



Parent Handbook

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License No. 304370688 and 304370689

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Welcome to Village Montessori Center

We are glad you have chosen Village Montessori Center for your child's early education experience! Our goal is to work in partnership with you. The parent's responsibility is to make a continuing effort to understand and embrace the Montessori approach, to get involved in the life of the school community, to model respect in all aspects with others in the community and to strive to incorporate Montessori principals in parenting skills in order to achieve consistency between home and school. The School's responsibility is to follow the commitment to develop the whole child – emotionally, socially, physically, and academically, to model and practice grace and courtesy, to communicate effectively with parents and to maintain high standards in the program, guides, and curriculum.

This Parent Handbook outlines our policies and procedures as required by the State of California. It is your responsibility to thoroughly read all the information provided in this handbook and sign the Admissions Agreement. This Parent Handbook constitutes a valid part of the enrollment agreement between Village Montessori Center and the parents/guardians of children who are enrolled at the school. Enrollment at Village Montessori Center constitutes acceptance of the following policies.

We are licensed by the State of California, Community Care Licensing Division, Department of Social Services to serve infants thru children 6 years of age. Our Preschool License is number 304370688 and our Infant and Toddler License is number 3043370689. Our hours of operation are 7:00am to 6:00pm, Monday thru Friday. In general, the Director may be contacted daily from 8:00am to 4:00pm, by appointment, by telephone, or by email.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Village Montessori Center is to prepare our students socially, emotionally and academically to be fulfilled individuals who make a positive contribution to their family and their community.

The underlying foundation is respect:

1. ***I respect myself.*** true learning is respect.
2. ***I respect my friends.*** we are social beings and our actions affect others.
3. ***I respect my environment.*** we are the caretakers of our community.

We are reminded of Maria Montessori's quote "*The education of the very young child does not prepare him for school, but for life.*"

GOALS

We are working on normalization (a child in harmony with self and environment). This is accomplished as a child learns to work and enjoys working. Work (the process, not the product) is what brings fulfillment of **FIVE MAIN GOALS**:

1. **Concentration**: the ability to observe and comprehend, the ability to remain focused on a task for increasing amounts of time.
2. **Independence**: in choices, in decision making, in care of person and environment and in the responsibility for learning.
3. **Inner Discipline**: necessary for social and academic development.
4. **Purposeful Activity**: learning to engage in purposeful activity, as opposed to chaotic or nervous activity.
5. **Joyful Accomplishment**: to experience the feeling of, and to quest for joyful accomplishment (the positive experience is what propels a child to accept himself and desire further knowledge).

MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator, developed a method of teaching based on her scientific observations of young children's behavior. Her first "Children's House" was established in Rome in 1907. She found children learned best in a homelike environment filled with developmentally appropriate materials that provide experiences, which contribute to the growth of self-motivated, independent learners. Dr. Montessori carried her message across the globe, including the United States in 1912.

At its core, the Montessori philosophy is simple; to follow the child, which assumes that every child is a unique individual who is naturally driven to grow, develop and learn. The educational goals include instilling in children a love of learning, and the ability to make appropriate learning choices while respecting themselves, others and the environment. The prepared environment is created for the child. The child is encouraged to care and respect his surroundings.

PHILOSOPHIES THAT MAKE MONTESSORI UNIQUE

- Deep respect for children as individuals.
- Multiage classes allow teachers to develop close and long-term relationships with their students.
- Multiage groupings allow students to become leaders and further develop their self-esteem.
- Independence is nurtured and allows children to become purposeful, motivated and confident learners.
- Peace and conflict resolution are taught daily and children learn to be part of a warm, respectful and supportive community.
- Hands on learning is central to the curriculum in all programs and leads to children being engaged rather than passive about their work.
- The environments are respectfully and carefully prepared with multisensory, sequential and self-correcting materials to support self-directed learning.
- Teachers, children and parents work together as a warm and supportive community.
- Character development is a central focus in the classroom. This is achieved through role modeling of the teachers as well as the older students in the class.

UNINTERRUPTED WORK PERIOD

An important aspect of the Montessori Method is to allow children the time they need to thoroughly explore and work within the environment. Generally, work periods will extend for two to three hours. During this uninterrupted block of time, the students freely select work, eventually becoming absorbed in the work that has a particular fascination for them. Interruptions disturb the development of the child's focus, concentration and opportunity to deeply delve into work. These long work periods further allow teachers to give individual, or small group lessons to the children ensuring that all areas of the classroom are thoroughly presented to each student.

THE CHILD

During work periods the following can be observed in the classroom:

- Children may work alone or in spontaneous groups. No one may touch another's work without being invited to do so; therefore, there is no forced sharing.
- Everyone walks around the work rugs.
- Circle rules for group stories or lessons include sitting quietly with arms and legs folded.
- Children serve themselves refreshments and are in charge of cleaning up the environment.
- Children talk quietly and ask for help on a one-to-one basis, not by yelling across the classroom.
- They do not interrupt a lesson but wait quietly in close proximity to the teacher until noticed.
- Children resolve conflicts between each other in a kind and peaceful manner.
- Children greet visitors to the classroom with grace and courtesy and are welcoming to all.

THE PARENT

- Will partner with Village Montessori Center in their child's education. We must trust one another and share the goal of providing the best educational environment for each child to develop to their fullest potential.
- Will have a happy, positive attitude toward school and will project these thoughts onto the child.
- Will encourage the ability to distinguish between appropriate indoor behavior and outdoor behavior for the children. There is a difference.
- Will make time to attend parent teacher conferences twice a year, or as requested.
- Will avoid tangible rewards for accomplishments children naturally receive pleasure from.
- Will leave toys at home and don't fight with children over leaving them in the car at the school door. Children are grumpy when this happens.
- Will notify the lead teacher if you have a question or concern.

