

Parent/Student Handbook



10510 Star Road
Wake Forest, NC 27587

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MISSION STATEMENT

Casa Esperanza Montessori's mission is to foster a culture of independence, inclusivity, critical thinking and a sense of global responsibility by using elements of Montessori philosophy and Spanish language acquisition.

2023-2024 Version

Welcome to Casa Esperanza Montessori Charter School! At Casa, we do our best to prepare students to be lifelong learners and lead productive and fulfilling lives. We believe that positive parent relationships are a key to student achievement and success. This handbook contains important information and links to various resources that we hope will empower parents to become active partners with our dedicated school staff.

Every student. Every Day. The Casa Way

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CASA A-Z

ACADEMICS

BENCHMARK ASSESSMENTS

Casa utilizes data from various benchmark assessments in order to determine student achievement in comparison to grade level standards. Currently, we use iReady, NC Check-ins, and DIBELS 8.

CURRICULUM

Casa provides instruction in Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science, using a variety of curricular materials, including Montessori materials.

STATE TESTING

As a public charter school, Casa participates in the following required state tests:

- End of Grade (EOG) tests for Reading and Math (grades 3-8)
- End of Grade (EOG) test for Science (grades 5 & 8)
- End of Course (EOC) test for Math 1 (students enrolled in Math 1)
- DIBELS 8 (grades K-3)
- WIDA evaluations (including ACCESS) for English Learners
- Beginning of Grade testing (grade 3)
- Read to Achieve (RTA)

ATTENDANCE

Daily Attendance

Daily attendance is required by law (see Attendance Policy

<https://www.cemcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/CEM-Policy-3.3.2-Attendance-Policy-Revised-September-20161-1.pdf>). To be considered present for the day, a

student must be in attendance for a minimum of 4 hours. Absences will be excused for the following reasons:

- Illness or injury
- Medical, dental, or mental health appointments
- Death in the immediate family
- Court or administrative proceedings where the child is a party or a subpoenaed witness

- Religious observance
- Quarantine or isolation ordered by a local health officer or the State Board of Health
- Participation in an educational opportunity (pre-approval required)
- Special circumstances as determined by the local Board of Education
- Participation in military deployment activities

Absences will be considered unexcused if a written excuse (with one of the above mentioned reasons) is not provided within 5 days of the absence(s).

Late Arrival (Tardies)

Students who arrive after the beginning of the school day will be considered tardy. Tardy arrivals may be excused for the same reasons as absences. For every 5 unexcused tardies, a student will be given one unexcused absence.

Early Checkout

Students who are checked out of school before the end of the school day must be present for a minimum of 4 hours to be considered in attendance for that day. When a student is checked out early, the person picking up must come into the building and show identification to sign out the student. Early checkout will not be allowed after 2:30 pm.

BEFORE and AFTER SCHOOL CARE

We offer before school care, after school care, early release days, Teacher workdays & intersession camps care for students in PreK- 8th grade.

ADMISSION

Admissions to all programs are on a 'first come-first served' basis. Applications for all programs are available at the front office and on our school website. Completed applications and fees or deposits must be returned to the Childcare program Director by the deadline to guarantee a child's spot in the program.

Pre-K-Grade 8, Before School 7:00 am -7:35 am

Doors open at 7:00 am; please sign your child in when they are dropped off. This is a quiet, mixed-age environment designed to gently ease students into their school day. No food is provided, but children may bring a healthy breakfast from home to eat and finish before 7:35 am.

Pre-K-Grade 8, After School 3:05-6:00 pm

This program has planned lessons and activities to both entertain and enrich the

children attending. Limited homework support is offered during this program as well for students in Grades K-8. We also offer children suggested center based activities. Students bring a healthy afternoon snack.

Early Release Days 12:00-6:00 pm

Teacher workdays 8:00 - 4:00pm

Intersessions One week Camp (Spring & Fall) 8:00 - 3:00pm

These programs are available on a first come - first served basis. Registration forms will be available at the front office and our school website in advance.

WITHDRAWALS

Parent-initiated withdrawals require a 30 day notice in writing. Casa Esperanza reserves the right to dismiss any child for the remainder of the day or for the remainder of the session who poses a disciplinary problem that cannot be resolved through redirection or reminders. The Casa administrator on duty's decision is final.

