



CLANMORE
Middle School



Handbook

Clanmore Middle School Family Handbook

1. Introduction

a. Welcome

Welcome to the Adolescent Community at Clanmore Montessori School. We are excited to offer you this handbook as a useful tool for you to refer to with your Middle School student as needed throughout his/her time here at Clanmore.

As students move from Upper Elementary to the Middle School, they are entering into a very important time in their lives, adolescence. In Montessori terminology, they are entering the third plane of development, a time of great personal change and development during which the young person engages in deep learning, explores social growth and develops personal awareness. Adolescents are emerging adults and require a different environment and a broad range of activities through which they can develop their understanding of themselves, their social group, and the wider society around them.

The Middle School at Clanmore Montessori School was designed to ensure that adolescents receive an educational experience that is appropriate and meaningful for this particular stage of development. The Middle School curriculum is delivered through a Montessori approach to growth and learning and is broadly split into three areas: academics, individual growth, and community work. In all three areas, as much as the work allows, the curriculum is individualized, integrated across subjects, and hands-on.

Our school days include intense study within and outside of the school, learning from others in the environment around us, studying and discussing real-life issues, discovering real-life solutions, and serving and caring for our friends and neighbours. Through this blend of applying academic study to the real world, we embrace difficult problems, mistakes, and celebrate growth through these challenges. Through this approach, our curriculum meets and exceeds the Ontario Ministry requirements for grades 7 & 8, and aims to engage students in an exciting, personally relevant, and meaningful approach to learning.

Thank you for trusting us to provide your adolescent with an exceptional middle school experience. We look forward to watching and guiding his/her growth throughout these next two years.

Sincerely,

Middle School Core Staff

- b. Montessori Philosophy of the Prepared Environment and the Work of Adolescents
- i. The Montessori Philosophy of education suggests that the primary role of education is “preparation for life” and that our environments are one of our core teachers. At different stages of our infancy, childhood, and adolescence, we require different forms of preparation and thus, different environments to assist in optimal development. As practitioners of the Montessori method, we refer to classrooms as Prepared Environments. The physical space of the classroom, the activities, academic study, the social group of other students, and the teachers themselves are all part of the Prepared Environment. During adolescence, the Prepared Environment of a middle school community also includes the wider world, as students will frequently be interacting with adults other than teachers and family on an academic or semi-professional level. Because of this new expansion of the Prepared Environment, Dr. Montessori believed that a key element in the work of adolescents is how to work beside and with others in a collaborative, constructive, and courteous manner. Adolescence can be thought of as a trial run for adulthood and as such, we have prepared a Middle School program that aims to offer both extended, individualized opportunities for personal growth and a glimpse into some of the trials and tribulations we face in adulthood.
 - ii. Grace and Courtesy: Considered a hallmark of Montessori classrooms and an integral aspect of the path to adulthood, students in our program are given the tools and the opportunities to develop grace and courtesy by engaging with the environment and one another through meaningful work. We offer proactive guidance on politeness, becoming helpful, growing an awareness of others, and expectations of adult mannerisms. These moments are cultivated through on-going demonstrations, individual and group discussions, and daily expectations within the community.
 - iii. Freedom and Responsibility: Another pillar of Montessori classrooms is the balance between freedom and responsibility. As a part of the Clanmore Middle School program, we specifically help students focus on six areas key to the growth of managing newfound freedoms with new responsibilities of young adulthood. We offer students and their families remarks on these six areas on each report and have divided these areas into two broad sections.
 1. Responsibility: Organization, Collaboration, and Community
 2. Independence: Self-Regulation, Initiative, and Communication

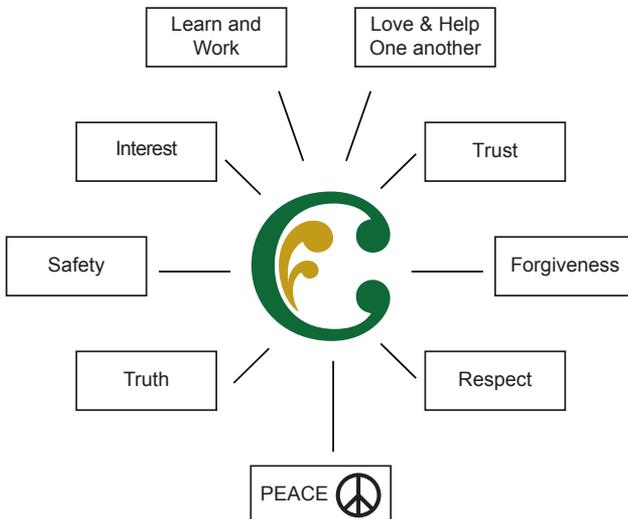
c. Clanmore Vision and Mission

- i. Our vision at Clanmore Montessori School is to offer a unique educational program for children from 18 months to 15 years. We offer a top quality environment which meets the total needs of the child and fosters family life. The program is based on the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, who developed an approach to children consistent with their natural development and their fundamental desire to learn.
- ii. Our mission is to provide the finest quality authentic Montessori prepared environment for children from 18 months to 15 years. Clanmore responds to and inspires each individual child in the school academically, intellectually, socially and emotionally and optimally prepares them for life.
- iii. For more information, please see our full vision and mission on our website, www.clanmore.ca.

d. Restitution and the Fab Five

- i. Restitution: creating the conditions where a child can fix his/her mistakes and return to the group strengthened.

Using the ideas of Diane Gossen on Restitution, at Clanmore we work to meet our needs of belonging, power, fun and freedom in an environment which endorses both our beliefs as well as the intrinsic motivation of each person. At Clanmore the children believe that we attend school to work and learn, to help ourselves and one another, to love and be loved, to be in an atmosphere of truth and respect and to be safe. Our ultimate goal is peace for all. Discussions and activities centre around these beliefs and are, of necessity, age appropriate and always aimed at offering independence and strengthening the individual within the community.



