



# Family Handbook 2023-2024



Dear Families,

Welcome to the 2023-2024 edition of the *Family Handbook*. In this document, you will find the answers to many of your anticipated questions. Included here is information about how to be involved with the school through SMPO membership (you are already a member if you are a parent or teacher) and how to volunteer at school. There is information on how the school communicates with parents and families and parent education opportunities are described. There are also guidelines on how to observe in the classrooms, an important way to understand the Montessori method of education and the rich learning opportunities your child is able to access every day at school.

If you have been a parent in our community in the past, you will find content that is familiar as well as many new additions. Please review the information in this handbook and keep it in your home for future reference. If your copy is misplaced, you can always access the electronic edition we have posted on the website.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Yezbick', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michelle Yezbick, School Director

## Contents

Contact Information for Sherwood Montessori .....	6
Our Mission Statement .....	7
A History of Sherwood Montessori .....	7
The Transitional Kindergarten/Kindergarten Curriculum.....	8
The Elementary Curriculum.....	8
The Middle School Curriculum: Erdkinder .....	9
Attendance .....	9
Birthdays.....	13
Birthday Party Invitations.....	14
Bullying.....	14
Cell Phones.....	16
Clothing .....	16
Communication .....	16
Conferences (Fall & Spring).....	17
Diversity .....	18
Extended Day .....	18
FERPA .....	18
Field Trips.....	21
Fundraising .....	21
Grievances .....	22
Guidance and Discipline.....	23
Independence.....	24
Independent Study.....	25
Injuries.....	25
Lunch.....	25
Medications at School .....	26
Mental Health Resources in Butte County.....	26
Observations .....	26
Orientation for Parents of Students Attending School for the First Time .....	27
Parking.....	29
Recommended Reading on the Montessori Method.....	29
Report Cards.....	30
Safety .....	31
Sherwood Montessori Board Meetings.....	32
SMPO .....	32
Student Success Team (SST).....	33
Toys and Electronics.....	34
Visitation Policy .....	34

Volunteering ..... 34

Appendices..... 37

A. Sherwood Referral Document .....37

B. Thought Paper.....37

C. Butte County Office of Education Child Welfare and Attendance Truancy Process and Responsibilities  
Overview .....37

D. Parking .....37

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## Our Mission Statement

The mission of Sherwood Montessori is to educate K-8 students of the greater Chico area by providing Montessori education within the context of **mutual respect and joy**. The focus of the education will be on **engaging critical thinking and fostering empathy**, and developing the skills needed to become **competent, responsible citizens** who are **life-long learners** and **skillful problem solvers**. The school will serve our community by providing a rich and supportive educational environment for children based upon the philosophy of Maria Montessori which allows each child to reach his or her own potential academically, personally, and socially and will focus on **educating the whole child intellectually, physically, and psychologically**. The methodology used will develop a firm foundation for the students, and will emphasize **ethics, initiative, persistence, and self-confidence**.

This mission will be accomplished by a concerted **community-based effort** between the school, the parents, and the individual child.

### Core Values:

To successfully implement and sustain this mission, the school will be founded on the following core values:

- To creatively apply the Montessori method toward reaching high academic standards, while emphasizing core subjects
- To maintain a diverse total school population through inclusive mixed-aged, mentor based classrooms that welcome all students
- To place emphasis on collaboration, problem-solving, and self-directed goal-setting for each Montessori student according to developmental readiness
- To nurture a commitment toward sustainability and environmental awareness locally and globally, both in Chico and in the greater world
- To apply firm standards of conduct, emphasizing mutual respect, honesty, and courtesy
- To employ creative, passionate, and engaged teachers who are committed to the Montessori philosophy
- To nurture high parental involvement and collaboration in all areas of education and Governance

## A History of Sherwood Montessori

Sherwood Montessori was started when a group of parents saw the need for a Montessori approach to education in the Chico community. Dr. Russell Shapiro, the first Board Chair wrote the school's Charter Petition and it was approved by the Chico Unified School District Board of Education on December 2, 2009. Planning for the school's opening began immediately and Sherwood opened its doors to close to 100 students on August 25, 2010. Twenty months later, on March 7, 2012, our Charter was successfully renewed for the next five years. On March 22, 2017, it was renewed again for another five years, and Sherwood had moved to its new home at the Chapman Elementary campus and 1010 Cleveland Ave. The Mission Statement above represents the dream that we have had the privilege to see realized. Our history is just beginning, and we, the educators, parents, families, and community members will be the authors of it. With the guidance of the Mission

Statement and the inspiration that comes from wanting a better world for our children, Sherwood will be shaped into the kind of school of which we can say: *I wish I had gone to a school like that.*

## **The Transitional Kindergarten/Kindergarten Curriculum**

Sherwood Montessori provides a learning environment for students ages 4-6 years old modeled on the Casa dei Bambini, or Children's House, for children 3-6 years old in the traditional Montessori structure. Children who will be turning 5 between September 2<sup>nd</sup> and February 2<sup>nd</sup> are eligible to enroll in the transitional kindergarten program. Our tk/k classroom includes the materials you would find in a traditional Montessori primary, or Casa, environment. The Sensorial materials and Practical Life materials, developed by Dr. Montessori, support young children in their independence, foster self-esteem, provide readiness for academic learning, and promote ownership of their learning environment. The beautiful, child-centered classroom also includes engaging Montessori materials in language arts, math, science, art, and geography.

Children in the primary classroom learn and grow at an amazing rate with caring and nurturing teachers providing academic and social-emotional instruction. Many students are entering school for the first time in our primary class and our teachers are gentle guides to prepare them for success. The activities and lessons are developmentally appropriate and responsive to young children's needs. After their time learning and growing in the tk/k class, Sherwood students are eager to move up to the elementary level where intriguing work and learning at the next level awaits them.

## **The Elementary Curriculum**

The Montessori Elementary curriculum at Sherwood includes the traditional Montessori lessons and methodology supplemented with content needed for learners to be successful in the twenty-first century. Instruction is tailored for each individual learner. With multiple age groupings, children are able to move forward in areas of strength and receive support in areas of need all within their primary learning environment. The curriculum across subjects moves from content and skills presented and practiced first in the concrete realm before moving gradually to the abstract realm, supporting and ensuring mastery at each stage.

The classroom materials have been carefully designed for the success of the learner. They are attractive and inviting, made of natural materials, and deliberately planned in their ability to create an area of focus for the learner as she or he constructs understanding through multiple sensory modalities. The materials and learning environment have been planned with the perspective of the learner in mind. Thus, they are developmentally appropriate, appealing, orderly, and include "control of error" which enables the children to develop independence. It is not necessary for an adult to point out mistakes; the materials and environment facilitate the child's ability to self-correct. A sense of ownership of one's work and one's classroom develops and the locus of control shifts from the adult to the child. The result is true emancipating education and the nurturing of lifelong learning.

## **The Middle School Curriculum: Erdkinder**

Maria Montessori outlined a compelling approach to teaching adolescents that she called “Erdkinder”, German for “Earth Children”. With the Erdkinder approach, kids are presented with a real world setting in which they construct their education based on the environment. An urban setting might find the students running a grocery store or a bed and breakfast. A rural setting would likely be a farm. At Sherwood, the middle school fundraising projects provide such entrepreneurial opportunities, and the cooking and gardening program teaches real-life skills. Using this authentic approach, the adolescent student understands the value of academic skills as they are needed for success in the real world.

As with the elementary curriculum, there is an emphasis on individualizing each child's program. Every student at Sherwood Montessori is educated with the preparation for success in high school and beyond as the goal. Our work is not limited to preparing the child as an academic, although this certainly is our responsibility. We also see our work as preparing children with all skills needed to be successful in the twenty-first century. Please see the following objectives for an overview of the skills and goals that fall within the scope of our program.

### **General Educational Objectives of the Montessori Program**

#### ***Physical Skills***

- Developing control and mastery of the body’s movement
- Developing healthy lifestyles and an appreciation of maintaining a healthy body
- Developing fine motor coordination

#### ***Physical Goal***

- Learn sports and athletic skills that can be enjoyed into adulthood
- Master fine motor control necessary for writing and other skills

#### ***Emotional Skills***

- An awareness of one’s own feelings
- Communication of one’s feelings to others
- Ability to peacefully problem-solve conflicts

#### ***Emotional Goals***

- Develop empathy
- Develop self-confidence
- Develop healthy self-esteem
- Develop an appreciation of one's connection to others

#### ***Intellectual Skills***

- The mastery of all academic and thinking skills needed for lifelong learning

#### ***Intellectual Goal***

- To become an independent, self-directed learner

## **Attendance**

Sherwood Montessori is committed to delivering a high quality, authentic Montessori education by a concerted community-based effort between the school, the parents, and the individual child. Families put their trust in us that we will adhere to this commitment just as we put our trust in

families that they will do the same. **Regular attendance is essential for children to succeed in school.** A child who is excessively absent will miss out on community building and social opportunities that cannot be recreated. Excessive tardiness can have a similar effect on a child's educational experience. Late arrival is also disruptive to the class as children stop their activities to wonder why their peer was late. *Please call the school if you know your child will miss school for any reason.* Office staff is instructed to call the parents of any child who is not present at school if we have not had a call, email or note sent that notifies us of the absence. The safety of the children is a primary concern at Sherwood and these calls home are to ensure that safety.

