

central **montessori** school

Parent Handbook Part 2

“I was walking one day upon the Pinciana Hill with a boy from the elementary school. He had studied geometric design and understood the analysis of plane geometric figures. As we reached the highest terrace from which we could see the Piazza del Popolo with the city stretching away behind it, I stretched out my hand saying, ‘Look all the works of man are a great mass of geometric figures;’ and, indeed, rectangles, ovals, triangles, and semicircles, perforated, or ornamented, in a hundred different ways the gray rectangular facades of the various buildings. Such uniformity in such an expanse of buildings seemed to prove the limitation of human intelligence, while in an adjoining garden plot the shrubs and flowers spoke eloquently of the infinite variety of forms in nature.”

Maria Montessori

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PARENTS AND CENTRAL

COMMUNICATIONS

DAY TO DAY

Strong relationships are built on a shared history, trust, and excellent communication. The director sets the classroom and school policies and is often the person to speak to first for information about a child's functioning or school policies. Parents are encouraged to offer feedback to the director as well. If for any reason, you would like immediate information from a teacher, please contact the front desk. Front desk staff can step in for a teacher while they speak with you. This allows them time to document your call as well.

We respectfully ask that parents do not contact teachers during their personal time or through private communication. It is important that phone calls and meetings be carefully documented at all times. This documentation is best done during school hours while the teachers are at school.

The morning transition can be a tender time for children and teachers should respect a child's desire to reunite with their parents at the end of the day and do not share information with parents at that time.

A TIME AND PLACE TO SHARE INFORMATION

- Parent conferences: Four conferences are offered every year. Meet with your child's teacher to gain insight into your child's progress and development. Additional conferences may be requested at any time by both parents and teachers. * By appointment only.
- Parent observations: Once your child has acclimated to his/her classroom, all parents are encouraged to observe their child's classroom once a year. Additional observations may be valuable. PAUSED
- Parent visitation days: Parents are invited to spend a bit of time in their child's classroom during this dedicated time. Meet your child's friends and see your child's work. Children love to have their parents in their "space". Check the school's calendar for these dates. PAUSED
- Individualized written information: Infants receive daily written reports, and our toddlers and primary children receive weekly "love notes" from their lead teacher. Lower elementary students will bring home a near-weekly work chart. They will also bring home their work booklets once they are filled. It may take several weeks for the youngest elementary student to complete a work journal as they are moving from very material-oriented work and just beginning to record work with paper and pencil. Upper elementary students take their binder/portfolios home once every two weeks. Middle school students create Google Classroom portfolios that can be viewed by teachers and parents.
- Silent Journey: This is an intensive parent and staff workshop. It has much to offer to our toddler parents or parents new to our school community. We invite all of our PAC members to participate in this as well. Leave with a deep understanding of all aspects of Montessori and your child's personal daily experience in this wonderful environment. This is offered on odd number of years.

Special Note: Carpool communications can lead to misunderstandings and present several other challenges. It may be tempting to have quick check-ins with parents during carpool or other campus activities. Please contact the main office if you would like to speak to your child's teacher.

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING AT HOME

You can enrich your child's home environment in a way that takes full advantage of your child's natural desire to learn and support your child's studies at school. Find helpful suggestions and information below. As you can tell, there are so very many fun and educational ways to support your child. Simply providing vocabulary for everything in a child's environment and naming experiences is a way to quickly increase comprehension and vocabulary.

Math

When you become aware of a repeating pattern in your daily life, share it with your child. (Day, night, day, night or stop, go, stop, go or possible repeating patterns in clothing, etc.) Ask, "What's missing?" if you see a gap in a pattern. Use analog wall clocks, watches, etc. Many skills are learned by interacting with analog timekeepers. Fractions, rotational directions (clockwise, counterclockwise), lines of longitude, etc.