e. General Expectations of Students, Parents, and Staff

- i. The expectations outlined in this handbook are intended as a guide to maintain the environment of our school as a comfortable and safe place to be.
- ii. Rationale for Safety and Respect Policy
 1. We recognize that adolescence brings about new challenges both social and emotional. During this time of life, it is developmentally necessary for children to take on new challenges, begin to step away from only relying on family, and to build new peer groups. Additionally, because adolescents are taking their first steps into the wider world of adult society and law, we seek to help adolescents build a mature awareness of their own conduct. It is therefore necessary to offer clear expectations of conduct and the steps we will take to assist in the growth and correction of misconduct.
 2. Certain behaviours are appropriate because they facilitate a safe environment, effective teaching, and learning, while other behaviours are inappropriate because they interfere with these expectations.
 3. We understand that as an institute of learning, students will sometimes make mistakes. Our goal at Clanmore Montessori is not to emphasize the negative aspect of mistakes, but to treat each opportunity as a moment for growth. We therefore encourage all members of our community, including our faculty and staff, and your family, to embrace the opportunity for reflection, Restitution, and growth in these moments.
- iii. Students, Parents and Guardians, and Staff at all times shall:
 1. Be courteous to others
 2. Use acceptable language
 3. Actively participate in our collaborative community which facilitates the Montessori environment
 4. Resolve conflict in a peaceful manner
 5. Show respect for all individuals through one's behaviour and words
 6. Respect the building, its equipment, and personal property of all others
 7. Conduct themselves in a manner which allows each student, family member, and staff member to feel safe from physical abuse

2. Safety and Respect Policy

- a. In the event of misconduct, the situation may warrant one or more of the following responses. It is our goal to solve issues of misconduct with the lowest level of intervention possible. Please note that the Middle School family will not be contacted unless the staff believe the adolescent may require such notification in order to correct the issue or to fix a mistake. Adolescents, as they grow, require patience and time to reflect upon their conduct. We believe they are not only deserving of the chance to correct any issues, but deeply benefit from the process of guided reflection through Restitution that can occur. Family is undoubtedly an important pillar in the lives of teenagers, but we believe that an opportunity for self-reflection and growth must generally preempt intervention by the family in order for the adolescent to grow their sense of independence and responsibility.
 - i. Teacher or staff member directly involved will discuss the situation with student.
 - ii. Student advisor will offer one-on-one guidance for support and Restitution.
 - iii. Teacher or advisor will request a student/parent conference.
 - iv. Adolescent Coordinator will meet with student and parents to develop an appropriate Plan of Action to resolve any outstanding issues.
 - v. School Leadership will meet with Coordinator, teacher or staff member, student and parents to resolve any outstanding issues.
- b. Governance Structure of the School
 - i. Should the parent or guardian have a concern or grievance:
 1. Communicate the concern to the staff member most immediately involved. Often, this will be the class teacher. If the child raises the complaint, have them attend the meeting with the teacher as well. Often, concerns can be managed through this level of conversation.
 2. If the result of the interaction is not satisfactory, or if your concern is more general in nature, make an appointment to meet with the Adolescent Coordinator.
 3. If the issue cannot be resolved with the Adolescent Coordinator, it is at this point School Leadership may be contacted. Please inform School Leadership, in writing, of the concern in order to make an appointment.
- c. Communication with Team
 - i. Ongoing communication between the school, students, and their families plays a critical role in the Middle School program. We encourage you to touch base with our team on a regular basis. Part of the curriculum is designed to help build a communication bridge between each student and their family. We do this through the use of agendas, an advisor system, conferences, progress reports, and

open observations of our community, each of which are outlined below. Beyond this, we encourage you to make small contacts with the staff about a student's home life and any brief questions you might have.

Please note that impromptu discussions during school hours are difficult for teachers because their priority for attention must be given to the students in their care. Further, confidentiality is difficult to maintain in these circumstances, as other children and adults are nearby. We encourage you to request a meeting with your child's teacher or advisor if a longer conversation is needed.

- ii. Should you need to contact the Middle School staff directly, we can be contacted by email (teachers@clanmore.ca) or phone (905-337-8283) throughout the school day from 8:15 AM until 5 PM. Core teachers are happy to discuss issues or concerns with you, but please recognize that it may take 24-48 hours to return your phone call or email given the busy teaching schedule.

d. Disciplinary Tactics We Will Not Engage In

- i. Faculty and staff of Clanmore Montessori School are forbidden to engage in the following forms of discipline: corporal physical forms; loud, profane, threatening, frightening or abusive language.

e. Consideration of Circumstances

- i. Disciplinary responses will be administered when the safety and/ or respect of others or the individual has disrupted the order of the environment and to decrease the possibility that the misconduct will be repeated. Students will be treated with fairness, patience, and guidance through the Restitution process so that they may grow accordingly. Discipline will be based on a careful assessment of the circumstances of each case. Consideration will be given to:

1. The student's age
2. The seriousness of the offense
3. The frequency of misconduct
4. The student's attitude and displayed efforts to improve
5. The potential effect of the misconduct on the school environment

- f. Restitution and the Plan of Action. The incorporation of both these policies are done so with the belief that this approach will maximize teachable moments and ensure personal and community growth. Through the process of Restitution, the student has time to reflect on the underlying causes of their actions and to develop a response that is personally meaningful to his or herself, as well as to any person that may have been affected as well. The following list is not intended to be inclusive of all possible methods for completing a Plan of Action and the Restitution process:

- i. Writing a letter
 - ii. Completing independent research with a presentation on the issues
 - iii. Verbal apology
 - iv. Work assigned outside of school hours
 - v. Greatly reduced freedoms within the program
 - vi. Elimination from participation in school sponsored events
 - vii. Additional tasks to benefit the overall community
 - viii. Development of new daily habit which involves family and school
- g. Misconduct Samples and Clanmore's Responses

The following lists do not include all the types of misconduct and responses that might occur. Misconduct not listed will be subject to the discretionary authority of the teacher, Program Coordinator, and/or School Leadership.

