

WELCOME TO GOOD EARTH MONTESSORI SCHOOL
AND GEM CHARTER SCHOOL
GENERAL INFORMATION
PARENT HANDBOOK



GOOD EARTH MONTESSORI SCHOOL/GEM CHARTER SCHOOL
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OFFICE HOURS 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM Monday through Friday

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHARTER SCHOOL AND
OWNER/DIRECTOR GOOD EARTH MONTESSORI
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

**Nelleke van Savooyen
Sandy Holzer**

GOVERNING BOARD FOR GEM CHARTER SCHOOL

❖ Nelleke van Savooyen	President
❖ Sandy Holzer	Secretary
❖ Robert Stratton	Board Member
❖ Cindy Carter	Board Member
❖ Ada Jaime	Board Member
❖ Gene Letson	Board Member

GOVERNING BOARD FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL

• Nelleke van Savooyen	President
• Robert Stratton	Secretary

TEACHERS FOR GEM CHARTER AND GOOD EARTH MONTESSORI

Teacher resumes are available for review in the school office during business hours.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Good Earth Montessori and GEM Charter School are dedicated to the development of well-rounded individuals, who are proficient, self-confident and have ascertained the potential and desire for life-long learning and improved academic performance through the implementation of the Montessori Method of Education.

SCHOOL'S PHILOSOPHY

Good Earth Montessori School, established in 1979, bases its philosophy and goals on the discoveries made by Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952).

Dr. Montessori discovered children's remarkable, almost effortless ability to absorb knowledge from their surroundings. The Montessori Philosophy is designed to help children with their task of inner construction as they grow from childhood to maturity.

Montessori classrooms provide a prepared environment where children are free to respond to their natural drive to work and learn. All activities are presented to the children on an individual basis at the Primary level and on an individual or in a small group at the Elementary level, by the Montessori trained teacher.

The children's inherent love of learning is encouraged by giving them opportunities to engage in spontaneous, meaningful activities under the guidance of a Montessori trained adult. Through their work, the children develop concentration, motivation, persistence and discipline, within this framework of order, the children progress at their own pace and rhythm, according to their individual capabilities, during the crucial years of development.

The Primary classroom consists of a mixture of children between the ages of 3 and 6 years old. The children in the primary program possess what Dr. Montessori called the absorbent mind, the ability to absorb all aspects of one's culture and environment without effort or fatigue. As an aid to this period of the child's self construction, individual work is encouraged.

The children in the primary program will be working in the following areas:

- *Practical Life exercises instills care for self, others and for the environment.*
- *Sensorial Materials serve as tools for development. Children build cognitive skills and learn to order and classify impressions by touching, seeing, smelling, tasting, listening and exploring the physical properties of their environment.*
- *Language development is vital to human development. The Montessori environment is rich in oral language opportunities, allowing the child to experience conversations, stories and poetry. They will be learning the phonic skills necessary to develop their reading. The children are also exposed to the study of grammar.*
- *Geography, Biology, Botany, Zoology, Art and Music are presented as extensions of the sensorial and language activities.*
- *Mathematical activities help give children a solid understand of basic mathematical principles, prepares them for later abstract reasoning and helps to develop problem-solving capabilities.*

At the Elementary level the children will be introduced to the "Great Lessons", these are connected stories that span the enormous historical frames of time and space. From this core of story frameworks emanate

the details of the disciplines: science, mathematics, social studies and language. The students will be involved in an exciting research style of learning. The children will work in small groups on a variety of projects, which spark the imagination and engage the intellect.

***The Montessori elementary environment** balances the child's developing imagination and powers of abstraction with down-to-earth, concrete, hands-on materials. Each material has its structured sequences designed to lead to discovery and understanding. The elementary-aged child is moving from and understanding of the physical world to an understanding of abstract concepts.*

Montessori provides diverse and creative passages to abstraction. Mathematics, for instance is presented through three-dimensional, manipulative materials that reveal simultaneously arithmetic, geometric and algebraic correlation, each providing a concrete way to experience an abstract concept. Likewise for Language, the grammar materials use symbols and visual patterns to help the child discover parts of speech and analyze the structure, style and logic of sentences. Biology, Botany and Zoology and Science, through story telling the children are invited to use their imagination and through their questions they will explore these subjects by using school resources and the resources available to them in our community by going on fieldtrips.

The classrooms will have all the Montessori materials needed to help the children master all the subjects necessary in order to advance to the next level. The Montessori trained teacher will keep detailed records of which activities have been introduced to each child and she will observe when the child has mastered the activity.

AMI ACCREDITATION

Good Earth Montessori School is accredited by the Association Montessori Internationale. AMI was founded in 1929 by Dr. Maria Montessori who intended that AMI serve two purposes; first, to protect her life's work in its original integrity and completeness; and second, to guide its further development and application in the interest of all children. From its headquarters in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, AMI has functioned as the source of authentic, complete Montessori training and as a center for continuing research and development. AMI/USA sends a consultant to our school once every three years to work with the staff in order to help us reach our full potential.

