

**Seacoast Center for Education  
Montessori Elementary I-II Teacher Preparation Program**



**Student Handbook**

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## **Mission Statement**

Seacoast Center serves children by educating adults. Our programs offer instruction and reflection on the nature of childhood and education. Our work is based on observation of human development and its constructive role in the learning process. Our heritage is the educational perspective of Dr. Maria Montessori, with instruction in the Montessori Method a central purpose of our institution.

## **A Brief Description**

Seacoast Center for Education offers Montessori teacher education programs at the elementary level. The Seacoast Center Montessori Elementary I (6-9) Program is a 360 hour course designed to prepare teachers to work with children from ages 6-9 in Montessori multi-age classrooms. This course is conducted in two academic summer sessions of four weeks duration with two seminars during the academic year. Students entering in July of one year typically complete class sessions at the end of the following July. Certification candidates must possess a bachelor's degree or its equivalent. Qualified candidates who complete all course requirements and a practicum equivalent to one academic year (1080 hours) in an approved classroom are recommended to the American Montessori Society for the Elementary I Credential.

The Seacoast Center Montessori Elementary II (9-12) Program is a 240 hour course designed to prepare teachers to work with children from ages 9-12 in Montessori multi-age classrooms. The course is conducted in one academic session of five weeks with two seminars during the academic year. Certification candidates who complete all course requirements and who have completed the equivalent of the Elementary I credential are recommended to the American Montessori Society for the AMS Elementary I-II credential.

## **Purposes and Objectives**

The purposes and objectives of Seacoast Center for Education and its programs are:

1. To offer instruction to adults in the theory and methodology of the Montessori Elementary classroom for the stated age range.
2. To work with all individuals in a professional and supportive manner.
3. To provide support to students where possible in completion of all course requirements.
4. To conduct a teacher education program offering a model for personal conduct between adults and children.
5. To promote world citizenship of the Montessori community through involvement with professional organizations beyond our region in support of childhood and education.

## **The AMS Elementary Credential / MACTE Accreditation**

The Elementary Credential from the American Montessori Society certifies the individual to teach in AMS-affiliated Montessori schools throughout the world and is accepted by many non-AMS affiliated Montessori schools. It does not in itself prepare the individual to enter the general teaching field.

It is our policy to offer only teaching credentials offered by the American Montessori Society that are also accredited by the MACTE, the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education. Seacoast Center for Education is a charter member of MACTE.

## **Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities**

Seacoast Center maintains the right as an institution of private post-secondary education to enforce its policies and to act with due process to disassociate from the program individuals whose activities or public attitudes are not constructive to the goals and purposes of the program. It is our position that successful work with children in a Montessori classroom relies on the ability of the adults involved to act in a positive, professional manner both within the training process and the practicum experience.

### Student Responsibilities

#### 1. Admissions

- A. To read all information published by Seacoast Center
- B. To be knowledgeable about other available institutions and accrediting agencies, so that enrollment in Seacoast is an informed choice.
- C. To complete the application process promptly by submitting required materials and meeting pre-training requirements including all required reading.

#### 2. Financial Arrangements

- A. To read any and all information provided by Seacoast regarding fees, refund policies, and financial requirements, and to request further information or clarification when needed.
- B. To read and understand all financial agreements made to and by Seacoast, and to keep a copy of all agreements and receipts.
- C. To meet financial obligations to Seacoast Center promptly.

#### 3. Academic Programming

- A. To read any and all information provided by Seacoast Center and to request information or clarification when necessary.
- B. To be an active and positive participant in the course of study offered by Seacoast Center within the context of stated requirements and existing institutional resources.
- C. To monitor his/her own personal and academic progress throughout the training period, during both the academic and practicum phases.
- D. To attend all required classes and instructional activities, to arrive promptly, and to complete assignments on time.
- E. To respect the principle of academic and professional integrity.
- F. To respect the freedom of the staff to inquire, publish, and teach.
- G. To respect the facilities and property of the program, including buildings, books, and equipment, and to observe stated requirements for their use.