- i. **Level 1** These types of misconduct:
 - Failure to bring required class materials or assigned work to class
 - Violation of classroom expectations of grace and courtesy
 - Horseplay or disruptive behaviour
 - Bringing, eating, and/or distributing non-approved foods to school
 - Rudeness or discourtesy during meetings and discussions
 - Failure to complete daily chores
 - Tardiness to classes
 - Failure to clean up personal work area
 - Violation of dress code expectations
 - Use of personal electronic device without permission
 - Misuse of school property, including computers

May warrant these types of consequences:

- Reminders
- Restrictions for recess
- Confiscation of disallowed item
- Loss of certain school privileges or freedoms
- Temporary change in uniform requirement
- Teacher/parent/student conference

ii. **Level 2** These types of misconduct:

- Repeated occurrence of any of the above
- Refusal to participate in classroom or community activities
- Leaving a teacher-supervised area without permission
- Use of profane/offensive language or gestures
- Plagiarism, cheating, or copying the work of another student

May warrant these types of consequences:

- Level 1 consequence
- Guidance through Restitution with School Leadership
- In-class disciplinary action
- Removal from the classroom
- Community Restitution
- Change in grade or work requirements [e.g. Plagiarism, cheating, etc]
- Loss of freedom
- Teacher/parent/student conference with Program Coordinator

iii. **Level 3** These types of misconduct:

- Bullying
- Harassment* or threats
- Fighting or purposely causing bodily injury
- Damage to property
- Stealing from the school or another individual
- Use, possession, or distribution of drugs, alcohol, or smoking/vaping materials
- Possession of any weapon or facsimile of a weapon

May warrant these types of consequences:

- Level 1 or 2 consequence
- Removal from school environment until School Leadership can complete an investigation
- Development (by staff, student, and family) of a Plan of Action to complete the path of Restitution
- Contact with law enforcement
- Requirement to fix or replace damaged property
- Assignment of additional work done away from the classroom

*Students explore relationships in a variety of ways depending on their age. The school seeks to educate all children on appropriate conduct at all levels. As children grow into adolescence a mature awareness of intrusive and unwanted contact must occur. Any action committed with another that is deemed unwelcome may be considered a form of harassment. This includes physical and verbal harassment and conduct with sexual overtones. Clanmore Montessori is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from harassment for its students and staff and reflects, instead, a community of mutual respect.

Cyber-Harassment and Cyber-Bullying: Technologies including (but not limited to) email, cell phones, and social media have, unfortunately, become outlets for harassment and bullying, which can often be especially damaging and corrosive. Adolescents need to know that the same basic rules of respect and courtesy apply to the use of these digital landscapes as they would to any other face-to-face communication. The school cannot presume to police the use of private internet services at home, and parents have an extremely important role to play in monitoring and guiding their child's conduct online. Nonetheless, off-site cyber-harassment and cyber-bullying very often spill directly into school relationships, targeting individuals or groups of students, and undermining their dignity and well-being as members of our community. Such incidents will warrant intervention and appropriate disciplinary action by the school.

It is Clanmore's preference that no situation will grow to the point of needing a serious response beyond what is listed in this policy. However, if deemed necessary by the School Leadership, suspension and the development of a Plan of Action with the staff, student, and family may be used in an effort to bring about acceptable behaviour. Failure to complete an agreed upon Restitution and Plan of Action may result in additional response by the school. School Leadership may terminate the enrollment of any student whose conduct is a danger to others or is in violation of local laws or otherwise seriously in conflict with school standards.

3. Responsibilities

a. Student and Family Responsibilities

i. Ongoing Communication with the Team

1. Agendas

- a. At the beginning of each year, Middle School students will receive an agenda that they will use to plan their time, record their homework assignments, and ensure that their work, both academic and community oriented, is being completed on time. All due dates, events, and reminders are to be recorded in their agendas. **The Middle School faculty does not regard the use of the agenda as optional.** Students are required to have their agenda with them for all meetings, classes, and lessons, and to take it home with them each evening. **Students are to review their agendas with their parents on a regular basis, at least once a week.** We strongly encourage families to make use of a visible, family calendar on which the student may transfer important due dates. Please consult your child's agenda before contacting the staff.
 - i. We strongly encourage students to add ALL obligations, school related or not, to their agenda. Students should make a habit of adding any tutoring, athletic practices, musical lessons, and family obligations to their agenda so they can clearly see ALL expectations and potential conflicts.

2. Advisor System

- a. Middle School students are assigned to one of the core staff of the Middle School as part of an advisory group. Academically, the advisor helps each student look at his/her work from a broad perspective, helps the student develop important skills such as time management, project planning, and general organization. Individually, advisors routinely check in with their students throughout the week and are available for one-on-one conversations to discuss various issues including stress, peer relations, behaviour, and other emotional issues.
- b. For Parent/Teacher Conferences, and Student-Led Conferences, please sign up for a time slot with your child's advisor.

3. Attendance, Arrival, Dismissal

- a. Attendance: In order that each student and the entire adolescent community benefit, we ask that students and parents make every effort to ensure regular attendance with minimal absences throughout the year. We understand the need for occasional absences (e.g. sickness, death in the family, high school visitations for Year 8 students, etc); however, we ask that you make every effort to minimize absences that could otherwise be avoided.

Please make sure that your vacation and travel plans work around our school schedule so that students can take part in the Middle School program that has been designed specifically for them. Absences from school not only set your own student back, but because of the collaborative nature of our community working and learning together, his/her classmates are also held back or left to fill in when someone is absent.

When an absence is absolutely necessary, please ensure at least one of the Middle School's core staff are notified (in advance if possible). Absences, regardless of reason, are noted on Middle School reports.

- b. Arrival and Dismissal: It is absolutely necessary that students arrive on time each day. Morning meeting starts promptly at 8:30 AM, so it is advised that students arrive no later than 8:15 AM to ensure that they are prepared for the day. Students must be sitting in the meeting circle, with their agenda and pencil pouch in appropriate attire before the meeting is called to order to be listed as "on time". We realize that there are valid reasons for occasional late arrival; however, where tardiness occurs often for a student, Middle School staff will be in contact with parents to ensure this is remedied. Students who arrive after morning meeting has ended are expected to independently check the meeting binder for important information to add to their agenda. Students who arrive after morning chores are expected to discuss with the group how they will make up for the missed community work. Tardies, regardless of reason, are noted on Middle School reports.

Dismissal occurs at 4 PM each day. While we do not walk students to their cars, we expect each student to say goodbye, preferably with a handshake, to at least one teacher. Before being dismissed for the day, students have daily chores to complete. We have scheduled enough time each day to ensure the chores can be completed by dismissal, but sometimes students may not have

completed their task efficiently or appropriately and thus will not be ready to leave until after 4 PM. We know that many of our students are involved in after school activities that require them to leave promptly at 4 PM. Parents, please discuss the importance of your children completing their jobs on time so that they can leave on time. Students will not be dismissed if they have not completed their daily chores. Additionally, on days when students will be working and/or studying outside of the school, students may arrive back to the school after 4 PM. Parents will be advised of this prior to the activity.