*Here are some facts about attendance and achievement we'd like to share that may surprise you:*

- Chronic absenteeism is missing 10 percent of school days for any reason – excused and unexcused, including in-school suspensions. Based upon research, it marks the point when students start to fall behind academically because they have missed too many school days.
- Sherwood Montessori, like the majority of California public schools, is currently in ATSI (Additional Targeted Support & Improvement) for poor attendance. This means we are being monitored for our efforts to increase attendance for students.
- We lose funding for each and every absence regardless of the reason. California has chosen to fund schools in this way, in spite of the limited control schools have over absences. We practice fiscally responsible budgeting, meaning we do not assume high attendance rates, but we would rather allocate more money to spend on the students' educations! Currently, each day of absence costs the school about \$56/student.
- Attendance matters as early as kindergarten. Studies show many children who miss too many days in kindergarten and first grade can struggle academically in the later years. They often have trouble mastering reading by the end of third grade.
- Sporadic absences, not just those on consecutive days of school, matter. Just one or two days a month can add up to 10 percent of the school year.
- Your children can suffer academically if they miss 10 percent of the school year or about 18 days. That can be just one day every two weeks, and that can happen before you know it.
- *Strive for five or fewer absences for the best learning outcomes for your child.*

Finally, good attendance relieves the school of the uncomfortable duty of reporting truancy to child welfare agencies as required by law. Parents may be surprised to learn that as little as three unexcused absences or tardies over 30 minutes log triggers the progressive discipline process for truancy in the County of Butte. Truancy is a legal issue and Sherwood is obligated to follow all laws in terms of reporting absences to the proper authorities.

### **Arrival**

The Montessori classroom is a structured environment, with the early part of the day being reserved for organizing activities and planning the work period. **Late arrival interferes with the community as a whole and prevents the child from participating in cooperative learning experiences.** Please allow sufficient time for your child to arrive at school and not feel rushed. The feelings of the child as he or she enters class can set the tone for the day.

Between 8:30 a.m. and 8:45 a.m., Sherwood Montessori staff is available to monitor students as they arrive. This will be on the playground nearest the Sherwood side of campus. Please refer to the traffic map for details about where to park, where the kids can be in the morning before school, and

where to walk. Any child on campus before 8:30 a.m. must check in to Extended Day. If a child arrives at 8:27 a.m., she or he must check in to Extended Day.

Children arriving *after 8:45 a.m.* are tardy; if the child arrives after attendance sheets have been collected by the office they *must be signed in at the front office, Room 3*. Please park and walk your child to sign him or her in at the front office. Your child will be given a tardy slip to hand to her or his teacher as a means of communicating that late arrival procedures were followed. This is not used as a punitive measure, but to facilitate safety procedures. When a child is not present at school and no call has been made to the school to explain the absence, a call home is made to determine the whereabouts of the child. This call can be very alarming for parents if they expect that the child is at school! Office staff has no way of knowing if a child arrives tardy without the above procedure being followed.

### **Dismissal/ Pick Up Procedures**

- 2:50 is the regular pick-up time for all students in grades TK-3 every day. Students in grades 4-8 are dismissed at 2:55.
- Kindergarten and transitional kindergarten students may be picked up anytime between 12:05-2:50 every day.
- For students in grades TK-3, we ask that parents pick kids up at the classrooms.
- Students in grades 4-8 are dismissed to walk home, ride bikes home, or walk if parents have signed a permission form. Students in grades 4-8 may walk out to their rides or wait for a pick up at the picnic tables near the garden.
- **At 3:00, all students in all grades who have not been picked up will be checked in to Extended Day and supervised by after school care staff.**
- **Students who do not have an Extended Day contract and are on campus before or after school will be sent to the office and a call home will be made.**

*These procedures ensure that all students are under the supervision of an adult, either a parent or child care staff, at all times while on Sherwood's campus.*

### **Early Out Procedures**

When it is necessary to take your child out of school before dismissal time, please come to the front office to sign your child out. You will be given an early out form to hand to the classroom teacher or teacher's aide to facilitate communication that she or he has been signed out in the office.

### **Absences**

Education Code Section 48260 defines a "truant" as any pupil absent without valid excuse 3 full days in one school year or tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on 3 occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof. Education Code Section 48205 provides the following absences as "excused"- illness; quarantine; medical, dental, optometric, or chiropractic appointment; funeral services of a member of the immediate family; and for justifiable personal reasons. Inasmuch as class participation is an

integral part of students' learning experiences, parents/guardians and students shall be encouraged to schedule medical appointments outside of school hours. Student absence for religious instruction or participation in religious exercises away from school property may be considered excused subject to law and administrative regulations.

Most students will have times when it will be necessary to be absent from school. It is important for sick children to stay home to recuperate. **We are not equipped to accommodate children with illnesses while they convalesce.** Following is a list of conditions that warrant an excused absence due to illness:

1. A temperature of more than 100°F orally
2. Nausea or vomiting
3. Stomachache
4. Diarrhea
5. Persistent cough
6. Earache
7. Thick yellowish or greenish discharge from nose
8. Sore throat
9. Rash or infection of the skin
10. Red or pink eyes

Following are guidelines for determining when it is appropriate for a student to return to school after an illness:

*Note: Sherwood will follow California Department of Public Health recommendations regarding isolation/quarantining for infectious diseases.*

- Bronchitis: on antibiotics for 24 hours or more
- Chicken Pox: when lesions are crusted over (approximately one week)
- Colds: no presence of yellow or green mucus, which may be related to an infection (may return if there is no elevated temperature, sore throat, or severe cough)
- Conjunctivitis: when discharge from eyes has stopped; for bacterial conjunctivitis, usually 24 hours after starting antibiotic eye drops; see physician regarding viral infections
- Diarrhea: free of diarrhea for 24 hours or more if caused by illness and not medication
- Ear Infection: on antibiotics for 24 hours or more
- Fever: fever-free for at least 24 hours (readings are generally lower in morning)
- Strep Throat: after treatment with antibiotics for at least 24 hours
- Vomiting: free from vomiting for 24 hours or more

### **School Attendance Review Board (SARB)**

Truancy, defined as unverified, unexcused or excessive excused absences and tardies, negatively affect students' education. Sherwood is required by law to monitor truancy and to report to authorities when there are problems. Not doing so would put the school in jeopardy and is therefore not an acceptable solution to the problem. We truly want to work with families to find solutions when attendance or timeliness is a problem and wish for all families to have a clear understanding of the legal process that is involved when students miss school. Please review the

chart provided in Appendix D for clarity around the school's responsibilities as well as other agencies that may become involved in the event that truancy is an issue.

1. Four unexcused absences will generate a mandated, legally compliant initial attendance letter detailing the school attendance policy and the legal ramifications of excessive unexcused absences.
2. Five absences, excused or unexcused, will initiate an attendance conference held with the parents/guardians and the student, if appropriate. The purpose of this meeting is to communicate the attendance policies clearly to families to ensure maximum attendance for the remainder of the year.
3. Seven unexcused absences will generate another attendance letter referencing truancy guidelines and the school's expulsion policy. The Butte County Office of Education will be notified of the potential for a truancy referral at this time.
4. Ten unexcused absences will generate another attendance letter referencing truancy guidelines and requiring review under the school's expulsion policy for possible expulsion from the school for truancy. At this time the student will be referred to the Butte County Office of Education for truancy.
5. **Eight excused absences will generate a letter requiring third-party proof for excusing any future absences.** The intent is not to castigate or persecute families with frequently or seriously ill children. Discretion will be required by the Director in determining the facts of these situations. The intent is to reveal fraudulent claims of illness to avoid truancy and expulsion. *If your child is absent due to a visit to a physician, please pick up an excusal note while you are in the office, so we can excuse the absence and it will not count toward one of the eight allowed before such notes are required.*

***Family vacations are not valid excuses for missing school. Please schedule your vacations during school vacation times. If an extended absence is unavoidable, please contact the office (not your child's teacher) at least two weeks' prior to the anticipated absence to see if an Independent Study Contract can be implemented. If an Independent Study is not possible, either due to a notice less than two weeks or other factors, absences will be recorded as unexcused.***

## **Birthdays**

Each child's birthday can be shared at school with a special celebration. Celebrations are unique to each classroom, changing at each level. Usually the child brings a treat for the celebrations. Please communicate with your child's teacher about allergies your child's classmates may have and about what types of treats are allowed. Food choices are a very personal and sensitive topic, and it can be challenging for a school to accommodate a diverse set of beliefs from the community. For children, the bottom line is that it is sad when they can't have a treat that is brought or if their

treat cannot be served because of allergens or high sugar content.

