



BRAND GUIDELINES

CASA: CLASSY, BUT COMFORTABLE!

We typically describe our beloved school using phrases like “home away from home” and “nurturing environment”. That’s definitely who we are on the inside. In this document we are going to describe our school, and all the wonderful things it has to offer, using words like “brand” and “font” and “standards”, instead.

On the inside we are still the same, but on the outside it’s like we just got a new haircut and put on our classy but comfortable clothes! That’s what people see when they meet us. We like to be true to ourselves and make a good first impression!

It may seem unusual to think of our school like a product with a brand that we are marketing. We put love and respect into educating children using the Montessori method and education isn’t the kind of thing that people want to think of like an industry. But consider this...

Each family makes a deliberate choice to come to our school.

It is important to:

- Make a good first impression when prospective families visit our website or school to learn what we have to offer
- Continue to make a good impression as we help new families to get oriented to our school
- Maintain a good long-lasting impression by routinely showing that we are organized, professional, and we cherish each student

So, it is beneficial for our school to set guidelines for our brand because following the guidelines will help us project a positive image, **consistently**.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

In this guide you will find all the pieces that go into creating and maintaining our brand. Guidelines like these are a work in progress and should be reviewed as we grow.

DEFINING OUR BRAND.....PAGE 1

WHAT IS OUR BRAND IDENTITY?
OUR BRAND COMMITMENT

SHOWING OUR BEST SIDE.....PAGE 2

LOGOS
FONTS
COLORS
IMAGES
SHOWCASING STUDENT WORK
TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

INFORMING AND ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

PRINTED MATERIALS STANDARDS.....PAGE 5

WISE DECISIONS
TRANSLATIONS
8.5" X 11"
LARGE SIGNS
ADMINISTRATIVE SIGNS ON ENTRY DOORS
ALL SIGNS IN CARPOOL

DIGITAL MATERIALS STANDARDS.....PAGE 7

TEMPORARY/DISPOSABLE INFORMATION
EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE
WEBSITE
FACEBOOK

DEFINING OUR BRAND

We are a culturally diverse, multi-lingual, educational community that delivers a unique charter school model of Montessori instruction and Spanish language acquisition to preschool through 8th graders in an effort to build self-directed global thinkers and leaders. Our community consists of our Board, administration, Parent Faculty Association, teachers, parents, students, all volunteers, and local supportive businesses.

WHAT IS OUR BRAND IDENTITY?

The Casa Esperanza Montessori Charter School, also referred to as “CEMCS” or “Casa Esperanza”, or “Casa”, projects our enthusiasm for quality education and our passion for our community: **we are one school, one community.**

We convey our brand identity through all forms of communication and experiences from **wearing uniforms**, to encouraging student **peace ambassadors**, to publishing a **bilingual newsletter** - expressing how we look, how we act, and what we say. Everything we do directly impacts the way we are perceived.

It's crucial that our current and future students' families and local business partners have the best possible experience with our brand. This includes everything from our efforts to provide consistent, quality, timely information about our events and policies to the quality of our educational programs and the reach of our community-building initiatives.

OUR BRAND COMMITMENT

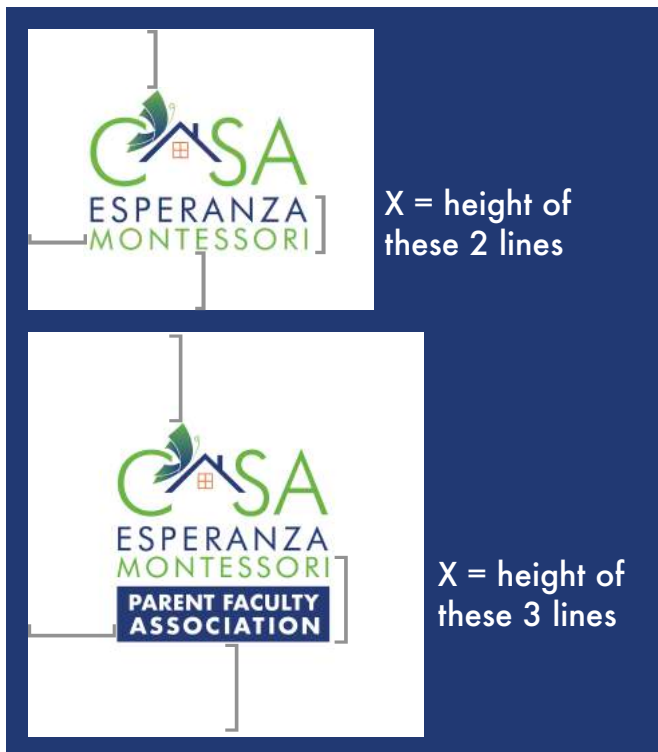
All our print and online materials will reflect the same consistent level of quality because graphic and institutional identity is key in representing the school internally and externally.

We'll measure how well we are building our brand through the connection it communicates and the experiences shared through those connections.

SHOWING OUR BEST SIDE

LOGOS

The school's logo and the PFA's logo were designed to be in color on a white background.



- Always use full color in email or online. Black and white is okay for photocopies.
- Always display the logo at full opacity.

