Scope

The California Montessori Project ("Charter School") policy is to comply with applicable federal and state laws and regulations. The Charter School is the local agency primarily responsible for compliance with federal and state laws and regulations governing educational programs. Pursuant to this policy, persons responsible for conducting investigations shall be knowledgeable about the laws and programs which they are assigned to investigate. This complaint procedure is adopted to provide a uniform system of complaint processing for the following types of complaints:

(1) Complaints of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying against any protected group, including actual or perceived discrimination, on the actual or perceived characteristics of basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, ethnic group identification, race or ethnicity, ancestry, nationality, national origin, immigration status/citizenship, religion, color, or mental or physical disability, medical condition, marital status or on the basis of a person’s association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics in any Charter School program or activity; and

(2) Complaints of violations of state or federal law and regulations governing the following programs including but not limited to: Every Student Succeeds Act / No Child Left Behind Act (2001) Programs (Titles I-VII), including improving academic achievement, compensatory education, limited English proficiency, and migrant education, special education, Pupils from Military Families, Migratory Pupils, Accommodations for Pregnant and Parenting Pupils, Title II, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, consolidated categorical aid, migrant education, career technical and technical education training programs, child care and development programs, child nutrition program, foster and homeless youth services.

(3) Complaints alleging that a pupil enrolled in a public school was required to pay a pupil fee for participation in an educational activity as those terms are defined below.

   a. “Educational activity” means an activity offered by a school, school district, charter school or county office of education that constitutes an integral fundamental part of elementary and secondary education, including, but not limited to, curricular and extracurricular activities.

   b. “Pupil fee” means a fee, deposit or other charge imposed on pupils, or a pupil’s parents or guardians, in violation of Section 49011 of the Education Code and Section 5 of Article IX of the California Constitution, which require educational activities to be provided free of charge to all pupils without regard to their families’ ability or willingness to pay fees or request special waivers, as provided for in Hartzell v. Connell (1984) 35 Cal.3d 899. A pupil fee includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:
A fee charged to a pupil as a condition for registering for school or classes, or as a condition for participation in a class or an extracurricular activity, regardless of whether the class or activity is elective or compulsory, or is for credit.

A purchase that a pupil is required to make to obtain materials, supplies, equipment or uniforms associated with an educational activity.

c. A pupil fees complaint may be filed anonymously if the complaint provides evidence or information leading to evidence to support an allegation of noncompliance with laws relating to pupil fees.

d. If the Charter School finds merit in a pupil fees complaint the Charter School shall provide a remedy to all affected pupils, parents, and guardians that, where applicable, includes reasonable efforts by the Charter School to ensure full reimbursement to all affected pupils, parents, and guardians, subject to procedures established through regulations adopted by the state board.

e. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to prohibit solicitation of voluntary donations of funds or property, voluntary participation in fundraising activities, or school districts, school, and other entities from providing pupils prizes or other recognition for voluntarily participating in fundraising activities.

(4) Complaints of noncompliance with the requirements governing the Local Control Funding Formula, Local Control and Accountability Plans, or Sections 47606.5 and 47607.3 of the Education Code, as applicable.

(5) Complaints that of noncompliance with the requirements of Education Code section 222 regarding the rights of reasonable accommodations have not been made for lactating pupils on campus.

(6) Complaints of noncompliance with the requirements of Education Code Section 48645.7 regarding the rights of juvenile court school pupils when they become entitled to a diploma.

(7) Complaints of violations of state or federal law and regulations governing bullying and harassment claims.

The Charter School prohibits any form of retaliation against any complainant in the complaint process, including but not limited to a complainant’s filing of a complaint or the reporting of instances of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying. Such participation shall not in any way affect the status, grades or work assignments of the complainant.

Compliance Officers

The Governing Board designates the following compliance officer(s) to receive and investigate complaints and to ensure the Charter School’s compliance with law:

California Montessori Project – American River Campus
The Principal or designee shall ensure that employees designated to investigate complaints are
knowledgeable about the laws and programs for which they are responsible. Designated employees may have access to legal counsel as determined by the Principal or designee.

Notifications

The Principal or designee Charter School shall annually provide written notification of the Charter School’s uniform complaint procedures to students, employees, parents/guardians, the Governing Board, appropriate advisory committees, private school officials or representatives, and other interested parties.

The annual notice shall be in English. Pursuant to Education Code Section 48985, if fifteen (15) percent or more of the pupils enrolled in the Charter School speak a single primary language other than English, this annual notice will also be provided to the parent or guardian of any such pupils in their primary language.

The Principal or designee shall make available copies of the Charter School’s uniform complaint procedures free of charge.

The notice shall:

1. Identify the person(s), position(s), or unit(s) responsible for receiving complaints.

2. Advise the complainant of any civil law remedies that may be available to him/her under state or federal discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying laws, if applicable, and of the appeal pursuant to Education Code Section 262.3, discrimination laws, if applicable.

