



Goodwater Montessori School 2023-2024

## Family Handbook & Student Code of Conduct

Goodwater Montessori School

710 Stadium Drive  
Georgetown, Texas 78626  
512-931-3560  
[www.goodwatermontessori.org](http://www.goodwatermontessori.org)  
[goodwater@goodwatermontessori.org](mailto:goodwater@goodwatermontessori.org)

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August 2023

Dear Goodwater Montessori Families,

Welcome to Goodwater! We are honored that you have entrusted your children to us, and we pledge to create an authentic Montessori environment in which students will thrive as Maria Montessori intended.

This handbook is an information source for our school and a guide to Goodwater policies. It is important to familiarize yourself with the Family Handbook and discuss the Student Code of Conduct with your student. If any policies change, or we add additional policies, this document may be revised as needed as we progress through the school year. The most current version will always be posted on our website. This handbook includes the Student Code of Conduct required by state law. Your signature and your student's signature acknowledging receipt of this code is required. Please follow the link found on the handbook page of our website.

Please feel to reach out to Guides or Administration if you have suggestions at any time.

Kindest Regards,  
Dr. Bruce Tabor  
[bruce.tabor@goodwatermontessori.org](mailto:bruce.tabor@goodwatermontessori.org)

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## Goodwater Montessori School Board of Directors

Goodwater Montessori Charter School is operated under the auspices of WilCo Montessori Partners (WCMP), an IRS-authorized 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 2014. Board members serve three-year terms and employ the Superintendent/ CEO, approve the budget, monitor expenditures, and establish policies for operating the school and ensuring its financial viability.

### Meetings

Most board meetings are held at 6:30 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed. Unless otherwise indicated, all meetings will be held at:

Georgetown Public Library  
402 W 8th St Suite B, Georgetown, TX

Goodwater board meetings are open to the public. Within the limits of the Texas Open Meetings Act, as detailed in Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code, some subject matter may be discussed in closed sessions. Those topics are consideration of real estate contract transactions, other contract negotiations, personnel matters, student hearings, and legal matters.

Board Agendas are posted at the school and on the school website at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

- Members of the community are invited to address the Goodwater Board for up to two minutes during the public comment period of scheduled board meetings.
- In such a case, the board of directors is required to listen and may ask clarifying questions but may not act on any subject matter that is not included in the board agenda.
- Community members are welcome to remain for the rest of a board meeting but may not participate in deliberations.

2023-2024 Board of Directors

President Suzanne Robinson [suzanne.robinson@goodwatermontessori.org](mailto:suzanne.robinson@goodwatermontessori.org)

Vice President Dr. Allen Brown [abrown@goodwatermontessori.org](mailto:abrown@goodwatermontessori.org)

Treasurer Jan MacWatters [jmacwatters@goodwatermontessori.org](mailto:jmacwatters@goodwatermontessori.org)

Secretary Chris Hinds [chinds@goodwatermontessori.org](mailto:chinds@goodwatermontessori.org)

## **Mission, Vision, and Values**

### **Mission**

To provide an exceptional Montessori education to all children and their families, encouraging a life-long love of learning and active participation in their communities and the world.

### **Vision**

To develop conscientious citizens who approach their world with confidence, creativity, and collaboration.

### **Values**

Diversity, Independence, Joy, Passion, and Respect

## The Montessori Method

Montessori education was founded in 1907 by Italian physician Maria Montessori M.D. who based her educational methods on scientific observation of children's learning processes. Dr. Montessori believed that "We should not fill children with facts but rather cultivate their own natural desire to learn." Guided by this discovery that children teach themselves, Dr. Montessori designed a "prepared environment" in which children freely choose from a number of developmentally appropriate activities.

Montessori education is:

### Child-Centered

- Mixed-age classrooms allow students to have repeated exposure to lessons and become leaders to the younger children in the class.
- Child-centered education is facilitated by a Montessori guide who is consistently aware of the child's academic progress and emotional development.

### Collaborative

- A collaborative approach to education emphasizing long work periods and group project work that reflects the workplace, preparing children to be creative contributors to their communities
- Integrated lessons with high-quality, hands-on materials that help the child to understand the interconnected nature of all subject areas

### Impactful

- Montessori education is based on scientific observations of human development. Dr. Maria Montessori, a scientist, and a medical doctor, based her approach on thousands of hours of observation of children and a lifetime of experimentation and refinement, developing a scientific model of human development and an educational approach that supports fully realized human potential. (National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector.)

Goodwater Montessori School believes that the Montessori Method of educating the child is a highly effective and innovative approach. Well-researched and in place at more than 22,000 private and public schools worldwide, Montessori is increasingly recognized as utilizing practices — such as mixed-age grouping, differentiated instruction, and social-emotional learning — that best conform to students' natural learning instincts. The American Montessori Society ([www.amshq.org](http://www.amshq.org)) explains that students need adults to expose them to possibilities in their lives, but the children must determine their response to all the possibilities.

Montessori schools teach the same basic skills as traditional schools and offer a rigorous academic program. Most of the subject areas are familiar such as math, science, history, geography, and language but they are presented through an integrated approach that brings separate strands of the curriculum together. While studying a map of Africa, for example, students may explore the art, history, and inventions of several African nations. This may lead them to examine ancient Egypt, including hieroglyphs, and their place in the history of writing.



The study of the pyramids, of course, is a natural bridge to geometry. This approach to curriculum shows the interrelatedness of all things. It also allows students to become thoroughly immersed in a topic—and to give their curiosity full rein.

Goodwater has a rich and rigorous Montessori curriculum aligned with the State learning standards, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), which span the years of academic and social/emotional development. The trained guide teaches the concepts aligned with the TEKS with precisely made, hands-on didactic materials to aid the students' knowledge base and develop critical thinking skills. In doing so, we are able to accommodate students' learning needs through content, process, product, and specialized learning environments. The guide records the students' progress daily in the recordkeeping system.

Research by pediatric neuropsychologist Steve Hughes, Ph.D., about Montessori education, as explained on his website ( [www.GoodatDoingThings.com](http://www.GoodatDoingThings.com) ), presents interesting conclusions. Dr. Hughes states that “Montessori education is a brain-based, developmental method, which allows children to make creative choices in discovering people, places, and knowledge in the world. It is hands-on learning, self-expression, and collaborative play in a beautifully crafted environment of respect, peace, and joy. It is also about brain development. A skillful Montessori guide knows what stage a child is in their brain development, and they are meeting it, and they are feeding it. The Montessori Method is like education designed by a pediatric developmental neuropsychologist.”

Montessori graduates do well in the world beyond the classroom. Increasingly, the modern world favors creative thinkers who combine personal initiative with strong collaborative skills — precisely the characteristics that Montessori education nurtures. Adults who attended Montessori schools have spoken of their childhood experiences with the Montessori method saying it gave them not only the ability to work cooperatively in existing settings, but also the skills of confidence, creativity, and communication needed to make innovative and groundbreaking changes.

For more information about Montessori, we recommend:

- Association Montessori Internationale — [www.amiusa.org](http://www.amiusa.org)
- National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector — [www.public-montessori.org](http://www.public-montessori.org)
- North American Montessori Teachers Association — [www.montessori-namta.org](http://www.montessori-namta.org)

“The formation of children’s capacities is hugely important during the first years of life – not just academic learning, but the ability to concentrate, persevere, and think for themselves, as well as the ability to interact well with others. Children who have been given the right kind of support

during these years grow into adults who are self-motivated, love learning, who can think flexibly and creatively, and who are not only conscious of the needs of others but actively foster harmony as they go through life.”

Association Montessori Internationale ([www.amiusa.org](http://www.amiusa.org))

## The Montessori Environment

Goodwater Montessori School offers a true Montessori environment, mixed-age classrooms, Montessori materials and curriculum, individualized instruction, and Montessori-certified guides. Our mission is lived out vibrantly every day on our campus and done with grace and courtesy consistent with Montessori guiding principles.

Goodwater Montessori classrooms have beautiful hands-on learning materials suitable for individual and small group learning. Our school days include long blocks of work time for the introduction, guided practice, and mastery of concepts in the curriculum. The multi-age classrooms help facilitate peer tutoring and community building.

A multi-age grouping typically spans three years, forming a community:

- Primary - Ages 3 to 6 (Pre-K through Kindergarten).
- Lower Elementary - Ages 6 to 9 (Grades 1, 2, and 3).
- Upper Elementary - Ages 9 to 11 (Grades 4 and 5).
- Adolescent - Ages 12 to 14 (Grades 6, 7, and 8)

The multi-age class groupings allow the children to be in a class of various ages. Modeling, communication, and collaboration are natural outcomes of working together.

