

Family and Student Handbook

Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School

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Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School Mission Statement

Our mission is to support and nurture the innate joy of learning and provide students with practical, academic, and social skills needed to be contributing members of their communities and the world.

Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School Core Values

*At Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School we strive to create a more peaceful world by offering a **cosmic education** where self-directed learning is experiential and authentic.*

*Our goal is to unlock the **human potential** by guiding individuals in obtaining independence in the physical, academic, social, emotional, and spiritual realms.*

*We create safe **prepared environments** that respect where each individual is along the developmental planes and can reveal him/her. Our learning communities are guided by the principles of respect, integrity, observation, self-awareness, listening, inquiry and reflection.*

In our school, individuals are encouraged to develop positive self-discipline and a sense of accountability, experiencing liberty within limits, while learning to balance freedom and responsibility. Individuals are given the opportunity to become active contributing members of their communities, stewards of the planet and to discover their own cosmic task.

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Cosmic Plan/Task/Education

Life progresses according to a cosmic plan and the purpose of life is not to achieve perfection along an unlimited line of progress but to exercise influence and to achieve a definite aim upon the environment... Similarly all other animals by the process of feeding themselves or seeking food carry out a "cosmic" task which contributes to keep nature in a harmonious state of purity... the universal syllabus that can unite the mind and the consciousness of all men in one harmony, that we intend by "Cosmic Education." This education must take its departure and spread from one centre, the cosmic plan of creation. (Montessori, Basic Ideas of Montessori's Educational Theory pg. 129 & 131)

Three different, yet interrelated concepts are discussed here. The Cosmic Plan is the wonderful way the world is interconnected and interdependent and all parts of life work together, although most of them without thought, for life to happen. A simple example is the carbon dioxide released from animals as a waste product that is a necessary component of photosynthesis in plants and the oxygen they

release that animals would die without. On a fundamental level, we need each other. The Cosmic Task is the special task that each individual contributes to this continuation of life. Cosmic Education is the name of the elementary curriculum and its aim to give children the keys to the universe, while at the same time indirectly (and sometimes directly, as in the Great Lessons) showing them the Cosmic Plan, and encouraging them (this time usually indirectly) to think about what their own Cosmic Task might be. We want them to ask "what is my task? What will I contribute to life?"

Human Potential

The social problems of the child and the adult are therefore integrated, but can also be separately considered, and the school bears special responsibility for the child. Youth is universally recruited in the school for the great army of life. The potentialities of a cultivated humanity should be the root of every social question, but the adult is beyond reform, and experiments with him repeatedly fail. (Montessori, To Educate the Human Potential, pg. 82-83)

The human potential is something Montessori felt that was rarely seen, as a result of cultural and educational practices. She felt that humanity was limited by the many obstacles placed in our way and that a new type of education could correct these problems and let children develop naturally into the "new men" she envisioned as bringing about a future peaceful world.

Prepared Environment

It will be obvious then that the prepared environment will have to contain a great many more things than just the small tables and chairs, cupboards, lavatories, etc. We can group what is required under the following heads:

1. The materials necessary for the carrying out of the exercises of practical life and similar occupations
2. The sensorial materials
3. The materials for the acquisition of culture- the Three R's, history, geography, art, handwork, etc...
4. Those things necessary for the development of his religious life. (Standing, Maria Montessori: her life and work pg. 270)

The prepared environment is the special way that a Montessori classroom is set up in a way that respects the characteristics of each plane of development. The classroom is prepared for the students to learn at their own pace, using materials as long as they need them, and creating an optimal place for "self-mastery." The classroom is set up with respect to their social, emotional, and intellectual needs

Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School Goals

High Academic Achievement

Historically, Montessori elementary students do well compared to their elementary peers and Montessori schools are highly rated academically. Ridgeline Montessori continues this tradition by combining the same high standards found in all Eugene schools with an innovative, engaging Montessori curriculum and teaching methods previously unavailable in local public education.

Our curriculum is unique to the school, merging the Oregon Curriculum Goals with the Montessori Scope and Sequence. The richness and depth of this curriculum, combined with the motivating elements of the Montessori Method, engages students and challenges them to work at their full capacity.

All Oregon assessments are administered to Ridgeline students to ensure they are meeting or exceeding Oregon standards. We are proud of our testing record, which compares very well to that of older, more established programs. For more information on our test results, see www.ode.state.or.us and select Reports, Latest Test Results (under Assessment). Then click on Eugene School District 4J and Ridgeline Montessori to see our scores in various subject areas. If you have additional questions, contact the office.

Social Growth and Emotional Development

Education of character is a basic tenet of Montessori education. Students realize the non-academic outcomes of the Montessori philosophy including respect for others, self-motivation, and self-reliance. Children learn to take care of themselves, their environment, and each other. Students in a Montessori classroom, in cooperation with their teacher, set their own goals, manage their time, and take responsibility for their learning.

Active Parent Participation

The Montessori classroom fosters community spirit not only in the classroom, but throughout the school community. Just as Ridgeline students take responsibility for classroom jobs such as taking attendance, recycling paper, cleaning, and tending the garden, Ridgeline parents take on a variety of roles that assure the school's operation. In this way, parents show children that their education is worthy of a family effort.

Ridgeline Montessori families are expected to complete 40 hours of volunteer work per academic year. Strong parent support is vital because, per the terms of our charter, Ridgeline Montessori receives 80% of regular state per-pupil funding. Compensating our experienced teachers, purchasing Montessori materials, and paying rent to District 4J for our building limits our ability to pay for support functions. Instead, we rely on a committee structure of parent volunteers to organize and/or assist with fundraising, special events, newsletter production, teacher-assigned tasks, and other school-supportive efforts. All parents are encouraged to participate in the Ridgeline Community Organization meetings. Parents also may serve on the Site Council by election, or the Board of Directors by appointment.

What Are Public Charter Schools?

A charter school is a public school operated by a group of parents, teachers, and/or community members that is responsible to, but run autonomously from, the school district. Our "charter" is a contract between Ridgeline Montessori and the School District 4J. The charter spells out the school's goals, standards, accountability plan, education design and curriculum, governance and operations. Ridgeline is a non-profit corporation with a volunteer board of directors.

While charter schools resemble public alternative schools in Eugene, there are differences. Charter schools have access to startup and operational monies in the form of federal funding awarded through the Oregon Department of Education. Ridgeline Montessori has been awarded more than \$255,000 in charter school grants to purchase equipment, instructional materials, and furnishings; provide professional training for staff; and cover other costs of starting an innovative educational program.

A charter school also has flexibility in staff certification. According to charter school law, at least half of the teachers must be Oregon-certified. Ridgeline's goal is to employ teachers who are both Oregon-certified and Montessori-trained teachers. The Montessori training and certification process is separate, specialized, and rigorous.

Ridgeline Montessori is among about 250 public Montessori schools in the United States today, some of which are also charter schools.

School Governance

Ridgeline Montessori is organized as a nonprofit organization under the laws of Oregon and has received tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of the U.S. As a nonprofit corporation the school is managed by a Board of Directors.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is composed of volunteer community members who have an interest in Ridgeline Montessori as a unique educational opportunity. Board members have the primary responsibility for fulfillment of the school's mission and are legally accountable for its operations. School Administrators attend all Board meetings but are not voting members. The Board sets school policies and is fiscally responsible for the school's resources. The Board selects and evaluates the Montessori Administrators, who are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school.