3. Advise the complainant of the appeal process pursuant to Education Code Section 262.3, including the complainant’s right to take the complaint directly to the California Department of Education (“CDE”) or to pursue remedies before civil courts or other public agencies.

a. The Charter School is primarily responsible for compliance with state and federal laws and regulations;

b. A pupil enrolled in a public school shall not be required to pay a pupil fee for participation in an educational activity.

b. The complaint review shall be completed within sixty (60) calendar days from the date of receipt of the complaint unless the complainant agrees in writing to an extension of the timeline;

d. Copies of the local educational agency complaint procedures shall be available free of charge.

Procedures

The following procedures shall be used to address all complaints which allege that the Charter School has violated federal or state laws or regulations governing educational programs. The Compliance
Officers shall maintain a record of each complaint and subsequent related actions.

All parties involved in allegations shall be notified when a complaint is filed, when a complaint meeting or hearing is scheduled, and when a decision or ruling is made.

Any individual, public agency, or organization may file a written complaint of alleged noncompliance by the Charter School.

A complaint alleging unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying shall be initiated no later than six (6) months from the date when the alleged unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying occurred, or six (6) months from the date when the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying. A complaint may be filed by a person who alleges that he/she personally suffered unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying, or by a person who believes that an individual or any specific class of individuals has been subjected to unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Pupil fee complaints shall be filed not later than one (1) year from the date the alleged violation occurred.

The complaint shall be presented to the compliance officer who shall maintain a log of complaints received, providing each with a code number and date stamp.

If a complainant is unable to put a complaint in writing due to conditions such as a disability or illiteracy, the Charter School staff shall assist him/her in the filing of the complaint.

- Step 2: Mediation

Within three (3) days of receiving the complaint, the compliance officer may informally discuss with the complainant the possibility of using mediation. If the complainant agrees to mediation, the compliance officer shall make arrangements for this process.

Before initiating the mediation of an unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying complaint, the compliance officer shall ensure that all parties agree to make the mediator a party to related confidential information.

If the mediation process does not resolve the problem within the parameters of law, the compliance officer shall proceed with his/her investigation of the complaint.

The use of mediation shall not extend the Charter School’s timelines for investigating and resolving the complaint unless the complainant agrees in writing to such an extension of time.

- Step 3: Investigation of Complaint

The compliance officer is encouraged to hold an investigative meeting within five (5) days of receiving the complaint or an unsuccessful attempt to mediate the complaint. This meeting shall
provide an opportunity for the complainant and/or his/her representative to repeat the complaint orally.

The complainant and/or his/her representative shall have an opportunity to present the complaint and evidence or information leading to evidence to support the allegations in the complaint.

A complainant’s refusal to provide the Charter School’s investigator with documents or other evidence related to the allegations in the complaint, or his/her failure or refusal to cooperate in the investigation or his/her engagement in any other obstruction of the investigation, may result in the dismissal of the complaint because of a lack of evidence to support the allegation.

The Charter School’s refusal to provide the investigator with access to records and/or other information related to the allegation in the complaint, or its failure or refusal to cooperate in the investigation or its engagement in any other obstruction of the investigation, may result in a finding, based on evidence collected, that a violation has occurred and may result in the imposition of a remedy in favor of the complainant.

- Step 4: Response

  **OPTION 1:**

  Unless extended by written agreement with the complainant, the compliance officer shall prepare and send to the complainant a written report of the Charter School’s investigation and decision, as described in Step #5 below, within sixty (60) days of the Charter School’s receipt of the complaint.

  **OPTION 2**

  - Step 5: Final Written Decision

  The Charter School’s decision shall be in writing and sent to the complainant. The Charter School’s decision shall be written in English and in the language of the complainant whenever feasible or as required by law.

  The decision shall include:

  1. The findings of fact based on evidence gathered.
  2. The conclusion(s) of law.
  3. Disposition of the complaint.
  4. Rationale for such disposition.
  5. Notice of the complainant’s right to appeal the Charter School’s decision within fifteen (15) days to the CDE and procedures to be followed for initiating such an appeal.
  6. For unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying discrimination complaints arising under state law, notice that the complainant must wait until sixty (60)
days have elapsed from the filing of an appeal with the CDE before pursuing civil law remedies.

8. For unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying discrimination complaints arising under federal law such complaint may be made at any time to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

If an employee is disciplined as a result of the complaint, the decision shall simply state that effective action was taken and that the employee was informed of the Charter School’s expectations. The report shall not give any further information as to the nature of the disciplinary action.

Appeals to the California Department of Education

If dissatisfied with the Charter School’s decision, the complainant may appeal in writing to the CDE within fifteen (15) days of receiving the Charter School’s decision. When appealing to the CDE, the complainant must specify the basis for the appeal of the decision and whether the facts are incorrect and/or the law has been misapplied. The appeal shall be accompanied by a copy of the locally filed complaint and a copy of the Charter School’s decision.