The classroom guide uses strategies, including our three-hour, uninterrupted work cycle, to deliver the lesson to the students. Direct instruction with didactic materials is used to introduce a concept. The guide follows the child through guided practice to eventual mastery of a concept. The three-year intervals in Montessori allow the child time to further explore and develop deeper understandings of academic content, as well as develop deeper concentration by carrying out long-term projects and work. Subject matters and concepts are interwoven and interconnected in the Montessori curriculum. This promotes deeper understanding and broader discovery.

## Charter Schools

Charter schools are public schools that extend the privilege of school choice to all families. Funded by the State of Texas, they provide options for parents and students in pursuing their ideal educational experience. Children attending a charter school benefit from high academic standards and innovative approaches to teaching and learning. Charter schools are open to all children who are eligible to attend traditional public schools. They are governed by a local board using adopted bylaws and are required to meet all Texas school accountability standards.

Charter schools are organized by a founding group that is passionate about the basic tenets of the curriculum. In Goodwater's case, that's WilCo Montessori Partners. Board members, staff members, parents, students, and community members are attracted to the charter school because their interests coincide with the charter school's educational program and special themes. Charter schools are responsive to parents' concerns because they operate in a free market. Parents make the choice to send their children to the charter school, and parent involvement in school activities is welcome and encouraged.

Charter schools were authorized by the Texas Legislature in 1995 as an alternative to traditional public schools. Goodwater Montessori School, under the auspices of WilCo Montessori Partners, was awarded a charter by the Texas State Board of Education in July 2016 and opened in 2017.

Open enrollment charter schools are public schools that have the flexibility to choose curriculum, set school calendars, maintain flexibility in hiring, and adapt to the educational needs of individual students. Charter schools have increased accountability and must also meet the academic achievement and financial management standards required by the Texas Education Agency. Among other things, Texas charter schools are tasked with:

- a) Improving student learning,
- b) Increasing the choice of learning opportunities within the public school system,
- c) Establishing a new form of accountability for public schools, and
- d) Encouraging different and innovative learning methods.

### Geographic Boundaries

As a charter school, Goodwater enrolls students from a much larger boundary than a traditional public school. All students (except those adjudicated of a crime) living within Williamson County are eligible for enrollment in Goodwater on a space-available basis. Any family residing within Williamson County may apply for enrollment to Goodwater Montessori School.

## Funding

Charter schools receive state funds based on the average daily attendance (ADA) of students (as do traditional public schools); however, they do not receive funds from local tax revenue. Texas Education Agency (TEA) data indicates that charter schools receive approximately \$1,000 less in total revenue per pupil than traditional public schools. In the State of Texas, the funding for students follows the student; therefore, a school is funded based upon the children that attend that school, as well as fundraising.

**Goodwater Montessori School**

**2023-2024 Academic Calendar - Approved 5/22/23**

August 2023						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

September 2023						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

October 2023						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

November 2023						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

December 2023						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

January 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

February 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

March 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

April 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

May 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

June 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

July 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

- School Closed
- Weather Days/School Closed
- 6 Weeks Period
- Parent/Teacher Conferences

- PD Days/ No School
- STAAR Testing
- First and Last Day of School
- 9 Weeks Period

- 1688 Number of Student Days
- 183 Number of Staff Days
- 450 Minutes per day 7:55 am - 3:25 pm
- 7700 Total Minutes including 2100 PD waiver

Aug 2-14	Planning/Development Days
Aug 15	First Day of School for students
Sep 4	Labor Day Holiday - Closed
Sep 18	Planning/Development Day
Oct 6	Teacher Conferences - No school
Oct 9-13	Fall Break - Closed
Nov 20-24	Thanksgiving Break - Closed
Dec 21-Jan 3	Winter Break - Closed
Jan 4-5	Planning/Development Days

Jan 15	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday - Closed
Feb 19	President's Day Holiday - Closed
Feb 20	Teacher Conferences - No school
Mar 11-15	Spring Break - Closed
Mar 29 & Apr 1	Bad weather makeup days
May 23	Last Day of School for students
May 24	Planning/Development Day
May 27	Memorial Day Holiday - Closed

## 2023-2024 Faculty and Staff

### Superintendent/ CEO Dr. Bruce Tabor

Director, Business Operations	Marcy Steward
Director of Special Education	Taryn Wellington
Montessori Instruction and Curriculum Coordinator	Kristi Felty
Executive Assistant/ Communications Coordinator	Kristi Lee
School Programs Coordinator	
Student Admissions and Information Specialist	Kim Hodges
Administrative Assistant	Maegan Kizziar
School Improvement Coordinator.	Roberta Givens
ASEP Supervisor	Gina Odendahl
School Operations Generalist	Sharmayne Smith

[Current Employee Staff Contact Link](#)

### Disclaimers

#### Anti-Discrimination

Goodwater Montessori School does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, skin color, age, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, academic, athletic, or artistic ability, or the district the child would otherwise attend without regard to disability or handicapping condition, in administration or educational policies, admission and hiring policies, and other school-administered programs.

Educators are responsible for any unlawful discrimination by students under their supervision. Employees should immediately address and report any conduct by students that could be considered as discrimination. Employees may be terminated for failure to report and prevent discrimination.

#### Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. All reports of sexual harassment will be investigated. Any employee found to be responsible for sexual harassment will be terminated.

Educators are responsible for any intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment created by

students under their supervision. Employees should immediately address and report any conduct by students that could be construed as sexual harassment. Employees may be terminated for failure to report and prevent sexual harassment.

Goodwater has designated the Director of Business Operations to coordinate its efforts to prevent sexual harassment and to comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

### Late Applications

A child who applies after the application deadline will be considered for registration should a position in his/her grade become available after the lottery is completed. Each application will be time-stamped and will be added to the end of the appropriate grade's waitlist. The school will continue to accept applications throughout the school year. Applicants will be added to their grade's waitlist if the grade is oversubscribed.

### Registration Information

#### Step 1:

Families are notified by email of their admission to Goodwater Montessori School, and online registration information will follow with a registration packet with instructions and documents required for admission. Registration packets are due on the date specified in the admission notification and must include all required information and documentation. Goodwater Montessori School will work with families to encourage timely submission of registration packets. Parents who fail to submit documents by the stated deadline will forfeit their child's spot for the school year.

#### Step 2:

Additionally, parents/guardians must submit the following documents to the school registrar: Please have copies already made, if possible, in order to expedite the process.

- Copy of Parent/guardian photo ID.
- Copy of Child's birth certificate.
- Copy of Child's Social Security card.
- Immunizations records or notarized Exemption Affidavit
- Proof of residency within the geographic boundary of Williamson County, Texas, in the form of a utility bill, property tax statement, lease agreement. (If you do not have any of these documents and live with someone or on a property without that documentation, please complete the Residency Affidavit below.)

For PreK Students: Please bring documentation of your PK Eligibility Qualifier:

- Income-based PK Admission: If your family qualifies for the National School Lunch Program based on their income guidelines, please provide proof of income (current pay stub, current tax return if self-employed).
- If you qualify for SNAP/TANF, please provide your SNAP/TANF documentation.

- Active Duty Military, or Child of Military MIA, KIA, or Injured (pertinent documentation required)
- If the student does not speak or understand English, testing will be administered at a later date, so no documentation is needed upon registration.
- Family is Homeless (Survey will be given.).
- The child has ever been in the custody of DFPS (DFPS letter required).
- The parent has earned the Star of Texas Award (Certificate required).

## Enrollment and Admission

Goodwater Montessori School complies with all admissions requirements as stated in Texas Education Code Sec. 12.117 and prohibits discrimination in student admission based on sex, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, academic, artistic or athletic ability, or the district the child would otherwise attend in accordance with Texas Education Code Sec. 12.111(a)(5). Enrolling a child in Goodwater Montessori School is a two-step process: application for admission and then enrollment in the charter school.

### Application

During the designated application period, which begins in late January or early February, parents may submit an online application for their child(ren) at least three years old for grades Pre-K 3 through the eighth grade.

Application for admission is completed using the statewide common admission application, known as the Charter Student Admission Application (CSAA).

### Geographic Restrictions

Students must reside within the geographic boundaries designated by the school's charter as of the first day of that child's attendance and fulfill all registration requirements. Williamson County is the geographic boundary for Goodwater Montessori.

### Minimum Age Requirements

All students must be at least as old as the following appropriate age for their grade by September 1 of each school year:

Grade	Age
PK3	3
PK4	4
KG	5
1st	6
2nd	7



3rd	8
4th	9
5th	10
6th	11
7th	12
8th	13

### Lottery for Grades K-8

When any grade is over-subscribed (when there are more applicants than spaces) at the end of the application period, Goodwater Montessori School will conduct an electronic lottery per State of Texas guidelines until all openings are filled. The following are exempt from the lottery if applications are submitted during the designated application period:

1. Children of Goodwater Montessori School staff members
2. Siblings of Goodwater Montessori School students already admitted or attending the school

Children not selected for immediate placement will be placed on a waitlist according to their number in the lottery process.

