foods are not allowed in school, he/she will soon cease to request them.

Parents need to monitor their student’s food and drink choices and reinforce the guidelines for nutritious snacks and lunches.
Dress Code

Adolescence is a sensitive time where students are developing self-esteem and an individual sense of style. Adolescents use clothing styles as a means of expressing identity, an important characteristic of the age.

With this said, the dress code for the Adolescent Community is based on practical needs for daily work and respect for each member of the community. As members of the Adolescent Community are often working outside in all types of weather, each guide and student should dress appropriately for this work. It is important that each member of the community take responsibility for making proper clothing choices. The school has provided guidelines (below) to assist families in making these choices.

Due to the sensitivity of this subject with adolescents, it is best for parents to monitor their student’s dress choices and reinforce the dress code guidelines. Staff will relay violations of the dress code to parents so that the family can discuss this together and assist the student with future clothing selections.

The following are guidelines for dressing for the school day:

- Students should refrain from wearing clothing or attire that inhibits or restricts participation in class activities or is a distraction to the learning environment.
- As students are often working outside in all types of weather, they must dress properly for these activities every day of school.
- All clothing must adequately cover undergarments and the midsection.
- As students often sit on the floor for community meetings or gatherings, students must be able to sit on the floor without exposing their undergarments.
- Clothing should not contain offensive pictures or writing.
- Shoes may be worn in the AC space. If students choose not to wear shoes, they must have something on their feet while at school (socks, sandals, slippers, etc.).

Field Trips and Outings

Adolescents require involvement in activities outside of school throughout the year. All field trips and outings are part of the curriculum, or Plan of Study and Work. Students should attend these events whenever possible. Several activities away from school are planned each cycle. Field trips are scheduled throughout the course of the year to correspond to what is being studied in the classroom, while some are spontaneous in nature. Spontaneous outings are local trips to secure supplies for community work or visit a community asset for class or committee work. Please review and submit the permission form for field trips and outings at the end of this handbook.

Students also spend time away from the school to help in the community and to participate in cultural events. These generally take place during the school day, but some unique opportunities may occasionally arise on nights and weekends. Community building trips are also planned throughout the year and students are asked to participate in an annual trip to River Ridge and a week-long spring field trip planned by the AC community.
When feasible, Knox County school buses or charter buses are rented for field trip transportation. Usually staff and parents will provide transportation for students in their personal vehicles. **Due to the critical role of social experiences in the Adolescent Community, the community needs parents to help transport students to these activities.**

**Eighth Grade Year**
The eighth grade year is a special time for Nature’s Way students. For most of the eighth grade students, it marks the end of many years spent at our school. In order to celebrate the time spent at Nature’s Way and their last year, several special activities are planned for this group, including a back-to-school eighth grade meal, an end of year field trip, end of year dinner in May, and graduation.

Every spring, eighth grade students participate in a week-long internship program. This is an opportunity for students to experience possible professional interests and interact with the larger community. During the winter, eighth grade students begin planning for their internship by participating in career planning with online Kuder Navigator platform. After completing the internship week, the students share what they learned with the community. Parents of eighth grade students are also asked to work with their children to help plan an internship. Students often need their parents’ help in locating and communicating with appropriate professionals in the community.

In the fall, the school staff hosts a meeting to share important information for the upcoming transition to high school. Teachers are available to write letters of recommendation for students as needed. AC staff will also work with parents to make decisions about placement and to meet specific requirements for high schools. Additionally, a panel of Nature’s Way alumni visit the school in the spring to field questions that current 8th grade students may have about high school.
Problem Solving and Conflict Resolution
The Adolescent Community Approach to Problem Solving

Conflict is an inevitable element of community life and working with others. Our Community Conflict Resolution Procedure helps guides and students talk through emotionally difficult situations to reach a mutually agreed-upon solution. This is an opportunity for personal growth.

Often conflicts can be avoided by talking to students about respect and self-discipline. Adolescents are working on defining themselves as they strive to understand the “rules” of adult society. Students are actively involved in running their community, using the Community Forum agenda and voluntary class planning committees to discuss issues crucial to running the classroom. In advisor group meetings, guides use techniques such as role-playing and literature seminars to practice conflict resolution skills.