Examples of treats not allowed include: cookies, cupcakes, candy, anything with chocolate. Examples of treats that are allowed include: any fruit, fruit kabobs, frozen fruit or smoothies. **Communication between the school and parents can eliminate these disappointments.** Teachers can give parents a list of ideas for low or no sugar refreshments for these occasions.

## **Birthday Party Invitations**

If a child is having a birthday party outside of school, we ask that parents distribute invitations through the mail or email. **Not being invited to a birthday party can be devastating to a child and disruptive to the learning environment, therefore no birthday party invitations will be distributed at school unless the entire class is invited to the party.** If you are unable to obtain an address for a student in the class, you may ask the office for a list of contact information for the class. Some parents have opted out of sharing this information and we will be unable to give contact information for these students.

While we are aware that asking parents to send invitations is an inconvenience and an expense, the disruption of birthday party invitations at school is significant. Please honor our request and send invitations not intended for the whole class through the mail or email.

## **Bullying**

Maria Montessori developed her approach to education with nothing short of world peace as its ultimate goal. At Sherwood Montessori, we uphold this high expectation by creating classrooms and a school as a whole that reflects our belief in this possibility. To achieve a climate of peace, joy, and respect, high expectations for positive behaviors will be the norm and problematic behaviors will be dealt with firmly and consistently.

**Bullying** may be relational and/or physical and demonstrates an observable **pattern of behaviors. Bullying will under no circumstances be tolerated by any person, adult or child, and will be dealt with decisively.** Relational bullying can include:

- verbal putdowns
- exclusion
- threats of exclusion
- tattling
- boasting and drawing disparaging comparisons
- gossiping
- internet bullying

- threats of physical violence
- threatening non-verbal behaviors such as glaring at someone
- using one's physical size to intimidate
- pushing
- pulling
- pinching
- shoving
- tripping
- any other such means of exerting power and/or intimidation.

**Instances of bullying behavior will be dealt with as they happen.** Education and support will be provided to all students involved in a short and empathic manner. If additional support is required, the teacher(s), Director, and parent(s)/guardian(s) will develop and implement a plan. However, by responding **proactively** to these situations, the goal is to prevent unhealthy and conflictual dynamics between teacher, students, and parents.

Students at Sherwood are taught to recognize and stand up to bullying. The acronym "**POUR**" is used to help students understand the difference between relational conflicts and bullying. "**P**" stands for "purposeful". The behavior is on purpose, not impulsive or reactive, or the result of not understanding appropriate social interactions. "**O**" is for "one-sided". There is one person who is targeting the other, it is not a back-and-forth in a difficult relationship. "**U**" is for "unfair". There is clearly an aggressor and a victim, the bully has the power. "**R**" is for repeated, actions and words are recurring.

We empower students to "Give the bully the SLIP", with "**SLIP**" being another acronym that can help kids remember what to do if they are being bullied. "**S**" is for "Stand up, speak up" Kids are encouraged to practice standing still and strong and saying clearly: "Stop!" "**L**" is for "Label it." Say something like: "That's bullying, it's name-calling, it's a threat, it's leaving someone out." Name the behavior and label it as bullying. "**I**" is for "I don't like it." "**P**" is for "Please stop." Politely, with power and purpose.

Sherwood students are encouraged to stand up for one another when they notice bullying and use their "bystander power" because bullies are few and bystanders are many. These are just some of

the lessons that students are taught in the realm of conflict management and social-emotional learning. Our intention in sharing here in the *Family Handbook* is to give common language used at school that can be used at home if children report troubling behavior. Having common language will reinforce to kids that caring adults at school and at home will support them in coping with conflict and recognizing when bullying is occurring.

## Cell Phones

Children may bring cell phones to school provided they are turned off and remain out of students' hands until after school has been dismissed. The school cannot be held responsible for cell phones that are lost, stolen, or broken while on school grounds. Classroom teachers have the authority to collect cell phones during the instructional day and return them at the end of the day if needed. Please remember to turn your ringer off when you visit your child's classroom. In the event that you forget, try not to be overly mortified when you entertain the class, it happens to the best.

## Clothing

It is recommended that children wear comfortable and washable clothing that will enable them to participate freely in the many activities of the day. Children in the elementary and middle school levels should wear comfortable athletic shoes on their Physical Education class day/s, no boots or sandals. To prevent loss, jackets and sweatshirts should be labeled with the child's name. There is a Lost and Found shelf near the front office; parents are advised to check there routinely for their child's belongings. Smaller lost and found items are in the office, Room 3. **Items in the Lost and Found will be sent to a charitable agency at Thanksgiving Break, Spring Break, and Summer Break.** Prior to these donations, lost and found items will be displayed for parents to peruse at arrival and dismissal times.

## Communication

Your child's classroom teacher will be the source of answers for many questions that may arise throughout the school year. Be sure to determine with him or her when the best times to address questions are. Generally, before school in the morning is the busiest time for a teacher to prepare for a successful day with the students. Please do not approach your child's classroom teacher without a pre-scheduled appointment in the mornings before school as this lost time can sabotage the day's plans for all students. mail is another way parents can communicate with school faculty. Lead teachers, office staff, and the director have email addresses:

[firstname@sherwoodmontessori.org](mailto:firstname@sherwoodmontessori.org)

The Parent Square app is the platform used by the school to send many important announcements and information via email, voicemail, and text messaging according to parents' choice. Please download the app to your smart phone and/or computer to receive messages from the school. The friendly folks in the office are happy to help if you need help with the process.

Some of the ways we keep parents notified of activities going on at the school:

- Weekly School Announcements on Thursdays
- SMPO parent organization meetings
- Town Hall meetings
- Parent/teacher conferences
- Classroom newsletters
- Bulletin boards
- Events calendar on our website

When parents need to communicate regarding an issue that is happening at school, the appropriate individual needs to be identified. If the issue is a classroom related issue, the classroom teacher is the person with whom the communication needs to be addressed. All of Sherwood's teachers are committed to providing a high-quality Montessori education to each child. When there are problems, the teachers need them brought to their attention, so they can be solved. Open communication is essential for this process.

If the issue is a school related issue, the Director is the individual with whom the communication should be addressed. Issues with school personnel, facilities, finances, and issues with other parents and family members are some examples. If a parent has first tried to resolve a problem with a teacher and is not satisfied with the outcome, then the Director is the appropriate person with whom to communicate. The Director can be reached via email or an appointment for a meeting with the Director can be made through the office.

The Sherwood Montessori Board of Directors is available if problems have been presented to but are not resolved by the School Director. Although our Board members have a commitment to helping Sherwood implement its mission, they are not involved in day to day operations and so are limited in their abilities to help with problem-solving. Please see the section on "Grievances" for more information.

## **Conferences (Fall & Spring)**

Fall and spring parent/teacher conferences are held each year. These conferences offer parents the opportunity to speak individually with their child's teacher, to hear about the child's progress and the teacher's goals for their child. Conferences are an opportunity for parents to give teachers additional information about their child. For the 2020-2021 school year, fall conferences will be **October 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Monday through Friday of conference week, dismissal will be at 1:35 p.m. instead of the regular 2:50 or 2:55 p.m. dismissal.** Your child's teacher will post a schedule to sign up for conferences with more details about times available.

Spring conferences will be **April 22<sup>nd</sup> -26<sup>th</sup>.** As in the fall, **dismissal will be at 1:35 p.m. Monday through Friday of conference week.**

## **Diversity**

Developing and maintaining a diverse student population is a priority for Sherwood Montessori. Being a successful person in the twenty-first century means having an appreciation for a variety of perspectives. It means being able to shift one's concept of etiquette and assess the appropriateness of one's behavior, discourse style, non-verbal communication, and a host of other facets of social interaction. Sherwood strives to be a welcoming, inclusive environment to families from any background and all are welcome regardless of ethnic, racial, cultural, religious, sexual orientation, gender expression, and physical or mental/emotional ability. Sherwood Montessori is committed to Anti-Bias Anti-Racist education. All students and adults in our community are entitled to respect and discrimination in any form will not be tolerated.