- c. Early Pick up: We understand that there may be an occasional need to pick up your child before the end of the school day. Students who will be picked up before 4 PM are required to organize coverage of their daily chores well before they leave, preferably during morning meeting. Students who frequently miss afternoon chores must resolve this community work with the group to find an acceptable balance in their responsibilities. Because we regard this community work as a part of the Middle School curriculum, please note that for every 3 early pickups, the student will accumulate one absence.

As with regular dismissal time, students who leave school early must say goodbye to at least one teacher before leaving school grounds.

4. Conferences & Progress Reports

- a. Throughout the year, there will be four formal meetings at which the students, parents, and teachers will meet to discuss the student's progress. The first of these meetings, the Goal Setting Conference will be a chance for the student and his/her parents to discuss desired areas of growth for the year. The second, the Parent/Teacher Conference, will be led by the teacher with the parents in attendance. The remaining two will be Student-Led Conferences. During these, the students are provided an opportunity to present their work and their reflections on how they have progressed, some challenges they have recognized, and to discuss possible action plans for improvement in their future work and engagement with the community. Additionally, two written reports will go home, one at the end of the 2nd quarter and another at the end of the 4th quarter. Where a particular issue arises that requires conversation outside of these meetings, parents and students are asked to request meetings with a student's advisor.

5. Observation

- a. All Clanmore parents are welcome to observe the Middle School at any time throughout the year. Please contact the Middle School core teachers to arrange an observation.
- b. Middle School parents are also invited to join the students for a student-catered lunch meeting. Please provide the Middle School core staff with a few days notice of your interest.

ii. Learning Needs

All students learn differently, but there are some students who have specific learning needs that require accommodations to help them be successful in the classroom. Clanmore has a process for developing a Personal Education Plan (PEP) for students who have identified learning needs. It is important that the school, the student, and the family work together to create this plan, based on professional reports, to ensure the student is supported in the most appropriate way.

Sometimes learning differences are not apparent until the middle school years, a period of time with both intense biological and psychological development and when there is an increase in the amount, and style, of academic output required of students. Where Middle School staff has concerns about the learning needs of a student, parents will be asked to meet to discuss next steps to support the student at school.

1. PEP and Assessments

- a. A PEP will only be developed by Clanmore Montessori School if a professional psychological, educational, or medical assessment has been completed and the report shared with staff. Completed PEPs will be kept on file and can be accessed by our PEP Development Staff, the student's current teachers, and the student. Students with PEPs will have this noted on the front cover of middle school reports.
- b. A copy of the PEP will be kept by the student in his/her Middle School portfolio binder (provided by the school) and can, and should, be accessed on a regular basis. Students with PEPs are strongly encouraged to make discussing their PEP both with their teachers, and their advisor a priority, so that they can make the best use of this resource.
- c. Family members will also receive a copy of a completed PEP and should make a regular effort to discuss the strategies and expectations with their child. PEPs are a required part of Student-Led Conferences.

2. Accommodations vs Modifications

- a. Accommodations are tools that allow a student to complete the same material as his/her peers. Common examples include teacher-selected seating, receiving extra time to complete an assignment or test, physical apparatus to improve reading comprehension, or listening to a recording.
- b. Modifications are changes to the curriculum. Students with modifications are not expected to learn the same content as their peers. Students who receive modifications in any subject area will have this noted on their reports.

iii. Agendas, Locker/Cubby Organization

In addition to the daily use of agendas (see section above), students are expected to practice good organizational skills with their locker and cubby. Lockers should be free of trash, food, and dirty clothing. Cubbies should be kept organized and free of loose items. At regular intervals throughout the year, the Middle School community participates in a deep clean of the environment; however, maintenance of a student's locker and cubby space is a daily expectation. Additionally, we strongly encourage parents to carry over the expectations of an organized personal space to their child's home.

iv. Dress code

With the exception of Odyssey, at all times, students must wear a watch.

1. Daily Wear: The Middle School is a place where students can begin to wear their choice of clothing. On most days, students should arrive wearing presentable attire that is appropriate for a learning environment or the planned activity. Middle School guides will help students create an appropriate daily dress code that reflects the maturity and responsibilities expected of this age during the first week of school. Upon completion, this guide will be posted in the classroom and emailed to the students and families.
 - a. Students are expected to keep a pair of indoor shoes in their locker at all times. These will be worn daily and are only to be taken home if the student is intending to replace them the following day.
2. Physical Expression: On gym days and other P.E. related outings, students are required to wear the full Clanmore gym uniform, including a Clanmore t-shirt, shorts, and tracksuit if necessary. Some students may wish to keep this in their lockers, taking it home every other week to wash.

- a. Indoor gym shoes **MUST** be kept at school. These may also be the daily indoor shoes, as long as they are appropriate for wearing in the gym (non-marking).
 - b. Students **MUST** also have a change of clothes on gym days in order to participate. This is part of helping adolescents recognize their changing bodies and to appropriately care for themselves. For this reason, students without a change of clothes, or without indoor gym shoes, may be required to observe only, instead of participate.
 - c. While attending PSAA and off-campus sporting events, students are required to stay in the Clanmore jersey and/or uniform.
3. Business Casual: For some events, students are asked to wear business casual clothing. This is discussed at length, with “fashion shows” throughout the school year, and is included in the details on the dress code. By far, this is one of the most nuanced expectations of the Middle School environment. We ask that families be directly involved in the discussion and selection of appropriate clothing on business casual days. Adolescents naturally want to be as comfortable as possible and tend to dress well below the expectation of business casual on their first tries. Please don’t hesitate to give constructive feedback to your child!
4. #1s: For formal engagements and presentations, students are required to wear their #1s, or full school uniform. This includes the Clanmore blazer and tie, an ironed white, button down shirt, appropriate Clanmore pants or skirt, appropriate socks or tights, and black dress shoes.
 - a. It is the expectation that students are able to wear this uniform throughout the two year program. At times, it may be necessary to purchase new dress shoes for your child. Students are expected to wear the appropriate uniform when it is required.
 - b. Year 8 students are reminded that grad pictures often occur after many of them have experienced a growth spurt! We understand this happens and do **NOT** expect students to purchase a new blazer for the last few months of school. However, shirts, pants/skirt, socks, and shoes are all items that should be regularly updated for your size.

b. Program Participation

Montessori Adolescent communities are built upon the idea that teenagers need access to, and practice with, working collaboratively in a kind of miniature society. In order to learn about themselves and the adult world they will soon join, we have included several program components that are mandatory for all students.