HOW TO REACH US IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

If you need to reach someone in the childcare program during childcare hours, please call the direct BASC phone line at 919-749-6343. In the event an emergency prevents you from picking up your child by the 6:00 pm deadline, please call. An additional fee of \$1 per minute will be due immediately when a parent picks a child up late. Three (3) late after school pick ups can be cause for the child's termination from the program.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT, EXPECTATIONS, AND DISCIPLINE

The school-wide Behavior Management Program includes school-wide expectations and acknowledgement of appropriate behaviors. Staff are expected to teach, practice, model, and reinforce the school-wide expectations. When a student is "caught" following an expectation, staff may recognize the student. We have an acknowledgement system as well as a tracking system. Individual, classroom, and school-wide goals may be set throughout the school year with:

CASA SCHOOL-WIDE EXPECTATIONS (THE CASA WAY)

All Casa staff will be responsible for teaching and reinforcing school-wide expectations. The behavior matrix with specifics can be found through this link: [Casa School-Wide Expectations](#)

The expectations are:

Care for yourself and others

Always be respectful

Safely move around the school

Accept responsibility for your actions

MTSS BEHAVIOR TIERS

Casa implements a tiered system of behavior interventions that begins with classroom management and continues through intervention in social emotional learning.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Each classroom is expected to be effectively managed in order to maximize instructional time. Staff follow the management guidelines of:

- Maximizing structure and predictability
- Establishing expectations, rules, and procedures
- Actively engaging students
- Actively supervising the classroom
- Encouraging and acknowledging appropriate behaviors
- Responding to inappropriate behaviors

CLASS DOJO

Class Dojo will be used in all grade levels, Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade for the purpose of tracking positive behaviors. Teachers will have a class dojo page with each student being assigned to an avatar and the 4 positive behavioral expectations identified (Care for yourself and others, Always be respectful, Safely move around the school, Accept responsibility for your actions). This site will be used for staff to keep track of how many times students are recognized for demonstrating the school expectations. It will not be used for parent communication.

	Example Behaviors*	Example Consequences*
Level 1 (Minor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Dishonesty● Noncompliance● Out of area● Inappropriate language● Misuse of property● Technology violation● Minor disruption● Non-aggressive physical contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reteach behavior expectation● Conference with student● Peace table● Student reflection● Proactive strategy● Parent Contact● Parent Conference
Level 2 (Major)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Physical aggression (hitting, kicking, punching, etc)● Bullying/harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Restitution● Behavior Intervention● Parent Conference

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Racist behavior (including jokes, slurs, etc) ● Destruction of property ● Theft ● Abusive language ● Significant technology violation ● Repeated minor behaviors ● Threats ● Elopement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In school suspension ● Out of school suspension 1-10 days
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Weapons ● Serious bodily injury ● Illegal substance ● Gang related behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Long term suspension (10-365 days) ● Recommendation for expulsion

*Note: this chart is intended to be used as general recommendations to support administrators in decision making. It provides a few examples and is not intended to be comprehensive or exclusive. Administrators will exercise their professional judgment when administering consequences and can escalate or deescalate to a different level, giving consideration to the student’s intent, disciplinary and academic history, the potential benefits to the student of alternatives to suspension, and other mitigating or aggravating factors.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Parents can collaborate with their child’s homeroom teacher to send in a birthday treat for the class. We encourage healthy snacks that are respectful of various dietary needs and allergens. In addition, students’ birthdays (grades Children’s House through 2nd grade only) may be celebrated following the Montessori “Walk Around the Sun”. This activity is a collaborative effort that allows the student’s parents to submit photos and/or information about the student.

INVITATIONS PASSED OUT AT SCHOOL

Classroom teachers may distribute invitations for a student’s birthday only if there is an invitation for each student in the class. Invitations for a class-wide event planned by parents need to be brought to Leadership prior to distribution.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board's mission is to implement Casa Esperanza Montessori's educational vision over time for future generations. The Board plans for the future and approves policies

that correspond to Casa's mission statement. The Board sets policies, directs the management of school assets, does long-range planning, and supports the administration, activities, and programs of the school.

Service on the Board is entirely voluntary; board members receive no financial compensation for their services to the school. Board meetings are open to the public and are generally held at the school, beginning at 6:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of most every month. A calendar of board meetings for the year is posted on the school's website <https://www.cemcs.org/student-life/calendar/>

Board members are valued members of both the Casa parent and local communities who have specific knowledge and experience they can contribute to standing board committees. The work of the board is accomplished through these committees. Board committees are composed of board members, Casa parents, and faculty members. If you would like to offer your talents or service to help build Casa Esperanza Montessori, please consider volunteering on one of the Board's committees.