Families are notified by email of their admission to Goodwater Montessori School.

Registration packets are due on the date specified in the registration notification and must include all required information and documentation. Goodwater Montessori School will work with families to encourage timely submission of registration packets. Parents who fail to submit documents by the stated deadline may forfeit their child's spot in the admissions lottery for the school year.

### Prekindergarten Admissions

Prekindergarten applicants who have applied by the end of the application period who are eligible for the State Prekindergarten Program will have priority in admission. If there are additional Prekindergarten spaces, they will be filled by non-eligible students. To be eligible for the State Prekindergarten Program, a child must meet the geographic boundary and minimum age requirements, **and** meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Child is unable to speak and comprehend the English language
- Child is educationally disadvantaged
- Child is homeless (as defined by 42 USC, §11434a)
- Child of an active duty member of the United States military
- Child of a member of the United States military who was injured or killed while serving on active duty
- The child is or has ever been in the conservatorship of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care) following an adversary hearing held as provided by Family Code §262.201 or has been in foster care in another state or territory, but currently lives in Texas
- Child of a person eligible for the Star of Texas Award as a peace officer, a firefighter, or an emergency medical first responder

If there are more Prekindergarten student applications than spaces, all applicants will be placed in a lottery and randomly selected per State of Texas guidelines. Selected students will be invited to submit eligibility documentation as described under “Registration Information,” below.

Eligible students will be offered the opportunity to enroll if space is available. If space is not available, eligible students will be placed on a waitlist. Ineligible students will be offered the opportunity to enroll after all eligible student applicants have been offered enrollment. If space is not available, ineligible students will be placed on a waitlist behind any students eligible for the State Prekindergarten Program.

Any Prekindergarten applications received after the application period will be placed on the waitlist in the order in which they were received, with eligible PreK students receiving priority.

Prekindergarten children of staff members and siblings of students already admitted or attending Goodwater Montessori School are exempt from the lottery if applications are submitted during the designated application period. A small percentage of Goodwater Montessori School’s Prekindergarten population may be comprised of children of staff and siblings of current students who are ineligible for the State Prekindergarten Program. These applicants will be admitted in the order applications are received. If the school determines that a small percentage of Prekindergarten enrollment has already been filled with staff member children and siblings of current students, applications that would otherwise be exempt will be placed in the lottery along with all other applications.

Prekindergarten students who are not eligible for the State Prekindergarten Program will be offered Prekindergarten on a tuition basis.

### Waitlist

Goodwater Montessori School strives to maintain full and vital classrooms at all times. In the case of grade oversubscription, an electronic waitlist will be maintained by the school registrar in partnership with the school’s software provider. As positions become available throughout the year (in the event of a student withdrawal), children occupying the next position in their grade’s waitlist will be notified and instructed to submit a registration packet.

### Late Applications

A child who applies after the application deadline will be considered for registration should a position in his/her grade become available after the lottery is completed. Each application will be time-stamped and will be added to the end of the appropriate grade’s waitlist. The school will continue to accept applications throughout the school year. Applicants will be added to their

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- Copy of Child's Social Security card.
- Immunizations records or notarized Exemption Affidavit
- Proof of residency within the geographic boundary of Williamson County, Texas, in the form of a utility bill, property tax statement, lease agreement. (If you do not have any of these documents and live with someone or on a property without that documentation, please complete the Residency Affidavit below.)

For Prekindergarten Students: Please bring documentation of your Eligibility Qualifier:

- Income-based PK Admission: If your family qualifies for the National School Lunch Program based on their income guidelines, please provide proof of income (current pay stub, current tax return if self-employed).
- If you qualify for SNAP/TANF, please provide your SNAP/TANF documentation.
- Active-duty military, or Child of Military MIA, KIA, or Injured (pertinent documentation required)
- If the student does not speak or understand English, testing will be administered at a later date, so no documentation is needed upon registration.
- Family is Homeless (Survey will be given.).
- The child has ever been in the custody of DFPS (DFPS letter required).
- The parent has earned the Star of Texas Award (Certificate required).

This process does not qualify your students for the Free/Reduced Lunch Program at Goodwater. That application will be distributed in late July and confirmed once the Lunch Application is received by the school.

## Returning Students

Students returning to Goodwater Montessori School must complete a recommitment form in

early spring to ensure continued enrollment. The form will be distributed to families early in the Spring semester.

#### Exclusion from Admission

Goodwater Montessori School reserves the right to exclude from admission a student who has a documented history of a criminal offense, a juvenile court adjudication, or discipline problems under Texas Education Code Sec. 12.111(a)(5) Subchapter A, Chapter 37. The Superintendent/CEO, Board President, Lead Guide, and/or Special Needs Teacher (where applicable) and ESL Specialist (where applicable) will review documented cases of violations under TEC Sec. 12.111(a)(5) Subchapter Chapter 37 to determine an applicant's eligibility for admission.

#### Re-Enrollment

Former Goodwater Montessori School students may re-enroll at any time provided a position in the appropriate grade/age is available. If a position is not available, the student will be placed on the waitlist for the current year, and/or the former student may participate in the following year's application and registration process.

#### Transfers

Goodwater Montessori School will not accept transfers from outside its geographic area.

#### Withdrawal

The parent/guardian is required to complete school withdrawal paperwork prior to the day of withdrawal of their child from Goodwater Montessori School and also clear any library book fees prior to withdrawal.

### Attendance

The School Day starts at 7:55a.m. daily. The School Day ends at 3:25p.m. daily.

Parents are expected to ensure the on-time arrival and departure of their students. A late fee will be charged when students are left at school after 4:00 pm. Fee information: \$1 for every minute after 4:00 pm.

#### Compulsory Attendance Rules

Mandatory attendance for students who are at least six years old as of September 1 of the applicable school year is required by state law Texas Education Code 25.085. The law requires

a student to attend public school until the student's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday unless the student is exempt under 25.086 of the Texas Education Code. This requirement is enforced through Texas Education Code 25.093 and 25.094. According to the Texas Education Code, students must be present at least 90 percent of the school days unless otherwise exempted by the administrators.

**Please note: The school is funded based on the daily attendance of each student. Charter schools receive less funding per student than traditional public schools; therefore, the financial stability of Goodwater Montessori School is directly affected by your child's regular attendance.**

**Attendance will be taken daily at 10 a.m.**

### Excessive Absences

In the event of 3 or more unexcused absences in a 9-week period, a notification will be sent to the parents/guardians with a warning given.

In the event of 6 or more unexcused absences in the semester, an attendance committee meeting will be held. The student may be considered for dismissal from Goodwater Montessori School to their home campus. This policy applies to all students ages PreK to 8<sup>h</sup> grade. To support the strength of the educational environment and to ensure the best attendance, parents are encouraged to schedule routine medical and dental appointments after school hours or after 10 a.m. when attendance is taken.

Please notify the school of absence by emailing [attendance@goodwatermontessori.org](mailto:attendance@goodwatermontessori.org) and the student's guide.

### Excused Absences

An absence may be considered excused for the following reasons:

- **Illness.** A child who is ill should not be sent to school since this may cause the child's condition to worsen and may expose other children to the child's illness. A student who has a temperature of 100° F or greater or who has been vomiting within the past 24 hours should stay home. The child should have a normal temperature for 24 hours before returning to school. After three days of an absence due to illness, parent must provide a note from the doctor to return.
- **Medical or Dental Appointment.** Parents are encouraged to schedule non-illness medical or dental appointments during after-school hours. Appointments made during school hours will require a note from the medical provider for students to be considered excused. The note must be turned in within one school day of the return of the student to school.
- **Religious Observance.** Prior to the day of observance, the family must submit a written request to the administration for the absence to be considered excused. The guide and family will plan to complete all missed work, if applicable.
- **Death in the Family.** In the event of a death in the family, students will be granted an

excused absence, the length of which will be determined in consultation with the school administration.

- Other necessary or justifiable reasons as excused by the school administration

### Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences are any absences that have not been excused as defined above and outlined by the Texas Education Agency. To maintain their educational progress, students will need to participate in any missed lessons or other classroom work as necessary.

### Tardiness

Tardiness is disruptive to the learning environment and can have a negative impact on all of the students. Parents and students are together responsible for arriving at school on time.

Though Montessori enables students to work independently, lessons and work are planned to begin at 7:55 a.m. Students who arrive late miss critical information and often disrupt the work of others.

- Primary students who arrive after 7:55 a.m. are tardy, and the parent/guardian must walk with the student to the office. Primary doors close at 7:55 a.m.
- All students who arrive after 7:55 a.m. parents must check their student in at the office. The student will be counted as tardy and be allowed to proceed to class.