## **Extended Day**

Sherwood Montessori provides childcare for one hour before school starts in the morning (7:30 a.m.-8:30 a.m.) and in the afternoon/evening after school until 5:30 p.m. at 1010 Cleveland Ave. The Extended Day staff also provides supervision for any student, on the playground, for no charge, for the fifteen minutes before school starts (8:30 a.m.-8:45 a.m.). The Extended Day program includes healthy snack time, time to do homework/quietly look at books, outside time, and activities such as arts and crafts, and science explorations.

For the 2023-2024 school year, the school will be providing tutoring for an hour after school and childcare until 5:30 p.m. free of charge. The program is supported by grant funds provided by state and federal programs for COVID relief. Parents/guardians will need to fill application materials for the program to participate.

## **FERPA**

### **General Guidance for Parents**

FERPA is a Federal law that applies to educational agencies and institutions that receive funding under a program administered by the U. S. Department of Education. Parochial and private schools at the elementary school levels do not generally receive such funding and, therefore, are not subject to FERPA. The statute is found at 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and the Department's regulations are found at 34 CFR Part 99.

Under FERPA, schools must generally afford parents:

- access to their children's education records
- an opportunity to seek to have the records amended
- some control over the disclosure of information from the records.

Parents may access, seek to amend, or consent to disclosures of their children's education records, unless there is a court order or other legal document specifically stating otherwise.

When a student turns 18 years of age or attends a postsecondary institution, the student, and not

the parent, may access, seek to amend, and consent to disclosures of his or her education records.

### **Access to Education Records**

Schools are required by FERPA to:

- provide a parent with an opportunity to inspect and review his or her child's education records within 45 days of the receipt of a request
- provide a parent with copies of education records or otherwise make the records available to the parent if the parent, for instance, lives outside of commuting distance of the school
- edit the names and other personally identifiable information about other students that may be included in the child's education records.

Schools are not required by FERPA to:

- Create or maintain education records;
- Provide parents with calendars, notices, or other information which does not generally contain information directly related to the student;
- Respond to questions about the student.

### **Amendment of Education Records**

Under FERPA, a school must:

- Consider a request from a parent to amend inaccurate or misleading information in the child's education records;
- Offer the parent a hearing on the matter if it decides not to amend the records in accordance with the request;
- Offer the parent a right to place a statement to be kept and disclosed with the record if as a result of the hearing the school still decides not to amend the record.

A school is not required to consider requests for amendment under FERPA that:

- Seek to change a grade or disciplinary decision;
- Seek to change the opinions or reflections of a school official or other person reflected in an education record;
- Seek to change a determination with respect to a child's status under special education programs.

### **Disclosure of Education Records:**

A school must:

- Have a parent's consent prior to the disclosure of education records;
- Ensure that the consent is signed and dated and states the purpose of the disclosure.

A school MAY disclose education records without consent when:

- The disclosure is to school officials who have been determined to have legitimate educational interests as set forth in the school district's annual notification of rights to parents;
- The student is seeking or intending to enroll in another school;
- The disclosure is to state or local educational authorities auditing or evaluating Federal or State supported education programs or enforcing Federal laws which relate to those programs;
- The disclosure is pursuant to a lawfully issued court order or subpoena; and
- The information disclosed has been appropriately designated as directory information by the school.

### **Annual Notification**

A school must annually notify parents of students in attendance that they must allow parents to:

- Inspect and review their children's education records;
- Seek amendment of inaccurate or misleading information in their children's education records;
- Consent to most disclosures of personally identifiable information from education records.

The annual notice must also include:

- Information for a parent to file a complaint of an alleged violation with the FPCO;
- A description of who is considered to be a school official and what is considered to be a legitimate educational interest so that information may be shared with that person;
- Information about who to contact to seek access or amendment of education records.

Means of notification:

- Can include local or student newspaper; calendar; student programs guide; rules handbook, or other means reasonable likely to inform parents;
- Notification does not have to be made individually to parents.

### **Complaints of Alleged Violations:**

Complaints of alleged violations may be addressed to:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
 US Department of Education  
 400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
 Washington, DC 20202-5901  
 Phone: (202) 260-3887

Complaints must:

- Be timely submitted, not later than 180 days from the date you learned of the circumstances of the alleged violation
- Contain specific allegations of fact giving reasonable cause to believe that a violation has occurred, including:
  - Relevant dates, such as the date of a request or a disclosure and the date the parent learned of the alleged violation;
  - Names and titles of those school officials and other third parties involved;
  - A specific description of the education record around which the alleged violation occurred;
  - A description of any contact with school officials regarding the matter, including dates and estimated times of telephone calls and/or copies of any correspondence exchanged between the parent and the school regarding the matter;
  - The name and address of the school, school district, and superintendent of the district;
  - Any additional evidence that would be helpful in the consideration of the complaint.

## **Field Trips**

Excursions into the world beyond the classroom are an excellent way for Montessori students to extend and apply the learning they pursue in the classroom. Whole group field trips as well as smaller group excursions based on interest are encouraged. To drive on a field trip, drivers need to fill out a “Volunteer Driver Form” and attach a copy of proof of insurance. These are kept on file in the office for the school year. Each year a new form must be completed, but only one form per driver is needed regardless of how many children attend Sherwood. Parents attending field trips as chaperones are expected to actively supervise students, therefore are not permitted to bring children other than those students they are assigned to as this can create a distraction from chaperoning.

## **Fundraising**

In an ideal world, public education would be well-funded and costs would be covered by our expertly handled tax dollars. Unfortunately, we have seen that this is not the case. We ask that Sherwood families participate, to the extent that they are capable, in our efforts to close the gap between the program we know is best for our kids and the program that is supported by public funds. The following gives an overview of fundraising at Sherwood:

## Fundraising at Sherwood Montessori

<b>Person/Group</b>	<b>Role in fundraising</b>
SMPO	Support the school by volunteering to help out with fundraising.
Director	Solicits help from SMPO members. Writes grants for funds available through CDE, DE, foundations, corporations or other sources.
Classrooms	Run smaller scale fundraisers to generate money for trips/projects with approval from Director.
Board of Directors	Provides vision for the fundraising efforts of the school. Actively seeks major contributions from a variety of private and business sources. Builds an active group of financial supporters who regularly donate money to the charter school.

## Calendar of Yearly Fundraising Events

<b>When</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Proceeds Support</b>
Winter	Winter Performance	SMPO Events
Spring	Sherwoodstock/Sherwood Music Festival	School Development Fund
Ongoing	Sherwood swag (t-shirts & sweatshirts), eScrip, Amazon Smile	General Fund
Ongoing	Various grants, Restaurant Takeovers	Targeted areas of need

## Grievances

Differences and disagreements are a part of life and Sherwood Montessori recognizes the need for healthy communication and a positive and proactive way to handle grievances that is aligned with our Mission Statement.

If parent(s) have a complaint, we ask that parent(s) report their concerns directly to the school personnel concerned, and discuss these concerns in a private meeting, preferably within 24 to 48 hours. The School Director shall be made aware of these concerns by the parents and/or individual if they are unresolved. If, in discussion with the School Director, the parent wishes to file a formal written grievance, proper paperwork will be provided. The Director will meet with those filing within five working days to review the complaint. The Director will work with the parent or guardian, student, teacher, aides, or other employees whose participation is relevant in order to resolve the concern. The Director will provide a written response within 10 working

days of the meeting. If the parent or guardian is not satisfied with the outcome or decision by the Director regarding the complaint, they have the right to file a written appeal with the Director within five days of receiving the response. The Board of Directors will serve as an appeals body if a complaint is not resolved. The Board will respond within 30 days of receiving the appeal. If a parent has a complaint with the Director of the school, a letter would be sent to the Board of Directors for the administrative remedy to be followed.

The Board prohibits retaliation against complainants. The Board of Directors will not investigate anonymous complaints unless it so desires. The steps above outline the process for filing a complaint and parents are expected to exhaust all the steps in this administrative remedy before pursuing other action.

## **Guidance and Discipline**

### **Guidelines**

The Montessori classroom provides a variety of activities from which to choose. Once a child becomes acclimated to the classroom, her or his concentration on the absorbing tasks enable the teacher to maintain a comfortable hum of activity. A combination of group and individual attention is provided. Children are free to move about the environment provided they follow Sherwood's philosophy of mutual respect which includes respect for self, respect for others, and respect for the environment. Occasionally, a child may disrupt the normalized atmosphere; when this occurs, the teacher is responsible for redirecting the child's behavior in a positive manner. If unacceptable behavior continues, the following measures will be taken:

**Observe** - The teacher will make every attempt to see the situation from the child's point of view. At this point the teacher will ask the child questions to try to resolve the conflict. S/he will always involve the feelings of the child when trying to find a solution.