Present or identify these concepts as they present themselves to you and your child. Less than, more than, fewer, the same, different, put together, etc. Ask math questions in preparation for word problems. Keep them very simple. "How many apples are in this bowl? How many will be left after I eat one? After we both eat one?" Allow your child to handle money while it is still around. It is an invaluable way to teach counting and subtracting skills. The presidents found on coins present endless opportunities to talk about our national history and in some instances, to talk about national heroes.

- Count by rote up to 100. Start with 1-10, 1-20, 1-30, etc.
- Count by rote by fives (needed for advanced reading time studies)
- Count by tens
- Count by twos

Language

The amount of time a parent spends reading to a child is the very best predictor for future school success...even more than parental involvement.

Read, read, and read by yourself in front of your child. Read newspapers, the internet, comics, and menus aloud. Read street signs and food containers aloud as well. Read to your child even after your child is able to read to you. This is very important. Children should be read to until they are at least nine years old. Select books that have a vocabulary slightly more advanced than your child's vocabulary.

Writing

Montessori advocated cursive writing even for the youngest children. There are fewer reversals, letter formation tends to be more uniformed, and left orientation is better, reducing fatigue (Montessori children write/compose a lot.) Don't worry too much about this, any fine motor control practice is excellent. Help your child practice holding a pencil correctly. This is the same way we hold a chopstick!

Use lower case letters when possible. Journals: Let your child see you write in a journal and help your child begin this wonderful habit. Encourage your child to draw in his/her journal as well.

Cultural studies

Montessori considered all sciences, geography, and history to be cultural studies because these studies are geocentric in nature. An interest in and love for astronomy and geology, sand and water, and all of science begins very early in a child's life. The first lessons come from nature-experiences of the sun and wind, playing in sand and water and mud, seeing the sun rise and set, watching the stars at night, visiting the seashore, and the child's own collection of rocks and minerals. First we give the child the rocks, sand, water, mud, oceans, clouds, stars, lakes, and so forth and then we give the names. All of this experience and knowledge leads to a natural concern and responsibility at a later age because children love what they know.

Cameras, thermometers, compasses, magnifying glasses, globes, maps, measuring tapes, rulers, analog clocks and watches, and bathroom scales are excellent learning materials that should be in every home. Talk about the food you eat and where it comes from. What part of the plant it is. Is it nutritious or not? Allow your child to cook with you and see how temperature changes things. How many cups of water do you need? How many eggs in a dozen? Go everywhere and do everything! Camping in the backyard is a wonderful way to spend a weekend night. Flashlights for nighttime and daytime studies. Check out the stars.

Travel together. Don't forget the art and hobby kits and lessons. Photo albums: Children love their own photo albums! Documentation of personal history may be the beginning of a life-long love of all history. Plus, what a wonderful thing to bring to school during birthday celebrations!

Workbooks

Although workbooks are not used in Montessori classrooms until the Lower Elementary grades, there are many children who enjoy these activities. Some parents also enjoy assisting their child with this work. Check out the good quality books at your local bookstore or even office supply store... start with books that appear to be "too easy" so that your child experiences good success and gradually move up with less pressure.

Computer programs

We currently use a program called IXL at the Lower Elementary level. By the time the students are in middle school, they are using Chromebooks for most of their students. They use Google Classroom which allows them to work collaboratively on documents and research. Just remember that computer learning may or may not translate into information that can be easily generalized, and too much time in front of computers and TV presents a direct correlation between time sitting and health.

Board games

Perfect for children six or older and are wonderful. Social behaviors, money, and language are all part of this experience for children.

Homework

Montessori schools traditionally do not send home pencil and paper homework for many reasons. We do send out family homework in the form of projects (science, performance etc.) for students in the elementary program. Parents are actually responsible for many of the homework assignments: Daily reading to their child, providing their child with money that they can actually use, etc. Some students truly like paper and pencil work books. These can be bought online or at many stores in Richmond. Upper Elementary students complete weekly reports and projects. Upper elementary and older students may have daily homework. Classwork not completed at school may be sent home as well.