School Administration and Faculty

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Business Management/Founder | Jenny Johnson |
| Director | Jenny Johnson |
| Administrative Assistant | Bree Yazdizadeh |
| Building Maintenance | Carl Johnson |

FACULTY INFORMATION

The School prides itself on the quality, educational depth and talent of its faculty. Our staff consists of qualified Lead Teachers and Assistant Teachers under supervision of a Director. We encourage all staff members to have earned or are working toward either a Bachelor of Arts or Science degree with Early Childhood units, Associate of Arts degree, or Certificates in Human Development, Child Development or Early Care and Education. The staff is CPR and First Aid certified.

The School aims to ensure that the Lead Teachers are trained in Montessori pedagogy under the training of the American Montessori Society (AMS) or Association Montessori International (AMI). All Certified Montessori Teachers are MACTE credentialed teachers, which is the only recognized training body of American Montessori Schools. All assistants undergo specific Montessori Assistant training both in-house and from independent trainers, so that a consistency is achieved throughout the School. We are proud of the high degree of professionalism our staff exhibits.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Credentialed teachers are encouraged to add to their training each year by completing additional hours for Professional development, which may include attendance at national or local conferences, university courses, webinars, or in-service hours. The school supports ongoing professional development of its faculty by providing both funds and time.

FACULTY IN-SERVICE DAYS

Professional development days are marked on the school calendar. These days are used for a number of purposes, including workshops, faculty meetings, and preparation of the environment. Each staff member may also be granted other professional days to attend meetings, seminars, and workshops, or to observe other schools. Each year our school closes up to three days for classroom preparation and staff development.

In addition, Lead Teachers are actively creating additional Montessori materials and working in their classrooms throughout the school year, in order to prepare the classroom environments and teaching materials. A Montessori classroom is a highly enriched and complex environment that demands much time and effort from the Lead Teachers to prepare and maintain. Consequently, Montessori schools typically devote more days to preparation than other schools do.

FACULTY CHANGES

Village faculty includes lead teachers, assistants, support staff, and substitute teachers. Many have come to Village after serving many years in other schools, bringing a depth of experience to our school. With approx. 20 staff, employee turnover is inevitable from year to year. Changes in staff for the upcoming session are formally announced, prior to the beginning of the fall academic session. Any changes after the fall session begins will be communicated to parents as soon as possible.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All Staff agrees to respect a code of confidentiality regarding information about all children and families. We encourage you to share important and necessary information about your child or your family with the Director and the child's teacher. This information will help us effectively prepare and plan to best meet his/her needs. All information you share with us will be held in confidentiality. Community Care licensing staff has the authority to review records and interview staff, children, and parents.

School Communities

INFANT AND TODDLER COMMUNITY

The first two years of a child's life is a time of rapid development and discovery. The Infant and Toddler Community provides the child with an atmosphere of freedom and respect; where his blossoming independence is encouraged. He is given the freedom to make choices and to explore his own interests. While learning to care for his self, his community and his environment the child will develop and practice skills that prepare him for life. Children ages 0-24 (approx.) months will be considered for enrollment into our Infant and Toddler Community. Cups and utensils will be introduced in the classroom; therefore, no bottles are permitted at school once the child turns twelve months old. We offer a ratio of 1 adult for every 4 (or less) infants.

Our Infant and Toddler Community is based upon the guidelines outlined by the American Montessori Society and is not designed to be daycare. This program is a partnership with the family and each is based upon a sequence of routines and activities which reinforce the rhythmic patterns of activities of individual toddlers and not upon a rigid schedule. The Lead Teacher (Guide) chooses materials that meet the needs of each individual child and that facilitate exploration, discovery, practice and independence. The Guide's role in the community is to follow and observe the child; discovering his needs and interests as they are revealed. The Guide also offers assistance in a way that helps the child to help himself.

It is our hope that every child will leave the Infant and Toddler Community with a foundation of confidence, strength and independence upon which he will construct his future self.

PREPRIMARY MONTESSORI CLASSROOM

Our PrePrimary Montessori Community offers multi-aged grouping for ages approximately 2 years thru 3.5 years old. This Community is based upon the guidelines by the American Montessori Society and is a training program designed to help prepare the children for the Primary Montessori Community and is not designed to be daycare. The PrePrimary Community provides the child with an atmosphere of freedom and respect; where his blossoming independence is encouraged. He is given the freedom to make choices and to explore his own interests. While learning to care for his self, his community and his environment the child will develop and practice skills that prepare him for life. Self-help, social skills, and toilet training are the main focuses within the PrePrimary Community. We offer a ratio of 1 adult to 7 (or less) Toddlers.

In our PrePrimary Community, the environment has been prepared by a specially trained and certified Montessori Lead Teacher (Guide). The Guide chooses materials that meet the needs of each individual child and that facilitate exploration, discovery, practice and independence. The Guide's role in the community is to follow and observe the child; discovering his needs and interests as they are revealed. The Guide also offers assistance in a way that helps the child to help himself.

Children will be enrolled in the PrePrimary Community as long it is developmentally appropriate. A child will be considered "ready" for the Primary Community once they are toilet trained and have the necessary attention span to

be successful in the Primary Community. It is our hope that every child will leave the Preprimary Montessori Community with a foundation of confidence, strength and independence upon which he will construct his future self.