## Program Responsibilities

To preserve and protect the rights of students, Seacoast Center is committed to the following responsibilities:

1. Admissions
  - A. To provide written policies on admission requirements.
  - B. To provide prospective students with adequate and complete information on all aspects of the program, including personal contact with staff and visits to Seacoast Center facilities.
  - C. To maintain a file of employment opportunities for your use.
1. 2. Advertising To maintain an advertising policy that is truthful and accurate.
2. 3. Financial Arrangements
  - A. To provide complete and accurate information on the full costs of the program.
  - B. To maintain fair and accurate refund policies and to provide written information on such policies.
  - C. To charge fair and reasonable fees for infractions such as breaking equipment or non-return of library books.
  - D. To keep complete and accurate financial records for each student.

## Academic Programming

- A. To maintain a level of quality consistent with the Mission Statement and Purposes and Objectives of our institution.
- B. To maintain clear written policies on acceptance of credit from other institutions and for providing transcript information to other institutions when requested by you.
- C. To provide fair and reasonable academic evaluation of your performance; to properly maintain records of your evaluations; and to maintain confidentiality with respect to ; student records.
- D. To inform you of your academic progress and to recommend certification upon completion of program requirements.
- E. To provide adequate conditions to support academic instruction.
- F. To offer quality instruction by means of personnel with appropriate credentials and/or experience, who are current in their fields, meet classes on time, are well prepared, and are available to you upon reasonable notice outside of class.
- G. To describe program requirements in accurately, and to ensure that requirements are relevant to our Purposes and Objectives.
- H. To offer courses compatible with their descriptions in the Seacoast Center brochure and Student Handbook.
- I. To respect the principles of academic and professional integrity.

J. To maintain written policies for dismissal and to carry out such policies only for appropriate causes with due process.

*This statement is based on Fair practices in Higher Education: Rights and Responsibilities of Students and their Colleges in a Period of Intensified Competition for Enrollments. A report of the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1979.*

## **Ethics**

The professional relations between Seacoast Center, its adult students, and fellow professionals, will be guided the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, particularly in *Section III: Ethical responsibilities to colleagues (excerpted)*:

"In a caring, cooperative work place human dignity is respected, professional satisfaction is promoted, and positive relationships are modeled. Our primary responsibility in this arena is to establish and maintain settings and relationships that support productive work and meet professional needs.

### *A- Responsibilities to co-workers*

Ideals:

I-3A.1 To establish and maintain relationships of trust and cooperation with co-worker.

I-3A.2- To share resources and Information with co-workers.

I-3A.3- To support co-workers in meeting their professional needs and in their professional development.

I-3A.4- To accord co-workers due recognition of professional achievement.

Principles:

P-3A.1- When we have concern about the professional behavior of a co-worker, we shall first let that person know of our concern and attempt to resolve the matter collegially.

P-3A.2- We shall exercise care in expressing views regarding the personal attributes or professional conduct of co-workers. Statements should be based on firsthand knowledge and relevant to the interests of children and programs.

### *B-Responsibilities to employers*

Ideals:

I-3B.1- To assist the program in providing the highest quality of service.

I-3B.2- To maintain loyalty to the program and uphold its reputation.

Principles:

P-3B. 1- When we do not agree with program policies, we shall first attempt to effect change through constructive action within the organization.

P-3B.2- We shall speak or act on behalf of an organization only when authorized.

We shall take care to note when we are speaking for the organization and when we are expressing a personal judgement."

*Based on NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct adopted 11/89 Reviewed and adopted again by Seacoast Center for Education in March, 2009.*

## **Admission**

Seacoast Center accepts applications throughout the year for entrance into our summer programs. In order to maintain the quality of life in our small setting we do limit class sizes and encourage early enrollment.

Candidates for AMS Elementary certification must hold at least a US Bachelor's degree or its equivalent. Candidates holding degrees issued outside the United States are eligible for AMS International credentials upon satisfactory evaluation of transcripts or diplomas. Should this require external evaluation it is at the student's own expense.