Additional information

Central can make recommendations for learning tools for the home. These make excellent gifts and provide parents a way to truly engage their child in learning opportunities. Just let us know if you would like this information.

Daily reading

The best predictor of academic success is daily reading at home. Specifically, parents reading to their child even after the child can read independently. Set a great family tradition, share your family values, build memories of shared experiences by reading to your child everyday.

Supporting your child's social development

- Provide emotional vocabulary
- Model social/emotional problem solving in an overt manner so your child can see you move into resolution.
- Include discussions of gratitude and empathy
- Build a social group for your child (and yourself?) that includes a variety of people: different ages, races, genders, abilities
- Model giving and volunteerism whenever possible
- Read books about these topics as well

VOLUNTEERING

V is for Volunteer Program-The quality of our Montessori program is deeply enriched because of gifts of time and support parents provide for their child and our community. It is truly quite remarkable. The amount parents/guardians are involved in supporting their child within a school is the second best predictor of a child's success. (The first predictor of a child's success is the amount of time the parents/guardians spend reading to their child.)

There are several benefits to volunteering at Central. Parents have unique access to staff and school and can gain information and insight into their child's daily school life. Parents take part in our parental community and have the satisfaction of building something for others. Central benefits because of the enrichments and family events that are supported through volunteer efforts.

Parents, their friends and families, and middle school students can all accrue volunteer hours that can be exchanged (\$20 per hour) in order to reduce their \$600 Annual Education Fee.

PARENT ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAL (PAC)

This group of parents is composed of the people who act much like board members and/or PTA members. They provide feedback to the head of school, design school enrichment programs, family events, head up the Volunteer programs and support the development of a school and larger community. They are our parent leaders. We ask parents to consider joining PAC if they feel a deep commitment to the quality of their child's daily experience in a Montessori program and enjoy fast-paced, dynamic relationships with other like-minded parents. Find information about PAC family events and meetings on our website event calendar.

HEALTH FIRST POLICIES

Central is only as healthy as our sickest child. We must work together, now as never before, to keep our community as healthy as possible. Both parents and school have a role to play. This is especially important as we move through this time of COVID.

COVID considerations

As part of our mitigation efforts, Central requests that parents allow their sick children to remain at home. At this time, Central may ask parents to pick children up from school if they have symptoms of illness, with or without a fever. Children should be tested for COVID before returning to school. Pleasen provide the test results to Central.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- Keep your cell phones on and sync your email accounts to your phone
- Email Central if a Dr. has diagnosed a communicable disease in your family. This information is confidential. Please do not call or convey this information in person. It is very important that we can document, in real time, the moment we receive this information.
- Keep inoculations and physical examinations current
- Read and follow Central's Health First Policies including Covid Mitigation Protocols LINKS
- Send your child to school only when they are able to fully participate in a busy day-including outdoor activities and play.

STAY IN TOUCH, STAY INFORMED

It is imperative that parents/guardians provide Central Montessori School with current and necessary medical information. Parents/guardians must inform Central Montessori School through writing about any allergy or known medical conditions their child may have. Central Montessori School staff has been trained in CPR, First Aid, EpiPen procedures, health care and all required safety measures as outlined by the Department of Social Services.

IF A CHILD DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

If a child becomes ill while at school, they are moved into the office space and cared for by well-trained frontdesk staff members and/or administrators until the parents can arrive. Occasionally, a teacher may stay with a child.

Children who have a low grade fever, 100.4 (children older than 2), will have their temperature monitored for 15 minutes. If the temperature remains high, parents will be contacted by email. Central Montessori School must be able to contact parents immediately in case of an emergency or other situation. The child will be isolated and given good care until the parent/guardian arrives.

Parents will be contacted by email. If parents have not called or responded to the email to confirm they have received the email, Central will call the first parent listed on their emergency contact form.