- Logo width should be 1" or larger.
- Leave white space around **all sides** of the logo equal to or greater than X. *Place a white square behind a logo if necessary.*

- The logos may be aligned left or center at the top, *not on the right or at the bottom.*
- Do not change the colors, saturation, or opacity of the logos. Do not crop, rotate, elongate, or condense the logos.

FONTS

The modern look of our logo should be emphasized by consistently pairing it with modern-looking text. This requires choosing a sans serif font.

This is a sans serif font - it does not have embellishments like little "feet" at the base of the letters.
This is a serif font - it has embellishments like little "feet" at the base of the letters.

- Use Helvetica for printed materials
- Use Open Sans on the website
- Use Sans Serif in Gmail communication
(there is no option for Helvetica or Open Sans in Gmail, but they are very similar)
- Use Futura, our logo font, for titles and emphasized text.

An exception would be Board-approved events like the Mariposa Fund Kickoff and Viva Casa that have design elements that are unique and established.

COLORS

We have chosen a cheerful color palette for our logo and website to represent the feeling of joyful learning at our school.



- When conveying large amounts/multiple paragraphs of information use black text.
- If colored text is needed for titles or emphasis choose either:
Blue (Hex color 213973) or **Green** (Hex color 69B444).
- If an accent color is needed use:
Orange (Hex color FD5E12).
- When conveying small amounts of important information a block of **Blue** (Hex color 213973) may be used in combination with white text.

IMAGES

Images include photos, graphic art, clip art, student artwork, etc. found on on our website, Facebook page, Twitter account, email, fliers, brochures, administrative notices, yearbooks, newsletters, and any other media.

- Images should reflect enthusiasm for learning and diversity as a community.
- Images should display our Montessori hands-on approach to learning, and Montessori and Spanish educational materials when possible.
- Photos must be approved according to the **Board Photo Review Process**. <insert link when complete>
- Photos may be cropped. Backgrounds may be blurred, but faces may not be blurred.
- Photos may be posed or candid.
- Photos should show a good balance of male/female students/teachers/parents at different ages/grades when possible.
- Photos should not portray students making hand gestures.
(A gesture may have positive symbolism in one culture and negative symbolism in another.)
- Photos should show a good balance of our community in general; photographers should try to photograph people and things that we may not often see.

SHOWCASING STUDENT WORK

We are proud of our diversity. When selecting student work to display publicly, show a good balance of male/female student work at different ages/grades in Spanish/English when possible.

TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

We use these unique abbreviations in our general communication and must take care to use them consistently. It is important to introduce these terms and abbreviations at the beginning of each school year so that everyone is properly informed and feels included.

CH - Children's House = Pre-K/K, Preschool/Kindergarten, *no special pronunciation*

CHLE - Children's House/Lower Elementary = K/1st grade, *pronounced "Ch Lay"*

LE - Lower Elementary = any combination of 1st/2nd/3rd grades, *pronounced "El Eē"*

LEUE - Lower/Upper Elementary = 3rd/4th grade, *pronounced "El Eē Yū Eē"*

UE - Upper Elementary = any combination of 4th/5th/6th grades, *pronounced "Yū Eē"*

MG - Middle Grades - 7th/8th grade, *pronounced "Em Jē"*

HOS - Head of School - the principal

AHOS - Assistant Head of School - the assistant principal

PFA - Parent Faculty Association - a non-profit 501c3 organization, run by elected officers, that supports our school specifically as a fundraising and community-building group

Board - The Casa Esperanza Montessori Charter School Board, run by appointed Board members, that oversees the administration and makes sure the school is in compliance with the charter

Charter - a document outlining Casa Esperanza Montessori Charter School's educational model and financial plan, approved by the state Department of Public Instruction (DPI)

INFORMING AND ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

PRINTED MATERIALS STANDARDS

WISE DECISIONS

Think about how the information that you're communicating will be used, and how it will be interpreted by new families, established families, or business partners. Will it hang on the refrigerator for months, be recycled within minutes of reading, or be re-used many times? Is it easy to read up close, far away, or in a language that reaches your intended readers?

- All printed materials should contain a "last updated date" or "version date" if applicable.
- Materials that are intended to be read once and recycled should be printed on a half page of paper if possible. Make sure the text is still readable at a reduced size.
- Signs can be laminated so that it's easy to replace the date, time, and place information.
- Some printed materials should contain information that will be accurate for a long time and will not need to be updated or re-printed. In this case, pay attention to terms that will allow your work to be re-usable and flexible! For example:
 - List an employee's position, not their name: "Head of School" instead of "Sra. Nunez".
 - Use vague dates if appropriate: "Annually" instead of "every December".
 - Use general email if appropriate: "info@cemcs.org" instead of "csaldana@cemcs.org".

TRANSLATIONS

- It is important to offer as many materials as possible in both English and Spanish.
- This work should be done by certified translators when possible and reviewed by a Spanish-speaking member of the Administration.
- Information about safety and new parent/student orientation should be the priorities for translation into Spanish.