### Excessive Tardiness

- Unexcused tardies are cumulative for the semester.
- Failure to be in class on time as outlined above will result in a recorded tardy.
- Three tardies result in one unexcused absence and a notice to the parent/guardian.
- Six tardies result in two unexcused absences and a parent/guardian conference.
- Ten tardies result in three unexcused absences and the development of an arrival plan between the administration and parent/guardian.

Any student who leaves school before dismissal time must be checked out by their parents in the school office. Students whose parents fail to check out will be considered truant. Students will not receive credit for days in which they are truant. Parents will be notified of their child's truancy, pick-up, and a meeting will be requested by the administration with the goal of preventing further truancy.

**Three such offenses may result in the student being removed from Goodwater Montessori School.**

### Truancy

State compulsory attendance law requires that every child at least 6 and younger than 19 years of age attend school. The School enforces the compulsory attendance laws by ensuring the regular attendance of currently enrolled students through the application of truancy prevention measures and, if necessary, referral of students 12 years and older to truancy court.

A student's absence is excused if the absence is specifically authorized by School policy or rule or is otherwise approved by the campus administrator. Any absence that is not excused shall be considered an "unexcused" absence.

The School will provide written notice to parents if their student has incurred three unexcused absences (including partial day absences) in a four-week period, and will begin the implementation of truancy prevention measures, which shall include one of the following:

1. The creation of a behavior improvement plan that includes a specific description of required or prohibited behavior, the period of the plan's effectiveness (not to exceed 45 days), and penalties for additional absences;
2. School-based community service for the student and parent (or caregiver); or
3. Referral to counseling for student and parent (or caregiver), mentoring, or other services to address the student's truancy.

A student will be considered "truant" if the student fails to attend school, without excuse, on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year. A student, who is at least 12 years of age and younger than 19 years of age, may be referred to truancy court by the School within 10 days of the student's 10th unexcused absence. In rare occasions, parents may also be subject to prosecution for criminal negligence if the parent fails to secure the student's attendance.

## Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival: Children may be dropped off beginning at 7:40 a.m. The school is not staffed to care for children any earlier than this time. The school day begins at 7:55 am.

Dismissal: Dismissal time is at 3:25 p.m. daily. Children must be picked up by 3:45 p.m. unless they are enrolled in the after-school program. Children who are picked up more than 15 minutes after dismissal will be assessed a fee. Fee information: \$1 for every minute after 4:00 PM

### Early Departure From School

All students are required to remain at school until the end of the day. Early departure should be utilized only for illness and necessary medical appointments. Early pick-up of students after 2:30 pm is not permitted, except in the case of a family emergency. In this case, the parent/guardian shall contact the office prior to arrival on campus.

### After-School Enrichment Program

Goodwater offers an Afterschool Enrichment Program from dismissal until 6 p.m. for a fee. Registration will occur online at [www.goodwatermontessori.org](http://www.goodwatermontessori.org). Parents/Caregivers of students who are not picked up by 6:00 pm will be assessed at a \$1.00 per minute fee.

### Use of Facilities Before and After School

Certain areas of the school will be accessible before and after school for a variety of school-approved activities. Students are required to remain in designated areas and with the guide or activity sponsor at all times. Students will not be permitted to go to any other parts of the building unless otherwise given permission by the guide or sponsor.

### Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

The Montessori Curriculum teaches Grace and Courtesy. Please serve as models of Grace of Courtesy to your children during arrival and dismissal. Thank you.

Our procedures were determined based on the following:

1. Safety for our students and staff
2. Consideration for our school neighbors and fellow drivers
3. Ease of understanding for parents

Please be patient in line and respectful to staff and other parents in line.

- At dismissal, all students must be picked up by 3:45 PM (unless the dismissal line is not finished until after that time.)
- Please do not use your cell phones during arrival, dismissal, or while driving on campus.
- Please follow the direction of all staff and volunteers directing traffic and assisting students.



- Please leave the crosswalks clear. Do not stop on them.
- Please make a note of all crosswalks on the school grounds. Staff will help the students stay safe, but the drivers must as well. Please pull close to the car in front of you, so fewer cars will be blocking Stadium Drive.
- Please assist students who may need help getting out of the vehicle.
- Please make sure students get out of the vehicle on the driver side.
- Please observe speed limit signs. The speed limit is 10 MPH on school grounds.
- Please follow all traffic signs on school grounds.
- You must have a pickup card on display to pick up your students.
- Please do not park and walk up to pick up your students from the dismissal area.

Goodwater provides detailed instructions and maps to all families for arrival and dismissal procedures before the school year begins. This is also posted on our website . Families are expected to learn, understand, and follow the procedures each school day.

## Parent and Guardian Involvement

### Communication

Goodwater Montessori School will communicate with parents in person, via telephone, mail, and through mass methods, including its website, e-newsletter, social media, and texts.

### Parent –Guide/Staff Communication

All Goodwater staff have school email addresses for official school communication and will respond to questions within 24 hours M-F.

Topics relating to student behavior, academic performance, teaching methods, subject content, policy or administrative decisions, and confidential matters (such as special education needs, learning disabilities, and discipline) shall occur via face-to-face meetings, Zoom, email, or phone conversations. The meetings will occur in a timely fashion.

The Goodwater 2023-2024 school calendar includes two Parent Conference Days. Parents are encouraged to schedule appointments on these days to discuss their child’s progress with their guide.

### Prohibited Forms of Communication

Guides and staff are prohibited from using personal email accounts, personal social media accounts, or third-party websites to communicate with parents about school-related matters.

Additionally, guides and staff are prohibited from using personal email accounts, personal social media accounts, or third-party websites to communicate with students on any topic.

Official school social media sites may be used by authorized personnel to communicate general school news and information.

We urge parents and guardians to please contact the school with their specific questions or concerns about school policy or procedures before asking them through social media.

### Parent Lunch with Student

Parents should not plan on having lunch with their children, except on designated special events announced in advance.

### Audio and Visual Recording and Photography

Recording or photographing meetings with guides or staff is prohibited without the prior consent of all parties. If all parties consent, recordings must include an opening statement that consent has been given and approved by each party. No person is allowed to video or audio record in any learning environment without permission from the guide and/or superintendent.

Parents/guardians and students may not photograph other students in the school without written permission from the Superintendent/CEO.

### Solicitation of Goods and Services

Solicitation of goods and services is prohibited on school property except during school-sanctioned events or for the benefit of the school or other charitable efforts. No printed solicitation material may be distributed by staff, guides, or parents through the school unless cleared by the Administration office (Kristi Lee). All business relationships with the school must be made through the Administration office. Delivery of goods and services purchased privately outside of the school must be made outside of school property and not through students.

### Party Invitations

Guides are not permitted to distribute student party invitations. Please do not send your students to school with party invitations.

### Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers contribute to the vitality of Goodwater, and parents are encouraged to contribute to the school in a variety of ways. Examples are classroom enrichment, field trip chaperones, fundraising, library, gardening, lunch assistance, and staff appreciation.

## School Safety and Security

Goodwater Montessori School takes the safety of students and staff very seriously. The administration is continually in touch with law enforcement agencies and other organizations to create and update its best practices in all areas of school and student safety.

### Visits & Tours

All visitors, including parents/guardians, **must check in with the school office prior to visiting any school area.** Visitors must present a photo ID and be checked in through the Raptor Security System that scans driver's licenses or state-issued IDs and performs criminal background checks. All visitors must complete a successful check-in to be allowed entry to the school beyond the foyer. Volunteers who work with children will be required to undergo an additional background check.

For purposes of safety, confidentiality, and minimal disruption, parents/guardians and visitors are permitted in the classrooms only with prior coordination and approval through the administrative office and guide. Parents should schedule a time to meet with guides outside of the instructional day.

Goodwater will designate dates on which prospective parents may make an appointment to tour the school. Interested parents should contact the office at [registrar@goodwatermontessori.org](mailto:registrar@goodwatermontessori.org) for the schedule of school tour dates.

### Weather

In the event of threatening weather conditions, Goodwater Montessori School will take all necessary emergency precautions. Delayed openings or school closings will be posted on the school's website and Facebook page. Students will not go outside when the wind chill is 38 degrees or below, or the heat index is 100 degrees or above.

### Evacuation, Weather, and Emergency Drills

Evacuation, Weather, and Emergency drills (including intruder drills), under the supervision of the Georgetown Fire Department and the Georgetown Police Department, are conducted throughout the school year. Students, staff, and visitors are expected to:

1. Follow guide/staff instructions.
2. Walk quietly and quickly to the designated area(s).
3. Be familiar with directions posted near each exit.

### Field Trips

Children may be required to wear the Goodwater logo shirt to help identify our students when they are away from school.