CALENDAR

The school calendar can be accessed using the following link:

<https://www.cemcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023-24-CALENDAR-Board-Approved.pdf>

The testing calendar can be accessed using the following link:

<https://www.cemcs.org/state-testing-and-forms/>

CAMPUS EXPECTATIONS

Parents, guardians, and visitors are expected to respect the caring spirit of our school and understand that parents and teachers need to work together. All members of the school community need to be treated with respect and set a good example for our children through our words and actions. Communication with school staff, leadership, and board members should be respectful and productive with an emphasis on solutions. The following behaviors are unacceptable and will not be tolerated on the Casa campus or at any school-sponsored event:

- Using loud, offensive language (yelling, cursing, name calling, etc)
- Defamatory or libelous comments about members of the Casa School Community (including staff, parents, students, board members, leadership) on social media or other sites

- Damaging or destroying school property
- Behaviors that are disruptive, threatening, or challenging toward staff
- Abusive or threatening communication (including emails, texts, voice messages, phone conversations)
- The use of physical aggression toward another person while on campus or at a school-sponsored event

CARPOOL

Carpool procedures will be provided on the Casa website. Parents are asked to follow staff member directions while driving through carpool. Parents are asked to drop off and pick up their students within the scheduled time frame

If parents are late to pick up their child from school during the scheduled dismissal time, the student will be placed in our Before/After School Care program, and the family will be charged \$20.

Each family is provided with 2 carpool tags with their assigned carpool number. This tag should be displayed when picking up your student(s). If you are picking up other students, please display their carpool tag as well. If additional carpool tags are needed, contact the main office to request a replacement tag for a \$5.00 fee.

CARPOOL TIMES

- Last Name First Initial begins with letter A-N
- 7:35-8:05 AM and 3:10-3:40 PM
- Last Name First Initial begins with letter O-Z
- 7:55-8:25 AM and 3:30-4:00 PM

If your family has multiple students with different last names that fall into both carpool times, please use the carpool time connected to your oldest student.

If your student has a hyphenated last name, please follow the carpool time that correlates with the first last name. For example, if your student's name is Gonzalez-Rodriguez, attend the first carpool for the Letter G.

CELL PHONES, DIGITAL AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES for STUDENTS

Students are not to bring cell phones or any other electronic devices with recording or filming capabilities inside the classrooms (except for those that are medically necessary). In the event that a student does bring any such device to the classroom, it will be kept locked within the classroom for the entirety of the day. If a student brings a device and does not turn it in to their teacher and is found to have it on their person or in use, the device will be confiscated and given to Leadership and returned only to the parent.

CHANGE IN ADDRESS

It is very important, especially when a student becomes ill or is injured, that the school have current addresses and phone numbers in order that parents can be contacted. Please be sure to notify the school of changes of home address, phone number, and place of employment, day care, or emergency numbers. It is the parent's responsibility to keep the school updated of any changes.

CHILD ABUSE/REPORTING PROCESS

It is the responsibility of all Casa Esperanza employees to report suspected abuse and/or neglect to the proper authorities. The investigation will be conducted by the appropriate authorities - not Casa faculty.

CHROMEBOOKS

All students will be issued a Chromebook. These devices are the property of Casa Esperanza and are to be taken care of. All content saved on and searched for on any school-issued device is the responsibility of the student to whom it was assigned. In the event that a Chromebook is damaged or destroyed by the actions of a student, that student will be expected to pay the repair or replacement costs.

CLASSROOM CLEANING

Cleaning up and taking care of the classroom environment is an important part of the Montessori philosophy. Students will help maintain a clean and orderly environment.

CLASSROOM INTERRUPTIONS

Classroom interruptions should be limited to emergencies only.

CLASSROOM JOBS

As part of our alignment with Montessori principles, students should be taught personal and group responsibility. Each classroom will support this with the assignment of classroom jobs that will rotate periodically.

CLASSROOM PLACEMENT

A number of variables are considered for student class placement, including overall class make-up, previous school experiences, and individual student needs. Final determination for class assignment rests with the Leadership Team. The Leadership Team and teachers work closely to ensure class placements are appropriate for students. In general, we do not honor parental requests with student class placement. Additionally, our Spanish Immersion program and our Enrichment program are separate and students cannot switch between programs. A student would have to withdraw from one program and enroll in the lottery for the other program if they wished to switch programs.

COMMUNICATION WITH OUTSIDE TUTORS, COUNSELORS AND/OR THERAPISTS

If a parent wishes for Casa to collaborate with their child's tutor, counselor, therapist or other outside professional, they must complete a [release form](#).