When conflicts do occur, students are encouraged to do three things:

- Take responsibility for their actions and their words.
- Go to the person with whom they have a problem.
- Learn to solve their own problems.

The school provides students with a supportive environment where they can learn from their mistakes and work out problems peacefully. We strive to have students engage in the problem-solving process and we provide a safe and supportive environment where students are empowered to become independently responsible for their actions. At times students will need their parents’ support for making appropriate choices about behavior. If a behavior becomes repetitive, students are asked to conference with their parents and/or guides to discuss the situation.

When students feel that they cannot handle a problem on their own, they are encouraged to ask a guide to help mediate the problem. This form of mediation involves a process using a neutral and impartial third person who walks parties through the conflict resolution procedure to resolve their dispute. It is a peaceful process intended to help disputants reach a win-win agreement.

Students are encouraged to use a Communication Form to request mediation or to report a problem that they are having with another member of the community. This is a tool that empowers students to take the first step in resolving a problem. A sample can be found at the end of this handbook.
Community Conflict Resolution Procedure

1. Each party explains their perception about the conflict with an I STATEMENT that does not blame or accuse the other party.
   Ex. “I feel angry because I feel insulted by your comments.”
   Ex. “When you (name behavior), I feel (name feeling).”

2. Each party ACKNOWLEDGES the other party's perception or feelings by re-stating the other person's I statement
   Ex. "I acknowledge that you feel . . ."
   Ex. "I heard you say that you perceived . . ."
   Ex. "I understand that you feel . . ."

3. Each person should OWN HIS OR HER PART in the conflict.
   Ex. "When I spoke to you, I was really rude."
   Ex. “I got carried away outside and I probably kicked the ball harder than I should have.”
   Ex. “It’s true that I did….”
   Ex. “I admit that I contributed by…."

4. All parties PROPOSE WAYS TO RESOLVE the conflict until everyone agrees on a solution strategy.

5. APOLOGIES should be offered voluntarily and should be stated sincerely.

6. Thank the other party for being open with you and EXPRESS CONFIDENCE that you will be better people for having talked the problem out.
   Ex. “I feel better about this situation and thank you for working with me to find a solution that works for all of us.”
   Ex. “Thank you for sitting down with me to talk about this issue. I believe that we are going to be able to work together in on our Humanities project now.”
**Positive Discipline**
Since August of 2012 the entire staff at Nature’s Way has been trained yearly in the use of Positive Discipline based on *Positive Discipline* books by Dr. Jane Nelsen. Positive Discipline (or PD) is a discipline model used by schools that focuses on the positive points of behavior, based on the idea that there are no bad children, just good and bad behaviors. Adults can teach and reinforce the good behaviors while weaning the bad behaviors without hurting the child verbally or physically. Positive discipline includes a number of different techniques that, used in combination, can lead to a more effective way to manage groups and grow individuals.

The Positive Discipline Parenting and Classroom Management Model is based on the work of Alfred Adler and Rudolf Dreikurs. Dr. Adler first introduced the idea of parenting education to United States audiences in the 1920s. He advocated treating children respectfully, but also argued that spoiling and pampering children was not encouraging to them and resulted in social and behavioral problems. The classroom techniques, which were initially introduced in Vienna in the early 1920s, were brought to the United States by Dr. Dreikurs in the late 1930s. Dreikurs and Adler refer to the kind and firm approach to teaching and parenting as "democratic." Many other authors have carried on the parenting and classroom work of Alfred Adler. Jane Nelsen wrote and self-published *Positive Discipline* in 1981.

**Positive Discipline is the standard of behavior management used by all staff at Nature's Way.** Staff members are trained in the method and then encouraged and helped to extend their understanding through reading, workshops, and collaboration with other staff. This provides a consistent approach to all children and provides parents with the comfort of knowing all staff will treat their child fairly and in the same careful manner.