These academic and community components build an invisible backbone of collaboration, self-reflection, and maturity that are key elements to the Middle School program at Clanmore Montessori School. They help form an intentional community which depends upon the conscious choice of each individual to contribute. Taken as a whole, these program components help students grow six key skills of responsibility and independence: Organization, Collaboration, Community, Self-Regulation, Initiative, and Communication.

Joining the Middle School program means that a student (with the support of his/her family) will strive to participate in all aspects of the program. Refusal to participate in these components may require removal from the program. Each of these components are scheduled well in advance, so we advise students to not only have these events in their agenda, but to share those dates with family at home.

- i. Odyssey, Theater, MMUN, Science Fair, PLACE Project, Graduation
 1. Odyssey: At the beginning of each school year, the Adolescent Community prepares for a multi-day trip in order for the group to practice working together, communicating clearly, and building a positive community. Without the participation of students in the summer, to prepare snacks and meals, this trip would not be possible.
 2. Theater and MMUN: The Middle School has a two year curriculum cycle. In one year, we focus on Canadian History and develop a Theater program by working together. In the next year, we focus on International History and participate in the Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN) program in New York City by working with students outside of our school. In both cases, students are required to work together, and deeply depend on one another's participation. With this collaboration, students find they are capable of producing an entire play and arguing real life matters at the United Nations. Students who are unable to participate in the final rehearsals and performance of our play, or who do not attend the MMUN conference, leave their classmates in extremely difficult positions.
 3. Science Fair and PLACE Project: Each year, students participate in a Science Fair and every other year (during our Canadian History cycle), students work with historians at the Oakville Historical Society to research a part of our local history with the PLACE Project. These are opportunities for the students to present to people other than their peers, to experience large

scale, complex, and/or deep research. Somewhat distinct from our quarterly ISPs (Individual Study Projects), these two projects in particular push students into more mature heights of academic study and publication.

4. Graduation: We celebrate the path students have taken to complete their journey here at Clanmore. At the end of each school year with the help of a guide, Year 7 students will plan a graduation ceremony, budget expenses, collect decorations and groceries, and prepare for an evening of celebration. On the day of graduation, we ask that all Year 7 parents help with the preparation, decoration, and clean up of the service. Year 8 students will prepare a thoughtful speech and arrive on time in appropriate dress (between business and formal). On the day of Graduation, Year 8 students are dismissed by noon.

ii. Lunch Program and Snacks

1. Lunch Program: With an interest in encouraging cooperative work, independence, and nutritional maturity, students prepare and eat lunch together four times per week. All students complete the Ontario Food Handling Certification course upon entry to the Middle School. On a rotational basis, students are responsible for planning a nutritious meal, having it approved by a guide and the Lunch Manager, shopping for the meal, and preparing it for their classmates. Daily cooks are responsible for clean up. In preparation for this part of the program, guides will show all students how to travel safely to the Sobeys grocery store (511 Maple Grove Dr.) using local transit. In subsequent weeks, students will travel to Sobeys without adult supervision.
 - a. Allergies: Clanmore does not bring peanuts or tree nuts and/or foods that may contain these into the school. Where a student has a nut or other food allergy, parents are asked to ensure that this is identified on the student's current medical form and that if necessary, Epi-pens or other allergy related medications are on hand in case of emergency as per the Clanmore anaphylaxis policy. Food items that are brought to school must be free of tree nuts and/or peanuts in any form. Please read labels to ensure that items delivered to school do not contain peanuts or tree nuts.
 - b. Dietary Restrictions: We recognize that students and families may follow specific restrictions for a variety of reasons (No pork, no dairy, vegetarian, etc). While we will try to accommodate most restrictions, we have not designed our program to be limited by these restrictions. On days that the students are cooking a meal that a student with a food restriction can not eat, we will inform them in advance if an accommodation is possible (such

as creating a vegetarian version), or if the student should bring an additional lunch. Additionally, we strongly encourage students with food restrictions to volunteer to choose one of the monthly menu items to ensure that there will be a meal just for them.

- c. Food Preferences: As an important part of the program, we require all students to try each part of a prepared meal (with the exception of those with food restrictions) each time it is made, not just the first time. Teenagers are often reluctant to explore cuisine outside of their favourites, but we have found that with steady encouragement and modeling from guides along with the requirement that ALL students try the food, most students leave our program after two years with a much matured palate. Please do NOT send students to school with extra food just because they have said they don't "like" a meal. Please encourage your children to participate in cooking and shopping at home, and to try new foods regularly. Rest assured, students have access to leftover lunches and snacks and will not spend the day hungry.
 - d. Pizza/Sub Day: The Clanmore Parent Association organizes a Pizza/Sub Lunch on Mondays. Families have the option of signing up for this program or sending their children to school with a packed lunch on these days. If packing a lunch, please include wholesome, nutritious options that limit sugary sweets and soda. Students may use the Farmhouse kitchen to heat their lunch, but will be responsible for cleaning any item they use.
 - e. Water Bottle: Students should keep one water bottle at school to use during the day.
2. Snacks: Snack is provided each day for Middle School students. On a rotational basis, students are responsible for completing any necessary prep work, setting out or serving the snack, and cleaning up at the end of the day. Snack usually consists of a vegetable or fruit and a carbohydrate (crackers, Goldfish, chips and salsa, etc.). Students may request that the Food Manager add additional items be added to the weekly grocery list to supplement this snack, such as cheese, ranch dressing, Wow Butter, etc.).
 - a. Please do not send extra snacks with your child to school without first discussing it with the Middle School guides. We have found that students who bring additional snacks to school often try to skip lunch or attempt to eat out of their locker or in the bathroom. Additionally, this leaves the program with an enormous amount of food waste.

iii. MicroEconomy: Markets and Crossroads Cafe

In preparation for the adult world, Dr. Montessori recognized that adolescents want to engage in economies. From this idea, she created the concept of a “microeconomy”. Our community has a bank account, deals with real cash, and practices the creation of products for sale. Through this aspect of the program, students begin to get a better feel for money, planning, marketing, collaboration, and communication through service and sales. To be clear, the purpose of this part of our program is not to teach students that making money is the only goal. Problem solving, budgeting, recognizing areas of improvement, and real world mechanics all come into play.