COMMUNICATION

Communication may take place in person, via school email, virtual meetings (Google Meet), school phones, or in-person meetings. Our school website www.cemcs.org contains updated information including contact information for staff, school closures, and an event calendar. Friday Folders will be sent home at the end of each week with student work, work plans, and flyers/information for upcoming events. In addition, teachers will email a newsletter with details about classroom activities and school leadership will send a weekly school newsletter.

EARLY RELEASE DAYS

There are several school days throughout the academic year designated as Early Release Days. Please note - Lunch is not served on Early Release Days. Early release is at 12:00pm.

ENGLISH LEARNERS (ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE)

Students who speak a language other than English at home may be screened based on data from the Home Language Survey. If additional support is needed for English language acquisition, services will be provided at Casa. Testing will occur annually to determine when extra support is no longer needed.

ENROLLMENT

Under our state charter, enrollment is open to all residents of the state of North Carolina attending kindergarten through grade eight. We accept applications throughout the enrollment period. Families interested in the school should plan to attend a tour and an information session before submitting an application. Each year we run our lottery. In this lottery, each application we have received for the following school year is randomly assigned a three-digit number by computer. Available spaces in each grade level are then assigned in numerical order. Preference for admission is offered to siblings of children already enrolled at Casa Esperanza and for children of Casa Esperanza faculty. Anyone who does not immediately gain placement will be offered the opportunity to be placed on the waiting list. Applications received after the lottery has been run are placed on the waiting list in order of receipt. Charter spaces are then offered as they become available. ALL children must have a current application on file in order to be placed on the waiting list for admission. Please note, there are separate applications for our Enrichment and Immersion programs. Each student can only apply for one program.

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S (STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES) SERVICES

Casa provides special education and related services according to the federal mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the regulations of the North Carolina Public School Law, Article 9. Casa provides all services deemed necessary by an Individualized Education Program team.

EXTENDED PRACTICE (FORMERLY KNOWN AS HOMEWORK)

Extended practice may be provided to offer students an opportunity to apply previously learned skills. Daily reading at home (with parents for younger students) is part of extended practice. Guidelines by grade band:

Children's House (PreK-K) - no more than 20-30 minutes

Lower Elementary (1/2) - 30-40 minutes

Lower Elementary Upper Elementary (3/4) - 40-50 minutes

Upper Elementary (5/6) - 45-60 minutes

Middle Grades (7/8) - 60+ minutes

FERPA (THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT)

A federal law known as "FERPA" provides parents and eligible students with rights to inspect and review the student's education records, to request amendments to such records, and to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education regarding an alleged FERPA violation. FERPA also provides that student records and personally identifiable information contained in those records generally may be released to third parties only if the parents or eligible students provide written consent. One of those exceptions to this requirement is that "directory information" about a student may be released to anyone upon request unless the parent or eligible student has opted out of the disclosure of such information. "Directory information" includes the student's name, grade, school most recently attended, dates of attendance, date of graduation, awards received and participation in officially recognized sports and activities. Any parent, guardian or eligible student who does not want directory information released must notify the school in writing each year within 20 days of the receipt of this notice.

FIELD TRIPS

Each year student field trips are organized by the classroom teachers. Field trips could occur on-campus or off-campus. All off campus field trips will require chartered transportation. Field trip permission forms will be provided to families for a description of the field trip, its purpose and logistics. Permission slips are required prior to the trip in order for a student to participate in the field trip.

FRIDAY FOLDERS

Students' work plans, completed and/or graded work, and school communication or flyers are sent home in the Friday folder on the last day of each week. Parents of students in CH through 4th grade are asked to sign and return both the work plan and the folder on Monday.

Parents of students in 5th through 8th grade are asked to sign and return both the student agenda and the Friday Folder on Monday.

GO GUARDIAN

Casa uses the Go Guardian software program to allow staff to closely monitor student use of technology and digital platforms in the school environment. If there are issues or concerns with student technology usage, this will be addressed.