**Discuss** - Dr. Montessori believed a child to be capable of reason at an early age. The teacher will attempt to ascertain the cause of the child's acting out. On occasion, a parent may receive an Incident Report, which is intended to keep you apprised of any situations which have occurred. Certain actions, such as willful fighting, will require a parent to be called to come to the school to take the child home for the day. Usually, a conference will follow such measures.

**Conference** - Continued disruption will require a discussion as to the nature of the misbehavior. Communication between parents, teacher, and child is essential. The aim of these conferences is to suggest the best ways in which to deal with the behavior and gain cooperation from the child. Information shared at these conferences will help to better understand the child's perception.

**Referral** - When parent conferences fail to successfully resolve a situation, we can recommend an appropriate professional on a private basis, or direct you to services offered by our intervention program. These professionals include, but are not limited to, the following: speech therapist, school resource specialist, counselor, and school psychologist.

**Dismissal** - When all efforts previously stated prove unsuccessful, and we sincerely believe that our program is unable to meet the needs of the child, we may require that a child be dismissed from the school. Please understand that the well-being of your child, as well as his or her classmates, is our primary concern. Every effort possible will be taken to avoid this final measure. Parents have a legal right to appeal a decision to expel a student and details can be read in our Charter.

## **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**

Sherwood's PBIS program is designed with a Montessori framework to support students to make positive behavior choices. Clear behavior expectations are communicated in all areas of the school, and are posted where students, parents, teachers and staff can see them. The rules and expectations are posted and reviewed in lessons for all students. The *PBIS Handbook* is a good source for reviewing all materials relevant to the PBIS program and each family should have a copy. Please familiarize yourself with the materials in this handbook so you can reinforce the expectations that we have at school. The emphasis is on "Positive", and we will be celebrating the acts of kindness and good choices with celebrations and recognitions. Traditional Montessori philosophy does not "reward" positive or desired behavior because of the tendency for rewards to decrease intrinsic motivation, but celebrations for creating positive community together does not jeopardize intrinsic motivation.

The shift is subtle, but important. Montessori schools across the country are adopting PBIS with changes to align the program more closely with Montessori philosophies, including teaching Peace Education and supporting all students' social-emotional needs, not just the children who stand out by having less developed coping skills. Montessori seeks to "establish justice" not merely "instate order", therefore culturally responsive teaching and inclusive practices for all students are essential components of Sherwood's PBIS program. Continuous improvement efforts are made to bring our response to behavior in alignment with Montessori philosophy. During the 2023-2024 school year, a team of teachers and school leadership will continue, for our second year, to take part in the Northern California Educational Leadership Consortium to focus on our schoolwide responses to behavior and supporting kids to make good choices.

## **Independence**

Fostering independence in students is one of the pillars of the Montessori approach to education. Children are taught to be problem-solvers who can figure out solutions with resourcefulness, not being overly reliant on adults. This independence as a goal is considered when teachers plan lessons, set up their classrooms, and put classroom procedures in place.

Although independence is a goal for all students, Sherwood teachers understand that children come to school with a variety of skills and background experiences in being independent learners. High expectations are maintained for all learners, and appropriate, individualized scaffolds are put in place to ensure that these expectations are met. When a child is unable to meet the expectation, the blame is not put on the child. Accommodations will be made to help the child continue to approach the goal of independence.

To acknowledge that independence is a cornerstone of the Montessori method of education without also considering the value of interdependence would give a skewed picture of our work. Dr. Montessori valued interdependence highly; the multi-age classrooms are a testament to that. Dr. Montessori felt that older children would gain leadership skills and responsibility by being in mentor roles while younger children would gain motivation and resourcefulness. She also developed lessons in the cultural areas of the curriculum, particularly geography, to show the connectedness of all people. Thus, interdependence as well as independence has its place in our

school.

## **Independent Study**

Although our first choice is always to have our students attend school on days we are in session, it may become unavoidable for a family to have their child miss school. If this is the case, the next best arrangement is to plan an Independent Study which involves the student's teacher creating a work plan that can be done while the student is out. If you know you will need to have your child out of school, *please see the office for an application for an independent study*. Teachers do not have the necessary paperwork and will not be able to determine if an Independent Study is possible. The Director will review the circumstances and see if it is possible (the law is stringent on these matters and it is not always allowable). **Please give at least two weeks' notice as teachers need time to create a quality work plan.**

If no application is filled two weeks prior to the start of the Independent Study, the application will not be approved. This can be problematic on many levels: 1.) The resulting unexcused absences may trigger truancy procedures (these are legally mandated). 2.) The student who misses school will fall behind on schoolwork. 3.) The school will lose funding. The majority of our revenues are based on student attendance. In spite of these, it is unfair to expect a teacher to put together an independent study at the last minute. These programs can take 2-3 hours to put together, longer when the expected absence will be for several days.

For students who have been exposed to COVID-19 and need to isolate or quarantine immediately, providing a tailored workplan will not be feasible. Plans provided will be average work for the student's grade. This is counter to our preferred method of individualizing instruction but is necessary for the functioning of the school as teachers will not be able to provide individualized work for home and plan for in-school students simultaneously. We ask parents to do the best they can with what is provided and thank you for your understanding.

## **Injuries**

Sherwood staff has been trained in first aid and CPR. If your child is hurt at school, appropriate care will be given. If the injury will require follow up care at home, an injury report will be sent home to inform parents of the nature of the injury. If your child needs to be picked up from school for medical attention, school staff will call all numbers on the Emergency Form until an adult can be reached. *Please keep us updated regarding changes to phone numbers and contact information.* For serious injuries, staff will call 911 and see that the injured child is transported to the emergency room for treatment.

## **Lunch**

Lunchtime will be at 12:35 p.m. in the cafeteria/multi-use room. Lunchtime rules are reviewed with all students and are posted in the cafeteria during mealtime and are included in the *PBIS Handbook*. School lunches can be purchased through our school lunch provider. Families that

qualify can receive free or reduced lunches by filling out an application, available in the office. If you choose to send lunch from home, please remember to include an ice pack for days when the weather is hot. *Please do not pack candy or sweets in your child's lunch.* Caffeinated beverages are allowed only with authorization from your child's physician.

## **Medications at School**

School staff is able to treat injuries that occur at school with ice, soap and water, and bandages. No other treatment is to be administered unless an "Authorization To Administer Medication" is on file. If your child needs medicine administered at school, please contact the office to receive this form which will need to be filled by a doctor. Children who need to take medication will come to the office where medication is kept in a locked cabinet.

## **Mental Health Resources in Butte County**

Residents of Butte County can call 211 to reach a county employee who can refer the caller to support services for a mental health crisis. The call center is open 24 hours a day. Sherwood Montessori is committed to guiding and nurturing the whole child, academically, physically, and socially and emotionally. If a student is experiencing social or emotional needs, a Student Study Team (SST) may be called to assess the needs and identify appropriate supports. Teachers or parents may request an SST meeting for students struggling with social or emotional issues.

## **Observations**

Parent observations in Montessori classrooms usually begin in late fall, after the children have had an opportunity to establish community norms and a sense of ownership over the classroom. After this period of what Montessori called "normalization" occurs, parents are welcome and encouraged to observe. Please plan these observations in advance with your child's teacher and familiarize yourself with the observation guidelines.

### **Observation guidelines**

- Sign in as a visitor in the school office.
- Limit your observation time to about 30 minutes.
- Remain quietly in the chair provided for you.
- If a child approaches you, answer any comment or question briefly. Please do not engage the children in conversation or ask them to demonstrate activities.
- Please keep in mind that your child can respond to your presence in a variety of ways. Therefore, do not expect this to be a typical day for your child, but rather a chance to see some of your child's activities and a view of how the classroom functions as a whole.
- Make note of any questions that arise during your observation and arrange a time to meet with your teacher to discuss your observations.

**In order to make your visit more meaningful, here are some questions to consider as you**

**observe your child:**

- What kinds of activities is your child choosing?
- Does he/she choose activities independently?
- Does he/she use the materials with care?
- Does he/she complete the activity and return it to the shelf properly?
- Is he/she working with focus and concentration?
- Does he/she work through difficulties or do they frustrate easily?
- Are her/his movements controlled and settled?
- Does he/she seek help when needed?
- How does he/she interact with the other children?
- Does he/she respect the work of others?
- Does he/she participate in group activities?
- Does he/she work cooperatively with other children?

**In addition to observing your child, take a few minutes to also observe the classroom community as a whole. Look for:**

- The variety of activities that are in use
- The interactions between the adults and the children
- The balance of individual and small group activities
- Instances of helpfulness, whether spontaneous or suggested by an adult
- Examples of leadership – children helping other children

**Orientation for Parents of Students Attending School for the First Time**

Most children want to come to school, but feeling anxious about new experiences is usually part of the emotions a child will experience. It can also be difficult for a parent to separate from his or her child for the first time. The following is meant as a help to ease the transition for both parents and children.