Guides will work with students to help them solve their problems in a positive manner. Any recurring or significant behavioral event will require parental support; any isolated problem or event will be documented but not sent home should the student show an ability to grow independently.
Guidelines and Civility
**Guidance in Civility**

Adolescence is a critical time during which the brain is undergoing a period of tremendous growth and change, second only to that of the toddler years. This rapid change brings with it unique opportunities and challenges for the adolescent, particularly in the areas of social and emotional life. Just as they are busy exploring new concepts in history or literature, adolescents are also engaged in the important work of learning new lessons in civility, morality, and self regulation.

The school recognizes that all children (and adults!) make mistakes. Mistaken behaviors represent an individual's best present knowledge of how to meet a legitimate need. Adolescent Community staff view mistaken behaviors as an important opportunity for guidance and growth. When mistakes are made, Adolescent Community staff will work with students, other staff, and parents, when appropriate, to learn from those mistakes. Guides work closely with students to help them acquire the behavioral knowledge and skills needed to achieve their individual goals as well as to support the shared work of their community.

**Expectations for Civility**

The school environment must remain safe in order for optimal learning and development of the personality to occur. To assist with the preparation for adult life, the Adolescent Community will model and expect behaviors that are responsible and respectful. Below is a list of behaviors that may detract from the safety or efficacy of the learning environment and the corresponding steps that will be taken to restore connection, enhance communication and ensure safety within the community.

This document may change throughout the year with input from students, staff, and parents. In addition, there are specific guidelines addressing the use of computers, cell phones and personal listening devices.

**Examples**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distracting behavior, inappropriate language, or disrespecting school environment</td>
<td>Redirected to appropriate activity. Communication Form submitted to advisor if necessary. Student meets with advisor to problem-solve the situation. Parents may be contacted and/or a conference scheduled in the case of repeated behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student not accountable for Community Service or other personal responsibility.</td>
<td>Communication Form submitted to advisor. Student meets with advisor to problem-solve the situation. Parents may be contacted and/or a conference scheduled in the case of repeated behavior.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Behavior:** Materials not put away properly.

**Action:** Student name will be placed on the House Elf Board. 
Repeated behavior will result in student-advisor problem solving.

**Behavior:** Using or displaying a cell phone inappropriately at school.

**Action:** **First Time:** Student redirected. Occurrence is documented as a “technology violation” on a Communication Form.

**Second Time:** Cell phone will be held in the office and must be retrieved by parent or guardian after repeated offenses.

**Behavior:** Violation of dress code.

**Action:** Private conversation. Communication Form submitted to advisor for repeat offenses. Advisor notifies parents to problem-solve the situation. Offensive or distracting clothing must be removed, covered or exchanged with an appropriate alternative. If there is no alternative, parents must bring a change of clothing.

**Behavior:** Damaging materials or property.

**Action:** Communication Form given to advisor. Student meets with advisor to problem-solve the situation and replace or repair materials. Parents will be contacted in the case of significant damage requiring extensive work or funds to replace. 
*Parents may be contacted and/or a conference scheduled in the case of repeated behavior.*

**Behavior:** Behavior which is potentially dangerous to self or others

**Action:** Redirection to more appropriate activity and Communication Form submitted to advisor. Significant event will be reported to parents. 
*Parent will be contacted and/or parent conference scheduled in the case of repeated behavior.*
Behavior: Bringing a weapon, fireworks, or illicit material to school

Action: Item will be confiscated. Advisor will submit a Communication Form to the office and to the parent. A conference will be arranged.

Note: Periodically, students request to bring in a specialty tool for managerial group work or class project. Prior permission must be granted by parents and staff before this can occur.

Behavior: Work not completed

Action: Advisor will consult with student and family periodically, but students and parents should check the records program at ThinkWave.

The parent-led team will convene to develop a catch-up plan.

Behavior: Taking another person’s property without consent

Action: Return or replace property
Communication Form submitted to advisor and mediation scheduled if necessary
Repeated behavior will result in contacting parents and/or parent conference

Behavior: Cheating/Plagiarizing

Action: First time: Student retakes test/resubmits work. Communication Form submitted to advisor and parents with follow-up discussion.
Second time: Student retakes test/resubmits work. Communication Form sent home. Parent conference scheduled.

Behavior that makes the environment unsafe

Behavior: Physically striking an individual with intent to harm.
Abuse directed toward others.