GOOGLE CLASSROOM - STUDENTS

Google Classroom use will vary depending on grade level. The following guidelines should help:

CH through 4th grade

- Can be used to post additional resources and videos

5th through 8th

- Can be used to post and submit assignments (Not for grading)
- Can be used to post additional resources and videos

GRADE BANDS

Casa has multi-age/grade classrooms that offer opportunities for individualized learning as well as small and large group experiences. The classes are grouped in the following way:

Children's House - 3-6 year olds including Kindergarteners and students in our private preschool

Lower Elementary (LE) - first and second graders

Lower Elementary/Upper Elementary (LEUE) - third and fourth graders

Upper Elementary (UE) - fifth and sixth graders

Middle Grades (MG) - seventh and eighth graders

GRADES AND GRADING

Kindergarten- 2nd Grade

All Content Areas	<p>60% Work Cycle Assignments</p> <p>30% Assessments</p> <p>10% Projects</p> <p>PLEASE NOTE: Students who score below a 70% on an assessment may retest for a maximum score of 70% within 1 week after the score has been provided to the student and parent.</p> <p>Test corrections may only be used as a reteach opportunity. Grades may not be assigned to test corrections. The re-test should not be the same initial test.</p>
Grade Scale	<p>4 = Exemplary (Student consistently demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the standards, content, and skills taught during the quarter)</p> <p>3 = Proficient (Student consistently demonstrates understanding of the standards, content, and skills taught during the quarter)</p> <p>2 = Approaching Proficiency (Student is approaching understanding of the standards, content, and skills taught during the quarter)</p> <p>1 = Not Yet Proficient (Student has not yet demonstrated an understanding of the standards, content, and skills taught during the quarter)</p>

3rd-8th Grade

All Content Areas	<p>45% Work Cycle Work</p> <p>25% Assessments</p> <p>10% Exit Tickets/Quizzes</p> <p>20% Projects</p> <p>PLEASE NOTE: Students who score below a 70% on an</p>
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	<p>assessment may retest for a maximum of 70% within 1 week after the score has been provided to the student and parent.</p> <p>Test corrections may only be used as a reteach opportunity. Grades may not be assigned to test corrections. The re-test should not be the same initial test.</p>
Grade Scale	10 point scale

It is important to balance the number and types of mastery checks being provided to students.

Example: Per Quarter (minimum)

- 2 Assessments
- 2 Quizzes (per unit assessment)
- 1 Project (progress check ½ way with project grade)

Missed Work Policy: If a student has an excused absence, they should be provided missed work upon their return and given an additional day to turn the work in for full credit.

If a student has an unexcused absence, they should be provided missed work upon their return and the late work policy applies.

Late Work Policy: Students should not be given classwork to take home on the weekend if it is for a classwork grade. In order for students to get credit for late assignments submitted late, they must complete the work **IN CLASS** but with an extension on the deadline.

Students should only be given the opportunity to earn a total of 90% of the total original credit for the assignment.

The student's grade will be reduced by 5% (starting at 90%) for each week it is late with a maximum of 2 weeks to turn it in late.

Educational Leave: Educational Leave is designed to allow students who will engage in out of school activities that are aligned with academics and state standards an opportunity to learn outside of the classroom. Educational Leave must be requested 4 weeks in advance of the travel using this [form](#) to the core teacher. The teacher will

then review the request for academic and standards alignment and make a recommendation to leadership. Leadership will make a final review and decision. No more than 5 school days per year will be approved per student.

HANDWRITING

Students at Casa learn to write in cursive beginning in Children's House and continue to write in cursive through 8th grade.

HEALTH

Every student entering public school for the first time must submit proof of a health assessment completed no more than 12 months prior to the date of school entrance, including required immunizations. The standard health assessment form (available at the school office) is completed by the medical provider and must be presented to the school prior to enrollment. If the record of health assessment is not received by the school within the first 30 days of enrollment, the student will not be permitted to attend school until the health assessment has been received.

ABSENCE DUE TO ILLNESS

We ask that parents keep their child home on days that the child has:

- Undiagnosed rash; may return to school after being assessed by child's healthcare provider and cleared to return to school
- A temperature over 100.4; may return to school when fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication
- An upset stomach, vomiting or diarrhea; may return to school when 24 hours have passed since last episode without the use of medication
- Any contagious disease, e.g. chicken pox
- A contagious bacterial infection, e.g. strep
- Antibiotics are prescribed; may return to school after taking antibiotics for 24 hours
- Cough that is persistent and interferes with normal activities
- Red eye(s) with yellow discharge; may return to school after being assessed by child's healthcare provider and given a noncontagious diagnosis or after being on antibiotic treatment for 24 hours

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

School employees will administer over-the-counter and/or prescription medication to students if the “Parent Request and Physician Order for Medication” form is completed and on file in the school office. The pharmacist’s label on prescription medications serves as the physician’s order. All prescription medications must have a pharmacy label which clearly indicates the student’s name, name of medication, date the prescription was filled and directions clearly marked.