Board meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 6:30-8:30 p.m. A list of current board members is available to Ridgeline families in the school office.

The main Responsibilities of the Board are as follows:

1. Dealing with the legal and financial operation of the school.
2. Hiring, evaluating and collaborating with the School Principal in operating the program.
3. Developing and overseeing budgets.
4. Maintaining and amending Board of Director's bylaws.
5. Making long-term plans and ensuring the Board's own succession.

ALL MEETINGS ARE PUBLIC MEETINGS. We are bound by the State of Oregon's Open Meeting Law and its Public Records Law. The only time the board can meet privately is in an executive session, and these are allowed only to discuss legal, financial, bargaining and personnel issues. At no other time can observers be asked to excuse themselves.

Site Council

The Site Council includes representatives from all stakeholder groups: parents, teachers, support staff, board of directors, students and administration. No more than half of the council may be teachers, and

no more than half can be parents at the school. Each stakeholder group meets on a regular basis to identify areas of concern and suggests agenda items for the full Site Council's consideration. In this way, the Site Council ensures that everyone involved in the school has a voice in how the school grows, develops and is governed. No group is able to dominate site council decision-making, because all action decisions are made by consensus.

The main objectives of the Site Council are:

1. To provide visionary leadership for the school.
2. To provide a forum for all stakeholder groups.

Site Council Meetings are held on the Monday, following the Board meeting, from 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Ridgeline Community Organization (Parent Council)

Every parent or guardian of an enrolled child is automatically a member of the Ridgeline Community Organization.

The main objectives of the RCO are:

1. To enrich the educational and social environment at the school.
2. To encourage the involvement of parents and community members in the day-to-day activities of the school.
3. To organize and implement fundraising and volunteerism.
4. To serve as a link between the Site Council and the Ridgeline Montessori community.

RCO meetings are the 4th Tuesday of the month from 6:00-7:30 p.m. Specific dates are available on the website and in the school calendar.

Recommended Montessori Reading

To Educate the Human Potential, The Discovery of the Child, The Absorbent Mind, all by Maria Montessori.

Montessori Today, by Paula Polk Lillard.

These books and others are available in the Parent Resource section of the Ridgeline Library.

Policies, Procedures and Programs

General Admission Policies

1. District 4J residents shall have priority for admission into the School and shall be allowed to fill all enrollment slots available in their grade in the School. Students are considered District 4J residents if they reside in District 4J by the application deadline of 4 p.m. on [March 18, 2010](#) or can prove through documentation that they will be residing in District 4J by the first day of school.
2. Children selected for enrollment in the School for academic year 2009-10 must be at least 5 years old by September 1 of the school year they will be enrolled in the school, unless they have met the district's criteria for early enrollment as per School Board Policy 5010 (School District 4J) (available on their website at www.4J.lane.edu/board/policy). Students can enter the lottery prior to taking the requisite testing for early enrollment. The enrollment slot shall be held for such student subject to his/her successfully taking the early enrollment tests at the next available date and subject to the School Administrator's determination that early enrollment is appropriate for such student at the School.
3. The School strives to reach all families in the 4J District who would like a Montessori education for their children. The School will not limit student admission based on disability, race, color, gender, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion, marital status, socioeconomic status, cultural background, familial status, physical characteristics, or linguistic characteristics of a national group. The School does not require payment of fees as a condition of admission to those pupils entitled under the law to free admission. No student or family is required to participate in fundraising activities as a condition of admission.

General Application Process

1. Public information sessions are held by the School to publicize the school and its mission. These sessions are noticed in the Education Calendar section of the Register Guard and placed on the School's website.
2. A mailing list of interested families is maintained by the School. These families are notified of the public information sessions.

3. Notices publicizing the School's public information sessions are placed in public places such as the library and community bulletin boards.
4. The School participates in community sponsored events which showcase alternative schools.
5. The School maintains a website at www.ridgeline.org which is an ongoing source of information about the School.
6. Any parents or guardians interested in the School can call 541-681-9662 and receive an information packet regarding the School.

Lottery Application Process

1. Prior to enrolling, families will attend an information session. If any family cannot attend one of the regularly scheduled information meetings, parents or staff from the School will arrange to meet with the family to acquaint them with the School and its mission.
2. If interested in the school, parents or guardians are required to complete an application form.
3. The application forms are due in the School's office by 4 p.m. on [March 18, 2010](#). Only those applications received by mail or in person by the end of the school day on [March 18](#) will be considered received as of [March 18](#). If the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the School, class, grade level, or building, applicants will be evaluated according to the following criteria. First, currently enrolled students and siblings of students currently enrolled are granted automatic acceptance on a space available basis. Next, priority will be given to all other students who will be selected for placement on the waiting list by an equitable lottery process. The lottery is overseen by the Ridgeline Board of Directors and is completely free of preference. The lottery will continue until all applicants have either been granted admission or assigned a placement number on the waiting list. The lottery will include only those students with completed applications received by the School by [March 18](#). The lottery will be held at the School on [March 31, 2010](#) and is open to the public.
4. Students applying after the lottery application deadline of [March 18](#), will be placed on the waiting list after all lottery participants, in the order the applications are received. Students will be taken from the waiting list, in order, for immediately available places in the School, or if accepted applicants or current students refuse admission or leave the School during that given year.
5. Students currently attending the School are considered continuing students and are admitted for all subsequent years that the child is at

the School. Reenrollment forms are due from such students in the School's office by [February 26, 2010](#).

6. Separate lottery drawings will be conducted for 4J residents and students who reside outside the district. All 4J residents in the lottery will get places on the waiting list ahead of students from outside the district, as required by Ridgeline's Charter with School District 4J.
7. The lottery is held by grade level. Those students will be drawn from this waiting list, in order, by grade if accepted applicants or current students refuse admission or leave the School prior to or during the given school year.
8. Parents of twin students from the same immediate household who want both children to participate in the lottery have two options. First, parents may submit a separate application for each child. The children would receive placement numbers in the order they are selected. If one or more but not all the children are selected, the other child may be considered for placement in the school the following year. Second, parents may submit one joint application. Both names would receive the same placement number. If one twin is selected, then both twins are selected. The waiting list does not supersede sibling priority.
9. The placement numbers drawn in the lottery will be posted on the School's door following the drawing on [March 31](#). The official offer of a spot will be made by the Board of Directors in writing. The Board of Directors of the School will notify families in writing of their acceptance or denial and waiting list placement number following the lottery.
10. Those students accepted in to the School will receive an acceptance packet, including enrollment forms. The completed forms must be returned to the School office no later than [April 16, 2010](#) in order to hold the spot for the student.
11. Waiting lists are maintained for one year. A new lottery will be held each year and a new waiting list will be created each year. Students are required to reapply annually.
12. Out-of-area families who apply will be subject to the same regulations as local applicants. All will be considered out-of-district unless they can supply a local address that will be their residence. Any variation of this regulation must be approved by the school administrator.