Candidates for Elementary I (6-9) certification must possess Early Childhood (2 1/2-6) certification from a MACTE-accredited institution or undertake a 45 hour overview for that level which includes basic theory, methodology, and curricula.

Candidates for Elementary II (9-12) must hold an AMS Elementary I (6-9) credential or have completed all requirements for that level at an approved program or institution.

Candidates who enroll as Elementary I-II students who are currently working in upper elementary classrooms may be able to undertake advanced content area at the request of sponsoring schools. This option requires a written statement from the head of the school regarding the candidate's ability to benefit from such a course of study. No certification is granted until the entire Elementary I-II program is completed.

Individuals wishing to take either the Elementary I or Elementary II programs without intention of certification will be considered on a space-available basis.

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## **Application Process**

Program applications are available online at [www.seacoastcenter.com](http://www.seacoastcenter.com) or from our office via mail or fax. The application lists accompanying materials we consider in admissions. No application can be processed before receipt of the application fee.

## **Non-Certification Students**

In the case of individuals who do not satisfy criteria for admission for certification but who wish to participate fully in the program, the Course Director will determine the candidate's ability to benefit from participation and may offer admission at his discretion. The application process is the same as for a certification student and enrollment on this basis does not necessarily reduce tuition or fees. In determining the ability to benefit, particular attention will be given to the personal statement and letters of recommendation supplied with the application. Additionally, the Course Director generally will request a statement of need from a Montessori school director attesting to the individual's suitability for employment at the chosen level.

### **Evaluation of Other Course Work**

Course work similar to that of the elementary certification program which has been completed at an unaccredited institution will be evaluated and may be accepted in partial fulfillment of course requirements for a maximum of one-third of the academic clock hours for the course according to criteria established by AMS.

Applicants who feel they can demonstrate compliance with the definitions and standards established by AMS may petition in writing to the Course Director for advanced status. The Course Director may request specific information from the applicant, including submission of materials and albums and written statements concerning previous experience. A Comprehensive Examination Fee may apply in this event at the discretion of the Course Director. Acceptance of previous work toward advanced status will not necessarily reduce the applicant's financial obligation for full tuition and fees for the program.

### **Attendance**

Note: All students are expected to sign in and out in person upon arrival and departure.

Academic Phase (summer session and seminars):

Given the compacted time schedule for this program, attendance at all sessions offered is required unless excused by the Course Director. The Course Director will have the right to excuse absences provided:

1. You provide a reasonable plan in writing for compensatory work related directly to subject matter missed.
2. The total number of contact hours missed does not exceed 10% of the programs total hours or 20% of any single curriculum area.
3. You understand that you remain responsible for all work missed during such periods.

Class hours missed may be made up during lab time. With prior arrangement, it is often possible to offer make up lessons during lab times using alternate faculty. This service is provided at the discretion of the Center.

### **Tardiness**

Tardiness amounting to more than 40% of any single class session will be considered as absence for the entire session, with subsequent loss of credit for all class clock hours assigned to that session.

### **Supervised Practice Labs**

Supervised practice lab sessions contribute to the total number of hours and are not optional when they take place during stated course hours. Lab periods conducted within specific content area times during the day are used for practice in that content area unless otherwise directed by the faculty member providing the class.

We offer evening labs each week staffed by at least one qualified faculty

member in order to provide flexibility of scheduling. We offer and ask for professional decorum and respect for our school environment at all times. Evening lab times tend to be more relaxed and offer valuable time for integration of materials, sharing with fellow students and faculty, and material-making.

### **Attendance During Practicum Phase**

AMS requirements for the practicum phase include 1080 hours, typically a full day nine month position in an age-appropriate classroom.

As teaching professionals, all students are expected to conform to personnel policies of their practicum sites with respect to absence, compensation, and continuing responsibility for performance of duties. A chronic or protracted record of absence or tardiness may be grounds for disqualification of the practicum experience.