FIRST AID EMERGENCIES

Simple first aid (soap and water, ice, and band-aids) for minor injuries will be given at school. In case of more serious accidents or sudden illness, the parent is notified. It is essential that the emergency call number be in the office and that it be up-to-date. It is our intent to immediately notify parents for any of the following:

- Any head injury
- Any bite
- An indication of anything communicable such as vomiting, diarrhea, rash
- A fever
- Significant injury on the playground

HEAD LICE

Head lice are a common occurrence amongst school age children and are not an indication of personal hygiene, nor do they present a health concern. Should live bugs be detected, the school will send out notification to parents in the affected classroom.

Children should not share articles such as hats, combs, brushes, barrettes, etc.

HEALTH INFORMATION

In compliance with state healthcare regulations, we offer this information about meningitis and influenza from the Center for Disease Control to assist you .

Meningitis http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/revb/enterovirus/viral_meningitis.htm Viral (Aseptic) meningitis

Influenza www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm

HOMEWORK

See Extended Practice.

IEP (INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM)

Students who qualify for special education services will have an IEP written by their IEP team. School staff are required to follow the guidelines set forth by a student's IEP, which is a legal document.

If you suspect your child has a disability, you may make a written request for your child to be evaluated for special education. You can also ask someone to write the request for you, and you sign the document. You may choose to provide supporting documentation (such as evaluations or medical information) if you want to, though this is not necessary. You will be a valued team member through the process.

IMMERSION PROGRAM

Students in the immersion classrooms receive instruction mostly in Spanish using the following guidelines:

Children's House through 2nd Grade - 90% instruction in Spanish

3rd and 4th Grade - 75%-80 % instruction in Spanish, Social Studies instruction is in English

5th and 6th Grade - 70% instruction in Spanish, Social Studies and some Science instruction is in English

7th and 8th Grade - 60 - 65% instruction in Spanish, Social Studies and Science instruction in English

INTERNET ACCESS

Casa Esperanza Montessori Charter offers internet access which may include the use of individual class web pages (wikis), teacher previewed video clips to support/enrich the class curriculum, private class blogs and other tools available and appropriate for elementary students. Casa Esperanza Montessori Charter School uses advanced software for Internet content filtering and has procedures in place to further block accessibility to material, as necessary. Parents and guardians of a minor are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. (Please see the acceptable use policy forms required for each student at Casa - [Acceptable Use Policy link](#)). Casa Esperanza Montessori faculty and staff model and discuss appropriate use of web tools. To that end, the Casa Esperanza Montessori Charter School supports and respects each

family's right to decide whether to deny their child's access.

LATE PICK-UPS

Students are expected to be picked up by the end of the school day. If a parent has not picked up their child within 15 minutes of the end of carpool, the student will be placed in the Afterschool Program at a drop in rate of \$20 per day.

LITERACY NIGHT

One night each year, Casa comes together for Literacy Night. A committee of staff and parents volunteer their time to create an unforgettable evening for students, families, and staff where we celebrate Casa's love for reading.

LUNCH FOR STUDENTS

Lunch is eaten in the classrooms. Most students bring their lunch from home, but some students receive lunch from the My Hot Lunch program. Students are not permitted to have access to microwaves, toaster ovens, etc. Since the school does not have food services, students who forget their lunch will call a parent. If a parent cannot bring lunch, the student will be offered food from the food pantry.

Parents have the option to order their student's lunch through the "My Hot Lunchbox" program. Staff will receive notification of students in their rooms who will receive hot lunch each day. Myhotlunchbox.com

MEDIA CENTER

Casa has a library where students can check books out. Two books are allowed to be checked out at a time. Lost or damaged books are the responsibility of the student and a monetary charge will be given to the student.

MEDICATION - STUDENTS

Students who require the administration of medication at school must have a medical form completed ([Medication Form Link](#)). Medication can only be administered by the school nurse or designee.

MEET THE TEACHER

Prior to the first day of school Casa hosts a Meet the Teacher event. Parents and students are invited to visit their child's classroom and meet the teacher.

MONTESSORI

Montessori is a child-centered educational method developed by Italian pediatrician Maria Montessori at the beginning of the twentieth century. This method is based on self-directed activity, hands-on learning and collaborative play. Children direct their own work by touching, manipulating and experimenting with age-appropriate materials that are self-teaching and self-correcting. Teachers prepare the environment and serve as a guide in the learning process. Classrooms are multi-age and children are encouraged to work independently and in groups to discover, explore and reach their maximum potential.