CHILDCARE LICENSE

*Good Earth Montessori School is licensed as a Child Care Center for the children ages 2.5 through school age with the Division of Licensing Services; the license number is **CDC 5528**. You can find the license on the bulletin board on the patio. **You can contact their office at 150 North 18th Avenue, 4th floor in Phoenix, AZ 85007 or call them at (602) 364-2536.***

ADMISSION POLICIES GEM CHARTER SCHOOL

*Admission is not limited based on ethnicity, national origin, gender, or income level, disabling condition, proficiency in the English language or athletic ability. **There is no tuition charged for attending GEM Charter School.***

GEM Charter School will admit all eligible pupils who submit a timely application.

GEM Charter School shall give enrollment preference to pupils returning to the charter school in the second or subsequent year of its operation and to siblings of pupils already enrolled in the Charter school. If, by the application deadline, the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level or building, all applicants for that program, class, grade level or building will be selected for the available slots through an equitable selection process, such as a lottery, except that preference shall be given to siblings of a pupil. After the application deadline, pupils for any remaining slots or for a waiting list will be accepted in chronological order.

*All Children will be considered for admission to the Charter. **A personal interview with both parent(s) and child are required before entering the program.***

Children must be 5 years old prior to December 31, of this year to be admitted to the Charter Kindergarten program. First graders must be 6 years old prior to December 31, of this year to be admitted into the Charter Elementary program. We will make exceptions in cases where the children are further advanced in their academics and social progress. This is done on an individual basis after the teacher and/or Executive Director of the School has evaluated the child.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES PRIVATE SCHOOL

Enrollment procedures differ for students enrolled in Good Earth Montessori (Children aged 2.5 through 4 years old and before and after school Programs for Charter students) and those enrolled in GEM Charter School.

*Charter Students: A signed and dated application must be submitted in a timely fashion to be registered in the Charter, there is no application fee for these students. For Charter school students who sign up for the before and/or after school GEM program, there is a **\$60.00 non-refundable registration fee for the first child and \$50.00 for each child thereafter.***

*Openings in a classroom for the private school will be filled according to the balancing needs of the classroom, on a first come, first serve basis. **Private school students: There is a \$110.00 non-refundable registration fee and \$70.00 for each child thereafter.***

ADMISSION RECORDS

Prior to the first day of school, parents are required to submit a health update, which covers the child's general health, special problems and needs, immunization (DTP, polio, measles, HIB), and a test for tuberculosis. The parents are also required to fill out an Emergency Information Form which includes a release for medical treatment and a Medical Waiver. These forms have to be notarized by the office staff prior to the child starting.

*A child may be exempt from this requirement when: a) his/ her physician recommends against immunization on medical grounds, or b) his/ her parents sign a medical release based on religious or personal beliefs. Parents exempting their child in this way must be aware that if an outbreak of measles or any contagious disease occurs, any child not immunized must be kept home until the contagious period for **all** children is over. **We***

also require a certified copy of your child's birth certificate. Prior to Admission, parents and child (ren) are required to meet with their child (ren)'s teacher.

CONTRACT TERMS

The contract period for each School Year is from the first day of school until the last day of school in May or June. This is for the Private school students and the Charter School students who are enrolled in any of the before and after school programs.

2011-2012 TUITION RATES AND HOURS

Primary Private School;

<u>Program</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Monthly rate with a signed contract</u>
Morning	8:30 AM-12: 30PM	\$435.00
Full Day	8:30 AM - 2:45 PM	\$505.00
Extended Day	7:30 AM - 5:30 PM	\$560.00

If you do not sign up for the after school program but would like to use an occasional extra hour we will charge \$3.00 per half hour for Private school students, until 5:30 PM. After 5:30 PM we will charge \$1.00 per minute for the first 15 minutes and \$2.00 per minute thereafter. You will be billed at the beginning of the month and payment is due by the 23rd of the month for any extra hours used for the previous month. Any amounts not paid by the 23rd of the month will incur a 10% late fee and an additional 5% late fee per month until paid in full.

Kindergarten and Elementary (ages 5-12);

<u>Program</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Monthly Rate</u>
Full Day	8:30 AM – 3:00 PM	No Charge (Charter)
Extended Day	7:30 AM – 5:30 PM	\$300.00 (excluding charter hours with a signed contract)

If you do not sign up for the after school program but would like to use an occasional extra hour we will charge \$3.50 per half hour until 5:30 PM, after that time we will charge \$1.00 per minute for the first 15 minutes and \$2.00 per minute thereafter . You will be billed at the beginning of the month and payment is due by the 23rd of the month for any extra hours used for the previous month. Any amounts not paid by the 23rd of the month will incur a 10% late fee and an additional 5% late fee per month until paid in full.

All monthly tuition programs including after school programs require a signed contract. Contracts are to be returned to the school by September 15. If parents do

not return the contract in time the tuition will be increased by \$20.00 per month until we receive a signed contract.

We require all Charter and Private parents to pay a \$100.00 supply fee for the year for their first child and \$75.00 for each child thereafter, this fee includes the monthly cook a lunch day (arts and craft supplies, pencils, paper, snacks etc.).

TUITION POLICIES

*The obligation to pay tuition for the full academic year is unconditional unless mitigating circumstances are discussed and approved by the Executive Director. Should mitigating circumstances require a student to leave the school prior to the completion of the academic year; the school will require **a 30- day written notice prior to the child's leaving(during the 30 day period you will have to pay the tuition)**. You will lose your deposit if you leave before the end of the school, but with the 30 day written notice you will not have to pay the tuition for the entire year and you will receive half of your deposit back.*

The school does not refund tuition or fees for days the student is absent due to illness, vacation or when the school is closed pursuant to the school calendar, this includes our Winter break, Spring break and all holidays. Tuition is based on a 180-day school year.