### **Assessment**

The Montessori Elementary I and Elementary I-II programs assesses and evaluate student work by several means during the program cycle:

1. A review and critique of selected album notations and illustrations.
2. Supervised practice lab sessions. Students are expected to maintain a log of their work during lab sessions as well as present materials to peers and faculty.
3. Periodic practical exams and peer assessments.
4. An individual or group project presented at the end of the academic session.
5. Written exam or summation at the end of the academic phase.

### **Grading Policy**

Seacoast Center does not issue units of credit or letter grades. All course work is evaluated on a pass/ not passed basis, with work not passed subject to re-submission.

AMS and MACTE require that all course requirements be completed within two years of the completion of the academic phase of the program.

Grading for the Academic Phase uses the following system:

1. Acceptable
2. Must re-present or re-submit
3. Incomplete

Grading for the Practicum Phase operates using the following system:

1. Satisfactory
2. Unsatisfactory
3. Incomplete

## **AMS Practicum Standards and Responsibilities**

1. **AMS MEMBERSHIP:** The American Montessori Society urges that all practicum sites become affiliated or accredited members of the organization. Information regarding AMS will be sent to all practicum sites that are not members of the organization. As of 11/04, AMS no longer requires filing of exemption forms for practicum sites that are not members.
2. **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:** The school site must have a written nondiscrimination policy for children and staff.
3. **LICENSING:** The site must meet all local and state regulations.
4. **SCHOOL POLICIES:** The site should communicate to the student and the teacher education program its administrative policies and guidelines relating to the student. This may be done verbally or in writing.
5. **JOB DESCRIPTION/CONTRACT:** The site should provide a job description and a contract of agreement acceptable to the site, the student, and the teacher education program. This job description or agreement should include the nature and type of remuneration given the student, if any.
6. **COOPERATION WITH THE TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION/PROGRAM:** The school must agree to cooperate with the course in all matters relating to the practicum.
7. **JANITORIAL SERVICE:** Janitorial service should be provided by the school.
8. **AGE RANGE OF CLASS:**

Infant and Toddler: Birth to 3 years of age (depends on model selected).

Early Childhood: The class should contain children in the full 2 ` A-6 age span.

Elementary I & I-II: The class should contain children in the full age span for which the student will be certified (6-9 or 6-12), except in the case of a beginning class, which may contain an age span of less than three years.

## **Requirements for Entering the Practicum Phase**

In order for you to enter into a practicum phase and receive field consultation visits, you must:

1. Complete at least one summer academic phase of the program. Any exceptions to this must be requested in writing and may not conflict with MACTE or AMS requirements.
2. Verify through documentation supplied by us that you have found an acceptable practicum site.
3. Be in good standing with the program financially.
4. Demonstrate through your participation in the course that you are ready for this important part of the process of your education.

### **Completion of Course Work**

As a student in the Seacoast Center Montessori Elementary Teacher Preparation Program, you will be considered to have completed requirements for certification upon satisfaction of all academic, financial, and professional obligations. Upon completion, you are eligible for the appropriate level of certification by the American Montessori Society.

The Course Director is responsible for maintaining all completed student files in good order, and for remaining current with all forms and procedures required by the American Montessori Society for processing student certification. In the event of disability on the part of the Course Director, we will designate in writing a substitute for the Director, and will make this person known to you by email.

### **Recommendation for AMS Elementary I or II Certification**

The Course Director will recommend you to the American Montessori Society for the appropriate level of Elementary Certification when you satisfy the following conditions:

1. Completion and favorable evaluation of album and written assignments.
2. Attendance at a minimum of 90% of academic sessions and seminars, with absences excused as defined in Attendance Policies.
3. Demonstration of competency in all areas of work with Montessori apparatus for which practical examinations are given.
4. A successful practicum experience with children at an authorized site, with favorable evaluation by field Consultants and completion of all practicum requirements. If a practicum has been undertaken at Elementary I, it is not a requirement for Elementary II.
5. Satisfaction of all financial obligations to Seacoast Center for Education, Inc.