8.5" X 11"

- Letters should be printed on **letterhead**, and other printed materials should contain a **logo**.
- Letters should use an appropriate font. (*See the section on fonts on Page 2.*)
- Other printed materials that this applies to are: admissions forms, tax-deductible donation letters, field trip permission slips, carpool forms, cross country forms, medical forms, etc.

LARGE SIGNS

If you're going to take the time to make a sign, follow these guidelines to make sure you get your message out loud and clear!

- Should be easy to read from 20 feet away.
- Should be designed with dark colored text and both capital and lowercase (not all caps) letters.
- Allow 30-40% white (unused) space around the message for maximum readability.

- Identify who is conveying the information if it is not the administration.
For example:
 - "Middle Grades request your presence"
 - "The PFA invites you to..."
 - "Mr. Lynch suggests..."
- For events, use the same design or sign border each year for recognizability and continuity.

ADMINISTRATIVE SIGNS ON ENTRY DOORS

- Must contain the Casa logo.

- Must be easy to read from 10 feet away. Test it!
- Must be posted at eye-level.

- Must be removed as soon as they expire.
- Must be replaced if they start to look worn.

ALL SIGNS IN CARPOOL

- Must be easy to read from 30 feet away. Test it!
- Should be posted at eye-level or have something eye-catching like a helium balloon on top.

- Should be repeated in case the driver misses it.

ELECTRONIC MATERIALS STANDARDS

TEMPORARY/DISPOSABLE INFORMATION

Some information is meant to be gotten rid of after reading once, but some digital content can't be deleted even though it has expired. Help your readers determine what's current!

Use precise dates for clarity when posting temporary information in our Home Page Announcements, in email, and on Facebook. For example:

- Use “Casa will operate on a regular schedule Monday, September 17, 2018” instead of “Casa will operate on a regular schedule tomorrow.”
- Use “Please come show your support on Thursday night, August 30th, 2018” instead of “We hope to see everyone this Thursday!”

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

Readers appreciate writers that get to the point! And you'll get a better response to your email if you follow these guidelines:

All email:

- Must have a clear subject line letting the reader know if they need to take action.
For example:
 - “For your review”
 - “Approval needed”
 - “Due date approaching”...
 - “Official policy change: Uniforms”
- Must tell the reader 3 important things in the first few lines:
 1. Why the reader is receiving the email.
 2. What it's about.
 3. What the reader is expected to do.
- Must always have a signature with the school logo, employee's name, position, contact information, and legal statement.
- Should always offer the option of having a conversation face-to-face when addressing problems or complaints.
- Must contain **links to our website**, if referring to policies. **Do not attach policies.**
- Must contain **links to our website**, if referring to forms. **Do not attach forms.**

WEBSITE

These guidelines must be used on the website to provide a fluid user-experience through consistently-formatted information.

- Underlined text is reserved for links only.
- Email addresses should be hyperlinks, not typed out addresses.
- **Bold text** is used to emphasize dates, times, rules, reminders.
- *Italicized text* is used to improve readability and emphasize conversational information such as a friendly reminder.
- Invitational text should be centered (Examples: Viva Casa, Intersession Camps, date, time, location, etc.).

- ALL CAPS is reserved for H2 titles only.
- H2 bold is used for Intro Titles (H2 = green, all caps, bold).
- H2 regular is used for section titles throughout a page (green, all caps, not bold).

- Break up large paragraphs of text with headings, bulleted points, and read more/less tags.
- Bullets should be used for lists whenever possible to improve readability.
- Tables with invisible borders should be used when possible to improve alignment/readability.

- Attachments should be in PDF format.
- PDFs should open in a new window instead of overwriting the current page to make it easier for the user to navigate to the next page.

- Use “Learn about...” “Find out more about ...” “Read more about...” instead of “Click Here”.
- Publicize and link to new content via email and social media.
Example, “Our new Strategic Plan is online!” or “Our Newsletter is online!”
- Electronic forms should be used when possible to collect information and should be integrated into the website.
- Manage all content within website when possible for uniformity, compliance, and ease of maintenance.

FACEBOOK

Our Facebook page is a combination tool. We rely on it to advertise current events and we use it like a digital book to tell the story of our school. Prospective parents and local business owners may scroll through historical posts to get a feel for who we are as a school community before deciding to apply to our preschool or sponsor an event. We must consistently provide keywords for users to search for what interests them.

Our Facebook page:

- Must display our logo at all times.
- Must use our color palette in graphics.
- Must contain content that relates to our brand.
- Should post at least 2 times/ week, but ideally no more than 2 times/day unless there's severe weather or an emergency.
- Should contain content that effectively showcases unique features of our school.
- Should have a balance between content that informs and content that drives an action.

Facebook posts, comments, and replies:

- Must always use "We" when speaking on behalf of the school.
- Must always reply from the account of the school, not the admin's personal account.
- Should maintain the same tone across all posts.

Facebook pictures:

- Must be approved for Social Media by our [Board Photo Review Process](#). <insert link when complete>
- Must have a caption so they can be found in a keyword search.
- Should be included frequently because posts with images interest more readers; however, the **quality** of the image is more important than the **quantity**.