MTSS (MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT)

Casa has an MTSS framework for both academics and behavior. All students will receive Tier 1 instruction for Reading, Math, and Behavior. Tier 1 includes core instruction and benchmark assessments for Reading and Math. When a student does not meet the success criteria for Tier 1, teachers will recommend him/her for Tier 2 interventions. If the grade level PLC determines that the student will receive Tier 2 interventions, they will be provided by the classroom staff and will be progress monitored every 2 weeks. After 6 weeks, progress will be analyzed and the grade level team will decide if the student will go back to Tier 1 only, continue with Tier 2, or additionally receive Tier 3 interventions. Tier 3 interventions will be provided by Interventionists. Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions for behavior will be determined based on behavior documentation forms and input from teachers.

NURSE/HEALTH ROOM

Our school nurse website is located at the below link

<https://www.cemcs.org/parent-resources/nurse-health-wellness/>

PARENT FACULTY ASSOCIATION (PFA)

Casa has an active PFA that supports different entities on the school campus. To learn more about this organization additional information can be found on our school website at <https://sites.google.com/cemcs.org/casapfa>

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences will be offered at least twice per school year. Parents or teachers can request additional conferences as needed.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Personal items are discouraged from being brought to school. Lost items are not the responsibility of the teacher or school.

PHOTOGRAPH/VIDEO/NAME RELEASE

Families will make the decision if they approve their child to participate in media releases and yearbooks through photos or video. This document should be updated yearly.

POLICIES

All Board of Directors-approved Casa Esperanza Montessori Charter School policies can be found on the school's website. [School Policies](#)

POWERSCHOOL

PowerSchool will be used for daily school attendance, grades, and quarterly report cards. Parents will be provided with directions and log in information to create an account in PowerSchool.

PRESCHOOL ADMISSIONS

Admissions are based on availability. To apply, return the application form and nonrefundable application fee to the school office. Upon admission, sign an enrollment contract and return it with the Advance Tuition Deposit. (Please see preschool

information addendum.) Because of state law regarding charter schools, *attendance in Children's House as a preschooler confers no preference for admission to the Charter funded kindergarten or elementary programs.* In accordance with Charter School law, all children of kindergarten age must receive an enrollment spot through the lottery process in order to continue attendance.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards will be issued at the end of each quarter and will be created through PowerSchool. If you need assistance logging into your PowerSchool account please email our Data manager at powerschool@cemcs.org.

RESTITUTION (MATERIALS REPLACEMENT)

If school materials are damaged intentionally by a student, the student will be responsible for the restitution of replacing the items intentionally damaged.

SAFETY DRILLS

Casa has established procedures for various situations and conducts drills throughout the year to stay prepared for any of these scenarios. If a safety concern causes a procedure to be implemented, students will not be released until the situation has been cleared. These procedures include the following:

- Shelter in Place - used for a weather related or environmental situation where it is deemed necessary to keep all students and staff within the school building to protect them from an external situation. Examples include blackouts, chemical spills, explosions, or extreme weather.
- Hold and Secure - used when there is a threat that exists outside the school building and is not related to the school but it is best to keep everyone inside the school building. Examples include police activity near the school.
- Lockdown - used when there is a major incident or threat of violence within the school. Examples include a school intruder or someone with a weapon.
- Evacuation - used when students and staff need to exit the school building due to a concern within the school. Examples include a fire or a gas leak.

SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

The decision to close school due to inclement weather is made solely by school leadership. Faculty, staff, and families will receive communication from the school

through our PowerSchool portal and it will be posted on WRAL under Casa Esperanza Montessori Charter School.

SCHOOL FINANCIALS

Casa school age programs are tuition-free, public charter school programs; however, state funding does not provide all of the resources necessary to implement our demanding program. We appreciate family support in fundraising activities that allow us to provide more opportunities for ALL students.

Each family is asked to provide basic school supplies and field trip costs. If a family has a hardship, please reach out to leadership for support.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES TO SCHOOL FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Your child's K-8 education funding for the entire school year is directly tied to the number of days your child is in attendance for the first twenty days of the school year.

If your child is absent during that time for two days, (10%) of the education funding for your child is not received for the entire school year. Attendance is important academically all year round; during these twenty days, it is also financially critical that students attend. Thank you for supporting your child's education both academically and financially.

SCHOOL PICTURES

Individual school pictures will be taken. School uniforms are mandatory for individual pictures and class pictures as they are used in the yearbook.