**Readiness to Start School**

Our teachers are focused on knowing your child as a whole, unique individual. Whether they are “academically ready” for kindergarten is not a primary concern. Knowing one’s colors, numbers, letters, or shapes is not a prerequisite for starting school. We are prepared to meet your child wherever she or he is in terms of academic background knowledge. Avoid statements about academic preparedness that might induce anxiety such as, “You need to learn your shapes so you are ready for school.” Teachers appreciate help in preparing the child to be successful socially and behaviorally. Children need to be ready to learn to share, to take turns, to solve problems peacefully, and to talk about their feelings. It is also helpful if they have had some help in being aware of their voice volume and body movements and the need to adapt these in indoor and outdoor environments.

**Going to School**

Here are some skills that your child will be developing right away:

1. Keeping track of belongings.

2. Understanding order. (Putting things back, having to take turns...you can encourage the same habits at home.)
3. Doing things for oneself. (Dressing oneself and taking care of personal hygiene etc., are skills which will come out of necessity in a classroom setting. Children are usually motivated to learn these and become more independent as they observe older children accomplishing them.)
4. Sharing an adult.
5. Inner controls related to environment. (Child learns to observe the limits and expected behaviors of the environment and the community because s/he wants to belong.)
6. Development of language. (New experiences will broaden your child's vocabulary.)
7. Desire to work. (School provides opportunities for social comparison which often translates to a desire to work to gain new skills.)

### **Being Aware of Your Feelings**

Below are some feelings you may be experiencing.

1. Concern about being accepted and liked in the school community.
2. You may feel loss. Indeed, you are losing time with your child, but you are gaining the opportunity to broaden your child's world, and you will always be your child's first teacher.
3. You may feel anticipation for the adventures ahead.

Try to focus on #3 and downplay #1 & 2.

### **Some Handy Responses**

If your child says: I want you to come into school and be with me.

You might say: This school is for children like you, it is not a school for grownups.

If your child says: The playground is scary.

You might say: Yes, when things are new they can be scary. Soon it won't be new, and it won't seem scary to you anymore.

If your child says: I don't want to go to school.

You might say: You are a big boy/girl. You need to go to school.

- Don't over-discuss ahead of time.
- If there is an issue upon arrival, don't be hesitant and don't give a choice. Remain firm, loving, and calm.

### **Also Important to Note**

1. Children do not always express the wide range of feelings they have when starting school. When asked about how school is going, they often say nothing or focus on one or two negative incidents. Parents should not always be literal about what a child shares regarding school. Much more is happening than they are expressing.
2. Most children understand that school is different and behave differently at school than they do at home. They are becoming members of the classroom and school community and this takes a great deal of effort at first. Your child may come home overtired at first while they make this adjustment. She may exhibit behaviors aberrant to her usual self as she "lets her hair down" at home. Home is a safe place to blow off steam, and this should pass in time.
3. It takes some time for teachers to get to know your child as a learner. Expect that your child's teacher will focus on community building and teaching rules and procedures initially. This is time well spent that will ensure that more time can be used later to focus

on individual academic plans. Your child's teacher will likely start with work that is very easy for him or her. Know that this is a wise teacher's move to build confidence in learners as more information about individual's skill levels is collected.

## **Parking**

For drop off and pick up, please use the CARD parking lot, the lot at the end of Cleveland Ave., and use the side gate which opens next to the bike parking area. **This is not a drop off area, please pull into a parking space and park.** Stopping to drop off students at the pedestrian gate causes backups and is discourteous to others. It also creates a safety issue as some drivers attempt to navigate around the standing vehicle.

If the lot is not open, please use the Chapman parking lot nearest to Cleveland Ave. There is no parking in the front classrooms where 16<sup>th</sup> Street meets Cleveland Ave.; this is a fire lane. Parking here causes trouble with after school traffic, and it could create an issue for emergency personnel in the event of a fire or medical emergency.

There is also no parking on Cleveland Ave. along the stretch of road in front of 1010 Cleveland Ave. Illegal parking here in the past has forced children to walk in the roadway to get around the car blocking their path.

Please park your car in a designated parking spot in one of the parking lots. The other alternative is to use the lanes on 16th Street that are intended for drop-off, along the chain-link fence and cement median. There is a Parking Map in the appendices of this document for referral.

## **Recommended Reading on the Montessori Method**

The books listed below are suggested for those interested in learning more about Dr. Maria Montessori, her method of learning, and the development of children. Some of these books are available at the school and parents are welcome to borrow these.

### **Books by Dr. Maria Montessori:**

- *The Absorbent Mind* - Dr. Montessori's comprehensive book on early childhood.
- *The Discovery of the Child* - Montessori concepts of education and the teaching materials.
- *The Secret of Childhood* - The child's role in society with focus on the child's spirituality.
- *Education and Peace* - A collection of speeches and essays by Maria Montessori on world peace.
- *Education for a New World* - This book discusses preparing the child for tomorrow's world.
- *To Educate the Human Potential* - The cosmic view of education beyond age 6 is the focus of this book.
- *The Formation of Man* - Montessori philosophy and her approach to world literacy.
- *From Childhood to Adolescence* - An overview of the different states of development through adolescence; includes the Erdkinder concept.

### **Books by other authors:**

- *Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work* by E. M. Standing - A detailed account of the Montessori Method in theory and in practice.
- *Montessori: A Modern Approach* by Paula Polk Lillard - A good introduction to Montessori for parents, educators and all professionals working with children.
- *Montessori: The Science behind the Genius* by Dr. Angeline Lillard, professor of psychology at the University of Virginia. An academic work that connects modern research with the Montessori method.
- *Positive Discipline* by Jane Nelson, licensed marriage, family, and child therapist provides proven strategies for establishing and maintaining respectful, nurturing relationships using positive techniques.
- *Beyond Discipline: From Compliance to Community* by Alfie Kohn describes a discipline approach used in classrooms that uses a positive and cooperative approach
- *Diverse Families, Desirable Schools: Public Montessori in the Era of School Choice* by Mira Debs examines the history of Montessori in the public realm and some of the issues that have arisen as Montessori reaches a broader range of families once offered widely tuition-free.

### **Report Cards**

Our report cards were created with input gathered from multiple sources to ultimately provide parents with a clear, informative picture of their child's performance at school. Academic skills that are evaluated are from the Common Core State Standards, specifically, the standards chosen by the teachers to have the most impact on students' future academic development. The Montessori philosophy seeks to educate the whole child and the reports are wider in scope than simply academics, therefore report cards contain information on social and emotional growth as well. Your child's teacher is the best source of information about the report cards and can answer any questions you may have.

### **Safe Storage of Firearms**

The State of California has passed legislature requiring public schools to inform parents and guardians about safe storage of firearms. This section of the handbook is to inform and to remind parents and legal guardians of all students in Sherwood Montessori of their responsibilities for keeping firearms out of the hands of children as required by California law. There have been many news reports of children bringing firearms to school. In many instances, the child obtained the firearm(s) from his or her home. **These incidents can be easily prevented by storing firearms in a safe and secure manner, including keeping them locked up when not in use and storing them separately from ammunition.**

To help everyone understand their legal responsibilities, this memorandum spells out California law regarding the storage of firearms. Please take some time to review this memorandum and evaluate your own personal practices to assure that you and your family are in compliance with California law.

- With very limited exceptions, California makes a person criminally liable for keeping any firearm, loaded or unloaded, within any premises that are under their custody and control where that person knows or reasonably should know that a child is likely to gain access to the firearm without the permission of the child’s parent or legal guardian, and the child obtains access to the firearm and thereby (1) causes death or injury to the child or any other person; (2) carries the firearm off the premises or to a public place, including to any preschool or school grades kindergarten through twelfth grade, or to any school-sponsored event, activity, or performance; **or** (3) unlawfully brandishes the firearm to others.<sup>1</sup>
  - **Note:** The criminal penalty may be significantly greater if someone dies or suffers great bodily injury as a result of the child gaining access to the firearm.
- With very limited exceptions, California also makes it a crime for a person to negligently store or leave any firearm, loaded or unloaded, on their premises in a location where the person knows or reasonably should know that a child is likely to gain access to it without the permission of the child’s parent or legal guardian, unless reasonable action is taken to secure the firearm against access by the child, even where a minor **never** actually accesses the firearm.<sup>2</sup>
- In addition to potential fines and terms of imprisonment, as of January 1, 2020, a gun owner found criminally liable under these California laws faces prohibitions from possessing, controlling, owning, receiving, or purchasing a firearm for 10 years.<sup>3</sup>
- Finally, a parent or guardian may also be civilly liable for damages resulting from the discharge of a firearm by that person’s child or ward.<sup>4</sup>

**Note:** Your county or city may have additional restrictions regarding the safe storage of firearms.

Thank you for helping to keep our children and schools safe. Remember that the easiest and safest way to comply with the law is to keep firearms in a locked container or secured with a locking device that renders the firearm inoperable.