The Director (Nelleke van Savooyen) is the only person in the school who can approve changes in enrollment.

DEPOSIT

All parents are required to pay 1 month's tuition as a deposit within 2 weeks of attendance. Deposits are refunded at the end of the school year if the child does not continue on to the next school year. If the child is scheduled to return the next school year we will roll over the deposit to the next school year. **If a parent has to withdraw during the school year we do require a 30- day written notice and during that period the tuition still needs to be paid.** Since we will allow the parents to withdraw their child/ren during the school year they will not be responsible for paying the monthly tuition after the 30 day period but they will lose half of their deposit. **THIS MEANS THAT THE SCHOOL WILL ONLY REFUND HALF OF THEIR DEPOSIT.** Parents are still responsible for any extra charges incurred during the last 30 days of their child's attendance and this will be deducted from the deposit. After March 31, of each year we do not allow any withdrawals if you do need to withdraw you will still be responsible for the tuition for April and May.

TUITION PAYMENT CHOICES

Monthly Payments: *The school will email an invoice at the beginning of the school year for the entire year's tuition. The school will **only** email/ or hand out monthly bills for those parents who do not pay the same amount each month. Tuition is due by the 20th of the previous month and can only be paid with a debit or credit card and is delinquent after the 23rd of the month. Tuition for August is due the first day of school and September is due August 20.*

All parents are required to sign a form authorizing the school to process their monthly payment using their credit or debit card monthly on a predetermined date but not later than the 23rd of each month.

1 School Year Payment: You can pay the entire year in advance by September 1; this will include a 1/2 month's deposit as well instead of a full month deposit.

2 School Year Payments: You can make two payments during the school year; the first one is due by September 1 and will also include the 1 month's deposit. The second payment will be due by December 23.

We do not give discounts to parents who pay the tuition for the entire year in advance.

A 10% late fee will be charged for tuition and extra hours if payments could not be processed with their credit or debit card on the 23rd calendar day of the month. A 5% late fee will be added each month until the past due balance is paid off. Any other payment arrangement must be pre-arranged with the Executive Director.

Any extra hours used during the month will be billed to you at the beginning of the following month and are due by the 23rd of the month. Parents who pay regular monthly tuition will have the extra charges paid with their monthly debit/credit payment. Parents who only have extra hours charges will need to sign a credit/debit card slip if the amount is larger than \$25.00 in order to have their balance paid no later than the 23rd of the month. Parents who only owe a small amount every once in a while will need to make a cash payment before the 23rd of the month.

Good Earth Montessori will accept cash, debit or credit cards only; we accept the following credit cards; VISA, MASTERCARD AND DISCOVER. We will no longer accept checks, but we will accept cash for amounts due less than \$25.00.

For the 2011-2012 school year we will also accept online payments from Intuit. When you receive an emailed invoice it will have a button on the bottom to make a payment using your checking account. The school will receive an email from Intuit and receive the money in our school account. This is 100% secure.

If tuition and/or other fees remain unpaid by the 3rd day of the following month and other payment arrangements have not been made, the School reserves the right to (i) Terminate this contract, (ii) dismiss the Student without tuition abatement until the account is brought current, and/or (iii) employ any and all rights and remedies allowed by law. In the event that it should be necessary to turn this contract over to an attorney to enforce any of the terms hereof, the School shall be entitled to recover collection costs, expenses and reasonable attorney fees..

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. Parents are asked to read the entire Parent Contract Handbook and sign the form stating that they will read the Parent Contract Handbook. The form will be handed to the parents at the time they pick up all the paperwork; the parent contract handbook is available on line at*

- www.goodearthmontessori.com, or in the office for those parents who do not have internet access.
2. Familiarize yourself with the basic Montessori philosophy. It is important that parents understand the basic principles of Montessori education to understand and support your child's academic progress. Parents should read ***"The Secret of Childhood"***, by Dr. Maria Montessori, ***"Montessori Today,"*** by Paula Polk Lillard and ***"Maria Montessori, Her Life and Work"***, by E.M. Standing, ***"Montessori The Science Behind the Genius"*** by Angeline Stoll Lillard. All these books are available at Amazon.com
 3. Keep abreast of current activities by reading the monthly Good Earth Montessori Newsletter, the notices that are sent home and by reading the bulletin board and observing the School Calendar. All information is also posted on our website; www.goodearthmontessori.com.
 4. The student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) accept responsibility for participation in:
 - a. A Student-Teacher-Parent Goal Setting Process (Elementary Students).
 - b. Parent-Teacher Conferences – twice a year.
 - c. Parent education nights, usually 3-4 times a year
 - d. Two-observation periods minimum each year for both parents, **before** each conference.
 - e. Parent Volunteer Time of at least 10 hours per year in one or more of the following:
 - ◆ The Fall raffle and party
 - ◆ The end of the year Picnic.
 - ◆ Fundraising.
 - ◆ GOGEM Parent Organization Committee Activities.
 - ◆ Coaching or assisting with extra-curricular activities.
 - ◆ Assisting with lunch hours.
 - ◆ Assisting or substituting in Classrooms.
 - ◆ Assisting teachers in making materials at home.
 - f. Providing effective and continuing cooperation and communication between school and your home.