When you have completed course requirements a transcript form is sent to you for your signature and verification. You are responsible for sending this transcript on to the American Montessori Society with the original transcripts supplied by you at the time of application. After processing, the AMS Elementary Credential is sent to our office for the signature of the Course Director, then forward to you via USPS first class mail. Depending on the volume of transcripts received in the AMS office and the time of year, this process can be expected to take a minimum of two months. We will issue a Certificate of Completion and transcript of courses attended if verification of status is requested in the interim.

You may request information on the status of your course work by fax at 603-590-6360 or via email at [assignments.seacoast@gmail.com](mailto:assignments.seacoast@gmail.com).

Course work submitted after the completion of your academic term will be evaluated at no additional charge for a period of two years, but must take place by appointment. AMS requires that all work be completed within a two-year period from completion of your academic term. After that time a Comprehensive Examination fee

may be applicable and you may be subject to further evaluation or additional course requirements. Given the time frame of the program, we reserve the right to limit evaluation of make up work submitted to summer academic sessions and regularly scheduled seminar periods.

For your convenience, all course work completed after the summer sessions may be submitted to our evaluation team at [assignments.seacoast@gmail.com](mailto:assignments.seacoast@gmail.com). A description of the process for submission is linked to our web site at [www.seacoastcenter.com](http://www.seacoastcenter.com).

### **Criteria for Withdrawal and Dismissal**

Instructors who have doubts about a student's academic capability, ability to deal positively and appropriately with children, manipulate materials, and/or work effectively with adults will immediately inform the Course Director of the situation. The Course Director then arranges a conference. If cause is demonstrated, a student may be placed on probation and the Course Director will work with the student to attempt to alleviate the area of concern. In the event of continued difficulty in the above areas the student may be asked to leave, at which time another appeal may be made. Ultimate responsibility for dismissal will rest with the Course Director. Refunds based on withdrawal or dismissal will follow advertised guidelines for refunds.

In the event of the withdrawal or dismissal of a student, all written records concerning academic performance remain in the cumulative file for a period of three years at the Center's main office. Financial records will be included if pertinent to the cause of withdrawal. Students who are dismissed or removed from the course involuntarily receive either no or partial credit based on work previously completed and deemed acceptable by individual instructors. Students withdrawing from the course voluntarily will be given credit for work completed and allowed to continue their work necessary for certification the following year. Reinstatement of students who have withdrawn is at the discretion of the Course Director.

## **Placement**

Placement information maintained by Seacoast Center includes job notices we receive and other professional Montessori periodicals. A list of area schools known to offer elementary programs is available upon request. The great majority of our students come to us with school relationships already established, though this is not a condition of acceptance. Practically, we find that students make use of Internet resources to search for employment opportunities.

Seacoast Center cannot guarantee employment, salary, or professional advancement, either during the practicum year or upon graduation from the program.

## **Financial Information**

The financial activities of Seacoast Center for Education are conducted via the offices of: Bonnie Davis, P.O. Box 292, Warren ME 04864. Tel: (207) 273-2016  
Fax: (207) 273-1016. Email: [bonniedavis.seacoast@gmail.com](mailto:bonniedavis.seacoast@gmail.com).

Upon written request, information related to your account is available to you during normal business hours. This office handles account matters only and cannot respond to inquiries regarding other program matters.

## **Tuition Payment Plan Information**

A schedule of fees and financial policies is revised each year for the upcoming course cycle. All students are expected to fully review and sign an enrollment agreement prior to matriculation. This is a legal contract. Your account must be in good standing in order for you to attend each seminar. Late payment may also result in suspension of field supervision visits at our discretion. We cannot be responsible for delays in processing resulting from late payment or delay of supervisory visits.

## **Fee for Returned Checks**

A fee of **\$20.00** will be applied to your account for any checks returned to us for insufficient funds.