### Dress Code

The intent of Goodwater's dress code is to provide a safe and secure learning environment where students can concentrate on their work without focusing on external appearances. A

dress code helps to reduce distractions, reflect standards and expectations, instill a sense of community, ensure comfort and free movement, and level economic distinctions.

When a student comes to school wearing clothing in violation of the dress code, parents will be notified of the issue, not the student.

Students are expected to wear clothing that is clean, well-fitting, weather-appropriate, worn correctly, and free of excessive rips and/or holes. Commercial cartoon characters are discouraged on any clothing item and lunch box/bag. Wearing the Goodwater t-shirt is encouraged.

### Tops

Tops can be t-shirts or a collared style with long or short sleeves and in any solid color, plaid, or print. Tank tops must have three finger-width (fingers of the wearer) shoulder straps and not have an extra-wide arm opening. Shirts and outerwear may not display:

- Political, offensive, or religious messaging
- Hoodies can be worn at school, but the hood portion cannot be on the head except outdoors.

### Bottoms

Students may wear pants, shorts, skirts, skorts, dresses, or capris. Tights, leggings, or shorts should be worn underneath skirts and dresses. Pants and shorts can be denim, khaki, cotton print or plaid, or sweatpants. The bottom edge of bottom pieces must not be higher than the wearer's fingertips, and undergarments must not be visible.

### Outdoor Footwear

Footwear must be closed-toe shoes that children can put on/take off independently and are designed for active play. Shoes must be tied or fastened, cover the foot, and be worn with socks or tights. The following types of outdoor footwear are not recommended:

- Sandals, and flip-flops, "Crocs," or other backless styles.
- Shoes that light up or make sounds or that have dressy heels, wedges, or wheels.

### Outerwear & Hats

Outerwear should be consistent with the weather. Students will go outside with their communities for recess daily, so please be sure they have dressed appropriately. Appropriate rainwear is a raincoat or poncho with a hood, and students should not bring umbrellas to school. Children should have warm hats on cold days and brimmed hats for sun protection on hot days. Hats may be worn outside but not inside the building unless it is a designated "hat day."

Please label all outerwear and hats with student names.

### Miscellaneous

- Students may not bring toys from home to school, including stuffed animals or electronic games.
- Backpacks are unnecessary; however, if a student wants to bring a backpack it must be clear.

## Technology in the Classroom: Responsible Use Policy

Goodwater Montessori Public Charter School provides information technology resources for both educational and administrative purposes. The aim of this Responsible Use Policy is to ensure that students will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's Internet resources in a safe and effective manner. Internet use and access are considered a school resource and privilege. The school employs a number of strategies to maximize learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with Internet access. These strategies are as follows:

- Internet sessions will always be approved beforehand and supervised by a guide or classroom assistant.
- The school will regularly monitor pupils' internet use. Students and staff will be provided with training in the area of internet safety.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of digital storage media (CDs, flash drives, etc.) in school requires the permission of a guide or classroom assistant.
- Students will treat others with respect in all online use.

### Internet Use

- Students will use the internet for educational purposes only during class time, and all websites will be vetted by the class guide or classroom assistant.
- Students will not intentionally visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful, racist, or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials.
- Students will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
- Students will never disclose or publicize personal information in online use.
- Students may not download materials or images not relevant to classwork.
- Students will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security, and/or network management reasons.

### Email /Google Drive/Internet Chat

- Students may use classroom email accounts only, under supervision by or with permission from the class guide or classroom assistant.
- Students with personal email accounts may not access these accounts at school.
- The classroom email address is to be used for educational purposes only.
- The classroom email address is the property of Goodwater Montessori School. All content will be monitored by school staff.
- If a child receives an inappropriate email, he/she should inform the class guide, or classroom assistant, and parent/guardian.
- Students will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory, or that is intended to annoy, embarrass, or intimidate another person.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such

as addresses or telephone numbers, photos, or passwords.

- Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.

#### Social Media

- Students with personal social media accounts may not access these accounts at school.
- Guides and staff are prohibited from using personal email accounts, personal social media accounts, or third-party websites to communicate with students.
- The internet has become a two-way communication system for the school and the wider community. Social media may be used by the school administration to communicate with parents and also for parents to communicate with the school.

#### Personal Electronics

- Primary students may not bring personal electronic devices to school for any reason.
- Goodwater Montessori discourages Elementary and Adolescent students from bringing personal electronics to school. Students who bring personal electronics such as smart phones, smart watches, and ear buds to school must keep them powered off during the school day and stored away. If they need to use them, they must ask an adult in the community or in the office.
- Any misuse of personal electronics as determined by school staff will result in the confiscation of the device by staff until the end of the school day, and parents must come to the office to collect the device.
- Parents who need to contact their child during the school day should call the school office, 512-931-3560.

## Food Services and Nutrition

Goodwater promotes healthy food and nutrition to all school faculty, staff, parents, and students.

Breakfast

Lunch

Parents may purchase a hot lunch for their child or send a lunch from home. To view menus and order meals, go to our website, [www.goodwatermontessori.org](http://www.goodwatermontessori.org), under Important Information for our Families, Food Service.

Some families can qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Parents should contact the school registrar for the information. Eligibility is based upon several factors:

- Income — Children can get free or reduced-price meals if a household’s gross income is within the limits described in the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines.
- Special Assistance Program Participants — Children in households receiving benefits from Supplemental Nutrition.
- Foster Care — Foster children who are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.
- Homeless, Runaway, and Migrant — Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant qualify for free meals. If you haven’t been told about a child’s status as homeless, runaway, or migrant, or you feel a child may qualify for one of these programs, please contact the school registrar for the information.

Goodwater follows the guidelines set forth by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and Texas Department of Agriculture’s Child Nutrition Program, actively ensuring that meals served on campus meet or exceed health guidelines for all students.

FMNV	FMNV is Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value as defined by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Texas Department of Agriculture. These types of foods will not be served to students on campus. Food items served and sold on campus shall, to the extent possible, be prepared from fresh ingredients.
FRIED FOOD	Foods that have been deep fat fried, pre-fried, flash-fried, or par-fried will not be served to students.
FRUIT/VEGETABLES	Must be offered daily on all points of service and be fresh whenever possible. Frozen or canned fruits will be packaged in natural juice or water whenever possible.
NON-FOOD INGREDIENTS	Students will not be served foods containing any non-food ingredients. These ingredients include but are not limited to artificial food colorings, artificial flavors, and artificial fats (trans-fats).

FOODS USED FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES	Lesson plans for instructional use of foods shall be submitted to the campus administrator for permission in advance of all food preparation. In the event that a learning opportunity in the classroom involves food or the preparation of food, school staff will appropriately accommodate the needs of students with specific allergies so that all may participate.
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The following guidelines apply to food brought from home.

LUNCHES BROUGHT FROM HOME	<p>To protect children with serious nut allergies, Classrooms that have students with nut allergies will be designated as Nut-free classrooms.</p> <p>It is strongly recommended that lunches brought from home not contain junk foods or high sugar desserts. If these items must be sent in a student's lunch, these types of items should be limited to very small portions so as not to detract from the child eating the healthier portions of the meal. Students shall not bring carbonated beverages to school. Goodwater does not offer access to microwave ovens to heat lunches brought from home.</p>
SNACKS BROUGHT FROM HOME	<p>To protect children with serious nut allergies, Classrooms that have students with nut allergies will be designated as Nut-free classrooms.</p> <p>It is strongly recommended that snacks be healthy. They should be in single-size servings and not include items with high sugar content. Also, because students often continue working on classroom assignments while having their daily snacks, messy snacks should be avoided.</p>
FAST FOOD	<p>Parents/guardians are strongly discouraged from bringing fast food products in for students during school hours, especially those that contain foods of minimal nutritional value, except under extenuating circumstances. In these cases, fast food brought to school will be removed from the original packaging and placed into a lunch sack at the school office before being delivered to the student.</p> <p>Parents/guardians may NOT bring carbonated beverages (sodas) with the meals.</p>

### Competitive Foods

Competitive foods are defined as any food or beverage sold or made available to students that are not defined in the chart above. They are called competitive foods because they compete with these foods. Parents and children may not think of them as competitive foods; they may think of these foods as “snacks and drinks” consumed outside of the regular meals provided by the school. These foods will not be allowed for sale on the campus or as part of the after-school program.



Foods and beverages provided during field trips, school events, or as part of fundraisers should follow these guidelines; however, it may be reasonable to deviate from these standards on limited and specific occasions with the prior approval of the school administration.

Goodwater Montessori School may allow alternative meals to be sold to students in conjunction with meals made available by the school food service department, i.e., food sold for fundraising purposes, up to three times per year, as allowed by the state.

### Food Provided to Students by Parents

No food of any kind should be sent to school to be handed out to students in the classroom except for when food has been requested for a class or school activity by the classroom guide or school administration (such as a cultural lunch). Unsolicited food sent from home will not be distributed and will be returned to the parent/guardian.