PRIMARY AND KINDERGARTEN MONTESSORI COMMUNITY

Our Primary and Kindergarten Montessori Community offers multi-aged grouping for ages 3 - 6 years. Our Primary and Kindergarten Community is based upon the guidelines outlined by the and is not designed to be daycare. The three-year mixed age grouping gives children the unique opportunity to succeed in a miniature community, where mutual respect, caring, sharing and self-reliance can flourish. Older children are mentors and role models for the younger children. Through teaching and mentoring the younger children, their knowledge is reinforced. Our Lead Montessori Teachers (Guides) prepare the environments to support a child's natural curiosity; encourage creativity and aid in cooperative learning. Children learn individually and in small groups. The child is free to choose work that has been introduced to him/her from the different areas of the classroom. Each classroom consists of the following areas: Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Math, Culture, Science, Art and Music. We offer a ratio of 1 adult for 12 (or less) children.

Every child has the freedom to observe, explore and interact with the inviting and colorful materials in the environment, thus acquiring knowledge through meaningful and satisfying work.

Children choose their "work" or "job", follow the steps given for each job, lay out what is needed, do the work then restore or return it for the next person to use. Children love the order, logic and intrinsic fairness in doing work this way.

The Primary and Kindergarten Montessori Community offers a unique cycle of learning designed to take advantage of the child's sensitive years between 3 and 6 years, when they can absorb information from an enriched environment.

The final year within the Early Childhood Classroom or Kindergarten year (age 5 on or before September 1st) is a monumental year and an extremely rewarding and joyous experience for the child. It not only serves as the year of culmination for all previous lessons, it allows the child to transfer his knowledge from the absorbent mind (concrete) to the rational mind (abstract). It also provides an opportunity for the child to embrace his new position of leadership and mentorship. Knowing how important his or her role is in their community builds self-esteem and confidence which are primary ingredients for future success.

School Programs

SCHOOL PROGRAM

We offer three basic programs to choose from:

Primary and PrePrimary (ages 2-6 years old):

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Half Day | 9:00am – 12:15pm |
| School Day | 9:00am – 3:00pm |
| Full Day with Extended Care | 7:00am – 6:00pm |

Infant and Toddler Community (under age 2):

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| School Day | 9:00am – 3:00pm |
| Full Day with Extended Care | 7:00am – 5:30pm |

For all children 24 months and younger, the maximum number of hours in attendance per day will be 9.5 hours. After 9.5 hours, if the child has not been picked up, we will begin calling the parents/guardians for pick up and will be subject to late pick up fees of \$1/minute.

Children enrolled in the Kindergarten Montessori program attend school 5 days per week. All other children attend school 3, 4, or 5 days per week.

The school is staffed according to student population and follows State mandates. Requests for extensions beyond the program time you have registered for are accommodated on a space available basis and need prior approval to ensure proper teacher/children ratios.

SUMMER PROGRAM

Students enrolled in the summer program enjoy a variety of projects and activities, which center on specific curriculums including culture, nature, science & the arts.

In order to secure enrollment for the following academic year, each child must be continually enrolled during the summer session. If you are unable to attend for the summer session, you will need to provide a 30-day withdrawal notice. Then, you will need to re-enroll your child and you may be placed on the wait list, as we will be unable to hold their current spot. Families enrolled as of January 1st, may take (2) one week vacation credits during the Summer Session (June, July, and August). Please note, vacation week credits are applied by the week, not individual days.

Priority will be given to new students who attend the entire summer session.

ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

Extracurricular activities occur after 2:30 p.m. We offer a wide variety of extra-curricular activity providers based on the interests of the children and families. Information on these activities is available in the front office and on our web site. Enrollment, questions and payment of chosen activities is handled directly by extracurricular providers. Extracurricular activities are provided as a convenience for the parents only; the school does not participate or represent any of the classes offered. The school suggests an observation of the class prior to signing your child up and committing to the offered session.

Admissions Policies and Procedures

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Infants thru kindergarten age children may be considered for admission. Children entering the Infant and Toddler Community must be able to drink from a bottle (or if over the age of 12 months must be able to drink from a sippy cup or cup). Children entering the PrePrimary Community must have an acceptable concentration span and be able to follow simple instructions. Children entering the Primary Community must be toilet trained and have an acceptable concentration span and be able to follow simple instructions. Because the kindergarten year is the culmination of the Montessori Primary Preschool curriculum, children enrolled in the kindergarten program must have attended a Montessori Preschool program for a minimum of one year, preferably from Village Montessori. Although we will consider other Montessori Programs on a case by case basis. A space is reserved in an age appropriate class when the non-refundable registration fee is received. A child is considered enrolled when a registration fee and all required paperwork is submitted to the office. Each parent is given a copy of the Parent Handbook to read. Your signature confirms you have read and understand the information it contains. All students are subject to a four-week adjustment period. If after this adjustment period, the child has not settled in, a conference will be scheduled to determine if our program is meeting the needs of the child. Parents are required to tour the school and participate in at least one classroom visit with the child.

ADMISSIONS PAPERWORK

A parent/legal guardian inquiring about the center will be given an enrollment packet. To be fully admitted and enrolled in our center, all the required Admissions Paperwork must be completed and on file prior to the first day the child attends school.

Student records are kept in the admission office and include complete registration forms, progress reports and conference notes. All student records remain the property of the school. Student records are confidential and can only be released with written parent permission. Parents and legal guardians who desire to review the student's records are requested to call the office and request a meeting to access the student's files. A staff member must be present whenever records are reviewed.

The Admissions Agreement and Other Required Forms are specific for each school year and therefore are required to be completed annually.

TUITION POLICY

There is a non-refundable Initial Registration fee required with the Application for Enrollment. There is a non-refundable annual registration required each spring. Tuition is based upon an Annual Tuition and is prepaid monthly. Tuition is due on the last day of the month. Payment must be received by 6pm of the due date to avoid late fees.