Action: Removal from situation. Communication Form submitted to advisor. Information shared with parents. Student meets with advisor to problem-solve the situation.
A second incident of physically striking an individual with intent to harm may result in extended removal from school until a parent conference is scheduled.
Behavior: Bullying or harassing another student*

Action: Removal from situation and Communication Form submitted to advisor. Student meets with advisor to problem-solve the situation and this information is shared with parents. A second incident of bullying or harassing may result in extended removal from school until a parent conference is scheduled to problem-solve the issue.

*See document on following page “What is Bullying?”
The following document was created in a collaborative effort between (former) middle school students and staff in order to clearly define the term “bullying” as it applies to our community.

**What is Bullying?**

Bullying is when someone intentionally hurts another person (emotionally or physically) through repeated actions that harm the person being targeted.

Three key components of bullying are:

1. It is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted actions.
2. It involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time.
3. It involves an imbalance of power or strength.

Bullying can include but is not limited to the following examples:

- Making derogatory comments or calling someone unwanted names
- Social exclusion
- Physical bullying such as hitting, kicking, shoving
- Spreading lies and false rumors
- Taking someone's property
- Making threats to someone
- Intentionally doing anything that you know bothers someone because he/she has asked for the behavior to stop
**Technology**

The Adolescent Community is fortunate to have access to a variety of technology tools including computers, laptops, the Internet, graphing calculators, radio, DVD players, etc. Students should use these items responsibly and only for schoolwork.

Students may use the Internet to research class projects and assignments. **They cannot use computers to access e-mail, social media, play games, or to do other personal projects without permission.** Students are expected to follow the technology guidelines posted in the Adolescent Community and in this handbook, including the provisions for student-owned laptops. Students must have their own laptops for work every day. Computers are available only during class times, personal work times, study hall, or designated committee work unless students receive permission from a guide. **Students must use their own computers** for work unless approved for a collaborative project.

Adolescent Community students also have access to a digital camera and camcorder that can be used for school work with permission. Students must have permission before bringing a personal camera or video camera to school, or to use smartphones as recorders/cameras.

**Computer Guidelines**

- Use computers responsibly and only for school work.
- Computers are only available during designated class times, personal work times, tutorials and study hall unless approved by a guide.
- Save all work to your USB drive and to the hard or cloud drive of your computer (two locations is recommended).
- Liquids may not be placed at the same table as a computer.

**First violation:** Student redirected to appropriate use of technology. Communication Form submitted to advisor. If violation occurred in a corner of a room or on the floor, the student will be asked to work at a table for the rest of the week.

**Second violation:** Loss of computer privileges for remainder of day. Communication Form submitted to advisor and sent home. Meet with advisor to find solution. If violation occurred in a corner of a room or on the floor, the student will be asked to work at a table for the rest of the week.

**Third violation:** Loss of computer privileges for one week and “Communication Form” sent home. Student must work in sight of a supervising staff member and at a table for two weeks.

**Fourth violation:** Loss of computer privileges for two weeks and parent conference scheduled. Student must work in sight of a supervising staff member and at a table for the rest of the school year.
Personal Listening Device Guidelines

A personal listening device is an electronic music player. This includes iPods, iPhones/smartphones, mp3 players, CD players, pre-loaded music on laptops.

Guidelines:

- It is the responsibility of parents to approve the content of the songs on their student’s personal listening devices.
- Streaming music from online sites is not permitted.
- Personal listening devices should be used for music only.
- Personal listening devices can be used before school between 8:00 – 8:30, after school between 3:30 – 4:00, during reflection time, and during classes at the guide’s discretion. For reflection time, students must listen to a pre-loaded playlist (not shuffle throughout reflection time).
- Personal listening devices can be used only by the owner of that device.

Inappropriate Behaviors:

- Listening to personal listening device or viewing songs outside the approved times
- Viewing videos, using unapproved apps, using Internet, streaming music, taking pictures without permission or playing games
- Sharing personal listening device

First violation: Verbal suggestion to redirect student. Communication Form submitted to advisor.
Second violation: Loss of personal listening device for the rest of the day. Communication Form submitted to advisor. Meet with advisor to find a solution.
Third violation: Loss of personal listening device for one week and device is taken to the office. Communication Form sent home. Meet with parents to find a solution.
Fourth violation: Loss of personal listening device for the rest of the school year and device is taken to the office.**

Each incident will be recorded by the supervising teacher. Personal listening device/phone violations will be recorded separately from computer violations.