SMOKE/DRUG/ALCOHOL/WEAPON FREE CAMPUS

Casa is a smoke-free, vape-free, drug-free, alcohol-free, weapon-free campus. Vaping and/or smoking is not permitted anywhere on the school grounds. Violators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Authorized police are authorized to carry their weapon per state policy.

SNACKS

Students are encouraged to bring healthy snacks from home daily. Snack breaks are provided during the school day.

STUDENT RETENTION PROCEDURES

Students who have not achieved adequate academic progress could be considered for retention and would be required to repeat the year of instruction. Final decisions regarding retention will be made by Leadership after considering all data. Parents have the right to appeal the decision and can reach out to the executive director.

TEACHER WORKDAYS

Casa will have multiple Teacher Work Days during which students will not attend school. These days will be identified on the school calendar.

TIME ON DEVICES

Due to the Montessori approach to instruction at Casa, students' time on school-issued devices is limited, actively supervised, and academically meaningful. Casa recognizes the value of certain online supplemental programs, and invests in purchasing licenses on an as-needed basis. The use of these programs may be required at different levels of instructional support.

Classroom use during the school day and/or for extended practice of any other online programs for instruction require leadership approval.

The guidelines below reflect the MAXIMUM number of minutes of student engagement on devices (screen time):

CH	30 minutes a day
1st/2nd	45 minutes a day
3rd/4th	60 minutes a day
5th/6th	60 minutes a day
7th/8th	90 minutes a day

TRANSPORTATION

Casa Esperanza does not provide transportation for students. Casa works with daycare providers that provide transportation and the daycare providers follow a different carpool process. For additional information about daycare transportation please call the school.

UNIFORM GUIDELINES

Students at Casa are expected to abide by the Casa uniform guidelines. Uniform items can be purchased anywhere and do not need to have the school logo on them. The following are the current Casa uniform guidelines:

Grades PreK to 8

- Navy blue pants, shorts, skort, or skirt
- White or kelly green shirt with collar (Polo shirt, button-down shirt, turtleneck, long or short sleeves)
- Navy blue or kelly green dresses or jumpers
- Navy blue, kelly green, or white sweater, jacket, sweatshirt, or hoodie that will be worn inside the school, either plain or with the Casa logo
- Navy blue, kelly green, or white leggings or tights may only be worn under dresses and skirts
- Outerwear, not to be worn inside the school, does not need to follow the uniform guidelines
- Please label all uniform items with your student's name
- "Jeggings" and denim material bottoms are not acceptable.
- Hats (including, caps, beanies, etc) should not be worn in the building

Grades 5- 8 ONLY - additional options

- Khaki or navy blue pants, shorts, skort, or skirt
- Navy blue, white, or kelly green shirt with collar (Polo shirt, button-down shirt, turtleneck, long or short sleeves)
- Navy blue, kelly green, or khaki dresses or jumpers
- Hats (including, caps, beanies, etc) should not be worn in the building

For \$1 each Friday (excluding holidays and early release days), ALL students will be offered the opportunity to have a non-uniform day. On early release days, students may have a non-uniform day for free.

T-shirts, including those with Casa logos, are not considered uniform-compliant.

Dress code for non-uniform days is as follows:

- Tops/dresses/etc: no spaghetti straps, tank tops, crop tops, or shirts with offensive language or images (as determined by the leadership team)

- Bottoms/dresses/skirts/shorts/etc: skin should not be exposed above fingertip length (from shoulder to fingertip when arms are held straight down at sides). The length of all bottoms/dresses/skirts/shorts/etc should come minimally to the bottom of fingertips when arms are held straight down.
- Any undergarment should not be visible.
- Leadership can apply discretion within this guidance.
- Students will be given uniform clothing from the uniform bank to change into if their clothing does not meet these parameters.

VOLUNTEERS/VISITORS

Prior to volunteering at Casa, all volunteers complete a background check and participate in the Volunteer Safety Training. After the first 30 days of school, volunteers with cleared background checks who have completed the safety training are invited to help within the school.

WORK PLAN/AGENDAS/PLANNERS

All Casa students are provided with a weekly work plan on the first day of each week that incorporates individual work options to practice skills that have been taught or to do projects that allow students to deepen their understanding of concepts. Students in grades CH through 4th grade use weekly paper work plans. Students in grades 5 through 8 will have all works written in individual student agendas. Work plans/agendas are sent home weekly to be signed by parent/guardian.