If payment is not paid within 3 days of the due date, you will not be allowed to bring your child to school unless special arrangements are made with the director. If payment is not paid within 5 days of the due date, your child will be dis-enrolled and you will be subject to the 30-day notice of withdrawal requirement, unless special arrangements are made with the director.

Payments for tuition may be made by cash, check, or online bank transfers. There will be a \$25 returned check fee for all checks returned by the bank

The parent/guardian who signs the Application for Enrollment and the Admissions Agreement for the child is financially responsible for tuition and any other expenses relating to the student.

Accounts that fall delinquent may be sent to a collection agency.

No tuition reduction will be made for absences of any child. Tuition is due monthly regardless if the child is present. There is no reduction in tuition for illness, family vacations, school closures, or for any other reasons.

We offer a sibling discount for families that have more than one child enrolled. Only one discount per family is allowed. The sibling discount is off the lower tuition rate.

A thirty-day advance notice will be given prior to any tuition or rate changes.

Refunds will not be provided.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Each child enrolled or admitted must meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the CA. Dept. of Health Services. The Physician's Report and copy of the immunization card must be submitted prior to the first day of enrollment. As per California law, the only exemption from immunization is when a physician recommends against immunization based upon medical reasons.

HOLIDAYS

Village Montessori is a year-round school and offers care every weekday of the year, except as noted on the school calendar. The school will be closed for some holidays and for some staff development days. You will receive a yearly calendar with all holidays and staff development days noted in advance. The following is a usual list of these days:

- Teacher In-Service Days (usually three days per year)
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving and the Day after
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Winter Break

If any changes are made to the Holiday schedule you will be given 30 days' notice of the change. No tuition reduction is made for holidays falling within a given month.

In Service Teacher Days will be scheduled as needed. You will be given 30 days' notice of these meetings and any other calendar changes.

The school **MAY** choose to stay open during daycare during a holiday break. If a family chooses to utilize the daycare portion of the Winter Break, there will be an additional fee due per day of attendance. The per day non-refundable charge will be due at least two weeks prior to the scheduled daycare so that we can ensure proper student/teacher ratio.

VACATION CREDIT

For families enrolled as of January 1st, there are **(2) one week vacation credits per family that may be used during the summer session only. The credit can only be taken during the summer session only, no exceptions (June, July, or August).** Please note, vacation week credits are applied by the week, not individual days.

Credit is given only to those families who actually take vacation; it is not intended to be used as "free tuition".

WITHDRAWING YOUR CHILD AND REDUCTION OF SCHEDULE

As per the Admissions Agreement, if you need to withdrawal your child from the program, we ask for a one-month advance written notice to be given to the school office. No tuition refund will be given if written notice is not provided. A 30-day written notice is also required to reduce your child's schedule. Should you reduce your schedule, there is no guarantee that your original schedule will be available at a later date.

DISMISSAL

We reserve the right to dismiss a child for reasons of nonpayment of fees, the inability of a child or parent to adjust to the Center's program or if a child's behavior is unsuitable or interferes with the safety and welfare of other children. A child may be dismissed by the School without prior notice, if in the opinion of the school, it is in the best interest of the child or the school to do so.

Classroom Placement and Transitions

SCHOOL CONSIDERATIONS

Placement Process is different from conventional schools whereas placement is often determined by the child's ability to get along with the teacher (and vice versa). Village is not a teacher-centered educational system: it is child-centered. Placement is determined by matching the skills and needs of the individual with the skills and needs of the learning community. The teacher is one part of the learning community. Other factors included are age, gender and the personalities within each community.

PARENT REQUESTS

The School is responsible for providing qualified and talented teachers in every classroom and works very hard to ensure that each child is placed in the environment where her/his needs will be met. **Classroom placements are based on these criteria and not on parent requests for a particular teacher or classroom.**

NEW STUDENT PHASE IN:

Once accepted, your child's teacher will contact you to arrange the process of transition, a vital aspect of introducing our School to both parents and child. The following process is followed:

1. Parent Observation
2. School Visit
3. First day of School

Prior to the first day of attendance, we ask that the child and parent schedule a "school visit" to meet the teachers and spend time getting to know each other. This is generally a 30-minute visit and allows the child to see that the parent is comfortable at the school, it allows the child to explore his/her new environment, it allows the parent and teacher to discuss the child's schedule and routine, and finally it allows any questions to be answered between both the parents and the teachers.

To ease the transition, it is suggested that the child have experienced some separating from parents with either family or friends prior to entering the classroom.

MOVING UP FROM ONE COMMUNITY TO THE NEXT

TRANSITION FROM INFANT AND TODDLER TO PREPRIMARY

Each child turning 24 months of age will be transitioned into the PrePrimary classroom. When this occurs, we will follow the following procedure:

- Infant and Toddler teacher will schedule with the PrePrimary teacher to observe the child for at least 30 minutes.

- We recommend that the parents observe the new classroom for about a half-an-hour prior to the child's move. After this observation, parents can bring questions to the PrePrimary Teacher or Director.
- Infant and Toddler teacher will bring the child to visit the new class and point out similar materials and familiar children. Several more visits may take place depending on the child's readiness, before the "real" move.
- A meeting between the PrePrimary teacher and the child's parent will take place to share information and discuss the changes: Larger classroom and more materials; Mixed age group; 2 years old to 3.5 years old; Expectation for the level of work and concentration will increase; Food preparation and snack are group activities in the PrePrimary class and take up much of the morning.
- The "real move" can be celebrated by formally moving the child's belongings from one room to another. Also, the child's records and information regarding previous lessons and mastery of such lessons can be given to the child's new teacher.
- By taking time to visit, observe and share information about the progression of the child through the developmental stages that are built into the Montessori community, the child looks forward to changes and new situations with a healthy anticipation.