### Birthday and Classroom Parties

Traditional birthday parties are not held during the school day. Guides will recognize/celebrate student birthdays as appropriate for their individual classrooms. **No food, sweet treats, candy, or beverage items of any kind are allowed into the school as part of a student's birthday celebration. Foods sent from home for this purpose will not be distributed and will be returned to the parent/guardian. This is done in consideration of all children, including those that have food allergies and sensitivities.**

Understanding that children enjoy having birthday recognition, parents/guardians are encouraged to consider alternatives such as:

- a) Allowing your child to choose a book to donate to the school library or to his/her classroom.
- b) Hand out non-food and non-candy treats such as pencils and erasers.
- c) Donate needed "wish list" items to your classroom (based on the needs of the guide).
- d) Donate playground/recess equipment, such as a soccer ball.
- e) Make a financial donation to the school.

### School-Sponsored Classroom Parties

Parents are encouraged to participate in parties for students on pre-designated school holidays or specific events in pre-arrangement with the guides and school staff.

Classroom parties should primarily focus on activities and camaraderie rather than food. With this philosophy in mind, parents are asked to only bring food items that are specifically

requested by the guide. Foods will be coordinated through the guides in advance of the party, and all “extra” food will be returned. It is strongly suggested that food choices be limited to only one dessert or sweet treat item. Other foods that can be brought to the classroom upon guide approval can include fruits and vegetables, low sugar snacks, baked (not fried) items, and overall healthy foods.

No candy is allowed in the classroom. This includes Valentine’s Day.

### School-Wide Celebrations

Goodwater Montessori will hold three school-wide celebrations each year:

- Winter Celebration
- Valentine’s Day
- End of The Year

### Health Guidelines

Goodwater Montessori School staff provides care when a child is sick or requires first aid, performs required vision and hearing screening, and reviews immunization records as required by State law. Parents should keep the school administration and the classroom guide(s) informed of their child’s health needs so that the school can provide the best possible care for each student.

### Food Allergies

The health and safety of all students are our top priorities. The school will work diligently to accommodate food allergies and teach students how to advocate for themselves and function in a communal eating environment. Students without food allergies will also receive the education and opportunities necessary to help facilitate the safety of their classmates and community. General food allergy guidelines are:

- a) Learning opportunities that include the preparation of food will accommodate the specific allergies of those children in the classroom so that all may fully participate.
- b) In accordance with Texas state policy, parents may not distribute food to other people’s children at any time.
- c) Sharing of food among students is prohibited.
- d) Goodwater Montessori School will work with individual students with food allergies and their parents/guardians to create individual allergy management plans.

Goodwater recognizes the vulnerability of children with anaphylactic food allergies and, as such, denotes classrooms that have students with NUT ALLERGIES will be a “NUT FREE.”

### Water

Hydrating the body and the brain is extremely important. Goodwater Montessori School

recognizes that water intake is important to health, especially in the Texas climate. For this reason, students will have regular access to fresh drinking water throughout the day. Students should bring a capped container of drinking water from home for consumption in the classroom and on the playground (the container must be labeled with the student's first and last name). Goodwater Montessori School encourages the use of only reusable water containers rather than disposable plastic water bottles.

### Medication

When students must take medication at school, either by a physician's order or by parent or guardian request, the following procedures must be observed:

1. Medication must be delivered to the appropriate administrative staff by parent or guardian in the original prescription bottle or over-the-counter container. Students are not allowed to bring medication to school (including cough drops).
2. A Goodwater School Medication Consent Form must be completed and signed by the parent or guardian prior to dispensing any medication, either prescription or non-prescription. A new form is required each school year. No medication will be dispensed without parent or guardian consent.
3. The prescription label must have the student's name, current date, name of the medication, dosage, and the time to be given.

If dosages should change while the child is on prescription medication, such changes are provided to school staff from the doctor, and a new prescription bottle must be provided with the changes listed. A new consent form must be completed prior to the new dose being administered. Changes will be made with a doctor's authorization only. The dosage of non-prescription medication must be within the manufacturer's recommendation as printed on the label.

4. Students may not carry prescription or non-prescription medicine to administer to themselves without a doctor's order on file in the office. This determination is made by the physician, taking into account student maturity level, level of understanding of self-administration. The sharing of any medication between students is strictly prohibited.

This includes vitamins and health supplements. Inhalers and Epi-Pens may be carried by the students with parental consent and a doctor's order. Medicines brought to school and not meeting necessary requirements will not be dispensed by any school employee and will be kept in the administrative office until a parent or guardian verifies the medicine in written form and follows the procedure or takes it home.

5. Only Administrative staff may keep and administer medication on field trips.

### Illness and Injuries

Parents are asked to keep their child at home if that student has any communicable illness, is vomiting, or if they are running a fever of 100° F or higher. Students should be fever-free without fever-reducing medicine for 24 hours before returning to school.

The school will contact parents directly in the event of any serious injuries or medical emergencies. Please ensure that the school is kept informed of any changes of contact telephone numbers so that this service remains efficient.

All teaching and administrative staff will have records of emergency medical conditions for students. With young children, it is very helpful to keep in close contact with the school staff and classroom teachers about any health problems your child has, however slight they may seem. Even small health concerns can affect a student's behavior or performance, and it is helpful to staff to be aware of any background information, which may help to better serve your child.

In the event of a confirmed, contagious, reportable disease, a letter of notification will be sent to the student's classroom parents.

Parents should notify the school staff of any confirmed, contagious diseases, including COVID-19, flu, strep throat, mono, chickenpox, staph, impetigo, pink eye, giardia, hand-foot-and-mouth disease, and salmonella.

### Allergies

Due to the serious and potentially life-threatening situations that can arise due to asthma and allergies (including food allergies), it is crucial that the school staff be notified of these conditions. Please refer to the paragraph on 'Medication' found in this section of the handbook for specific instructions should medications be necessary.

### Immunizations

Texas law requires students to be immunized against certain vaccine-preventable diseases. In order for your student to attend school, all required immunizations must be obtained, or a valid exemption must be on file. Information about required immunizations for students can be obtained in the office or on the website.

Students non-compliant with vaccines or those having invalid exemptions will be excluded from school per law.

### Nuisance Diseases

Nuisance diseases such as scabies, head lice (pediculosis), ringworm of the scalp, and impetigo are highly contagious and can cause a negative impact in the school setting. Students known to have live head lice will need to be picked up from school and may return to school after being treated with valid lice treatment. Letters will be sent home to notify parents if a student in the classroom is verified as having live lice. A parent should contact the school health provider if their child has had active, live head lice. All communication regarding head lice will be kept confidential.

# STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

## Policy Statement and Purpose

The Student Code of Conduct is Goodwater Montessori School's response to the requirements of the Texas Education Code. The law requires schools to define misconduct that may or must result in a range of specific disciplinary consequences, including suspension or expulsion from school.

Goodwater Montessori School promotes values and has behavioral expectations that are in keeping with its Mission and Vision.

All students, parents, guides, and staff have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community. With this right comes the responsibility to be law-abiding citizens and to be accountable for actions that intimidate or put at risk the safety of others or oneself. This includes behavior that may be considered intentionally anti-social.

For the purpose of this Code of Conduct, "school community" comprises individuals involved in Goodwater Montessori day-to-day operations — the administration, guides, staff, students, parents, guardians, step-parents, relatives, friends, supporters, caregivers, and board; and also invitees of the school for the purpose of visiting, viewing, participating, supporting or being present for any official activity, whether learning or social, held by or for the benefit of the school and its students.

This Student Code of Conduct sets clear standards for the behavior expected of members of the school community. It specifies the consequences for any members of the school community who do not comply with those standards of behavior, whether those persons are on the school campus, in transit to, or at another location for the purpose of any school-authorized events or activities. This Student Code of Conduct is intended to provide members of the school community with guidelines for the effective development of positive relationships within the school community and to assist in promoting the values that are in keeping with the school's Mission. This document is a guide for all members of the school community about acceptable standards of behavior in the school environment or when attending any official, learning or social, function, or activity relating to the school or in any location at which the school is represented.

## Montessori Behavior Background

Dr. Maria Montessori integrated a code of conduct into her curriculum, emphasizing grace and courtesy. Behavior in a Montessori classroom is no different in our homes or the social

community — respect and care for each other, our environment, and ourselves. The following are the principles that provide the framework for the Goodwater Montessori School Student Code of Conduct:

**HONESTY** — Honesty is the basic expectation at Goodwater Montessori School. Trust, which grows from honesty, is essential to relationships in the school community. Truthfulness and honesty can sometimes be difficult to maintain; however, honesty is most valued in our students.