Parents must arrive within thirty minutes of receiving the notice of their child's illness. Central Montessori School will call an emergency contact person if a parent/guardian has not reached by phone or email within 30 minutes of the first attempt to contact.

Parents/guardians will feel more relaxed and their child will have the necessary time (s)he needs to recover fully if a caretaker is secured before their child becomes ill.

Please check our Health First Policy for more information, including other exclusionary illnesses.

Parents should call if any member of a family contracts a contagious disease.

WHAT CENTRAL DOES TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE AND HEALTHY

Hygiene

All staff members have received training in health and safety procedures. We require staff and children to wash their hands upon entering the classroom, exiting the classroom, after eating, after sneezing or coughing, and throughout the day. We sanitize our environment every day. Classroom Practical Life lessons lead to health and safety and health.

Toileting

Once a child has entered Primary, the teachers encourage the children to clean themselves. There are several reasons for this. Please be certain to help your child learn to manage as best they can and to provide a warm, soapy bath at the end of the day.

Health and well-being morning checks

The Department of Social Services requires daily health and emotional well-being checks for each child upon arrival. All staff members are trained to give this daily check. If a staff member determines a child is ill or is not ready for a full day of activities because of signs of tiredness or lack of sleep, the parent/guardian will take the child from school.

A child can return to school after being symptom and fever free for twenty four hours. The child can return to school with a physician's written statement of a child's good health and no need for exclusion. (This can be helpful when children are on antibiotics or teething.)

The emotional well-being of the children are monitored each day. Children who are too tired to fully participate in school activities in a positive and productive manner will be sent home for rest and comfort. All children present at school must be able to participate in outdoor activities.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION POLICY

Central Montessori School does not administer any medications with the sole exception of inhalers, Benadryl, and EpiPens determined necessary in the event of allergent contact. All medication requires extensive documentation.

Required Documentation for EpiPens and emergency mediations

- Medication Authorization Form to be filled out by parent/guardian and physician
- Medication labeled with child's name, name of medication, dosage amount, and time to be given

- Medication in original container

Special Note: Central will contact parents if known contact with allergen has been made or symptoms are observed. The hope is that the parent can arrive at school in time to administer medication. In the event the parent will not be able to arrive in time, medication will be given by employees with the required training (EMAT certified).

- List of staff members who are EMAT certified can be found in each safety backpack and posted in each classroom. All EMAT certified staff members are trained on the proper documentation process.
- The child's name, allergies, and location of medication is posted in each classroom unless otherwise indicated by parents.
- Medication will only be given to the child for whom it is prescribed and will be kept in a locked container and out of reach of children.
- A log for the documentation of when medication is administered can be found in the lock box with the medication.
- Because Central only administers those medications listed above, parents will always be notified of the administration of this medication, including any adverse reactions.
- Central will document any adverse reactions and will document and notify parents of any errors in the administration of medication.
- Central will perform a monthly check of all medication (EpiPens) to be sure all medications and forms are not past their expiration dates.
- Central will send home new forms before an emergency medication expiration date and request new medications before its expiration date.
- Medication will be returned to the parent upon expiration.

LOTIONS AND SUNSCREEN

Central will apply over-the-counter creams and lotions for eczema and diaper cream once parents have provided Central with a permission form allowing us to do so. Please ask Central for these documents. Central will not apply prescriptions creams or lotions.

There have been no studies, that I am aware of, on the hazards to people (teachers) who apply sunscreen or insect repellent possibly hundreds of times a month. For this reason, we do not ask teachers to apply these lotions to children.

We ask that parents apply these lotions before the child arrives at school.

Special Note: There are studies that indicate that there are true and real environmental concerns about these products and their effect on our natural world. Please consider the non-chemical sun and insect protection that are easily available such as light colored long sleeve tops and full pants that can be tucked into shoes.

Incident reports

Teachers complete an incident report when a child has had an accident. This form can be found in your child's bag at the end of the day. Central will contact parents directly if they deem this necessary.