Regular Hours of Operation

Ridgeline enrolls students in Kindergarten through 8th grade. A calendar is published at the beginning of each year, which informs families what

days school is in session. **Early release on Fridays at Willard will be at 1:00 p.m. Early release on Fridays at Dunn will be at 1:15 p.m.**

Regular school hours at Willard are:

8:10 Doors Open
8:30 Tardy (Late arrivals report to the office)
3:00 Dismissal Lower Elementary
***1:00 Friday Early Release**

Regular school hours at Dunn are:

8:25 Doors Open
8:45 Tardy (Late arrivals report to the office)
3:15 Dismissal Kindergarten, Upper Elementary, MS
*** 1:15 Friday Early Release**

All adults entering either building during school hours 8:30 a.m.–3:15 p.m. must sign in at the office and put on a volunteer/visitor badge, prior to entering the building. Office Hours at both locations are 8:00 am to 4:00 pm on days class is in session.

Willard: Classrooms open at 8:15 a.m. at Willard. Students are requested to arrive between 8:15 and 8:25 to prepare for their day and be ready to begin classroom activities promptly at 8:30 a.m. Students not in class at 8:30 a.m. must report to the office. We strongly encourage all families to prioritize helping their children arrive at school at 8:15 a.m. Ridgeline does not have before school care; however the cafeteria opens at 8:00 a.m. to serve breakfast.

Dunn: Classrooms open at 8:25 a.m. at Dunn. Students are requested to arrive between 8:25 and 8:40 to prepare for their day and be ready to begin classroom activities promptly at 8:45 a.m. Students not in class at 8:45 a.m. must report to the office. We strongly encourage all families to prioritize helping their children arrive at school at 8:30 a.m. Ridgeline does not have before school care; however the cafeteria will open at 8:15 a.m. to serve breakfast.

After-care is available on-site through Eugene Creative Care until 6:00 p.m. You may contact them directly at 541-683-7291 for more information. The YMCA, Kid City, and U of O programs, in the past, have transported our students to their sites for after school care.

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures at Willard

Parking lot safety is a big concern at the Willard location! Parents are to drive their student(s) up to the curb by the breezeway before allowing them to get out of the car, or to park in designated parking spots and walk their student(s) to the breezeway or classroom. **Please do not double-park, stop in or block the driveway, or allow students to exit/enter your vehicle in the driveway.**

Parents are to pick up their student(s) in the same manner – drive up to the curb by the breezeway or park in designated parking spots or on the street and walk up to the breezeway to collect your student(s). Pick-up time is 3:00 p.m. Students are supervised by teachers, other staff, and volunteers during this time. Please be respectful to volunteers and staff who are assisting with the safety of our students during this time. They may ask drivers to pull forward, park, or move their vehicles in order to facilitate timely pick-up of students and maintain a safe situation. Since we share the parking lot, patience is the virtue for parents.

In the event of an emergency, which prevents you from picking up your student(s) on time, please inform the office immediately and make alternate arrangements. Students who are not picked up by 3:30 will wait in the office and office staff will attempt to contact parents to insure student safety. Parents who are unable to pick up their student(s) on time need to make child care arrangements and not rely on the office to supervise students after school hours.

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures at Dunn

It is imperative that parents follow this outlined pick up and drop off procedure; it will keep everyone safe! Please drive up Donald St. and take a right on E. 35th St. Drop off will take place on the North side of this street, curb lane only. Once your child has exited the car safely, you can follow E. 35th to Willamette and continue on your path, right or left. **Do not leave your vehicle** at the curb; this is for drop off and pick up only. Students should exit the vehicle from the **side closest to the green colored staircase**. Staff or volunteers will supervise and escort children from the staircase on E. 35th to their classroom/classroom to vehicle. Parents/guardians are welcome to walk their child(ren) in to the outer door of their classroom, but must drive up Willamette and park along the South side of E. 35th. Please see the map drawn on the back side of this sheet. Parents/guardians must leave the building by 8:45 a.m., unless volunteering or observing (must be scheduled in advance and have signed in at the office).

Variations from Regular School Hours

Ridgeline publishes an annual calendar for families indicating no school days, including holidays and teacher in-service/work days. The week of Veteran's Day, we will dismiss at 12:00 p.m. for Parent-Student-Teacher conferences. The early release days are determined prior to the start of the school year and are noted on the Ridgeline calendar.

Older students occasionally have extended day activities or overnight field trips. These are planned by each class and parents are informed as these activities approach.

Adverse Weather and Emergency Closures

In the event of inclement weather or other emergency, school administrators will make a determination as to whether it is safe to operate school for the day. Ridgeline will follow the decision made by School District 4J as to whether school will be in session, late start, or closed. As Ridgeline families come from a wide variety of locations in and around Eugene, each family is encouraged to use their own judgment as to whether their student(s) can safely travel to and from school during extreme conditions.



Tardy/Absence Policy

Due to the importance of the social, emotional, and academic benefits of arriving at school on time and maintaining good attendance, students are encouraged to attend school daily arriving when doors open, providing them with ample time to socialize, prepare for the school day, and ensure participation in valuable opening activities.

Students are expected to be *in class ON TIME every day*. Excused absences and tardies consist of: doctor/dentist appointments, illness and bereavement. Parents should inform the school as early as possible if their student will be arriving late or will be absent. This can be done by calling the office, emailing or sending a note ahead of time. *Students not in class on time must check in at the office prior to going to class*. All tardies and absences become part of each student's permanent record. Unexcused tardies and absences will be notified by the Auto Dial system via a phone call and an e-mail to parents at home or at work. This procedure helps to maintain the safety of all students.

Oregon State Law (ORS 339 010-339.990) requires that students attend school on a regular basis. Eight (8) or more half-day absences in a four-week period are considered a violation of Oregon school attendance

requirements. In an attempt to support families who find it challenging to get students to school on a regular basis, a Ridgeline administrator will make a personal or phone contact with parents to offer car pool opportunities, bus information, or other assistance that may meet family's needs in relation to attendance and/or on time arrival.

Releasing Students During School Hours

Students shall remain on school grounds or within the designated bounds of a school sponsored activity during school and activity hours. *Requesting a student's release during school hours must be done at the school office.* Office staff will notify the classroom teacher and the student will meet the authorized individual at the office. *Students must be signed out at the office by a parent or guardian to leave campus or a school sponsored activity.* The lead teacher will record a student's departure from an off campus, school sponsored activity. If a student is to leave campus during the school day on his/her own, a signed and dated note (including parent contact information) must be on file in the office.

Non-parents and/or persons not known to the school will be asked to present identification and proof of authority to take a student from school. Please keep us informed in the interest of the safety and welfare of your child.

School Breakfast and Lunch Program

Ridgeline offers a school breakfast and lunch program provided by School District 4J. Student cost for breakfast is \$1.50 and for lunch is \$2.50 per lunch. Reduced price of \$0.30 for breakfast and \$0.40 per lunch and free breakfast and lunch are available to families who meet the federal income requirements. Forms are available in the office and families are encouraged to apply. Prepayment for meals is required and checks should be made out to 4J Nutrition Services.