**Personal listening devices will be held in the office and must be retrieved by a parent or guardian.
Telephone/Cell Phone Guidelines

Please avoid making telephone calls directly to your child during the school day. Instead, please call the school if you need to talk to your child. Students may use the school telephone if necessary. The office staff will deliver messages to students; if you or your child must have a conversation, this should take place during a break or free time (unless an emergency).

Please try to work out personal details with your child during non-school time. Since cell phones detract from the learning experience, students may not use cell phones at school without special permission. If a student needs to carry a cell phone, it must be turned off and stored out-of-sight in a backpack, purse, or cubby while at school during the day. One exception to this is the use of the phone as a personal listening device.

Students may use text messaging to facilitate pick up times and other arrangements. Between 3:30-4:00 p.m., students may ask to text their parents or person picking them up to expedite the process. At 4:00, any remaining students in study hall will be unable to text. Should there be a change in pick up as mentioned in the “Dismissal” section, an AC staff member must speak to the parent (not text) in order to release the student to someone unauthorized (not found on the Identification sheet). Texting between peers or other abuse of cell phone privileges will be documented according to the “Behaviors and Consequences” section.
Communication Form

Date: ______________  Time: ____________  Name: ____________________________

Names of Students involved:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Location of Incident:
________________________________________________________________________

Description of Incident:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Would you like this incident to be referred to the advisor for mediation?
_____ Yes  _____ No

Finished form should be given to an Adolescent Community Staff Member or Advisor
Communication Form: Advisor Report

Advisor:_____________________________         Date: ____________________

Students involved:__________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Submitted by:  
___ Student  ___ AC Guide  ___ Other staff  ___ Parent

Type of Report

___ Accountability
___ Violation of Dress Code
___ Violation of Technology rule
___ Behavior that is potentially dangerous to self or others
___ Behavior that makes the environment unsafe
___ Student Information
___ Damaging Property
___ Other

Advisors please evaluate this Communication Form and note any further steps that may be needed.

Guide Mediation                  Parent Conference                  Information Report

Advisor Comments:

*Advisors: please submit to Rebecca upon completion.
A staff member must receive all medications. Please do not send medications in lunch boxes. Medicines need to be in the original prescription container, labeled with the child’s name and include the physician’s directions for use.

Child’s Name _____________________________________________
Class ____________________________ Date ____________________
Name of Medication ________________________________________
Purpose of medication ______________________________________
Dosage ___________________________________________________
Time(s) to Administer ______________________________________
Prescription ______ Over-the-Counter ______
Special storage requirements ________________________________
Possible side effects _______________________________________
Parent Signature __________________________________________

To be filled out by staff member administering the medication. Give form to parent with any unused medication.

Time(s) administered:
M ______ T ______ W ______ TH ______ F ______
Initialed by staff _______ _______ _______ _______ _______
Date unused medication returned to parent ______________________
Parent’s Initials ____________
Noted side effects _________________________________________
Field Trip/Activities Permission

- I give permission for my child, ______________________________, to participate in school-sponsored field trips and outings during the 2016-17 school year.

- Since social experiences are essential to the social, moral, and academic development of the adolescent, I also give permission for my child to participate in outings that occur spontaneously due to class or community needs. These outings will be local in nature (within Knox County).

- I understand that notification will be sent home prior to all planned outings but will **not be sent home** for spontaneous outings.

- I have received an electronic copy of the Adolescent Community Parent-Student Handbook and am aware of its contents.

Optional: By signing below, I give permission to the AC staff to administer the following medications as needed by my child without needing to contact me:

- _____ Tylenol  
- _____ Ibuprofen  
- _____ Aleve  
- _____ Benadryl  
- _____ Dramamine

Other:___________________

Signed: ______________________________ (Parent or Guardian)

Date:___________________________