TRAVEL RESPONSIBILITY

The Student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) assume full responsibility for the manner, safety and protection of the student in traveling to and from school.

Reimbursement provisions for charter students who qualify economically and Charter Special Education students who qualify because of their disability will be made by consultation with the Executive Director.

INSURANCE

Good Earth Montessori and GEM Charter School carry an insurance policy that complies with the requirements of the State of Arizona. This insurance policy can be reviewed in the office.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

*Pull in and park in one of the parking spaces provided if you arrive between 7:30 and 8:15 AM and 3:00 PM and 5:30 PM. **PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CAR IN THE DRIVE- THRU AREA.** Keep your child close to your side when in the parking lot.*

The carport door is unlocked between 7:30 AM and 8:30 AM.

*Walk in the garage door for all classrooms and sign your child in, **listing the time of your arrival, along with your first initial and full last name.** Make sure you drop your child off in his/ her classroom and that the Assistant or the Teacher is made aware that your child has arrived.*

Assistants are outside for drive through service with the sign in sheets between 8:15 AM and 8:30 AM. Please be considerate and do not block our driveway, or the mailbox, people can get very upset if someone is blocking them and they have to get to work. You can park on Ivyglen and walk over to avoid any traffic jams.

*Any children and their parent arriving **after** classes have started, need to ring the gate bell and go to the office to be signed in and the Director or Assistant Director will escort your child to the classroom. You are interrupting classes when you arrive late and you make your child uncomfortable by doing so and we hope that you are considerate and do this as little as possible. Doors are locked during class for the safety of the children. Please ring gate bell between 8:30 AM and 2:45 PM.*

PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Half day students will be dismissed at the gate from 12:30-12:40 PM.

Teachers are outside for drive through service with the sign in sheets between 2:45 PM and 3:00 PM.

*If you have an academic day contract either morning for the primary or full day for the elementary students and stay later, it is extremely important that you sign the **TIME** you picked your child up. Otherwise you will be charged the extended day rate until 5:30 PM.*

Please let us know if you are picking your child up later or earlier than usual so that we can let your child know. It can be very hard for a child to be picked up at a later time if they do not know about this. They might worry that something has happened to you.

ABSENCE, TARDINESS AND TRUANCY FOR THE CHARTER SCHOOL

15-803 School Attendance; exemptions; definitions

A. It is unlawful for any child between six and sixteen years of age to fail to attend school during the hours school is in session, unless excused pursuant to 15-801, subsection D, or 15-901, subsection A, paragraph 6, subdivision (c) or the child is accompanied by a parent or a person authorized by a parent or the child is provided with instruction in a home school. Non-compliance with the laws regarding compulsory attendance is GUILTY OF A CLASS 3 MISDEMEANOR. (ARS 15-802.E)

*In order for your child to receive the full benefit of school, **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO ARRIVE ON TIME** each day **and** attend each day. For children enrolled in the Charter School there is an*

*additional financial penalty to the school for excessive absenteeism. The state uses the first hundred days of school to determine how much we receive each month. It is very important that your child attends all hundred days. If your child is sick or absent, make sure you notify the office by 10:00 AM, if your child is sick more than 3 consecutive days the school requires a notice from the child's doctor with the reason why they have been out and when they can return to school. Any absences except for illness and religious purposes are considered un-excused. **“Excessive” absences will be reported to the truancy officer.***

This is a reminder of our schools attendance policy which adheres to the Arizona Department of Education’s rules and regulations. On your child’s 3rd unexcused absence you will receive an informational letter. On your child’s 5th unexcused absence you may receive a call from our truancy officer. On your child’s 6th unexcused absence a citation may be issued by our truancy officer. Three tardies = 1 absence. Tardies include coming in late AND leaving early.

We require you to plan vacations during the summer, winter or spring breaks.

Call the school if your child will be absent, and give the reason for the absence. If your child is tardy, be sure to sign him/her in and let the office staff escort your child to his/her class. Remember, children learn by example so you need to show them the appropriate way. Bringing your child in late or taking time off without a good reason is telling your child that it is all right to not be at school or work on time. It also disrupts the class and the teacher has to repeat something for a late child, which takes away from the other children who were there on time.

*Please be aware that if your child is excessively absent or tardy we will notify our Truancy officer who will contact you in order to find a solution to the problem. **Your child needs to be here every day and be on time.***

Children who have a chronic illness do not fall under this ruling only if the school has a note from the child's doctor stating that the child has a chronic illness and will miss days from school due to this condition.

EARLY PICK UP AND EARLY DISMISSAL

Parents are requested to inform the office in advance if they plan to pick up their child prior to his/her scheduled dismissal time. If parents are unable to notify the school in advance, it is necessary for them to stop at the office so that the teacher can be notified to dismiss the child without interrupting classroom activity.

We have some days when all children, private and charter are dismissed at noon, on those days we do not have childcare and your child needs to go home at noon. Late pick ups for those days will be charged at the \$1.00 per minute rate starting at 12:00 for the first 15 minutes and \$2.00 per minute thereafter.

RELEASE AUTHORIZATION

Children will **not** be released to **any person** other than a parent, legal guardian, or someone duly authorized to pick up their children. If it becomes necessary to have someone not so listed pick up a child, **a written release** must be provided. According to law, we are not allowed to accept a phone call permitting someone **not** listed on your emergency card to pick up your child.