Field Trips and Off-Campus Activities

Classroom teachers and students plan field trips, off-campus activities, and "going outs" that correspond with classroom curriculum. Parents are notified well in advance of such activities and permission slips are required for each student. Permission slips for each off-campus trip must be signed and returned to the teacher prior to the activity. Students who do not have parental permission to leave campus or who, in the judgment of the teacher, do not meet the behavioral expectations of the activity will remain on campus. Students who remain on campus will be assigned appropriate work for the day and an appropriate classroom or

office placement by the regular classroom teacher. Students who choose not to participate in field trips or off campus activities are expected to attend school with a teacher-assigned alternate placement and work activities.

Enrichment Opportunities

Choir will continue to be offered as an after school elective (at Dunn) for upper elementary and middle school students on Fridays from 1:25-2:55 p.m.

Parent Education Opportunities

Montessori education is different in many ways from other educational philosophies. Student success and parent comfort at Ridgeline are greatly increased when parents are well informed and have a deep understanding of Ridgeline Montessori philosophy and practices. Student's school experiences are impacted by these philosophies and practices on a daily basis. Parents are expected to access available resources to keep themselves well informed and educated and to facilitate coordination between home and school.

Parent and family education regarding the Montessori philosophy and Ridgeline operations is a high priority. Parent education events are held throughout the year and are publicized as they approach. These events include workshops, guest speakers, Tea with Trish (first Tuesday of every month), school-wide and classroom parent meetings, curriculum sharing events, and parent-student-teacher conferences. Ridgeline publishes a monthly newsletter that contains informative articles about school philosophy and programs. Teachers post weekly notes on the website, keeping parents informed of classroom activities and often include educational quotes or insights. In addition, the Ridgeline library maintains a parent resource section with a large selection of relevant books and other materials.

Students with Special Needs and Disabilities

Special education evaluation and services are provided by the student's home district. Many laws and regulations apply to special education and disability services, and Ridgeline must comply with these standards. If a student is exhibiting behavior that is concerning to a parent or teacher, the student may be discussed at a Step One meeting, which includes the classroom teacher, the counselor, an administrator and any other appropriate individuals. The team will meet to discuss the best course of action for supporting, accommodating and/or referring the student for further evaluation, within the regulations and options available.

In addition to formal special education services, Ridgeline employs instructional assistants to provide some services to students identified by teachers as needing additional reading instruction. The Montessori philosophy allows classroom teachers to individualize classroom work for each student. Most students' individualized needs can be met within the classroom.

Talented and Gifted (TAG)

Students, staff, and parents at Ridgeline are part of a school community committed to nurturing all children according to their individual needs. All children should be provided the tools for life-long learning: research skills, thinking skills, practical life skills, creative skills, and communication skills. Highly capable learners are viewed as individuals, each of whom has a unique range of abilities and interests that need to be nurtured. The Montessori classroom provides a learning environment in which students have involvement/ownership in their own learning, are able to work at their individual rate and level, can experiment with a variety of materials, ideas, and strategies, are accepted and accept others, and are challenged and held accountable for progress in areas of strengths and talents as well as in developing areas. Each student is encouraged to do original, creative work to be shared and celebrated.

Ridgeline is committed to recognizing, identifying, and serving the unique needs of all students, including those identified as talented and gifted (TAG) in accordance with state law. Referrals are welcome at any time during the year and may originate from parent, self, peer, school nomination, cumulative record review, or annual state assessment performance. The Montessori classroom values and educates each child as an individual and we feel strongly that Montessori instruction meets students' needs at all rates and levels of learning.

Ridgeline follows the District 4J process for the identification of TAG students in grades K-8 that conforms with state rules and regulations, including special provisions to:

1. Identify students who do not meet the eligibility criteria, but who demonstrate the potential to perform at that level (these may include students from cultural and ethnic minorities, disadvantaged or underachieving students, and disabled learners);
2. Notify parents about TAG eligibility determinations and appeal rights; and

3. Keep parents informed about their children's rate of learning and instructional levels;
4. Enable parents to participate in building individualized TAG plans for their children.

Wellness Policy

Students and adolescents need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive. The Ridgeline staff is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects student's health, social and emotional well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating, physical activity and other behaviors that contribute to student wellness. Ridgeline has adopted a revised version of the 4J Local Wellness Program in accordance with OAR 581-051-0305, OAR 581-051-0310, and OAR 581-051-0400. When faced with conflicting priorities or issues of implementation, this policy will be interpreted in a way that favors student health.

- All students in grades K-8 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a daily basis.
- Staff will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat and consider other strategies, such as recess before lunch, that contribute to healthy eating.
- Food service will be provided by Eugene School District 4J. Ridgeline will promote participation in the federal free and reduced meal program.
- Ridgeline supports a coordinated approach to school health which includes: comprehensive school health education, physical education, counseling, psychological and social services, healthy school environment, school-site health promotion for staff, and family and community involvement.

Physical Activity

- Physical activity includes regular instructional physical education, co-curricular activities, and recess. Substituting any one of these components for the others is not appropriate.
- All students will be expected to participate in regular physical activity and will be provided with appropriate opportunities for participation in physical education. Physical education instruction will be consistent with the state adopted physical education common curriculum goals, content standards and grade level benchmark standards for students. All students will be encouraged to further participate in

- physical activity through co-curricular activities and recess.
- Ridgeline encourages the integration of physical activity with the academic curriculum.
- Recognizing the critical importance of sufficient physical activity for students, teachers will withhold recess for disciplinary reasons only on an occasional basis as part of an individual behavior plan. Physical education will not be withheld as punishment.

Nutrition Education and Standards

- Students will receive nutrition education that is interactive and teaches the skills they need to adopt lifelong habits of healthy eating. Students will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout the school, classrooms and cafeteria.
- Nutrition education will be consistent with the state adopted health education common curriculum goals, content standards and grade level benchmarks for students. The aim of the curriculum will be for students to acquire knowledge and skills to understand and make healthful nutrition choices that contribute to growth and vitality and help prevent chronic disease. Nutrition education activities should be enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, and participatory.
- Ridgeline will promote family and community involvement in nutrition education, such as developing the Ridgeline gardens and providing students with opportunities to learn about sustainable agriculture and how food is grown in the community.
- Decisions regarding the sale of foods in addition to the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program meals will be based on nutrition goals, not solely revenue.
- Foods included in fundraising activities, after school classroom events, classroom parties, and foods used in classrooms during the school day as part of the learning process shall provide healthy food and beverage options, all of which do not include sugar as one of the first three ingredients.
- In order to prepare food for student consumption, at least one supervising adult must have a current Food Handler's card.

Celebrations

- Soda water, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, will not be distributed during the school day as part of a celebration or school party.
- Nutritious foods are encouraged when used as part of a social or cultural event in the schools. During the school day, classrooms

should limit the use of food at celebrations that are not related to the curriculum.

- Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, will not be distributed by staff as a reward for a student's academic performance or good behavior.
- Food used as part of the curriculum for students should be used judiciously, taking into consideration the nutritional value of the food being served, the frequency of use, and the school's sugar policy.
- Food provided by parents or community members for celebrations or classroom events must be store bought or homegrown, not home baked.
- Food offerings at after school programs, performances and school dances shall include healthy options such as water, milk, 100 percent juice and store bought nutritious foods.