## **Financial Aid**

Seacoast Center is able to offer no loans, grants, scholarships, or other forms of financial aid to its students. Applicants are urged to explore sponsorship arrangements with their practicum sites. The American Montessori Society provides limited scholarship assistance to persons in its teacher education programs. Requests for information regarding such assistance should be made directly to the American Montessori Society office at 281 Park Ave. South 6th Floor, New York NY 10010. Early inquiry and application is urged, as the limited funds available cannot possibly accommodate all deserving candidates for aid.

## **Student Fees**

Upon payment of the student fees, your name, address, and practicum information will be submitted on your behalf to the American Montessori and to the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education. You will receive a two-year intern membership in AMS, with its accompanying rights and privileges. All checks for practicum fees should be payable to Seacoast Center for Education. The American Montessori Society and MACTE do not accept fees directly from students.

## **Tuition Refund Policy**

Seacoast Center for Education Montessori Elementary I Program is a course of study beginning in July and concluding in July of the following year. The Montessori Elementary II program is a course of study beginning in June and concluding in May of the following year. Academic sessions, seminars and supervised practice sessions are considered in calculation of refunds. Payment plans are offered for the convenience of our students or client schools only. Tuition for the full program is due upon enrollment, with refunds based upon the following guidelines:

### **Full Refund**

Application fees will be returned if cancelled within three business days of receipt. A full refund of tuition will be made if withdrawal takes place within three business days of the first class.

We do not knowingly accept certification candidates who do not meet admissions criteria or who fail to demonstrate the ability to benefit from our program. In such cases, a full refund is applicable. A full refund will be made if your enrollment is the result of any false representations made by our literature or oral representations by Seacoast Center for Education. The Director is the only person authorized to make written or oral representations about the Montessori Elementary program we offer.

### **Partial Refunds**

A student who withdraws or is dismissed after three days of class but before completing 50% of the program is entitled to a pro rata refund, as calculated below, less a one-time application fee of \$500 or 20% of the program tuition, whichever is less.

The pro rata refund is the ratio of the number of two-hour class sessions remaining after the last session completed by the student to the total number of sessions in the program, rounded downward to the nearest 10 percent. The refund is the resulting percent applied to the total tuition for the course.

Materials fees may be refunded in all or part if all materials supplied are returned in a condition that allows us to redistribute them to other students within five business days of withdrawal or cancellation.

AMS/MACTE fees are non-refundable after they have been submitted to those organizations.

No refund is possible if withdrawal or dismissal occurs after the student has

completed 50% of the total course hours including supervised labs unless withdrawal is due to mitigating circumstances, in which case refunds shall be calculated based on the pro rata method described above. Mitigating circumstances are defined as circumstances beyond the student's control. A change of practicum site, whether voluntary or involuntary, will not be construed as a mitigating circumstance, as Seacoast Center for Education generally will continue services to the student uninterrupted during a change of practicum site.

The 50 percent completion limitation does not apply in cases where the student cannot complete the program due to action taken by the school. Examples of school's action shall include school closing or bankruptcy, or cancellation of the program. In these and similar situations, refunds and fees shall be based on the pro rata method described in previously for up to 100 percent of the tuition paid.

### **Timely Refunds**

Refunds will be paid within 30 days after the effective date of termination.

### **Good Faith Effort**

We will be considered to have made a good faith refund effort to make a refund, if the student's file contains evidence of the following attempts:

- (a) Certified mail to student's last known address;
- (b) Certified mail to the student's permanent address; and
- (c) Certified mail to the address of the student's parent or listed next of kin, if different from the permanent address.

### **Notice of Withdrawal**

We require that notice of withdrawal be in writing.

Upon receipt of written notification of withdrawal, we will honor any valid notice of withdrawal given, reimburse the student any refund amount due, and arrange for a termination of the student's obligation to pay any sum in excess of that permitted under the refund standards given above.

### **Distribution of Funds to Sponsoring Schools**

All or a portion of any refunds due are refunded directly to the sponsoring schools.

### **Solving Problems**

Our goal and hope is to create an educational environment in which problems are resolved collegially, and with professional communication levels of high quality. All individuals, whether students or contracted personnel involved with Seacoast Center for Education and its programs have the right to due process, respect, and appropriate channels for solving problems related to us.