**KINDNESS** — We expect that all Goodwater Montessori School students will treat others with consideration at all times. Students' treatment of each other must be respectful whether or not an adult is present. Goodwater Montessori expects students, faculty, and parents to accept, tolerate, and welcome differences and diversity.

**DISCIPLINE** — The Montessori approach to appropriate conduct is based on self-discipline. We understand that students test limits and that they will have challenges. We believe that for a child who is supported in learning self-awareness and honesty, his or her ability to communicate is a strong first step in accepting responsibility for inappropriate behavior or mistakes.

#### Study Advisory Council

Each quarter students will have the opportunity to be nominated for the Student Advisory Council. The Council meets with the Superintendent/CEO to discuss the state of the school and to provide feedback for enhancements. A representative from each grade level K-8<sup>th</sup> grade will be involved.

#### Standards of Behavior

Every student at Goodwater Montessori School has the right to learn and thrive in an atmosphere that is conducive to academic achievement and social growth. Any behavior by a student that threatens to disrupt the learning process or pose a danger to others is unacceptable. In the event a student is unable to comply with classroom rules and appropriate behavior, the student will be liable for breach of conduct and subject to the actions outlined in Section 7 of this document. With this in mind:

- All members of the school community are to be treated with respect and dignity.
- Responsible citizenship involves appropriate participation in the civic life of the school community. Active and engaged members are aware of their rights, and, more importantly, they accept responsibility for protecting their rights and the rights of others.
- Members of the school community are expected to use non-violent means to resolve any conflict.
- Insults, disrespect, bullying, taunting, name-calling, verbal threats, and physical acts disrupt learning and teaching in the school community and are a direct contradiction to the school's Mission and Values.
- Members of the school community have a responsibility to maintain an environment where conflict and difference can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility to all others.

- Respect all applicable Federal and State laws. The Superintendent/ CEO will report crimes as required by law and may contact local law enforcement regarding suspected criminal activity.
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity.
- Respect differences in people, their ideas, and opinions.
- Treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is a disagreement.
- Respect and treat others fairly, regardless of their disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes as set forth in State and Federal law.
- Respect the legal and moral rights of others.
- Show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others.
- Take appropriate measures to help those in need.
- Respect persons who are in a position of authority.
- Respect the need of others to work in an environment of learning and teaching.

#### Authority and Jurisdiction

School rules and the authority of Goodwater Montessori School to administer discipline apply whenever the interest of the school is involved, on or off school grounds, in conjunction with or independent of classes and school-sponsored activities. The school has disciplinary authority over a student:

1. Upon entering school property
2. While the student is in attendance at any school-related activity, regardless of time or location
3. For any school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location.
4. When retaliation against a school employee or volunteer occurs or is threatened, regardless of time or location.
5. When criminal mischief is committed on or off school property or at a school-related event
6. For certain offenses committed within 300 feet of school property
7. When the student commits a felony, as specified by Texas Education Code

Goodwater Montessori School has the right to search a student's belongings when there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain prohibited articles or materials. The Superintendent/CEO will report crimes as required by law and will call local law enforcement when the Superintendent/CEO suspects that a crime has been committed on campus. Goodwater Montessori School has the right to suspend or expel a student for violating this Student Code of Conduct.

## General Conduct

School community members are expected to:

- Support the Superintendent/CEO, guides, and school staff in the development of a learning community based upon the Montessori pedagogy.
- Abide by the school's policies.
- Acknowledge that the Superintendent/CEO has the ultimate responsibility to implement these policies.
- Work with the school teaching and support staff to deal promptly with areas of concern.
- Treat all members of the school community with respect and courtesy and respect the possessions of others.
- Acknowledge and affirm success in individual and school achievement.
- Students are encouraged to advocate for themselves in a positive, proactive way with all staff personnel.
- Students who are having issues with other students may request a "Conflict Resolution" by the Guide or may request a conversation with the Superintendent/CEO. In the event of a conflict resolution there will be weekly conversations with the students until all parties believe the situation has been resolved.

Goodwater Montessori Public Charter School prohibits the following:

### Disregard for Authority

- Failing to immediately comply with directives given by school personnel (insubordination)
- Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission
- Refusing to accept discipline management techniques assigned by a teacher or principal

### Mistreatment of Others

- Using profanity, vulgar language, making obscene gestures, and/or making racial slurs towards others
- Fighting or scuffling
- Biting
- Threatening another student or school employee on or off school property, either verbally, in writing, or electronically
- Engaging in physical abuse, verbal abuse, cyberbullying, or social alienation
- Engaging in conduct that constitutes sexual harassment or sexual abuse, whether by word, gesture, or any other conduct, including requests for sexual favors directed toward another student or employee
- Hazing
- Causing an individual to act through the use of a threat of force (coercion)

### Disrespecting School Property

Deliberate destruction and defacing of school property, materials, and buildings by students are strictly prohibited. Parents/caregivers will be responsible for monetary replacement of school and any property of others that is damaged. Montessori materials are to be treated with special care as they are the foundation of learning at Goodwater.



### Student Refusal to Work

The Montessori Curriculum offers a certain level of student autonomy and independence. Students are expected to do the work they choose, or that is chosen for them. If a student regularly refuses to do work or to participate in the class, parents will be notified, and a Parent/Student meeting will be held with Administration to establish a plan of action.

### Biting

Biting is common in some young children, but it is not acceptable behavior. Staff will complete an injury report on any bite that leaves a mark, and parents of the children involved will be informed of the incident. Parents/caregivers will be asked to have a meeting with the Guide and, if necessary, the Administration as well.

### Bullying

Specific bullying behavior is aggressive behavior that is repeated over time, intended to hurt, and involves a power imbalance. At Goodwater Montessori School, we believe that bullying is a serious offense that can lead to severe long-term problems for individuals and the school community. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated.

### Physical Safety

All school community members must not:

- Possess a firearm, ammunition, knife, other weapons, or fake (look-alike) weapon on school property
- Use any object (whether as a weapon or otherwise) to threaten or intimidate any other person or cause injury to any person by the use of any such object on school property.
- Possess, or use tobacco or vaping materials.
- Possess, or be under the influence of, or provide others with, alcohol or illegal drugs on school property

All school community members must:

- Not cause, inflict, or encourage others to verbally abuse, bully, threaten, or inflict bodily harm on another person by any physical aggression
- Seek staff assistance, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully

### Communication of a Threat

- Any student, regardless of age, who communicates any threat to another student or staff member will be brought to the office. A threat assessment analysis will be conducted and include a conversation with the student and the parent/ guardian/ caregiver. The Superintendent/ CEO will provide information on the investigation to the Threat Assessment Team, and a plan of action will be developed to assist the student.
- Parents of the student who was threatened will be notified with a plan of action provided. No student names will be provided.
- Students who communicate a threat will receive any services that are necessary to assist them.

### Responsibility for Other Community Members

Any parent or school community member who invites a relative, friend, supporter, caregiver, or other people to be present at any official learning or social activity held by or for the benefit of the school and its students must at all times be responsible for that person and ensure they act at all times in a manner consistent with the Student Code of Conduct.

## Breach of Code of Conduct

The consequences to a member of the school community for breaching this Code of Conduct will be as determined at the Superintendent/ CEO's discretion.

## Discipline Protocol: Procedure for Re-directable Behaviors

When children show behaviors that need redirection, our process is as follows:

1. Guides give a clear, specific direction. If the direction is not followed,
2. Guide asks the child what they need in order to get back on task. If not successful,
3. Guide gives the child a clear choice between appropriate activities.

If the challenge continues,

4. The behavior support team member comes into the classroom to support the child.

If needed,

5. The behavior support team walks the child from the classroom
6. The Guide will complete the referral form and contact the parents/guardian.
7. In the event parents/guardians need to come to the school, someone in the administrative office will contact them.
8. If possible, the child returns to the classroom and reconnects with the guide. Support staff stays until the child is ready to work.

When children show behaviors that are dangerous, destructive, or demeaning, our process is as follows:

1. The other children leave the classroom, or the student showing the behavior leaves the classroom to ensure the safety of everyone involved.
2. Parents/Guardians are called within the hour.
3. Alternate space is chosen for the student until parents meet with an Administrative team member and a plan is created.

## Process for Suspension

State law allows for a student to be suspended for no more than three school days per behavior violation. Before being suspended, a student and parent will have a conference with the Superintendent/CEO, who shall advise the student and parent of the conduct of which the student is accused. The student will be given the opportunity to explain the incident before the Superintendent/CEO's decision is made. The Superintendent/CEO will determine any restrictions of participation in school-sponsored or school-related extracurricular and curricular activities.