Fees and Fundraising

Fees

As a public charter school, Ridgeline does not charge tuition. A supply fee of \$75 per student is charged rather than asking each student to bring in their own supplies. Supplies then belong to the classroom and are shared by all students, consistent with the Montessori model. Incidental expenses for field trips or special supplies are charged as the occasion arises. If expenses are prohibitive for a family other arrangements can be made through the office.

Fundraising

Fundraising is an RCO activity lead by volunteer parents. The main fundraiser each year is the Direct Donation Drive. The DDD is held in the fall and asks families to contribute financially to the school. This is the most effective fundraiser because 100% of the money goes directly to the school and the volunteer time required to run the drive is relatively minimal. The Ridgeline Community Organization decides on other fundraisers as needed throughout the year. These may include such things as Box Tops for Education, Campbell's Soup Labels, eScrip, a book fair, and a spring family fundraiser. New ideas are always welcome and can be submitted to the RCO. Individual classes also sometimes hold fundraisers for their unique activities. Ridgeline does not participate in fundraisers that require students to individually sell products outside of school.

The Montessori philosophy encourages students to be active participants in their community and the world. Students will often form committees to do fundraising for humanitarian purposes and families are encouraged to participate if they can. These may include bake sales, fundraising dinners, or other special events.

Financial Assistance

Families who qualify for free or reduced lunch may qualify for scholarships for routine expenses throughout the year. Families with extenuating circumstances may also apply for scholarships. These expenses include supply fees, field trip fees, enrichment classes and other incidental educational expenses required for full participation in the child's classroom activities. No family or child should feel that they cannot participate in a school activity due to limited financial resources. Financial Assistance forms are available in the school office.

School-Home Communication

Registration/Emergency Contact

New students are required to complete registration forms upon acceptance to the school by lottery or waiting list. These forms are provided at the time of acceptance.

Parents are responsible to verify and/or update contact information, including emergency contacts. We will utilize this information to contact you in an emergency and to create the student directory.

School wide directories of student contact information are provided to each family early in the school year. This is done to facilitate friendships and contact between students and families as part of a supportive community. Families wishing to change their published contact information may withhold or publish their name, addresses, phone numbers and email address from the directory by sending a request to the office by *September 11th*. Detailed contact information (parents' work, emergency contacts, etc.) is kept confidential in the school office.

Privacy Policy

Parents and legal guardians have access to their child's academic records maintained by the school. Student files contain grade records, teacher evaluations, state testing records, and accident/injury and incident reports. This information will not be released to anyone other than parents or legal guardians, administrators, and the student's current

teachers. If you would like to see the contents of your child's school file, please make an appointment with an administrator. The administrator will advise you of your specific rights regarding individual pieces of information at the time you view the file.

Student contact information, including name, address, phone number, and parents names and e-mail addresses, is published in a school directory. Families wishing to keep some or all of this information private must inform the office, in writing, by September 11, 2009.

Student photographs are taken at the beginning of each year by a professional photographer. The date and time of student pictures are publicized well in advance and photos are available for purchase by the family. Photos are used by the school in student files and for identification purposes. Students are also photographed by teachers and other staff and volunteers for classroom and school use. Photographs may be used on the school website and in school publications such as the Ridgeline Reader and the school yearbook. Families wishing not to have their child photographed or wishing to exclude their child's photograph from specific uses may update this information by sending a signed and dated note into the office.

Weekly Communication

Ridgeline is primarily *paperless!* On the website at www.ridgeline.org you will find **school information** and **teachers' weekly notes** regarding general classroom events, news and fieldtrip permission forms. The school will continue sending out our electronic weekly newsletter, the **eNews** to all families. We rely on each family to notify us if a hardcopy communication is required as well as updating email addresses.

Students have weekly work expectations based on their individual needs. Teachers communicate this information to parents in a manner best suited to their classroom operations. Generally speaking, parents at Ridgeline are very well informed as to their student's activities and progress compared to other schools and philosophies. This is consistent with Montessori philosophy that education is a partnership between students, parents, and teachers.

If you think that you need more information than you are receiving, please speak to the teacher directly. Because teachers dedicate their time from 8:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. to the students in their class, we ask you to make an appointment when you wish to speak with the teacher, rather than dropping by or trying to meet during morning drop-off or

afternoon pick-up. Notes, voice mail, and email are often effective ways of making appointments or getting answers to quick questions. If you feel you need assistance communicating with a teacher, please contact the office.

Parent-Student-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Student-Teacher Conferences are held in the fall and at the end of the school. Consistent with Montessori philosophy, annual conferences are student led at most ages. Parents can expect the student to describe the work s/he has been doing in the classroom, describe his/her social and community involvement, and assess her/his own progress. Teachers will add comments as appropriate. Parents are also asked for their comments and questions. Parents are asked to be sensitive and appropriate when discussing their child's progress during the conference. If a private conversation with the teacher is needed, please arrange that at another time.

Parents are encouraged to speak with their child's teacher as often as needed. Teachers are available to meet with parents by appointment throughout the year. Please arrange a mutually agreeable time directly with the teacher. Administrative staff is always available to assist if needed.

Report cards

Report cards are distributed twice a year, in the spring and at the end of the school year. Fall Parent-Student-Teacher conferences take the place of a fall report card. Report cards contain information on both academic and social progress in the classroom.

Classroom Visitation and Observation

Lunch with your child

One of the best ways to get a flavor for the Montessori environment is to have lunch with your child. Parents are welcome to come to their child's class for lunch any day after October 19, 2009. *You must sign in at the office and put on a visitor badge before entering the building!* Bring a sack lunch for yourself or order a hot lunch at the beginning of the school day through the office.

Observation/Visitor Guidelines

Given time without distraction or disruption, Montessori classrooms develop into normalized environments where children are absorbed in their work and confident of their ability to engage in it- either in small

groups or alone. If observers and visitors come into the classroom before the children have learned to attend to their own work, the children will most certainly respond to the stimulation of observers and the very atmosphere that the observer has come to see will not exist.

Ridgeline students and teachers will use the first six weeks of school to create the Montessori environment. After that time frame, interested persons may make an appointment with the Community Coordinator who will assign a trained Observation Guide to coordinate the classroom visit. Please refer to the following *Observation Guidelines* for further details.

We believe that this attention to the needs of the children to work undisturbed will give observers a more accurate picture of the nature of a Montessori classroom, which is, after all, the reason for observing. If interested:

1. Observations must be scheduled through Cynthia Friedman, Community Coordinator, 541-681-9662. One person per day (adults only) may observe in each classroom during school hours. Observations of one hour are appropriate, but longer visits can be made with special arrangements.
2. Please try to arrive at the school office at least five minutes prior to your appointment.
3. A volunteer host will welcome you, cover observation guidelines, escort you to the classroom, and debrief with you after the visit.

Ridgeline Observation Guidelines:

The Ridgeline staff hopes you enjoy your visit. Your cooperation according to the following guidelines would be greatly appreciated.

1. While in the classroom, please remain seated. Do not move around the room, as this is distracting to the children and interferes with the environment you came to observe.
2. If students speak to you a brief answer will suffice. You may wish to suggest that the child go on with his/her work so that you can continue your work of observing.
3. If you have questions about the material, interactions, etc., please jot them down so you can refer to them while debriefing with your host.