When an authorized person, who does not pick up a child on a regular basis, arrives, he/she must go to the office with identification with a picture on it (driver's license or State ID) to receive an authorization permit before the child will be released. We will release children to people who are listed on the Emergency Card, but we would appreciate a phone call to let us know.

OFFICIAL CUSTODY

If one parent has official custody of the child, the legal documents to this effect must be on file in the office. Without the legal documentation, the school cannot refuse to release a child to either parent.

Please work out clear visitation arrangements between mother and father and/or grandparents without putting the school or the child in a difficult position.

VISITORS ON CAMPUS

All visitors on campus are to sign in and out in the office; we have visitor tags to wear on campus. Parents who are on campus for any purpose other than dropping off or picking up their child during normal school hours are considered visitors.

OBSERVATION OF CLASSROOMS

After the first six weeks of school, parents are invited and encouraged to observe their children in the classroom. Please call the office to schedule an appointment. Parents can drop in any time to see what is going on at the school; please limit unscheduled visits to 10 minutes and please do not disturb the classroom.

All parents are required to schedule a half-hour observation time prior to each parent-teacher conference date, which we schedule twice a year at the beginning of November and the beginning of May. Before you enter the classroom, please read the "**Observation Guidelines**", which will help you get the most benefit from your observation experience.

EMERGENCY CARE

In case of a life-threatening situation, the school will call 911. **EMERGENCY CARE HOSPITAL PREFERENCES WILL BE ADHERED TO** and the school will contact the parents immediately **AS LONG AS THE EMERGENCY CARD INFORMATION IS ACCURATE**. This is why it is **imperative** that parents keep the school up-to-date on phone numbers where parents can be reached. In case of a non-life threatening injury, an accident report will be filled out and you will receive a copy. If a bump on the head occurs, the parents will be called and informed. These children will not be given a nap.

ILLNESS

*For the sake of others as well as your child(ren), parents are asked to keep at home any child who has a fever or other symptoms of illness, such as a bad cough or green nasal discharge. Should a child become ill at school, he/she will be isolated from other children. The parent will be notified and is expected to make arrangements to take the child home **within 1 hour from the time we called.***

*A child should be free from fever (this is without giving your child medication with a fever reducer like Tylenol) for **24 hours** before coming back to school. If your child has been exposed to a contagious disease, he/she should be kept at home and the facts of his/her condition should be reported to the school and in order for your child to return we will need a doctor's note. Strep-throat, pinworms, conjunctivitis, impetigo, head lice, measles, mumps, chicken pox, scarlet fever, etc. are among those conditions categorized as "highly contagious". A sign will be posted should any of these conditions arise.*

MEDICATION

*Many antibiotics and other medications today can be prescribed to be taken in two doses daily rather than three, thus eliminating the need for the school dose. Please request this from your pediatrician. **Exceptions to this policy will be made only after serious evaluation and a physician's explanation of why the school dose is necessary will be required.** If it is necessary for a child to take medication, a form must be filled out IN THE OFFICE the morning the medication arrives at school with prescription number, instructions, name of medication and date issued. Prescriptions must be in their original containers and the parents are responsible for giving the medication to the office staff.*

Medication will only be given once a day at ± 12:00 PM.** All medicine is locked in the office. It is logged in and dispensed by the office staff. **PLEASE DO NOT PUT MEDICATION IN LUNCH BOXES OR BACKPACKS!

Children, who are asthmatic and need breathing treatments during the school day, may bring their machines and treatment will be provided as needed and as prescribed by the child's doctor. The school will need detailed instructions on how to administer the medication and at what times. If it is on an as needed basis we will try to call the parent before we administer the treatment but if we cannot reach the parent we will administer the treatment when the child shows signs of an asthma attack.

SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY

The office has a copy available of the Policies and Procedures for Special Needs children at GEM Charter School. For more information on special needs regulations please read the Federal regulations for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act-'97.

NOTIFICATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY RIGHTS REGARDING EDUCATION RECORDS OF STUDENTS AND THEIR PARENTS

Confidentiality of education records is a right of public school students and their parents. Two federal laws, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provide for this right. Under these laws, "education records" means those records that are: (1) directly related to a student; and (2)

maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution. Of course, education records are maintained on every child enrolled in a public school. The types of information gathered and maintained includes, but is not limited to: the student's and parents' names, address and telephone number; the student's date and place of birth, date of enrollment in the school, records from previous schools attended, attendance record, subjects taken, grades, school activities, assessment results, number of credits earned, immunization records, disciplinary records, if any, correspondence from parents, and child find and other screening results, including hearing and vision screening results.

In addition, for children with disabilities, education records could include, among other things, evaluation and testing materials, medical and health information, each annual Individualized Education Program (IEP), notices to parents, notes regarding IEP meetings, parental consent documents, information provided by parents, progress reports, assessment results, materials related to disciplinary actions, and mediation agreements.

The information is gathered from a number of sources including the student's parents and staff of the school of attendance. Also, with parental permission, information may be gathered from additional sources including doctors and other health care providers.