## Safety

The safety of the children, staff, and visitors at Sherwood Montessori is of vital importance. If you are interested in being a member of the Safety Committee, please see the Director. The Safety Committee will work with the Director, the Board, and the school's insurance carriers to continually improve the Safety Plan for the school.

Some ways parents can help keep Sherwood a safe place include:

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<sup>1</sup> See California Penal Code sections 25100 through 25125 and 25200 through 25220.

<sup>2</sup> See California Penal Code section 25100(c).

<sup>3</sup> See California Civil Code Section 29805.

<sup>4</sup> See California Civil Code Section 1714.3.

- Reviewing school rules with children
- Notifying the school of any changes in medical conditions
- Driving slowly and defensively near the school
- Keeping contagious children home from school
- Encouraging children to go to the adults at school when they have a conflict they need help resolving
- Pointing out malfunction in equipment or hazards on or near the school site

Safety from hate is as vitally important as physical safety. Teacher and staff are vigilant and listen for teasing or insults related to race, ethnicity, body size, physical abilities, religion, sexual orientation, clothing, appearance or socioeconomic status. Comments of this nature will not be ignored or tolerated but will be swiftly rebuked. Individuals, children and adults, will be taught why the remarks are inappropriate and restorative practices will be employed to address harm brought about by such remarks. If such actions are repeated, administrative remedy may include suspension or expulsion for students and termination of employment for staff or faculty.

Specifically: no insults related to ability, appearance, culture, gender, home language, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or social class will be tolerated.

## **Sherwood Montessori Board Meetings**

Regular, special, and emergency Board meetings are open to the public and parents and community members are welcome to attend. There will also be a separate opportunity at Regular meetings for general public comment on all subjects relating to the school. In accordance with the Brown Act, agendas for regular meetings are posted 72 hours in advance and agendas for special meetings are posted 24 hours in advance of the meetings. Agendas are posted on the school website as well as physically at the school site. Meetings are usually held at the school; a change of venue will be posted if the location is changed. Currently, meetings are being held on Zoom. The meeting ID and password are published on the agenda (posted on the homepage of the website and on campus on the office bulletin board), on the school's Google calendar on the website and in the School Announcements.

Community members who attend are invited to make comments related to items posted on the agenda. These comments must be limited in length and the Board will usually not respond. This may feel strange as we are used to two-way communication in most other settings; Board meetings are regulated by the Brown Act and use Robert's Rules of Order. Occasionally, the Board may hold a closed session. These meetings are not open to the public but are limited to personnel issues, potential litigation, and real estate negotiations. Board members may not disclose details of what occurs in closed meetings.

## **SMPO**

Parent involvement is vital for the success of Sherwood Montessori. In addition to providing volunteer opportunities that enrich our program, with participation parents make a powerful statement to the children that school is important, and education is valued by the family. The

SMPO provides parents with an avenue to effective participation in the school's operations. All parents and teachers at Sherwood are de facto members of the SMPO. Active membership is encouraged and achieved by attending regularly scheduled SMPO meetings, either in person or via Zoom. SMPO meetings include announcements and updates, information about events and fundraisers, opportunities to volunteer for the school, and a Director's report. There is also an Open Forum for items not listed on the agenda to provide an opportunity to offer suggestions and feedback.

The SMPO has a shared leadership structure, which evolved from many times hearing the feedback: *I want to help, but I don't want to be in charge!* Our events and fundraisers are well-established, and the Sherwood administrative staff can guide a Leadership Team for each SMPO event. In this way, many hands make light work, and our community gets the benefit of having many invested volunteers work together to create events that become cherished memories for the kids!

## **Student Success Team (SST)**

An SST will be convened to be a source of expertise whenever a student is not achieving up to her or his potential. Sherwood's SST may be comprised of the student's teacher, the student's parent/s, special education providers, and the Director of Multi-Tiered System of Support, although not every member of the team may be present at every meeting. The process of formally identifying a child for a modification in academic services can begin with a parent, teacher, or any staff member expressing a concern for a child. Concerns can be academic or emotional in their scope. Once the concern is expressed, the SST will meet to identify possible interventions for the student. After a determined amount of time with interventions in place, usually about six to eight weeks, the SST will meet again to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions. Interventions will be modified as needed until the child is able to function in a way reflective of her or his potential.

## **Title 1**

During the COVID emergency, Sherwood became a Title 1 School to take advantage of the federal funding provided to such schools. Typically, Title I federal funds through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). At the beginning of each school year, local educational agencies receiving Title I funds are required to notify parents whose student(s) attend a Title I school that they may request, and the agency will provide the parents on request (and in a timely manner), information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers, including at a minimum:

1. Whether the student's teacher:
  - Has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
  - Is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
  - Is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.

2. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

If you would like this information, please contact Michelle Yezbick, the School Director, at 530-345-6600 or by email at [michelle@sherwoodmontessori.org](mailto:michelle@sherwoodmontessori.org)

## Toys and Electronics

Children are encouraged to bring items from home that relate to the current academic themes, for example: books or current articles on topics of study, or special things responsibly collected from nature such as bird nests, unusual shells and rock specimens. *However, toys and electronics from home are not allowed at school.* If a child finds it hard to part with a particular toy, perhaps the toy can accompany the child to school and remain in the car to wait for the child's return at the end of the day. If a student is going to a friend's house after school and wants to have a toy or electronic for the after school visit, he or she may bring the item to the office to hold on to for the school day, but the office is not responsible for any item that is lost or broken while there.

## Visitation Policy

Sherwood is a community-based school, and all community members' voices and input are valued and necessary. In order to run a school efficiently, procedures around visits and appointments are needed to ensure that input is received, and the business of the school is not disrupted. To meet with the Director, please make an appointment with the Administrative Assistant in the office. To visit a classroom, please make arrangements through the office with at least 48 hours advance notice to allow communication with the classroom teacher. To arrange a tour for a community member interested in Sherwood, please communicate with the office as well. For more details on the Visitation Policy, our board adopted policy is posted on our website on the Board of Directors/policies page.

## Volunteering

Sherwood Montessori is committed to being a school in which collaboration and high family involvement is optimized to provide students with the best possible school experience. Seeing parents helping out at the school sends a positive lesson for children. It shows them that education is valued and it is important enough to work for and invest time in. Not every family has unlimited resources of time or skills to offer, but there are things that any and all of us can do. The SMPO offers a variety of tasks and projects in which parents and families can be involved. In addition, as each family gets to know the teachers and their child's program, parents can find other ways to help. Each family is encouraged to perform a **minimum of 40 hours** of involvement hours for the school each academic year. Part of these hours may be filled by attending school performances, attending Back to School Night and Parent Education Night, and participating in school functions. For families that are unable to extend themselves beyond attendance at these types of events, a cash donation in lieu of work hours can be made to the school.

The California Department of Education asks us to provide a metric of our family involvement in our LCAP (Local Control Accountability Plan). That is one of the reasons we ask families to report volunteer hours. Another reason is that some grant applications ask for data showing volunteer power in our organization. A third reason is that it helps us in the office know who has experience with different volunteering options and who needs to find a way to volunteer, we can connect parents with this information.

The Parent Square App makes reporting volunteer hours easy! Please download Parent Square to keep up with communication from the school, to sign up to volunteer, to report volunteer hours, and to receive alerts from the school.