Transitions during School Holidays/Breaks and the Summer Sessions are discouraged due to absences of the Lead Teachers or regular assistants.

TRANSITION FROM PREPRIMARY TO PRIMARY

When the child's lead teacher brings a recommendation to the Director to move the child to the next community, we will follow the following procedure:

- PrePrimary teacher will schedule with the Primary teacher to observe the child for at least 30 minutes.
- We recommend that the parents observe the Primary classroom for about half-an-hour prior to the child's move. After this observation, parents can bring questions to the Primary teacher or Director.
- PrePrimary teacher will bring the child to visit the Primary class and point out similar materials and familiar children. Several more visits may take place depending on the child's readiness, before the "real" move.
- A meeting between the Primary teacher and the child's parent will take place to share information and discuss the changes: Larger classroom and more materials; Mixed age group, spanning over 3 years; Expectation for the level of work and concentration will increase; Food preparation and snack are individual work.
- The "real move" can be celebrated by formally moving the child's belongings from one room to another. Also, the child's records and information regarding previous lessons and mastery of such lessons can be given to the child's new teacher.
- By taking time to visit, observe and share information about the progression of the child through the developmental stages that are built into the Montessori community, the child looks forward to changes and new situations with a healthy anticipation.

In determining a child's readiness for moving up, faculty first considers social and emotional maturity. We also look very closely at the child's academic skills. There also needs to be a strong sense of self-direction and independence, and the ability to work with concentration – alone or in cooperation with a group.

Children enrolled in the Primary classroom must be toilet trained.

Transitions during School Holidays/Breaks and the Summer Sessions are discouraged due to absences of the Lead Teachers or regular assistants.

THREE YEAR DEVELOPMENTAL CYCLE

Because the composition of a learning community is selected very carefully, it is unusual for children to be transferred from one class to another during this three-year period. However, if there appears to be a beneficial reason for a change in classroom, you will be notified and included in the evaluative process.

Getting To and From School

ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP

We adhere to policies and procedures that promote a safe and secure environment. According to state regulations, (Title 22, Div. 12, Chap. 1, Sec. 101229.1) – **It is mandatory for the responsible person to sign in/out the child daily, using a full first and last name and time of the day.** Village Montessori abides by this regulation thru an electronic sign in/out system. All authorized adults will use their “electronic fingerprint” or will be assigned a private, confidential code to sign in/out. This is a responsibility of each parent and should Village be fined for any reason for the parent failing to sign in/out, the parent will be assessed the fine.

No child under any circumstance will be released to an unauthorized person. All authorized persons must be indicated in the child’s records. In the event that your child needs to leave the center with someone other than those mentioned on your emergency form, you must notify the Director of this in writing or via email. The person picking the child up must show identification and sign out the child upon departure. This is for your child’s safety.

SEPARATION

To ease separation, we ask parents to establish a routine that is assuring and encourages independence:

- Help your child by keeping to a schedule
- Encourage independence such as walking on their own and/or carrying something.
- Say goodbye and assure him that he will be picked up later. Linger at the door for a lengthy goodbye disrupts the entire class and causes emotional distress for both your child and you. Your child will be greeted by his teacher as he proceeds into the classroom.

CELL PHONES

Our classrooms are Cell Phone Free Zones, including staff members as well as Parents/Guardians. We ask that your undivided attention is given to your child during drop off and pick up, and request that your phone is not brought into the classroom. If you must bring your phone into the classroom, at minimum please turn your phones ringer on “quiet” or “vibrate” and do not answer while in the classroom.

TARDINESS

For children not enrolled in morning daycare, drop-off is between 8:45 and 9:00am. Our Montessori Class starts promptly at 9:00am. Late arrivals disrupt the classroom community, the work of the other children and the teacher. Out of respect for your own child, the classroom community, the other children, and the teachers, please help your child arrive at school on time.

We consider excessive tardies to be problematic. Teachers are expected to speak with parents directly about late arrivals. If there is no improvement, then teachers are expected to inform the administration when tardies are disruptive and problematic.

A family considering Village should determine if their schedules and family circumstances permit consistent on-time attendance before enrolling in the school.

If by chance you are tardy, please enter the classroom for drop-off quietly, with as little disruption as possible. If you would like to say goodbye in the office, we will be happy to take your child into class for you.

ATTENDANCE

Consistent attendance is important. The children who benefit most from the prepared environment are those who attend regularly. There are several reasons for this:

- A consistent routine provides the security for the children; a sense of security enables children to learn more readily. Children learn to tell time by "what comes next"; children gain a sense of security when they know what happens next.
- A child's experiences in the classroom and with the materials are cumulative; consistent attendance bolsters learning.
- Your own commitment to your child's presence in school affirms the importance of school and learning.
- Intermittent attendance, or periods of long absence, can affect both your child's adaptation to school and their learning.

Please notify the school of any planned absences or call the front the office if your child's absence is due to illness for more than two days.

Make-up days are not allowed due licensing capacity requirements. The State of California requires that we do not exceed the licensed number of children at the center at any time. Please do not assume your child can come on a day they are not normally scheduled to come to make-up for a day missed.

There will be no tuition credit given for days absent. Tuition credit may be given for extended illness and will be at the discretion of the Director.

If you have an emergency and need immediate care on a day your child doesn't normally attend, please contact the Director to see if special arrangements can be made.