This information is collected to assure proper identification of a student and the student's parents and the maintenance of accurate records of the student's progress and activities in school. For children with disabilities, additional information is collected in order to assure the child is identified, evaluated, and provided a Free Appropriate Public Education in accordance with state and federal special education laws.

Each agency participating under Part B of IDEA must assure that at all stages of gathering, storing, retaining and disclosing education records to third parties that it complies with the federal confidentiality laws. In addition, the destruction of any education records of a child with a disability must be in accordance with IDEA regulatory requirements.

The federal Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education has provided the following notice of parent's rights under FERPA.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are:

- (1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

- (2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading.

Parents or eligible students may ask a school district to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.

If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

- (3) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, a school may disclose education records, without consent, to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

An agency reporting a crime committed by a student with a disability shall ensure that copies of the special education and disciplinary records of the student are transmitted for consideration by the appropriate authorities to whom it reports the crime. An agency reporting a crime may transmit copies of the student's special education and disciplinary records only to the extent permitted by FERPA.

- (4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by a school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U. S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington D.C. 20204-6005

A school may designate information in education records as "directory information" and may disclose it without parent consent, unless notified that the school is not to disclose the information without consent. The law defines "directory information" as follows:

The student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student.

Notices of these rights are available, upon request, on audio tape, in Braille, and in languages other than English. You may contact the Arizona Department of Education at 602-542-3111.

CHILD FIND POLICY

It is GEM Charter School's responsibility to inform the general public and all parents of students enrolled in our school of our responsibility to make available special education services for students with disabilities and how to access those services. In addition we have a responsibility to provide information regarding early intervention services for children birth through 2 years of age.

We are responsible for identifying, locating, and evaluating all children with disabilities within our school and for making appropriate referrals to:

1. Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) for children birth through 2 years of age for evaluation and services if needed; and
2. School district of residence for children aged 3 through 5 for evaluation and services if needed.

We are also responsible for providing a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) which includes special education and related services for students with disabilities at public expense, under public supervision and direction and without charge to the parents.

For all new students to the school, the classroom teacher will complete screening activities within 45 days of enrollment. The teacher will look at the child's ability in the areas of academics, vision, hearing, adaptive, communication, social/emotional and motor skills. If any concerns are noted the child may be referred for additional help.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Dr. Maria Montessori found that if children are productively engaged in purposeful goals, discipline problems are minimal. Good Earth Montessori staff does not use corporal punishment or other intimidating means of discipline. GEM personnel attempt to use natural and logical consequences to support the children in maintaining the classroom ground rules.

It is our intention that our children never be humiliated or ridiculed in any way. If there is a serious behavior problem, the family will be contacted for a conference. We will do our best to work in harmony with the home to correct any serious behavior problems at school.

Steps to enforce our discipline policy for both the Private and Charter School:

1. *Student receives verbal reminder of rule/ appropriate behavior/ consequences.*
2. *The initial consequence could be a time removed from the workspace or community service.*
3. *If behavior persists or child refuses to comply with #2, parents/guardians are called. We will confer with them and try to resolve the situation. It is explained to the parent/guardian that if the behavior continues to persist, they may be called to come and pick up their child.*
4. *In some situations a parent may be asked to stay with their child in the classroom throughout the day.*
5. *If the parent is asked to pick up their child because the behavior is persisting, the child will be removed from the classroom while waiting. A child can be suspended from school for up to 10 days.*

6. *When the child returns the next day, the teacher confers with the child and the parent before s/he reenters the class. Any limitations for the child will be discussed at that time. E.g. a behavior contract could be established or privileges suspended, etc.*
7. *For serious infractions, e.g. child hitting a teacher, child leaving campus without permission, etc. suspensions are possible and the child will not be able to return to the school until a conference with parent, teacher and administration takes place.*

OUTSIDE PROFESSIONAL HELP

When a child's behavior indicates a need for outside professional help:

1. *Parents will be called for a conference.*
2. *Professional resources and suggestions will be given.*
3. *If a therapist is seeing the child, the therapist must consult with the school within the first month of therapy.*
4. *The decision regarding the child's continuance at Good Earth Montessori will then be decided.*

GOOD EARTH MONTESSORI and GEM CHARTER SCHOOL RESERVE THE RIGHT TO PLACE A CHILD ON PROBATION AND EVENTUALLY TO DISMISS THE CHILD FROM SCHOOL SHOULD SUCH AN ACTION BE WARRANTED.

FOR GEM CHARTER SCHOOL; *Expulsion of a student from the school is at the discretionary power of the Governing Board under the Provision of ARS 15-341, 15-342 and 15-843. The school will assure due process rights for students involved in disciplinary action before he/she may be suspended or expelled.*

BITING POLICY

In order to provide a safe and healthy environment for your child, the school has a biting policy in force. An occasional biting incident, especially with the youngest children, is normal toddler development. However, if the child becomes a chronic biter, and if it is determined that the child would be better served in a smaller group setting, you may be asked to remove your child from school until the problem is under control. In most cases we will give the child a warning first, notify the parent in writing. The Second Offense we will send the child home for 2 days. If it continues after the 2nd offense we reserve the right to dismiss the child from school. The administrator is the only person who can authorize this.

TOBACCO AND DRUG POLICY

At Good Earth Montessori and GEM Charter school we do not allow use of any kind of tobacco, alcohol or any illegal drug. These policies are in force on all school grounds; this includes playgrounds, classrooms, offices and parking lot. Everybody is made aware of the Tobacco policy with signs by all doors as well as a sign in the parking lot area. Everybody is made aware of the illegal drug and alcohol policy in the School's Handbook.