1. Markets: Throughout each school year, the Middle School community will host 3-5 markets. At these events, students will sell products they have made themselves. Students often work in small groups to select, build/make, market, and sell the items. Much of this organization is the work of a Market Manager. Please check the school calendar to ensure that your child is able to attend each market.
2. Crossroads Cafe: Most Fridays throughout the school year, the students host a Cafe in the Link (the hallway that connects the Farmhouse to the rest of the school, just outside the art room). On a rotational basis, students work together to plan a breakfast, shop for ingredients, cook, make coffee, serve, and wash dishes.
 - a. Arrival: Students who are currently on the cafe rotation are required to be at school by 8 AM in order to help the rest of the group prepare. Students who arrive after 8 AM, who are on the cafe rotation, will be marked late.
 - b. Dress Code: Students working the cafe are expected to be in their #1s, without their blazer. Shirts should be pressed or ironed and black dress shoes must be worn. Students who are on the cafe rotation but arrive out of dress code will be limited to dish washing.
 - c. Tipping and Critiques: We recognize that when you see your child working in the cafe, you may be tempted to offer a larger-than-average tip for the service or possibly gloss over poor service or poorly cooked food. Because the cafe is part of helping the students understand how economies, budgets, organization, and attention to detail work, we ask that you refrain from tipping over 20%. Additionally, should you find that the service is slow or food has been prepared poorly or incorrectly, please do not hesitate to offer gentle feedback to the students. We want them to experience reality and be able to reflect on their work with a new level of maturity.

iv. Care of the Environment

Throughout the day and week, students are expected to participate in chores that benefit the Middle School environment and their community. Students are assigned to various chores on a rotational basis and will stay with that chore for 2-3 weeks. This allows students to become more proficient and effective at each job, while learning the nuances it requires. Students are responsible to the chore they complete, as well as to the partner who helps them. We have allocated 15 minutes in the morning and afternoon for this work. Students who are absent during chores are expected to discuss with their partner, in advance, how the work will be made up. This work is mentioned, in part on the report, as a part of the community and communication marks. Chores include, but are not limited to:

1. Cleaning bathrooms (floors, surfaces, toilets)
2. Cleaning the kitchen (emptying dishwasher, hand washing, sweeping)
3. Preparing snack or lunch
4. Caring for the garden
5. Care of the classroom environments including the basement
6. Acting as the class meeting moderator
7. Acting as a job checker
8. (Like all chores, the position of job checker is rotated throughout the school year. It is the expectation of our community that the job checker holds each student accountable for the expected work. Should a job checker approve a chore that is actually unfinished, the job checker then becomes responsible for finishing this task. This is one example of how we help students practice leadership and communication, by facilitating cooperation and having high expectations for attention to detail. Job checkers are dismissed by 4:05 PM.)

c. Academic Work

i. Academic Honesty

1. In preparation for adulthood, it is imperative that students experience authentic growth through their own academic efforts. Without the honest representation of their own work, students cannot clearly reflect on areas of needed growth, correctly gauge their next steps with independence, cannot advocate for help, and cannot gain appropriate critical thinking skills necessary for participation in adult life. Thus, practices such as plagiarism and cheating are subject to review under the Safety and Respect Policy.

a. Plagiarism includes:

- i. Submission of work that is not the original work of the student
- ii. Using the work of others without appropriate citation
- iii. Using online translation sites
 1. As a part of the Middle School program, we teach MLA citation including building a works cited page, appropriately quoting text, use of in-text citations, paraphrasing, and summarization.

b. Cheating includes:

- i. Using notes or other aids that have not been approved during a test or graded activity
- ii. Submitting work that is, in part or in whole, written by someone other than the student
- iii. Copying or allowing another student to copy work during a test or graded assignment

ii. Homework & ISPs

Clanmore Montessori seeks to offer a robust and rigorous academic curriculum cycle that spans two years. Some skills are taught every other year, while some skills are built upon over two years. Through conversation with our graduates and their families, we have found that the academic expectations are excellent preparation for the new challenges that await during high school.

1. Homework: Homework is a reality of Middle School life and it is important that students learn to effectively plan for and complete their homework regularly. There will be tests to study for, papers to complete, projects to design, materials to collect, and reading to accomplish. The amount of homework that a student brings home depends on his or her ability to complete the work during the school day, as well as the ability to plan ahead for upcoming assignments, community tasks, or tests. The student agenda is a key tool for this purpose. Additionally, there is time allotted throughout most days that allow for students to complete their work so they can minimize homework (e.g. class time, open and independent work periods, before and after school).

In general, Middle School students should not, on a regular basis, have more than one hour of homework per night. On most nights, this should be lower. On a few nights, potentially in advance of a presentation, this amount might be greater. As a part of their daily routine, families should assist their children in organizing their afternoon so that he/she can set aside about one hour for this purpose (preferably in the early afternoon or evening). Where you notice that your child is struggling with homework, please let the guides know so that we can develop a clear plan to ensure that the student can find success in completing the work.

- a. Independent reading: In general, the Middle School does not have a set time for students to complete their required novels during school hours. Students are welcome to use available open work time, but this will often not be sufficient to complete weekly readings. We strongly encourage students to make a daily habit of reading novels, as opposed to cramming several dozen pages the night before the due date. Assigning 10-15 minutes of afternoon homework to reading can create a solid, life long habit.
2. ISPs: Independent Study Projects (ISP) are a key component of each quarter within the school year. In most cases, each quarter, students will have one ISP for Humanities and one ISP for Occupations (science). In general, each class has four weeks of the quarter, with the first two weeks of the class introducing the current focus of study, and the second two weeks devoted to ISP work. In preparation for the ISP period, students will choose, and have approved by the content teacher, a topic of study that connects to the quarterly focus and is sufficiently rigorous for the individual student.

During these two weeks, students should have library books and/or appropriate materials to work on their project during school hours. Inevitably, some of the work will need to be completed at home, but we stress for students to make the most use of their time by conferencing with the teacher while they are at school. These two weeks are structured like an open work period to allow students to practice time management, self-regulation, and self-advocacy. Students will often be working on different elements of their project during this time, but this time is not considered “free time.” We strongly encourage families to check in with the calendars provided by the Middle School to be aware when students are in these two week ISP periods, and to ask about upcoming presentations.

ISPs often, but not always, include an oral presentation, a written component, a creative component, and documentation of sources. Additional requirements are always listed well in advance and are listed on corresponding rubrics.