Please know that there may be times that a child has experienced an accident at school and not reported this to their teacher or indicated in any way that they have been hurt. Often the child is so busy and happy that they simply will not take the time to slow down and process the need to report.

Central Montessori School reviews all health and safety incidences once a month and makes policy adjustments as needed. Staff is trained on any new policy changes during monthly staff meetings.

Neglect and abuse

All employees are familiar with the signs and patterns of possible child neglect or abuse. All children are screened each morning for signs of abuse and illness. By law, Central Montessori School must report SUSPECTED abuse.

Central Montessori School would like to encourage all of our parents/guardians, as advocates for children, to call DSS if you suspect or are witnessing or experiencing abuse. Central's staff training and support removes the danger of in-school abuse.

Central will occasionally be informed about spousal abuse which hurts children. We offer support to parents who may deal with such an event. Let us know if you need help for either spousal or child abuse situations. We are here to help.

Staff members have been trained to conduct Daily Observations when a child first arrives at school. We monitor for abuse, illness, or any other sign that might indicate that a child may need care of any kind.

Staff training and support

Central's staff undergo training and receive real time support in order to prevent harmful incidents to children. Staff do not need to interact with children should they become upset, frustrated, or angry. There are other trained staff present to step in for them. They have been trained on positive behavior management and skills and abilities to support children during trying moments. (This is significantly more support than many parents have in their homes.)

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

HAZARDOUS WEATHER NOTICES

Please remember how difficult it can be to predict weather patterns in Richmond. If weather conditions are questionable, Central Montessori School will close for possible safety reasons.

Like most schools, Central Montessori School will close if the roads or campuses become hazardous. The decision to close will be made by 6:30am and will be posted on our Google monthly calendar on our website. Please check for school emails.

You may also receive an automated emergency message on your phone with information if the school must close early.

The school will not have make-up days for cancellation of classes due to poor weather. If public schools are closed, we may be closed.

Absences are excused if public schools are closed or Central is closed. Remember we want to be here for you and your child every day.

When lightning is present, children are not allowed outside for 5 minutes following the last strike. On occasion, this has and may impact afternoon dismissals. We ask for your patience and understanding.

IN CASE OF A MISSING OR LOST CHILD

The Central Montessori Staff are trained to respond to this very unlikely scenario. Drills are conducted annually. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately after 911 is called if this event ever occurs.

LOCKDOWN (FULL AND PARTIAL)

If there is an outside situation that might pose a potential threat to the school, Central will issue a partial lockdown (all children are brought inside and parameters are actively monitored). 1st responders and parents may be notified if the threat is real.

If there is actual danger and the Richmond police have instructed us to do so, the school will be placed on full lockdown. At that time, no one: parent, child, staff may exit or enter the building until lockdown has been lifted. 1st responders and parents will be notified.

In the event of dangerous weather, the school may conduct a partial or full lock down.

SAFEROOM (SHELTER IN PLACE)

This is a portion of each campus that is structurally very safe and is farthest away from a window. Monthly safe room drills are practiced. A shelter in place might be used during severe weather.

SCHOOL EVACUATION

School evacuation may be called in the event of lack of power, plumbing concerns, fire, chemical spills, etc. The trained Central Montessori School staff knows when and how to implement a school-wide evacuation.