These policies are in place for students, parents, staff and school visitors. Parents, Visitors and Staff will receive a verbal warning/reminder if caught smoking or chewing tobacco on the school premises. Students will have the tobacco confiscated and their parents will be notified and if necessary counseling will be recommended

and/or made available to the students. Law enforcement will be notified in all cases involving illegal drugs and when necessary with deemed cases involving tobacco and alcohol by the Executive Director.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences are scheduled twice a year, in the fall and in the spring. By no means, should you feel that these are the only times you should visit with your child's teacher. Special meetings may be scheduled at a time that is mutually convenient. Both Good Earth Montessori and GEM Charter School have an "open door" policy and we welcome your input and communication. All parents have to schedule an observation time before they can schedule a conference time with the teacher. **The observation time is for at least 1/2 an hour for each parent.**

Teachers will also schedule class visits with all the new students before they start the school year. You can check with your child's teacher on when they would like to schedule this.

FIELD TRIPS AND "GOING OUT"

The educational program in each classroom is expanded by the participation in purposeful, informative field trips taken throughout the year. Parents are often asked to accompany the class to help with driving and supervision. **If your child is 5 years of age or under, you must provide a car seat and for children 6 years of age and up a booster seat (40-60 pounds).** Upon receiving a notice informing you of a specific field trip, please stop by your child's classroom within the next three days and sign the permission slip.

ALL CHILDREN ARE REQUIRED TO WEAR A GOOD EARTH MONTESSORI T-SHIRT ON ALL FIELDTRIPS.

For the elementary students, you will sign a "Going Out" permission slip at the beginning of the school year, which will cover the entire school year. The Elementary students schedule their own "Going Out" trips for a small group in order to do research for their group projects. Parents will be notified as soon as the trip is scheduled. Once you have signed the "Going Out" permission slip your child can schedule a "Going Out" trip at any time. Class trips will require a separate permission slip, which will be available for you to sign a week before the trip.

In most cases there is no additional charge for these field trips, unless the field trip is more costly than usual, in which case we might ask you to pay for your child. In some cases the children will hold a fundraiser for a field trip.

NUTRITION

The children bring their own lunches, which they can place in their classroom's refrigerator. Please send a nutritious lunch for your child every day. Besides the usual sandwiches, some suggestions for variety include: Pieces of cheese, fresh fruits and vegetables, popcorn, rice cakes, yogurt, hard-boiled eggs and salads. Most children prefer small quantities of a variety of foods rather than a large quantity of one or two items. If your child forgets a lunch we will charge you \$3.00 for fixing a lunch which will consist of peanut butter/jelly sandwich a fruit or vegetable and water.

We do not allow the children to eat any kind of candy, or drink soda, you can send a cookie but please limit it to **one small cookie.** It is well documented that excessive amounts of sugar in the bloodstream, particularly in young children, cause duress and hyperactivity. The children really enjoy eating nutritious foods and do not need foods with a lot of sugar or other additives.

We do not have commercial kitchen facilities on the premises.

We will send home what your child does not eat so that you can keep abreast of his/her nutritional intake.

Snacks:

Snack is included in your supply fee, your child will receive one snack in the morning and one after school and the primary classes will have food activities set up as part of Practical Life

The staff will set up a snack area for the primary classes so that they can serve themselves in the morning. In the afternoon, after school all children in the after school program will have a group snack at about 3:30 PM

A snack menu will be posted 2 weeks in advance in the kitchen area for the back primary class, the patio bulletin board for the after school program and on the refrigerator for the front class.

FOOD ALLERGIES

Should your child have a specific food allergy, please notify the office and your child's teacher immediately. We will post it in the classrooms. It should also be noted on the Emergency Card in the office. If your child has severe food allergies we need the parents to provide snack for their child. Please consult with your child's teacher about what kind of snacks you will be sending and how they need to be stored. Please mark these snacks with your child's name.

BIRTHDAYS

*Some parents like to send a special treat on their child's birthday to share with the class. **We do not allow any kind of sweets except fruits and low sugar treats. Check with your child's teacher before you bring anything.***

We would like you to bring a healthy snack for the primary classes, for example: strawberries and bagels or apples with crackers etc. These special snacks need to be brought in early in the morning so that the class can have it set up for snack.

The Department of Health Services requires foods brought for birthday snacks to be prepared by a commercial Health Department approved kitchen (store bought).

At the beginning of each month each class will send instructions home for each child who has a birthday.

*If you are planning a party outside of the classroom, **do not bring invitations to be distributed. Please mail the invitations directly to the home of the invited children; you can get a mailing list from the office.***

NAPS

Children who are 3 years old or under are **required** to have nap items (a sheet or blanket) at school, all nap items need to be clearly marked with the child's name. The school will provide the foam mat, a cover sheet and a small pillow to sleep on for all children.

We do not force the children to take a nap if they do not want to, we will have them take a short rest and if they do not fall asleep we will send them back in the classroom. If you feel your child needs a nap on a particular day make sure you let his/her teachers know. Naptime is between 1:00 PM and 2:30 PM every day.