- a. Library and External Sources:
 - i. Library Books: Because of the wide range of choice students have in selecting topics for research, it is not possible for the Middle School to supply authoritative resources on everything. For ISPs, guides expect students with approved topics to visit the local library in advance of the two week ISP period to collect relevant books on their desired topics. Unless explicitly noted in the ISP instructions, students should NOT submit work that primarily or completely derives from online sources. Please ensure your child has an up to date library card and makes time to collect the necessary resources.
 - ii. External Sources: Students are not limited to books as a part of their research. Whenever possible, students are strongly encouraged to visit places of interest and work with knowledgeable adults. These types of primary research are keys to highly engaging and personally relevant research. With approval from the subject teacher, such visits or work shadows will not count as an absence/late. Students interested should discuss the expectations of the visit and understand how to document the work in advance of the visit.
3. Late and Missing Assignments: Students who are absent are wholly responsible for requesting and arranging make-up work and lessons with teachers, as well as turning in missing assignments. In the case of a missed presentation, the student must arrange with the teacher an appropriate time to present to the group. Assignments that are not turned in may be marked as missing. Assignments which are turned in late may be subject to new requirements as necessary. Students who frequently have incomplete, late, or missing assignments may require a parent teacher conference in order to create a Plan of Action to bring the student up to speed.

d. Technology Access and Usage Policy

Clanmore Montessori recognizes the need for students to have access to, and practice with, online research and digital tools. Additionally, the use of computers for the purpose of research and projects are some of the most important first steps to learning appropriate online etiquette and digital citizenship. We encourage the use of technology for creation, rather than empty consumption, and to that end we strongly discourage multi-tasking and recreational use of computers. As such, students do not have an expectation of privacy while using school technology. Student account history is monitored at random to ensure acceptable and appropriate use.

- i. Computers: At the beginning of year seven, all students will be provided with an @clanmore.ca Google account. This will give them access to a variety of apps, most notably Documents, Spreadsheet, and Presentation. These accounts, and therefore much of the students' work, can be accessed from any computer, or device with internet access. For their protection and to help students practice online etiquette with trained adults, student email accounts only have access to other clanmore.ca email addresses. Students can neither email outside of our network nor receive external emails.

At school, students are permitted to access this account only from the classroom Chromebooks. Students are not to bring personal computers to school. Exceptions may be made where a student requires his/her personal computer to access assistive technology for specific learning needs, or where the student has been given prior permission for a specific activity in advance.

Unacceptable use of school computers includes, but is not limited to:

1. Physical damage to the equipment
2. Accessing or transmitting any material which violates any legal regulations including threatening or obscene materials, hateful, racist, or discriminatory materials, or materials that violate copyright laws.
3. Wilful transmission or creation of viruses, spam, or hoaxes
4. Engaging in any form of harassment
5. Accessing personal (non clanmore.ca) email accounts
6. Accessing any account which does not belong to the student for any purpose
7. Sharing personal passwords with other students
8. Changing personal passwords without permission from the Program Coordinator
9. Downloading programs or apps without the express permission of the Program Coordinator
10. Removal of programs or apps from the Chromebook
11. Altering the keymapping of the Chromebook
12. Deleting internet usage history and/or use of virtual private networks (VPN)
13. Use of personal headphones without prior permission

14. Visitation to any internet sites which have either been expressly forbidden or are deemed not to have educational value
 15. Publishing documents, pictures, or digital materials created on school computers on social media without authorization from Clanmore's Communication Coordinator
- ii. **Personal Phones and Electronics:** Cell phones, digital music players, and other personal electronics are not to be used on school property. It is the expectation that any such tech is powered OFF, not simply turned to silent, as teenagers often find the temptation of such devices too powerful to resist during the school day. If a student needs to contact his/her parent or family member throughout the day, a school telephone is available for this purpose. Use of this phone must be requested first through a guide so that we can determine if the call is necessary.
 - iii. **Cameras:** The Middle School currently has school cameras available for student use. Unless otherwise specified by the guides, students may not bring personal cameras to school. Use of the school cameras is limited to taking pictures or videos for the purpose of completing an assignment or documenting community activities. Photos and videos may not be shared off the clanmore.ca network or on any social media without authorization from Clanmore's Communication Coordinator and storage devices for cameras may only be used with school property. Students may not photograph or take video of any individual (student, staff member, or other persons on school grounds) without their knowledge and express consent. Use of cameras while on school property falls under the Safety and Respect Policy in this handbook as well as Clanmore's Photo Privacy Policy and misuse is subject to consequences as determined by Middle School Guides and School Leadership.
 - iv. **Personal Smart Tech:** Smart tech, such as wearable fitness technology, may or may not be permitted. As technology develops, the Middle School core staff will review new items as they become available. Students should assume they do NOT have permission to bring or wear smart tech to school without prior permission.

e. Open and Unsupervised Periods

In preparation for adulthood, our program helps young adolescents build responsibility and independence. Dr. Montessori believed that having the freedom to act meaningfully, through developmentally appropriate activities and opportunities was a key factor in the development of a responsible, independent adult. Freedom, in the Montessori sense, does not mean unrestrained direction or chaos. Instead, freedom offered in a Montessori environment is purposeful and designed to enhance self-regulation, direction, growth, and reflection. In this way then, freedom is inextricably tied to discipline, or limits.

Adolescents do need limits for their own safety, but they are also finally at an age when they can begin to recognize those safe limits for themselves. They must have enough freedom to act with individual drive in order to truly mature. Through a variety of program initiatives, we offer students carefully chosen freedoms to help them build this discipline. We have outlined these initiatives below.