What to Look For:

*Keep in mind that observations do not always give the observer the full appreciation or understanding of a particular classroom. Just as every child is very different from day to day, so can each day be different in the classroom.

- Level of respect for others and materials
- Orderly use of materials
- Individual choice of work by the children
- General work habits
- Freedom balanced with structure
- Social climate of the room
- Reactions to teacher’s presentations
- A variety of work in progress
- Elaborate work such as detailed charts, advanced math problems, etc.
- Independent work
- The teacher-child relationship

Observations/Questions _____

Student Health and Safety

Illness

Students with a fever (100°F or higher) must stay home until they are fever free for 24 hours. Students should also stay home when they have symptoms such as vomiting or diarrhea or appear ill in any way. Minor cold or allergy symptoms such as a runny nose with no other symptoms do not require the student to stay home.

If a student becomes ill or has symptoms while at school, the student will go to the office where office staff will assess the symptoms and offer the student the opportunity to rest. School staff will contact parents if the student needs to be sent home due to illness. The student will rest in the office until normal school release time if parents are unable to be reached.

Inform the office immediately if your student is diagnosed with a communicable disease such as strep throat, chicken pox, lice, or any other highly contagious illness. A notice will be sent home informing families that exposure may have occurred.

Accidents and Injuries

If a student is involved in an accident or in some way gets injured while at school, steps will be taken appropriate to the level of injury. All Ridgeline staff is CPR/First Aid certified and all are qualified to deal with minor emergencies. Parents will be informed as quickly as possible of any injury, and an incident report will be completed. At the discretion of the staff dealing with the emergency, 911 will be called or other appropriate emergency services will be contacted.

Students with a cast/wrap must have written directives regarding physical activities which the student may participate in. Those without written documentation will not be able to participate in P.E. and other physical activities in an effort to avoid further injury to the student.

Medication

Students requiring medication are requested to take all doses at home if possible. If medication must be given during school hours or while students are on school sponsored field trips, a medication distribution form must be completed and signed by the parent. Medication must be given to school staff in the original container including prescription label attached and only the amount to be given by school staff in the container. School staff must keep a log of the date, time, and amount of medication given to the student.

Mandatory Reporting

All Ridgeline employees are mandated reporters of possible child abuse under the Oregon Mandated Reporting law. The law requires all school employees – as well as other mandated reporters – to report incidents whenever there is a reasonable suspicion that child abuse may have happened. The law does not ask nor require school employees to investigate and determine whether or not child abuse occurred. The Oregon Mandated Reporting Law applies to all school employees 24 hours a day, seven days a week every day of the year. Failure to comply with the laws could result in loss of professional license and/or termination of employment.

It is important for parents to understand when school employees call DHS to report incidents of possible child abuse, they are prohibited from

informing the child's parents a report was made. Once the report has been made, the matter is in the hands of DHS to decide what the appropriate next steps to take are. DHS decides when and how parents are informed a report was made.

In compliance with Senate Bill 379, all staff, parents, and students will receive annual training/lessons on Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting. All students will receive age-appropriate lessons related to personal safety. Students will learn their rights to safe environments at home and at school. They will also learn about resources and whom they can turn to for help when they sense they are not safe.

Safety

Ridgeline Montessori considers the safety of every student and employee to be of the utmost importance. All staff members will be CPR/First Aid certified and update the certification and training as often as required. Emergency drills will be scheduled and practiced monthly. In accordance with OAR 437-001-0765, Ridgeline maintains a safety committee committed to workplace health and safety, consisting of at least four staff members and a parent representative.

In crisis situations the Crisis Management Plan will be implemented. Emergency supplies and first aid equipment are on site and portable in case of school evacuation. In the event of a major emergency, sign out procedures will go into effect to account for every student and staff member on campus.

Crisis Management Plan

In the event of a crisis situation, Ridgeline staff must respond in a timely and effective manner so as to ensure safety, provide personal and emotional support to individuals, and communicate appropriate messages to parents, students, the community, and the media.

Definition of a Crisis

A crisis can be defined under four broad categories:

- Bereavement (death of a student/staff member impacting a significant segment of the School population)
- Major environmental crisis (earthquake, flood, fire, tornado)
- Threats to physical safety (car, bus, or plane accident; power outage; guns; explosives; food poisoning, etc.)

- Other events such as allegations of sexual misconduct and long-term medical

Crisis Management Team

Montessori Administrators
Lower Elementary Representative
Upper Elementary Representative
Community School Coordinator
Office Manager

As appropriate, the following individuals may be asked to serve on the Team:

President of the Board of Directors
Site Council Convener
Legal Counsel

The Crisis Management Team shall:

- Evaluate the crisis
- Serve as the decision making body until the crisis is resolved
- Coordinate the internal and external dissemination of all information about the crisis
- Develop a comprehensive plan for dealing with the crisis

The directors of the Crisis Management Team are the Administrators. S/he may designate someone else to lead the Team in a specific situation if deemed appropriate. In the absence of the Administrators, the order of authority for presiding over the Team shall be: first, a Board designee, and second, the Office Manager.

Student Privacy Act

Neither Ridgeline faculty nor staff will release to the press or outside community the name(s) of a student or students involved in any crisis. Students' names will be released only by the Principal or Board President and only in appropriate cases after the immediate family/legal guardian(s) have been notified and permission granted.

Departures

If an Administrator gives permission for students to leave the school, the following procedure will be followed:

- Members of the administrative team will supervise pick-up at the main building.
- Sign out will occur if dismissal is over a period of time

- Students may leave only with a parent, guardian, or pre-approved carpool driver.
- The person picking up the student may be asked to present identification and sign out the student
- Drivers must wait outside the building. Runners will retrieve students from inside the building.
- Care for children not picked up will always be available. At least one administrator will stay at school until all students are picked up.

Student and Family Expectations

Volunteering

All families commit to volunteer a minimum of 40 hours during the school year as part of the enrollment process. This commitment can be met in many ways, including working with students in the classroom, making classroom materials for teachers, chaperoning field trips, assisting with special events, working on school clean up days, working on fundraisers, and assisting specialist teachers (art, music, etc.) or special areas such as the parking lot or the library. A list of current volunteer needs is included in the weekly e-News, and classroom teachers note volunteer needs in their weekly notes to families.

Volunteers who will be in contact with students must consent to a background check paid for by the school. This protects all our students. Volunteers who will be driving students on school business (field trips) must complete an Auto Insurance Information Form and have on file in the school office a copy of their current insurance coverage and driver's license. Background checks must be completed and volunteers must be approved prior to engaging in activities that involve contact with students. Volunteers and visitors are always asked to sign in at the office and wear a volunteer or visitor badge prior to entering classrooms. A green badge signifies that the person has a cleared background check through the school. Those visitors with a pink badge will be escorted by a staff member during their visit.