## **Grievance Procedure**

For main site and non-contract additional locations:

In the event of continuing difficulty, an Arbitration Committee is formed to resolve conflicts related to Seacoast Center's performance of duties in the areas specified below or the student's performance of responsibilities also presented below.

Seacoast Center's Arbitration Committee will consist of the Course Director, one core faculty member appointed by the director, a student enrolled in the program and elected by the student body, and a staff member to serve as an alternate in the event of a conflict of interest. In the event that the elected student representative to the Grievance Committee is bringing a grievance to the committee, the role of that student in the voting shall be assumed by the student who has received the second-highest number of votes in the election for committee representative.

Grievances against the Center and its staff will be heard by the committee in the following areas:

1. Incomplete or deficient training and failure to provide sufficient remedy where this concern is perceived or reported.
2. Failure to adhere to program responsibilities as designated in this document.
3. Failure to make financial restitution when appropriate within advertised policy.

Grievances against the student will be heard by the committee in the following areas:

1. Failure to adhere to student responsibilities as designated in this document.
2. Non-constructive participation including conspicuous inattention during class sessions and supervised lab periods. "Conspicuous inattention" includes but is not limited to material-making or protracted conversation with other students during lecture periods.
3. Breach of attendance policies, including unauthorized departure from the program site during periods designated for independent work.

Grievances outside these areas may also be heard by the committee if submitted to the Course Director and deemed appropriate.

Grievance Process

1. A person initiating a complaint must first consult with the individual against whom the complaint is being brought and attempt to negotiate a satisfactory solution. The Course Director must give final approval to any solutions arranged in this manner if these solutions involve a change in course requirements (i.e. assignments and attendance requirements).
2. If a complaint is not resolved to everyone's satisfaction by this initial contact, the problem can then be brought before the Center's Arbitration Committee, which will decide if it merits a hearing.
3. In the event of a hearing, the committee will hear from both sides of the dispute and will first attempt to arbitrate a solution between them. Failing that, the Arbitration Committee will decide upon a course of action that will be binding on the parties. (See "Appeal Procedure" below.)

### **Grievance Policy Regarding Contract Sites**

For courses offered by contract with public or non-public institutions: Grievances against Seacoast Center for Education follow the guidelines above, but must be made by an authorized administrative representative of the contracting agency. Problem resolution is an ongoing and informal growth process. Formal grievances will be entertained only after the internal grievance policies of the contractor (i.e. district or host-institution) validate the necessity of the process. The intention of this policy is not to limit rights of students but rather to place them in the appropriate hierarchical context given the contractual relationship between Seacoast Center for Education and the contracting agency.

### **Appeal Procedure**

Individuals who feel they continue to have legitimate grievances after all the above procedures have been exhausted may bring that grievance before the Problem-Solving Committee of the AMS Teacher Education Committee. The decision of this committee shall be considered binding on all parties and without appeal. Should this not offer satisfaction, the issue may be reported to the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education.

The policies published in this section are required by our affiliating and accrediting bodies and have never been necessary in resolving student-program issues. In the event complaints reach the grave level of requiring action by AMS or MACTE, Seacoast Center for Education, Inc. reserves the right to legal counsel.

American Montessori Society 281 Park Avenue South 6th Floor New York, NY 10010

MACTE Commission 506 Seventh Street Kenosha, WI 53141-2000

### **Stipulation**

No solution can be arrived at which is in conflict with AMS or MACTE requirements for teacher education programs.

### **Amendments to Publications**

This Student Handbook is intended as a companion to our promotional materials and application form. Each document contains important information and should be reviewed thoroughly. There is no intention on our part to present conflicting or inconsistent information. We ask to be notified of errors and will act to correct and clarify them.

Amendments to policies and correction of errors in this and other materials produced by Seacoast Center for Education will be considered to have taken effect when distributed to students directly, electronically, or via publication at [www.seacoastcenter.com](http://www.seacoastcenter.com).

All of the above-named documents are revised annually.