Students may be suspended for any behavior listed in the Code of Conduct as a general conduct violation or expellable offense. In ordering a suspension, Goodwater Montessori School will consider:

1. Self-defense

2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct
3. Student's disciplinary history

### Process for Expulsion

If a student commits an expellable offense, as outlined in this Code of Conduct, Goodwater Montessori School may expel the student only after due process has been afforded the student, and the Superintendent/CEO has determined that expulsion is the appropriate consequence. Goodwater Montessori School shall notify the school district in which the student resides within three (3) business days of any action expelling a student from the charter school.

There are two types of expulsion: Mandatory and Discretionary.

Reasons for Mandatory Expulsion:

- As required by the Gun-Free Schools Act (20 U.S. Code § 7151), and as required by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (Public Law 107-110), any student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school or possessed a firearm at school will be expelled for a period of no less than one year.
- A student must be expelled for committing an offense that qualifies as a felony under the Texas Penal Code.

Reasons for Discretionary Expulsion:

A student may be expelled for the following conduct on school property:

- Engaging in serious offenses or persistent misbehavior.
- Disciplinary infractions that violate the Code of Conduct while under Behavior Contract.
- Criminal mischief
- Disruptive activities (Disorderly Conduct or Assault)
- Disruption of classes
- False reporting (bomb threats, fire alarms, etc.)
- Theft
- Possession of a weapon other than a firearm (see Mandatory Expulsion) and using objects as weapons
- Fighting
- Sexual harassment
- Possession, use, or transmittal of a prohibited substance or drug paraphernalia
- Possession of any fireworks or ammunition
- Criminal trespass
- Threats, extortion, or harassment
- Possessing, using, or being under the influence of alcohol at school or at a school-related function
- Destruction of school property
- Bullying

Discretionary Expulsion Consideration:

In deciding whether to order expulsion, Goodwater Montessori School will consider:

1. Self-defense
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct
3. The student's disciplinary history

In the event a student is under a Behavior Contract and commits any additional infractions listed under "Reasons for Discretionary Expulsion" the student could be expelled.

In the event a student is under a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) plan, has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), or under a 504 plan, appropriate committee meetings must be conducted to determine steps required to support student behavior before any expulsion hearings occur.

Before being expelled, a student and parent will have a conference with the Superintendent/CEO, who shall advise the student and parent of the conduct of which the student is accused. The student will be given the opportunity to explain the incident before the Superintendent/CEO's decision is made.

Expulsion Due Process:

If the Superintendent/CEO believes a student has committed an expellable offense, he or she may schedule a hearing and provide written notice to the student and his/her parents, or caregivers of:

1. The reasons for the recommended expulsion; and
2. The date, time, and location of a hearing before the Superintendent/CEO, within three days after the date of the notice, unless the parents and Superintendent/CEO agree in writing to an alternate time. The notice shall further state that the student is entitled to:
  - a. Be present at the hearing
  - b. Have an opportunity to present evidence
  - c. Have an opportunity to examine/question the school's evidence
  - d. Be accompanied by his/her parents or another adult who can provide guidance to the student and who is not an employee of the district.
3. The notice shall also state that failure to request such a hearing constitutes a waiver of further rights in the matter. Hearing before the Superintendent/CEO:

After providing notice to the student and parent of the hearing, the Superintendent/CEO shall hold the hearing regardless of whether the student, the student's parents, or another adult representing the student attends. At the hearing, the school administration shall be allowed to present its evidence of the alleged violation and documented discipline management techniques attempted to correct the undesired behavior, if applicable. The student and/or his parents may present evidence and ask questions of the administrator's adult witnesses in defense of the allegations. Within 24 hours of the hearing, the Superintendent/CEO will notify the student and the student's parents in writing of his/her decision. The decision shall specify:

1. The length of the expulsion (no less than a school year)
2. The procedures for re-admittance to the school at the end of the expulsion period, and
3. The right to appeal the Superintendent/CEO's decision to the governing school board (or its designee)

#### Right of Appeal

A parent may appeal disciplinary decisions of Goodwater Montessori School Superintendent/CEO to the school's Board of Directors. The student or parent must submit a written request to the President of the Board within three days after receipt of the written disciplinary decision. The Superintendent/CEO must also be copied on this written request. If such a request is made, the board may designate a committee of the board members to hear the appeal. The Superintendent/CEO will provide the student or parent with written notice of the date, time, and place of the meeting at which the board (or its designated committee) will review the decision. The Board of Directors (or its designated committee) will review the record of the disciplinary action in a closed meeting. The board may also hear a committee from the student or parent (or representative) and from the school administration. The board (or its designated committee) may hear statements made by the parties at the review and will base its decision on evidence reflected in the record and any statements made by the parties at the review. Committee will not be deferred pending the outcome of the hearing. The Board of Directors (or its designated committee) will make and communicate its decision orally at the conclusion of the presentation. The decision of the board (or its designated committee) is final. If the student has been expelled prior to a final expulsion or disciplinary hearing, the student is not eligible for re-admission to the school unless the following terms are met:

1. The student must have a clean discipline record at their current school for at least one full year.
2. The student must reapply as a new student and adhere to the school's lottery process. (Sibling priority will NOT apply to students who have been expelled)
3. The student must meet with the Readmission Committee to present a request for re-admission.

The Readmission Committee will be composed of two guides and the Superintendent/CEO (or a designee). The Readmission Committee may request current guide recommendations for the student, relevant commentary from any counselor with whom the student may have consulted, as well as any other documentation pertinent to the application. The student will be allowed to make a statement to support his or her request and may submit additional documentation to the committee for consideration. A parent or other adult representative must also be present for the presentation to the Committee. Upon consultation of the presentation and after review of all relevant documentation, the Committee will make a recommendation on whether the student should be readmitted. The decision of the Readmission Committee may only be appealed to the Superintendent/CEO, whose decision will be final. The student must reapply and follow the same process for admission as if he or she were a new applicant; however, if readmitted, any subsequent violation of the Student Code of Conduct may result in expulsion without the possibility of readmission.

## Conflict Resolution

The Board of Directors of Goodwater Montessori School strives for an orderly process for resolving parent/guardian and student complaints. Complaints should be expressed as soon as possible and resolved at the lowest possible level.

The Board of Directors encourages students and parents/guardians to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with appropriate guides and staff.

### Informal Conflict Resolution

Participation in the informal process is mandatory before filing a Level 1 complaint (described below). The Board of Directors expects every reasonable effort will be made to resolve a complaint at the Informal Process level. At this stage, there will be a face-to-face meeting or telephone conference between the Superintendent/CEO and the individual to discuss the complaint. The Superintendent/CEO may obtain the assistance of other school staff to assist in reaching an informal resolution of the complaint. The Superintendent/CEO has the right to extend the time for filing a complaint unilaterally.

### Formal Conflict Resolution

Level 1: Written complaint to Superintendent/CEO.

When a student or parent/guardian of a student has a complaint regarding Goodwater Montessori, the individual shall first submit their complaint in writing to the Superintendent/CEO. The complaint must be submitted within 15 business days following the date the complainant knows about or should have known about the alleged harm. The complaint must be specific and, where possible, suggest a resolution. The Superintendent/CEO must hear the complaint, attempt to remedy the complaint keeping in mind the best interest of the affected parties and document the outcome. The Superintendent/CEO responds to the complainant and issues a final decision within ten business days of the Superintendent/CEO's receipt of the complaint.

Level 2: Written appeal to Superintendent/CEO.

If the individual submitting the complaint is not satisfied with the Superintendent/CEO's final decision, the individual may file a written appeal to the Superintendent/CEO. The written appeal shall be filed with the Superintendent/CEO's office within ten business days of the individual's receipt of the Superintendent/CEO's final decision. The complainant shall include a copy of the written complaint to the Superintendent/CEO along with a copy of the Superintendent/CEO's final decision. A copy of the appeal shall also be delivered to the Superintendent/CEO.

The appeal must be specific and, where possible, suggest a resolution. The complaint shall not include any new issues or complaints unrelated to the original complaint expressed to the Superintendent/CEO.

The Superintendent/CEO or designee shall respond to the complaint and issue a final decision within 15 business days of receipt of the written appeal.

### Level 3: Written Appeal to Board of Directors.

If the individual submitting the complaint is not satisfied with the Superintendent/ CEO's final decision, the individual may appeal their complaint in writing to the Goodwater Montessori School Board of Directors within 10 business days of receiving the Superintendent/ CEO's final decision. The complaint shall be addressed to the President of the Board and shall include a copy of the written complaint to the Superintendent/CEO, along with a copy of the Superintendent/CEO's final decision. A copy of the appeal shall also be delivered to the Superintendent/CEO. The President of the Board at the next regular meeting of the Board of Directors shall provide a copy of the complaint record to all Board members. The Board's decision shall be decided on a review of the record developed at the Superintendent/CEO's level. Any action of the Board of Directors regarding the complaint shall be taken in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act. The decision by the Board of Directors is final.