LATE PICK-UP

In the event that you are running late, please call the school. Children are aware of their routine and are best able to accept changes when informed in advance.

Children not enrolled in the daycare portion of the day, we allow a 15-minute grace period for drop-off and pick-up. Students dropped-off earlier than 15 minutes or picked-up later than 15 minutes will be charged an hourly rate for care. Charges will not be pro-rated and any portion of an hour used will be charged the full hour.

Children under the age of 24 months must be picked up after 9.5 hours of care and all children must be picked up by 5:30pm. Children over the age of 2 years must be picked up by 6:00pm. If you have an emergency and are unable to pick up your child on time, you must call the school office. A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed after 6:00 pm (or 5:30pm or 9.5 hours of care for children under 24 months). You will be required to sign a late pick up form indicating the fees that will be charged. These late fees will be billed to your account. Any parent who is

consistently late in picking up their child WILL lose the privilege of having their child in the program. If a child is not picked up by 6:05 p.m. and we have not heard from the parent, we will begin calling emergency contacts listed on your emergency form. For this reason, make sure these are current and accurate. Failure to receive parental notification by 6:30 p.m. will result in the staff contacting the Police Department. The police will attempt to locate the parents as well as emergency contacts. If no one can be reached, CPS will be notified and may assume custody of the child.

GUIDELINES FOR SAFETY DURING DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

- **Drive very slowly** in the parking lot. Young children are difficult to see.
- By law, all children younger than 8 years old, unless taller than 4'9" are required to be in the appropriate **child safety seat system** whenever they ride in a passenger vehicle. The safety seat system must be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- **By law, only hands-free cell phones are permitted while driving in California.** However, for the safety of the children, it is preferred that the parking lot and school be considered cell phone free zones.
- **It is illegal to leave young children in a vehicle, unsupervised, in the parking lot.**
- **You are responsible for your child's safety entering and exiting the school building.** Do not permit your child to run ahead of you and run out of your arm's reach.
- You are responsible to bring your child to a staff member during drop off. **Do not leave your child alone in the classroom at any time.**
- You are responsible to alert a staff member that you are taking your child from their care. Do not allow your child to leave without letting a teacher know that you are picking your child up.
- Each family will be given a Door Code for access into the building. This is a layer of security for the office and we ask that your code be kept confidential.

SCHOOL CONFIDENTIALITY AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

It is our duty to protect the confidentiality of our students, parents and staff. Release of records, sharing information or discussion of current or former members of our community is against school policy. All who belong to the school are expected to follow this policy. Parents/guardians who desire to review their child's file are requested to contact the front office and schedule time to review the child's file. A staff member must be present whenever records are reviewed.

Parents who post pictures of children from the school must have permission from that child's parent to do so. Children should not be named in postings.

To maintain the professional relationship between parent and teacher, staff members are strongly discouraged from "friending" parents within the social media sites.

If a school is requesting academic records from the school, they must send a request form with a parent signature to the school. The school will not release academic documentation without a parent signature.

The school maintains a Facebook and an Instagram account. We occasionally will post children's photographs on the accounts. We will never include the children's names in the postings. If you would like to opt out of any postings of your child, please provide a letter to the office and we will keep your letter in your child's file.

DISCIPLINE

We strive to keep the classroom environment a peaceful one. Children have freedom in the classroom so long as the child's behavior is respectful to themselves, others and classroom materials. Village Montessori does not under any circumstance use corporal punishment or intimidating means of discipline. Our approach to discipline is that of communication with mutual respect.

Behaviors which are contrary to our underlying **foundation of respect** will be addressed immediately and appropriately:

- Disruptive behavior, which deprives others of learning.
- Intimidation, verbal abuse, physical threats and hurtful acts (such as hitting, punching, kicking, or biting).
- Any bullying type behavior, including but not limited to, any physical or verbal bullying.
- Destruction of school property (classroom and playground equipment and supplies).

Teachers will let a child know if he is interfering with another's freedom and/or disrupting the peaceful work environment. The goal of discipline is helping the child gain self-control through learning appropriate behavior, rather than forcing the child to conform to adult standards. The following guidelines are followed by our guides:

- Redirect the child to an activity or work that is appropriate and meaningful.
- Use consistency.

- Allow for natural consequences to take place that are understood and logical to the child ex: cleaning up after a spill.
- Recognize and encourage concentrated and appropriate efforts.
- Model appropriate behaviors and actions.
- Use respect in all contacts with the child – what you say, how you say it and how you act.
- Teaching empathy without requiring a child to say “I’m sorry” without really meaning it.

We encourage our parents to mirror these basic behaviors at home, to make for consistent environments in your child’s main areas of life. While a parent is on school property, the above-mentioned guidelines must be followed.

In nearly all cases application of the foregoing guidelines will suffice. However, if the behavior of a child is not positively affected by this approach, the following procedures will be followed:

- First step: parent/teacher conference to discuss a plan of action involving the triangle: parents, teacher and child.
- Second step: parent, teacher and director conference to discuss further options available to help the child.
- Third step: It may be determined that the school does not meet the needs of the child and an alternate education setting is suggested.

The school reserves the right to terminate the attendance of any student or family whose presence is considered by the school to be detrimental to the best interest of the school and/or child(ren). The school reserves the right to ask a parent to collect their child from school as an appropriate action when the child is displaying harmful behavior. Any meetings between family/teacher/direct will be documented for use of all sides.