Upon notification by the CDE that the complainant has appealed the Charter School’s decision, the Principal or designee shall forward the following documents to the CDE:

1. A copy of the original complaint.
2. A copy of the decision.
3. A summary of the nature and extent of the investigation conducted by the Charter School, if not covered by the decision.
4. A copy of the investigation file, including but not limited to all notes, interviews, and documents submitted by all parties and gathered by the investigator.
5. A report of any action taken to resolve the complaint.
7. Other relevant information requested by the CDE.

The CDE may directly intervene in the complaint without waiting for action by the Charter School when one of the conditions listed in Title 5, California Code of Regulations, Section 4650 exists, including cases in which the Charter School has not taken action within sixty (60) days of the date the complaint was filed with the Charter School.

Civil Law Remedies

A complainant may pursue available civil law remedies outside of the Charter School’s complaint procedures. Complainants may seek assistance from mediation centers or public/private interest attorneys. Civil law remedies that may be imposed by a court include, but are not limited to, injunctions.
and restraining orders. For unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying discrimination complaints arising under state law, however, a complainant must wait until sixty (60) days have elapsed from the filing of an appeal with the CDE before pursuing civil law remedies. The moratorium does not apply to injunctive relief and is applicable only if the Charter School has appropriately, and in a timely manner, apprised the complainant of his/her right to file a complaint in accordance with 5 CCR § 4622.
UNIFORM COMPLAINT PROCEDURE FORM

Last Name: ____________________________ First Name/MI: ____________________________
Student Name (if applicable): ____________________________ Grade: ______ Date of Birth: ______
Street Address/Apt.: ____________________________ City: ____________________________
State: __________ Zip Code: __________
Home Phone: __________ Cell Phone: __________ Work Phone: __________

School/Office of Alleged Violation: ____________________________

For allegation(s) of noncompliance, please check the program or activity referred to in your complaint, if applicable:

☐ Adult Education  ☐ Consolidated Categorical Programs  ☐ Nutrition Services
☐ Career/Technical Education  ☐ Migrant and Indian Education  ☐ Special Education
☐ Child Development Programs  ☐ Pupil Fees  ☐ Local Control Funding Formula/LCAP
☐ Foster/Homeless Youth Services  ☐ Migratory Pupils  ☐ Pupils from Military Families
☐ Every Student Succeeds Act / No Child Left Behind Programs  ☐ Pupil Fees  ☐ Pregnant and Parenting Pupils
☐ Juvenile Court School Pupils  ☐ Lactating Pupils
☐ School Safety Plan
☐ Foster/Homeless Youth Services  ☐ Bullying/Harassment

For allegation(s) of unlawful discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying, please check the basis of the unlawful discrimination/harassment described in your complaint, if applicable:

☐ Age  ☐ Gender / Gender Expression / Gender Identity  ☐ Sex (Actual or Perceived)
☐ Ancestry  ☐ National Origin/Nationality  ☐ Sexual Orientation (Actual or Perceived)
☐ Color  ☐ Race or Ethnicity  ☐ Marital Status
☐ Disability (Mental or Physical)  ☐ Religion  ☐ Based on association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics
☐ Ethnic Group Identification  ☐ Medical Condition
☐ Genetic Information  ☐ Immigration status/Citizenship

1. Please give facts about the complaint. Provide details such as the names of those involved, dates, whether witnesses were present, etc., that may be helpful to the complaint investigator.
2. Have you discussed your complaint or brought your complaint to any Charter School personnel? If you have, to whom did you take the complaint, and what was the result?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

3. Please provide copies of any written documents that may be relevant or supportive of your complaint.

I have attached supporting documents.  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

Signature:___________________________ Date:___________________________

Mail complaint and any relevant documents to:

California Montessori Project – American River Campus
Julie Miller, Principal
6838 Kermit Lane
Fair Oaks, CA 95628
(916) 864-0081 phone
(916) 864-0084 fax

California Montessori Project – Capitol Campus
Bernie Evangelista, Principal
2635 Chestnut Hill Drive
Sacramento, CA 95826
(916) 325-0910 phone
(916) 325-0912 fax

California Montessori Project – Carmichael Campus
Laurien Spiller, Principal
5325 Engle Road, Ste 200
Carmichael, CA 95608
(916) 971-2430 phone
(916) 971-2435 fax

California Montessori Project – Elk Grove @ Bradshaw Campus
Kathleen Merz, Principal
9649 Bradshaw Road
Elk Grove, CA 95624
(916) 714-9699 phone
(916) 714-9703 fax

Commented [CF3]: Please verify that this is still the correct contact information for the compliance officers.
California Montessori Project – Elk Grove @ Elk Grove Blvd. Campus
Kathleen Merz, Principal 8828
Elk Grove Blvd, Ste 4 Elk
Grove, CA  95624 (916) 714-9702 phone
(916) 686-4368 fax

California Montessori Project – Orangevale Campus
Maria Ostendorf, Principal 6545
Beech Avenue
Orangevale, CA 95662
(916) 673-9389 phone
(916) 673-9396 fax

California Montessori Project – Shingle Springs Campus
Kim Zawilski, Principal 4645
Buckeye Road Shingle Springs,
CA 95682
(530) 672-3095 phone
(530) 672-3097 fax