CLOTHING

We encourage you to choose simple, comfortable, washable clothing which are both durable and allows the child to dress and undress himself/herself with as much ease as possible (i.e. sweat pants, shorts with elastic waist, dresses). Appropriate shoes such as tennis shoes or closed toe sandals should be worn. We do not allow children to play on the playground with flip flops, plastic shoes, high heels or boots because they are too dangerous.

We do not allow clothing with thin shoulder straps, shirts and pants that will expose stomachs and shirts, pants or shoes with any kind of picture or text on it except school t-shirts. The school reserves the right to ban a clothing item at school at any time.

Parents are advised to mark the child's name clearly on all of the child's belongings including sweaters, jackets, extra clothing, educational items brought to share and books. Each child should keep track of his/her own possessions since the school cannot be responsible for lost items or broken items or torn and ruined clothing. **If it is special clothing or a special object do not bring it to school.**

LOST AND FOUND

We have a lost and found box on the patio. Items not recovered from the lost and found display area will be donated to a charitable organization at the end of each month. The school does not accept any responsibility for lost items.

TOYS, GAMES AND PERSONAL PROPERTY

Materials of educational value are encouraged at Good Earth Montessori and Gem Charter School. Check with your child's teacher when they can bring it in. We do not allow the children to show toys during these times, so make sure they stay at home and help your child find something educational to share with his/her friends.

PHOTOGRAPHS, PUBLICITY AND PUBLICATIONS

Photographs and videos of the children participating in our programs may be taken from time to time and may appear in newspapers, magazines, brochures, on television, on our website, or other publicity materials. Your permission for photographs including your child can be used without compensation as part of this agreement. If you do not want your child to appear in any of the above you will need to let the Executive Director know in writing before your child starts school.

We will also have available to parents address and phone lists of all students at the school. If you do not want to be listed please let us know in writing before September 1 of the current school year.

COMMUNICATIONS

Newsletter: Good Earth Montessori and GEM Charter publish a monthly newsletter. In the newsletter we will publish any events that will be happening in the future as well as items of interest about various class programs, the Montessori philosophy, upcoming school events, and current children's events. You can access the newsletter on our website www.goodearthmontessori.com

We reserve the right to publish a directory of all the parents their child (ren), their addresses and their phone number. If you do not want to be in that directory please let the office staff know in writing by September 1 of this current school year.

Notices home: Periodically your child's teacher will send a notice home for an upcoming fieldtrip or classroom announcement. We will place these notices in your child's plastic folder; your child should take his/ her plastic folder back and forth each day.

Messages for Teachers: Messages for teachers are placed in the teachers' mailboxes for daily pick-up. Only in the case of a real emergency will messages be hand-delivered immediately. We have your child's teachers email address posted on our website at www.goodearthmontessori.com

TAX EXEMPT DONATIONS

Good Earth Montessori School is a for profit Corporation and GEM Charter School is a 501 (c) (3), non-profit corporation. As such **donations made to GEM Charter School** are tax deductible.

The educational programs **not** included in the Charter are:

- ❖ The pre-school program.
- ❖ The before and after school programs.

Every year you can make an Extracurricular Tax Credit donation to the Charter School. The maximum amount is \$400.00 (if you file a joint tax return, otherwise it is still \$200). **This money has to be used for extra curricular activities.** In order for the school to offer extra classes strings, yoga, fieldtrips and music classes we really count on you to make this donation.

Please check with us in the office so we can set you up for this tax-exempt donation. You can make monthly payments or make one payment per year. You will receive a receipt with the school's tax identification number. The amount you donate, up to the limit, will either increase your refund or reduce your tax liability. This is a dollar for dollar credit and your child really benefits from this donation.

All parents and individuals can do this, Private as well as Charter, but the Charter School can be the only recipient because it is a Non Profit Corporation.

In the past we have been able to use these funds for strings classes, chess classes, dance, music and yoga classes.

GEM CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD

The GEM Charter School Board makes policies and priorities impacting the GEM Charter School. This Board is composed of representative parents, business people and administration.

The Executive Director is also the President of the Board and she has the power to make decisions relative to the day- to- day running of the school. Any items that come up that need to be decided upon by the Board will be put on the agenda for a Board Meeting in the future. Board meetings for the Charter School are public meetings except for Executive sessions and are open to anybody and agendas will be posted on the white board outside the front door at the school, 48 hours prior to meetings.

Open Board meeting notices: *GEM Charter is required by law to post all notices of a Board meeting at least 48 hours before the meeting takes place, in a public place. Included with that notice will be an agenda and if there will be an executive session during that meeting.*

(ARS 38-431.02(D, E, F). We will post the notice on the bulletin board by the school's front door.

GOOD EARTH MONTESSORI AND GEM CHARTER GUARDIAN ORGANIZATION (GOGEM)

The school would like to see a strong parent organization to support all the work of both schools. All parents of children attending Good Earth Montessori and GEM Charter School are members of this parent organization called GOGEM (Guardian Organization for Good Earth Montessori). Someone from each family should volunteer for at least one event and be a support for each classroom. Your support of our school events is needed and very much appreciated.

ANNUAL REPORT CARD

At the end of each school year the department of education will publish a report card for GEM Charter School, you can find this report on the following web site; www.ade.state.az.us

We will start this new school year with great enthusiasm and we are confident that this year will be a great one. Please join in wholeheartedly for a great school year!