In the event a student is unable to abide by the expectations of the Safety and Respect Policy in this handbook, access to any of the following open and unsupervised periods may be restricted.

i. Recess

1. Middle school students are provided recess time each day. Students are not directly supervised throughout this time, although one of the Middle School staff is always in the building and can be accessed if needed. At the beginning of the year, the class meets to determine agreed upon areas that the students can be during their recess time. The yard and rolling hills to the East of the school are common places for Middle School recess. Places further afield require permission from the guides and in such cases, it is absolutely mandatory that students be accompanied by another Middle School student. Students may also request the use of the gym during morning meeting, but should be aware that this may not always be granted. In general, we strongly encourage students to head outside during recess when weather permits.
 - a. Watches: Students who are not wearing a watch may have their recess limited. It is not sufficient for one member of the group to be responsible for the others. Wearing a watch and monitoring his/her own time to return to class promptly is each student's responsibility.

ii. Grocery Shopping

1. On most weeks, two students will go grocery shopping together to Sobey's (511 Maple Grove Dr.). As mentioned in the Lunch Program section under Program Participation, students initially practice this trip with the help of a guide. Grocery shopping is considered a part of our community work. The students who

are responsible each week should have this task noted in their agenda at least one week in advance. Students prepare for the trip by checking the shopping list against items the kitchen already has in stock, collect a travel pouch, and shopping bags, then walk themselves to the bus stop at Lakeshore and Maple Grove. The travel pouch contains transportation cards, a debit card, a pen, a restricted-use cell phone, and what to do in case of an emergency. Grocery shopping generally takes about two and a half hours. Students who are scheduled for shopping are reminded to check the weather and bring appropriate coats and shoes to wear.

- a. Students will use a debit card which belongs to the Middle School. No other purchases, other than the items listed on the grocery list, are to be purchased with this card. Students are responsible for keeping track of the travel pouch, the debit card, and all transportation cards while they are off school property.
- b. Students who wish to bring their own cash, to purchase a drink or snack after shopping, if time permits, should discuss this option with their family. The Middle School neither encourages nor restricts this choice.
- c. Although students are not currently on school property while grocery shopping, they are still participating in a school activity and representing the school.

iii. Open Work

1. Throughout the school week, students have periods of open work. During these times, there are no specific classes being held. Instead, students are advised and encouraged to use this time productively. Many will opt to complete unfinished classwork, work on a project or continue research, read the current novel, complete community tasks, or even meet in small groups for various projects. The time may also be used for music practice, meeting with available teachers for extra help, journaling, or occasionally taking a short 5-10 minute active break.

Core teachers will generally not require students to work on any specific task, but class rules still apply. Computers must be used for school purposes only and students are expected to be using their time in a purposeful manner. Throughout the two year program, many students grow to make great use of this time. Those who do almost consistently end up with less homework because they have used their time productively at school. As a matter of daily or weekly conversation, we encourage parents to ask how their children used these open work periods.

- a. Cooking: On a rotational basis, students will be asked to cook on days that have open work periods. Students are more than welcome to rearrange their cooking duties with other students in order to not miss these open work periods, but it is likely to happen a few times throughout the school year. This is absolutely a feature of the program. Students must keep note of their responsibilities in their agenda so they can plan ahead for the week, not just for the day.

iv. Quiet Study

1. From 4-5 PM, Middle School students are welcome to stay in the Farmhouse on the main floor in order to complete homework, read, or complete other tasks. Students who stay will not be charged as part of the after school program, but must inform after school staff of their presence and departure each day. We strongly encourage students to make use of this time to complete their work at least once a week. Building the habit of immediately working on school tasks before heading home can be powerful preparation for high school.
 - a. Students who stay during this time are welcome to help themselves to lunch and snack leftovers in the Farmhouse kitchen, but are responsible for washing their own dishes.
 - b. Cell phones should not be used at this time.
 - c. Students may NOT be anywhere other than the main floor of the Farmhouse without the permission and knowledge of the after school staff.
 - d. Pick up should happen through the front door of the school as the Farmhouse is locked at 4pm.

v. Outings

1. On some outings, there will be opportunities for students to move about without the immediate presence of a staff member. During this time, students will be expected to adhere to the following procedures:
 - a. Stay with your partner or group at all times.
 - b. Wear your watch, know what time to return to the designated meeting point, and return on time.
 - c. Know where and how to contact nearby staff members.
 - d. Know the exact limitations of the area you may be in and do not, under any circumstances, leave those boundaries.
2. Students who are unable or unwilling to abide by the expectations of the Safety and Respect Policy of this handbook may not be permitted to join the group on the outing, or may have their freedom restricted while on the outing.

4. Information

a. Illness

Please see the Clanmore calendar for the school Health Policy and Periods of Exclusion.

b. Lost and Found

To avoid lost items, please ensure that your son or daughter labels all of his/her clothing, personal and school-related items. In the instance that something is misplaced, a lost and found box is located inside the door of the Art Studio. It should be checked often.

c. School Closings

In the event of inclement weather, Clanmore will be closed if Halton Schools are closed. For all other closures, you will be notified by email.

d. Volunteering

Throughout the time that your son or daughter has attended Clanmore, you may have offered many enjoyable hours as a volunteer. Parent volunteer opportunities are less available in the Middle School for a particular reason. Dr. Montessori believed that adolescents need sufficient time away from their families in order to explore and develop an independent sense of self. A parent in the classroom can be somewhat challenging to negotiate for the middle school student. The Middle School Staff will call on parents when absolutely necessary, but the emphasis in the middle school will be on utilizing adults who are other than parents with current students in the program.

This doesn't limit your ability to volunteer at the school. School programs (e.g. Listening to Reading, etc.), as well as the Parent Association offer unending ways to be involved. Please plan to take part in these whole-school opportunities alongside your son or daughter.

5. Suggested Readings

a. Montessori Resources

- i. [From Childhood to Adolescence](#) by Maria Montessori
- ii. [Education and Peace](#) by Maria Montessori
- iii. *"Occupations Projects, the Micro-Economy, and Student Managers: Meeting the Needs of Adolescents"* by Laurie Ewert-Krocker (<http://www.montessori-namta.org/PDF/ewert-krockeroccupations.pdf>)

b. Resources on Adolescence and Best Practices

- i. [Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience](#) by Mihaylyi Csikszentmihalyi
- ii. [Attack of the Teenage Brain! Understanding and Supporting the Weird and Wonderful Adolescent Learner](#) by John Medina
- iii. [Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain](#) by Daniel J. Siegel
- iv. [Escaping the Endless Adolescence: How We Can Help Our Teenagers Grow Up Before They Grow Old](#) by J. Allen and C. Worrell Allen

6. Parent/Child Sign off

Acknowledgment and Commitment

I have reviewed Clanmore Montessori School Middle School Handbook, the Safety and Respect Policy, the responsibilities of students and parents, the expectations of program participation, the overview of academic work, open and unsupervised periods, and the technology access and usage policy and agree at all times to adhere to and be bound by the terms, including the process of Restitution and any consequences of non-compliance.

Student Signature: _____

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Parent Name: _____

Date: _____