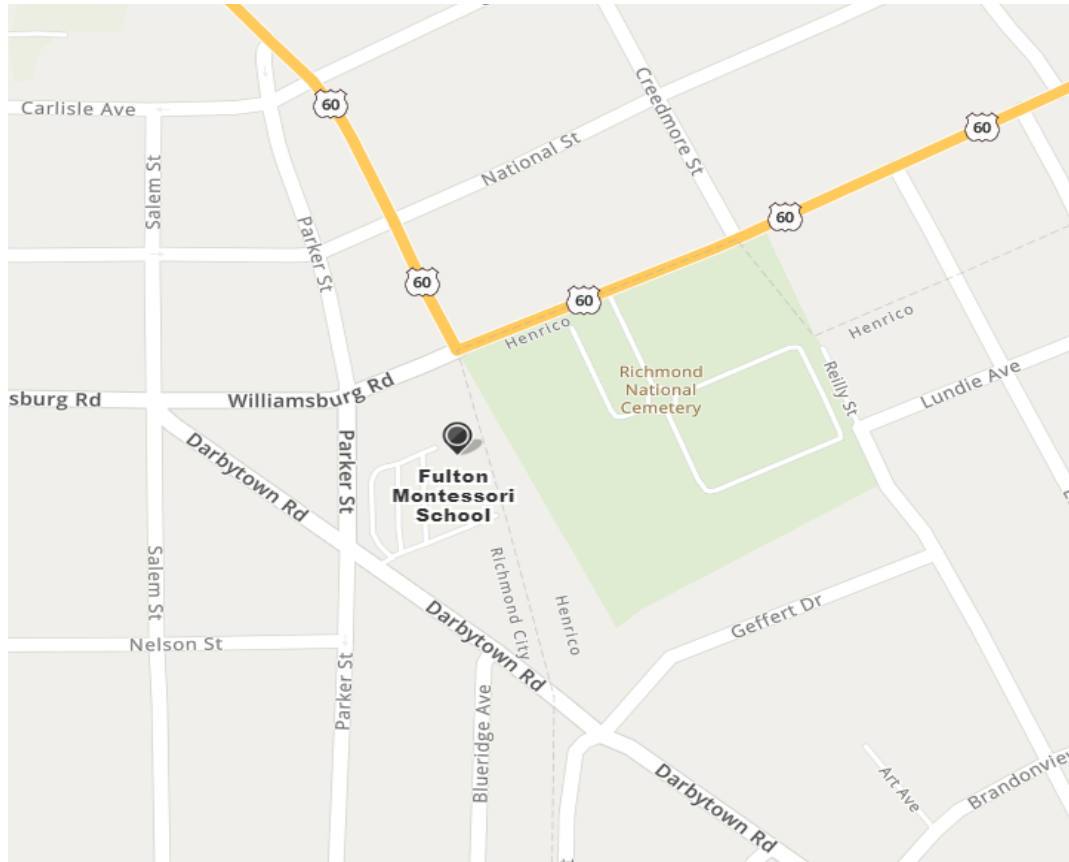
- An automatic text message will be generated telling parents where to pick their child up
- If possible, emails will also be sent out
- Central Montessori School may take a large box of necessary supplies including food and water with them.
- Please take a bit of time to become familiar with the locations of each safe house.
- Parents/guardians may want to keep safe house maps with phone numbers and directions in their car and at their house so that they have this information immediately available.

POSSIBLE EVACUATION LOCATIONS

Depending on the timing and circumstances of an evacuation, students may simply walk to another Central campus or to one of our beautiful neighborhood parks. On occasion, we might need to transport the children to other locations. We will utilize the school bus and volunteer parents and staff should this become necessary.

Take a deep breath, we will take excellent care of your child. We include these sections just to let you know that with the help of DSS, we have prepared for EVERYTHING. Everything is in place and all is well.