BITING

We understand that from time to time children may bite. This is most prevalent in toddlers. Young children may have difficulty expressing their feelings into words therefore occasionally they may bite. We will work with you as much as possible, to help alleviate the problem. This process may include parent teacher conferences, professional evaluations, and following any recommendations received. Should the biting continue, we will partner with the parents and attempt to solve the problem. Keep in mind, occasionally the solution to stop the biting is for the child to find a school better suited to meeting their developmental needs (ex: smaller class sizes or speech therapy). You are welcome to re-enroll when the biting has subsided.

DRESS CODE

Children need to wear play clothes to school. Your child’s whole early childhood education experience is based around exploration and investigation. We offer many daily activities and opportunities for your child with the following media: glue, paint, markers, sand, water, etc...

Clothing should be easy for all children to undo and take off so they can take care of their own bathroom needs. Blouses and shirts that do not cover the stomach or crop tops should not be worn. Costume type clothing (such as ballerina or princess dresses, super hero capes, etc..) should be left at home. Children should wear tennis shoes

with socks or rubber soled shoes. Sandals with straps and toes covered are acceptable. Flip flops, rain boots, dress shoes, crocs, tap shoes, slippers or shoes with heels are not acceptable as they make climbing, running and jumping a dangerous.

Please mark ALL of your child's outer clothing such as jackets, sweaters, sweatshirts, hats, gloves, etc. with your child's name. We will do our best to keep track of these items, but they do sometimes get misplaced or taken home by another student. Having their name written inside is the best way to help them return to you if lost.

Clothing and linens are the responsibility of the parents and will not be laundered at the center. The school will have on hand extra clothing and bedding in the event a child has an accident.

Extra clothes – each child must provide a complete change of clothing which is clearly labeled and placed in a plastic zip lock baggie. It is the parent's responsibility to replace any clothes as the child grows into a new size or as season change. Each classroom may have a set of "extra clothes" marked VMC, which are community owned and are there if/when a child gets wet or dirty and their own extra clothes are not available. If your child wears VMC labeled clothes home, please wash and return them to school as soon as possible.

HOMEWORK

Generally speaking, *homework* refers to academic work. However, we Montessori educators like to broaden the term: all work that is done at home is *homework*.

We hope that all children leaving Village for the day are given time to both relax and be responsible for the activities surrounding home life. Please refer to the end of this handbook for suggested responsibilities by age.

The practice of "reading" greatly influences a students' academic success. For our youngest children, parents model a love for reading by reading stories with their children and incorporating specific "reading time" for the family. Children can also be encouraged to "read by picture"; practicing storytelling and imagination. Those children who have skills necessary for early reading (emergent readers) may borrow school books that are at their level – helping to make this special time successful for the child.

Children enrolled in the kindergarten program may be assigned weekly homework packets. By assigning homework, we partner together with the parents and school in supporting the child's academic progress. We find that children perform better when the parents are more involved with the child's learning experience. We also find that with the simple assignments of homework packets, we are not only encouraging good academic habits but we are preparing the child for the next school they will attend.

TOYS AND SHARE DAYS

Games and toys are generally discouraged from being brought to school. Toys can become lost or broken and this can be quite distressing to a child. Personal items that have educational merit may be brought to share with the class. Parents are asked to monitor carefully what the child brings to school.

For students enrolled in the Primary Montessori and Kindergarten Communities, please speak with your child's teacher for specific share days and guidelines. Each student is encouraged to bring a favorite book, postcard, trophy, a picture, educational item, or item pertaining to the unit of study.

MISSING MATERIALS

Please be aware that any material with a missing part is removed from the children's use until the part is found and the work is "complete". Although we keep many spare parts in storage, we always spend days or weeks looking for missing parts before replacing them. Some parts, however, must be ordered from Montessori Supplies and could take several weeks to replace.

It is quite normal for children to pocket things, especially tiny or unusual items, so we hope you will stress only the need to return it and not mention the child's act of removing it. You might say, "this must be in its place," "you need this at your school", or "the children need this for their work."

Any small object you may find in your child's backpack, pockets, or folders, regardless of how insignificant it may seem (or who he says gave it to him), should be returned as it is significant to the classroom.

If your child goes through a period of pocketing, please help us during that time by checking carefully each day. Let him/her help you check and seal the objects in an envelope and write "for the school" on it. This may be a sign of love for his school, or a need for security, but never theft at this age.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

We provide a thorough evaluation of a child's performance which takes into consideration the whole child, including strengths, limitations, and social, physical, and creative achievements; the education your child receives at Village extends far beyond basic skills in math and language. Traditional schools provide a ranking or scoring evaluation of a child's work. Grading creates an environment of winners and losers, undermining the spirit of cooperation and community. Research indicates that grading reduces creativity, as students aim for work that will be safe and acceptable to the adult. And therein lies another powerful reason not to use traditional grades: the children begin to work to please the adult rather than themselves, to work for the extrinsic rather than the intrinsic reward. For these reasons, Village does not "grade" children.

PROGRESS REPORTS AND PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

The teachers who have worked with your child (ages 2 and above) will produce evaluations during the year of your child's progress in the classroom. You will receive two written evaluations each year. These reports will be reviewed with you in person at conferences with your child's teacher in the winter and spring.

In the winter and spring of each school year, you will have the opportunity to meet with your child's teacher to discuss her observations and recordings of your child's progress at parent/teacher conferences. Anytime throughout the year, if you have a question about your child's progress, please email or call the teacher for a discussion.

OBSERVATION/OPEN DOOR POLICY

Parents are free to visit the school at any time during the school hours to observe their child and program activities. We request that you schedule a time with the front office, whose job it is to manage numbers and times of visits in each classroom in any one day. Unannounced classroom observations are done from outside the classroom window to protect the concentration of the children working and the classroom environment.