Some examples of ways parents might volunteer include:

#### Classroom Environment

- providing snack for the class
- laundering dish towels at home
- cleaning the classroom (vacuuming, dusting, wiping tables and surfaces)
- caring for class pets over breaks
- sharpening pencils
- making copies

#### School Grounds

- sweeping up outdoor areas of the campus
- working in the garden
- completing handyperson tasks
- directing traffic before or after school
- creating a parent committee to beautify the campus

#### Educational Programs

- assembling booklets for the classroom
- listening to student readers
- administering spelling tests
- planning field trips
- driving and chaperoning on field trips
- helping with special projects (e.g. puppet making, cooking and gardening, art)
- sharing expertise in the classroom as a visiting guide

#### Fundraising and Events Planning

- planning classroom fundraisers
- joining an SMPO fundraising committee
- joining an SMPO event planning committee
- volunteering at special events (e.g. International Day, Parade of Lights, Fall Festival, Winter Performance, Variety Show, Sherwood Music Festival)
- researching grant funding sources and helping to write applications

### Marketing and Communications

- updating content on the school website
- developing Sherwood's social media presence (e.g. Facebook, Instagram)
- posting school reviews on Yelp, Google, Great Schools, Niche
- distributing flyers and brochures (e.g. grocery stores, farmer's market, library, cafes)

### Leadership and Governance

- serving as an SMPO coordinator (fundraising, marketing, community)
- participating on the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) committee
- serving as a member of the Board of Directors
- joining a Board committee (e.g. Development, Finance, Strategic Planning)

## **Appendices**

- A. Sherwood Referral Document
- B. Thought Paper
- C. Butte County Office of Education Child Welfare and Attendance Truancy Process and Responsibilities Overview
- D. Parking

# Sherwood Referral Form

*Order, Coordination, Concentration, Independence*

1010 Cleveland Avenue

Chico, CA 95928

(530) 345-6600

Student Name: _____  Date of incident: _____ Time of incident: _____ Grade:    TK    K    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8  Referring Staff: _____	<p><b>Location</b> <i>choose only one</i></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Classroom</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Hallway</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Bathroom</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 20th Street Park</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Cafeteria</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> 1010 Cleveland</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Playground</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Library</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Pick-up Areas</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Office</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Off Campus</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/> Hallway	<input type="checkbox"/> Bathroom	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Street Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Cafeteria	<input type="checkbox"/> 1010 Cleveland	<input type="checkbox"/> Playground	<input type="checkbox"/> Library	<input type="checkbox"/> Pick-up Areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Office	<input type="checkbox"/> Off Campus	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____				
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<p><b>Each referral can be only Minor or Major, not both.</b> <i>Choose up to two, circle the primary behavior problem if choosing two.</i></p>		<p><b>Perceived Motivation</b> <i>choose only one</i></p>															
<p><b>Minor Problem Behavior</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Defiance <input type="checkbox"/> Disrespect <input type="checkbox"/> Disruption <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate Language <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Contact <input type="checkbox"/> Property Misuse <input type="checkbox"/> Technology Violation <input type="checkbox"/> Elopement <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ —	<p><b>Major Problem Behavior</b></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Abusive/ Inapp. Language</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Bullying</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Defiance</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Disrespect</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Disruption</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Fighting</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Forgery/Theft/Plagiarism</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Harassment</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Lying/Cheating</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Property Damage</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Leaving Campus</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Physical Aggression</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Abusive/ Inapp. Language	<input type="checkbox"/> Bullying	<input type="checkbox"/> Defiance	<input type="checkbox"/> Disrespect	<input type="checkbox"/> Disruption	<input type="checkbox"/> Fighting	<input type="checkbox"/> Forgery/Theft/Plagiarism	<input type="checkbox"/> Harassment	<input type="checkbox"/> Lying/Cheating	<input type="checkbox"/> Property Damage	<input type="checkbox"/> Leaving Campus	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/> Other		<p><b>Obtain:</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Attention <input type="checkbox"/> Items/Activities <input type="checkbox"/> Peer Attention <p><b>Avoid:</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Task/Activity <input type="checkbox"/> Peer	
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<p><b>Other Comments:</b> _____                  _____</p>																	



**Thought Paper**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**What was the problem?**

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**How did your choices affect other people?**

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**What would have been a better choice?**

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**What is your plan to be sure this problem doesn't happen again?**

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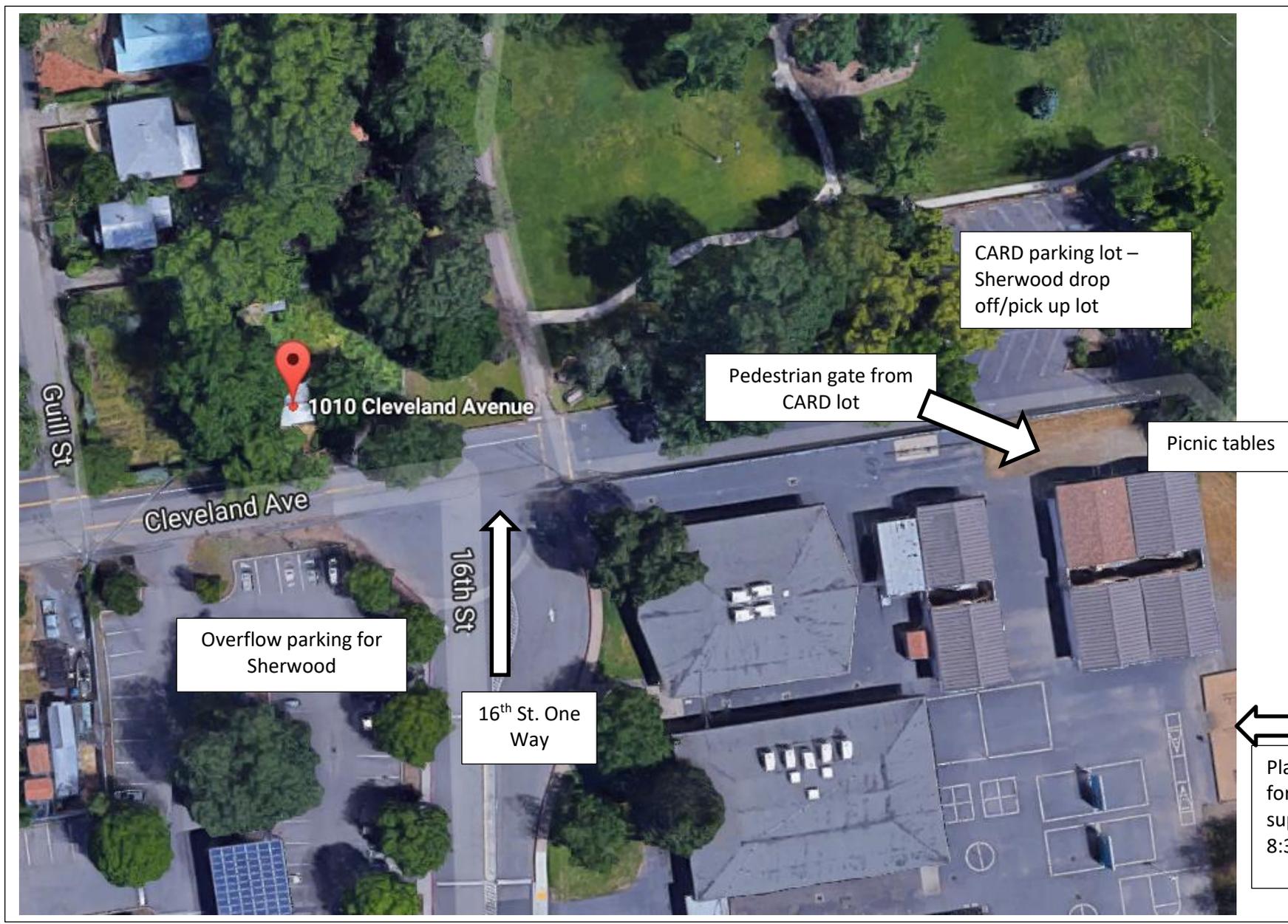
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Teacher's Signature _____	Date _____
Student's Signature _____	Date _____
Parent's Signature _____	Date _____

Student/Family	School Site/District		BCOE Student Attendance
3+ Unexcused absences or truant tardies of 30 minutes	—Letter #1 sent to parent	—Utilize all site, district, and possible community resources to address barriers to attendance and support family and student throughout the process Document —Copies of letters DO NOT need to be forwarded to BCOE	—Consultation offered to schools throughout the process
Additional Unexcused absences or truant tardies	-Letter #2 sent to parent —May include District Attorney letter. Refer to DA Letter overview		
Additional Unexcused absences or truant tardies	-Letter #3 sent to parent		
Meeting with Site Administrator or designee	School Site Contract put in place. *School determines if these meetings will occur (consistently for all students) after the second or third truancy letter.	Site Admin meets with student/parent to discuss attendance barriers and supports with School Site Contract put in place	
Broken School Site Contract	-Referral to SARB SARB Chairperson reviews referral, schedules meeting or returns for further action		
SARB Hearing	—SARB members discuss attendance barriers, suggest supports and resources —Contract signed		-Participate on SARB
Broken SARB Contract	-Notify SARB Chairperson and provide necessary documents as requested		—Referral to Law Enforcement or return to SARB/school for further action
Truancy Court	—Provide requested attendance updates -Administrator present at court when requested		—Prepare/present court report -Reminder calls to parents —Provide outcome to Site Administrator and SARB

North



1010 Cleveland Avenue

Guill St

Cleveland Ave

16th St

Overflow parking for Sherwood

16th St. One Way

CARD parking lot - Sherwood drop off/pick up lot

Pedestrian gate from CARD lot

Picnic tables

Playground for a.m. supervision 8:30-8:45