Field Trip Chaperone Guidelines

Chaperone Expectations

- Chaperones will actively participate in the field trip, taking responsibility for their assigned students
- Chaperones will supervise and assist students during the field trip

- Chaperones will model appropriate behavior:
 - Speak in a positive, quiet voice
 - Walk over to the child, rather than talking across the room
 - Get down on the child's level, rather than standing over him/her
- Chaperones will follow the Ridgeline Guidance Policy.
- Drivers will pull off the road if they need to use the cell phone/two-way radio

Teacher Expectations

- Teachers will supply each chaperone with:
 - A written list of all chaperones and their assigned students
 - Pertinent medical information regarding student(s) (asthma, allergies...)
 - Chaperone cell numbers if applicable
 - A map/directions to the field trip location
 - Time lines for departure and arrival to location, activities, lunch, departure from location and return to school
- Teachers will brief the chaperones on the field trip activities, expectations of both students and chaperones, the supervision and communication (cell phone/two-way radio) strategies to be used, any changes to itinerary and potential hazards to be aware of, prior to departure

Supervision Strategies

1. Chaperones will be assigned students to supervise throughout the field trip, *at the teacher's discretion*. Teacher and assistant will be available to float, offer guidance, take periodic head counts and handle behavior challenges etc...
 2. Chaperones will be assigned an area/zone within a secure environment (for example a museum). Children move from one area to another. Teacher and/or assistant will take periodic head counts.
- Students will be escorted to and from the restroom. Chaperones should either take their entire group or ask the teacher or assistant to escort student(s) to the restroom. Restrooms should be checked for safety.

- Parents attending a field trip with a student's younger sibling will not be able to act as a chaperone. The parent may be responsible for his/her student and sibling only.

Lunch and Food in the Classroom

The Montessori philosophy includes eating meals and snacks as a community, during which time lessons on grace and courtesy are taught and reinforced. Students are encouraged to pack their own healthy snacks and lunches, or to participate in the school lunch program. Classrooms provide opportunities for snacking during morning work time and eating lunch as a class. Occasionally community snacks or meals are facilitated by the teacher or the school. Parents are informed and asked to contribute to these events.

Please be aware of the nutritional value of the food your child is bringing to school. Items such as soda, candy, or other snacks that list some form of sugar as one of the first three ingredients are discouraged. Most classrooms keep a stash of nutritious snacks for children who get hungry or forget their lunch. Parents are encouraged to contribute healthy snacks to the classroom for this purpose. In 2007-08 the Student Council stated, "Gum, soda pop and energy drinks do not belong at school." They feel that candy, gum, soda and energy drinks have no/minimal nutritional value and are a distraction to the learning environment.

Dress Code

Students are encouraged to dress in a manner that does not distract from the learning environment. This includes wearing clothes and shoes that are comfortable and allow the student to participate in the full range of activities each day. Students are asked not to wear revealing clothing or clothing with cartoon characters, logos or designs that might be considered offensive, distracting, or otherwise inappropriate. All students are expected to wear clothing that adequately covers their bodies and underclothing. This includes shirts/tops that have at least a one-inch strap across the shoulder, shirts and pants/skirts that cover the midriff and underwear when arms are raised above the head and shorts/skirts that extend past the fingertips when arms are down by the side. Hoods may be worn outdoors on recess, but for safety reasons are not to be worn indoors. Hats will be at the discretion of the teacher.

Personal Belongings

Students may bring personal belongings to school if they have a clear educational purpose and the teacher's permission. Kindergarten and

Elementary Students' space is limited to a hook and small shelf space. Middle School students have small lockers. Please mark all personal items with the student's name.

Lost and Found will be donated to a charity, the last Friday of each month. Be sure to search the lost and found, for any missing items, in a timely manner.

Students may *not* bring toys, trading cards, or other items that distract from the educational environment. Ridgeline is not responsible for items brought to school or school sponsored activities/events.

Cell Phones and Similar Electronic Devices

The term "cell phone and similar electronic devices" means any portable communication device that is capable of sending and /or receiving audio, video, picture, electronic mail or text messages. Such devices shall include, but not be limited to, any beeper, cell phone, game boy, MP3 player, or other similar device.

Students may not use cell phones or other similar electronic devices during regularly scheduled school hours, 8:15 a.m.–3:30 p.m., and during school sponsored activities, without permission. Students may use the school's phones for emergency calls. Cell phones shall be turned off and inaccessible at all times during regularly scheduled school hours.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Ridgeline expects the highest standards of behavior from our students and staff. The Montessori curriculum includes positive community involvement and creating a positive classroom community. Students are expected to help maintain a clean and orderly classroom and school. Students are expected to treat all other students and adults at the school with kindness and respect. Ridgeline students represent a diverse population and an environment of inclusiveness is taught.

Students have the right to a stimulating and academically challenging learning environment. Students are responsible for taking advantage of the opportunities presented to them and making the most of their classroom time. The Montessori philosophy encourages students to be responsible for their own education.

Students have the right to a safe learning environment. Students are responsible for helping to create safety in their classroom and school.

Students who feel unsafe in any situation are to consult with their classroom teacher to find a resolution. Students may seek the assistance of their parents and school administrators in resolving emotional and physical safety issues.

Students have the right to contribute to their own educational plan, the classroom, the school, and the community. Ridgeline Montessori sponsors a student government with the intention of allowing all students a voice in school operations. Students may make suggestions to their classroom representative, who will take the suggestion to the student council where it will be discussed and taken to the Site Council as appropriate. The student government also offers an opportunity for anonymous opinions and suggestions through a “suggestion box.”

Students have the right to behave socially in the learning environment. Students are encouraged to form friendships with schoolmates and participate in activities with them outside of school hours. Social activities and planning may not disrupt classroom and educational activities. Classroom teachers and administrators will encourage and facilitate appropriate social activity at school.

Students have the right to express personal opinions and to be free from discrimination or harassment based on personal beliefs and affiliations. Students are responsible for expressing these opinions in a respectful manner that does not infringe on the rights of other students or disrupt the learning environment.

Students have the right to refuse to participate in political or other activities that violate their personal beliefs, so long as this is done in a peaceful and non-disruptive manner. If a student or parent objects to instructional materials on the basis of religious or ethical grounds, the student or parent may request alternative educational materials from the teacher that meet similar educational goals.

Students have the right to form clubs or groups or hold meetings on school property so long as they do not disrupt classroom or school activities. Meetings must be pre-approved by administrators and supervised by an approved staff member or parent volunteer.

Behavior/Discipline Policy

Core Values

At Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter School we strive to create a more

*peaceful world by offering a **cosmic education** where self-directed learning is experiential and authentic.*

*Our goal is to unlock the **human potential** by guiding individuals in obtaining independence in the physical, academic, social, emotional, and spiritual realms.*

*We create safe **prepared environments** that respect where each individual is along the developmental planes and can reveal him/her. Our learning communities are guided by the principles of respect, integrity, observation, self-awareness, listening, inquiry and reflection.*

In our school, individuals are encouraged to develop positive self-discipline and a sense of accountability, experiencing liberty within limits, while learning to balance freedom and responsibility. Individuals are given the opportunity to become active contributing members of their communities, stewards of the planet and to discover their own cosmic task.

Policy:

At the beginning of each year classrooms will discuss and establish the behavior expectations for their communities. Based on classroom contributions, Student Council will give input to the Ridgeline/Village Safety Committee and site-wide behavior expectations will be established for areas outside the classroom. Site-wide behavior expectations will remain in place until the community has the opportunity to give input, update and establish expectations the following year.