SAFE HOUSE #1 IN CASE OF **SCHOOL** EVACUATION



Sinuda Kapalczynski

FULTON MONTESSORI SCHOOL

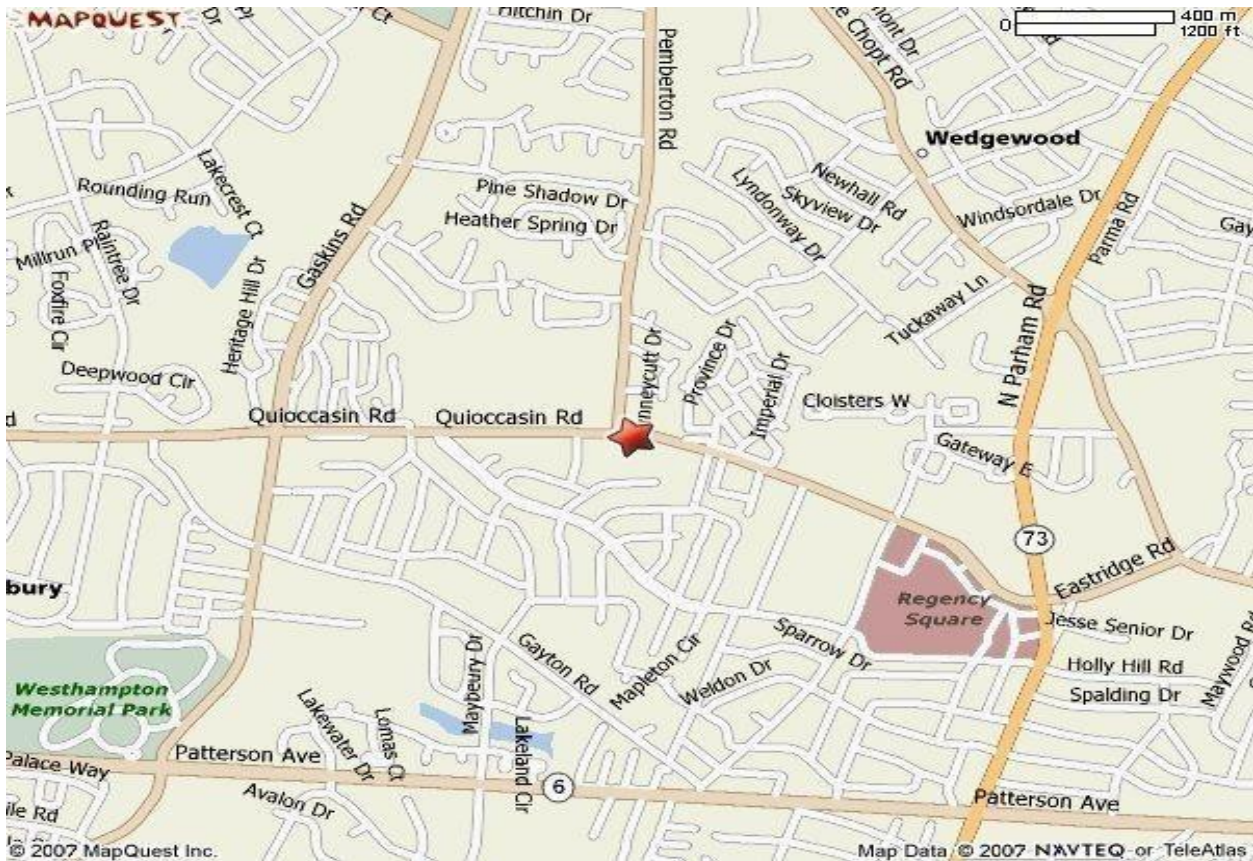
1637 WILLIAMSBURG ROAD,
RICHMOND, VA, 23231
804-222-8935

Central Montessori School 804-447-7493
frontdesk.centralmontessori@gmail.com

Stephan Pishko 804-426-8072
Anita Pishko 804-551-1312

Go directly to the safe house and join us there.