At Ridgeline, all feelings can be accepted but certain actions must be limited. All members of the Ridgeline Community are expected to align with the above Core Values. Violation of these Core Values will invite consequences that are based upon several factors, including, but not limited to:

- a. the severity of the act
- b. the situation in which it occurred
- c. the frequency of behavior problems
- d. the needs of the child

Procedures:

All students will be treated as unique individuals. Student behavior problems will, therefore, be handled as unique situations. In the event that the actions of the staff appear to be unfair, the individual may

respond by filling out the "Due Process" form at the end of this section, visit with the staff member involved, and present the individual's case. Consequences may be adjusted accordingly. If the needs of the individual have still not been met, the individual may refer to the official Complaint Policy included in the Family Handbook and the Staff Handbook.

SHORT TERM RECOVERY SETTINGS

In Another Area in the Classroom

In Another Classroom

At School

At Home

There are four levels to recovery settings that may be used sequentially or bypassed depending on severity:

1. In Another Area in the Classroom

*This level of recovery is at the discretion of supervising adult and will align with the **Ridgeline Montessori Core Values**.*

2. In Another Classroom

*Students will be sent to an alternate classroom when other preventive measures have not been successful and the student's behavior is interfering with the learning of others. This will be accompanied by one formal observation and will align with the **Ridgeline Montessori Core Values**.*

3. At School (Administration Involvement)

*For more serious misbehavior and/or repeated misbehavior, students should have a written plan, established with the homeroom instructor, for how they intend to address the problem in the future. If this plan has been unsuccessful and two formal observations have been made, students may be required to leave the classroom setting to an area supervised by administration. For chronic problems, restrictive settings may be needed along with other types of disciplinary and/or mental health interventions. All interventions will align with the **Ridgeline Montessori Core Values**.*

4. At Home

Serious violation of the Core Values or repeated misbehavior may result in recovery time at home. This recovery process is at the discretion of

*the school administrator and the homeroom instructor and will align with the **Ridgeline Montessori Core Values**.*

As stated in Eugene School District 4J's Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook:

Students will be subject to discipline, up to and including suspension or expulsion, for misconduct that violates federal, state, county, or city laws or the policies and rules established by the school district, including but not limited to harassment or discrimination, theft, disruption of school, damage or destruction of school property, damage or destruction of private property, assault or threats of harm, unauthorized use of weapons or dangerous instruments, unlawful use of drugs, narcotics, or alcoholic beverages, and persistent failure to comply with rules of the lawful directions of teachers or school officials.

In the event that a student does not comply with a supervising adult's request to leave a learning environment, another adult will attempt to remove the student. If he or she continues to resist, an administrator will inform the family of the situation as soon as possible. The family may remove the student from the school setting, or an administrator or appropriately trained faculty member will physically assist the student to a safe, more appropriate environment.

All disciplinary responses will be in line with certain ethical and legal issues:

SPECIAL EDUCATION LAW PL 105-17 I.D.E.A.

- Least Restrictive Environment
- IEP - Programs individualized and responsive to the child's needs
- Parental Involvement and other due process requirements
- Maximum cumulative suspensions
- Documentation of interventions

ETHICAL ISSUES

- When a child needs constant removal, what is their behavior really saying?
"I'm not getting what I really need to be successful."
- Use of this plan is not an excuse to do nothing to help the child
- The child should be involved as much as possible in a plan to prevent frequent use of this approach.
- Undue humiliation will be avoided.

- Students will be supervised at all times.
- We must continue to demonstrate through our actions, words and attitudes that the child is separate from the behavior and worthy of our concern and respect.

*This document was produced with contributions from *Love and Logic*, The Love and Logic Press, Eugene District 4J *Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook*, and Ridgeline Montessori Public Charter Core Values.

Physical Discipline

Oregon Statute prohibits the use of physical discipline. However, a teacher, administrator, school employee, or school volunteer is authorized to use reasonable physical force upon a student when, and to the extent the individual reasonably believes, it is necessary to maintain order in the classroom or school, or at a school activity or event, whether or not it is held on school property. When so used, physical restraint will not be considered a form of physical discipline.

Required Reports to Law Enforcement Agencies

Violations of the school's rules related to guns and dangerous weapons, vandalism or the intentional or reckless destruction of school property, and coercion, assault, or threats must be reported to the police. A school official may inform the appropriate law enforcement agencies when a student is suspected of committing other illegal acts on the school campus or at a school-sponsored activity.

Grievance Procedure/Complaint Process

The Ridgeline Complaint Process is designed to provide a formal method of disputes and may be utilized after good-faith direct communication between disputing parties has failed to resolve a complaint. Parents, students, employees and community members are encouraged to use it only after exhausting direct communication with the party or parties involved.

Parents, students and employees follow a three-step process, explained below, when submitting a complaint.

Step 1- Informal Complaint

An informal complaint is initiated by completing the Due Process Form (available in the office) and submitting it to the party involved within ten school days of becoming aware of the incident or ten days after having received the individual's response to their initial statement of concern. An informal complaint requiring an administrator's involvement will be

reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and a written resolution shall be given to the Complainant within 15 school days of receiving the complaint.

Step 2- Formal Complaint

If a Complainant wishes to appeal the written resolution provided in Step 1, or the circumstances warrant skipping an informal complaint, a formal complaint can be filed. It must be made, in writing, five school days after the staff member's written resolution is provided or five school days after the incident the Complainant deemed worthy of a formal complaint. An administrator shall review the matter and conduct whatever investigation and/or interviews are necessary. A written resolution shall be given to the Complainant within 15 school days, unless the investigation cannot be reasonably concluded within that time. In such a case the administrator shall inform the Complainant within 15 days of the continuing efforts of the investigation, and when a formal resolution shall be offered.

Step 3- Appeal to the Board

An appeal to the Ridgeline Board may be made by any parent, student or employee dissatisfied with the resolution provided by Step 2 of the complaint process. An appeal of any Formal Complaint decision shall be submitted in writing to the Ridgeline Board of Directors within ten school days of receiving the administrator's response. The Board will discuss the issue via email or telephone and address a response at the next scheduled Board meeting, which shall then be communicated in writing to the Complainant within five school days of the Board Meeting.

Mediation

If the Complainant is unsatisfied with the decision of the Board of Directors, Ridgeline agrees to cooperate in a voluntary mediation using the services of an outside mediator at no cost to the Complainant. Any solution derived from mediation shall be voluntary and by mutual agreement of the parties.

General Information:

Complaint Made Directly to Board Members

When a complaint about a student or employee is made initially to a Board member or to the Board of Directors as a whole, the complaint process shall be explained to the person and the Complainant will be encouraged to follow the complaint procedure described above.

Filing a False Complaint

Filing a false complaint is not to be confused with filing an unsubstantiated complaint. Ridgeline recognizes that a complaint may be valid even if it cannot be proven. It is Ridgeline's intent and commitment to take all complaints seriously, and to undertake a thorough investigation and provide a timely and reasonable response. It is equally important that the Complainant understand the seriousness of allegations. The intentional filing of a false complaint is a serious matter that may result in disciplinary and/or legal action against the false reporter.