SAFE HOUSE #2 IN CASE OF AREA EVACUATION



Janet Gallagher

WEST END MONTESSORI SCHOOL

9307 Quioccasin Road

Richmond, VA 23229-5473

804-523-7536

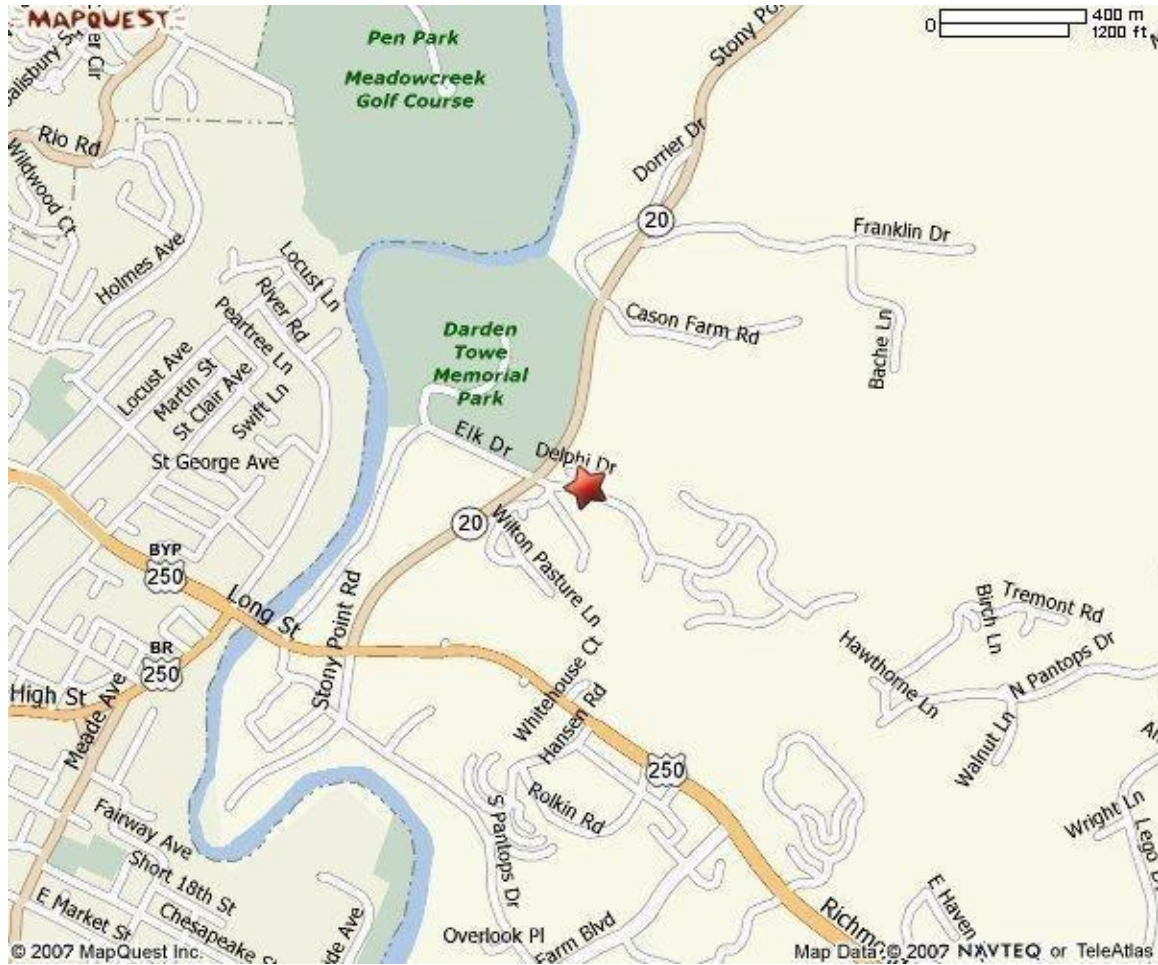
Central Montessori School 804-447-7493 frontdesk.centralmontessori@gmail.com

Stephan Pishko 804-426-8072

Anita Pishko 804-551-1312

Go directly to the safe house and join us there.

SAFE HOUSE # 3 IN CASE OF REGIONAL EVACUATION



FROST MONTESSORI SCHOOL

1553 Delphi Drive
Charlottesville, VA 22911

434-979-5223

Central Montessori School 804-447-7493
frontdesk.centralmontessori@gmail.com

Stephan Pishko 804-426-8072

Anita Pishko 804-551-1312

Go directly to the safe house and join us there.