Classroom observations are encouraged and scheduled during the school year, after new students have settled in (typically October thru May). There are guidelines for entering classrooms and recording questions and observations without disrupting the working children. Staff is available after observations to answer questions.

ALLERGIES

The school is sympathetic to those children with food allergies, especially nut allergies. It is your responsibility to inform the school of any food allergies, and the severity of the allergies. In order to maintain a safe environment for all children, **we do not allow any nut products at school.** We are a nut-free school. This includes breakfast, lunches, snacks, drinks, and birthday celebrations. Be careful of granola bars, trail mix, and any other products listing nuts as an ingredient.

DIAPERS, WIPES, BOTTLES, SIPPY CUPS, WATER BOTTLES

For children not potty-trained, the parents will provide all necessary Diapers, Wipes and Ointment. A notice will be sent home when supplies are running low and need to be replenished. Please send in replenishments in a timely manner. Infants using a bottle must bring pre-made labeled bottles to school each morning. Unused bottles will be sent home. Children one years and above will be encouraged to transition from a bottle to a sippy cup. All children are welcomed to bring a labeled Water Bottle from home to stay hydrated.

NUTRITION, SNACK AND LUNCH OPTIONS

Village is a **low-sugar** (sugar listed as the fifth ingredient or lower) facility. This policy is to be followed in breakfast, snacks, lunches brought to school and in community celebrations (such as birthdays) and special occasions. In the event that food brought to school is not low in sugar, it will be returned with your child.

We respect the children in their eating habits. They will be encouraged to eat their food, and they will be encouraged to try new foods but will not be forced to eat. Any recurring eating problems will be discussed with the child's parent. Children will be encouraged to eat their protein menu items first, then any vegetables/fruits, and finally any other items. Sugary items will be sent home to be eaten at a later time. With home provided lunches, uneaten foods will be sent home, if possible.

If special dietary needs or allergies require omitting a nutritional requirement from the school lunch, parents will need to provide a nutritionally complete (see guidelines) lunch from home. All food allergies must be listed in the school enrollment forms.

Honey will not be served to any child under the age of 12 months, per Licensing regulations.

Bottles are not allowed after 12 months. Sippy cups are not allowed after 24 months.

For your convenience, the school partners with a catering company in order to offer a Hot Lunch option. All purchases are made directly to the catering company and lunches will be delivered daily to the school. Each day's menu will offer two meal choices – one regular meal choice and one vegetarian meal selection. Each hot lunch will include a protein, a whole grain, a fresh fruit, a fresh vegetable, and milk. Snack and Lunch menus are posted on the web site and in the front lobby.

If Parents prefer to provide a home lunch, please make sure it meets nutritional guidelines set forth by the school.

Packed lunch guidelines:

- Healthy and balanced meal providing a protein, whole grain and fruit or vegetable.
- Do not pack gum, candy, chips, cakes, cookies, soda or fruit juice, as they will be packaged and sent home
- Do pack sandwiches, soup, yogurt, hard-boiled eggs, cheese, fruit, veggie strips, crackers, and milk (water is always available).
- Do pack a cloth napkin or paper napkin with cutlery.
- Include ice-packs if lunches include perishable items
- Hot items should be served in thermal containers (the school does not have the ability to heat lunches)
- Drinks from home must be water or milk; fruit juice will be sent home
- Food from fast food restaurants are not allowed

Snacks:

- As a part of the children's Practical life activities, the school will have a monthly snack host/hostess sign up calendar. This will allow the children to experience the full process of creating a meal: shopping, preparing, and serving. Each month parents will sign up to bring the snack on a specific day. Your child will help set-up and serve the snack that day. Children experience great joy and pride in the process. A snack will always be served whether we have a snack host/hostess or not. Please plan on serving 24 children. If you would like to participate in the morning snack but do not have the time to prepare, we also offer "snack-ticket" option. If you would like to buy a "snack-ticket" from the front desk, we will purchase the snack on your behalf and your child will still be the snack host for the day.
- Afternoon snacks will be provided by the school. Snacks are offered mid-morning for all children and mid-afternoon (schedules vary per class) for full-day children.

Food Prep and Produce Baskets:

Food prep is also a part of the classroom, and this is in addition to snacks listed on our menu. Parents may be asked to participate in the produce/flower basket rotation for children to use for morning food prep activities, snack and flower arranging. Family involvement will help to enrich our children's appreciation for good nutrition. Participation is voluntary and rotational. Volunteer parents may help in purchasing supplies needed and/or cooking projects.

NAPS AND REST PERIOD

Per licensing regulations, each child will be provided the opportunity to rest daily. Village provides each child a sleeping mat or cot. Parents provide the required bedding. Place the following items inside of a labeled pillowcase: labeled fitted crib sheet, labeled small blanket, and an optional labeled small pillow or lovey. Bedding will be sent home with the child to be washed on Friday, please return them on Monday morning.

Per Licensing regulations, children are required to have a rest period but are not forced to sleep.

Children in the Primary and Kindergarten communities who exhibit the following abilities will be invited by their teachers (with parent's approval) to join the extended afternoon academic period, after a brief resting period, will become "afternoon workers":

- Strong concentration
- Long attention span (can work for an extended time)
- Controlled behavior (self-discipline)
- Follows instruction well
- Sense of maturity & endurance

Children who are "in-between" will be given the opportunity to engage in a quiet activity after a brief resting period. Generally, the move to "afternoon worker" occurs around age 4 ½ and 5 years of age.

LOST AND FOUND

Unlabeled lost/found items are kept in a small box located in the Lobby. When unclaimed, these items are eventually donated to charity.

HOLIDAYS AND CULTURAL EVENTS

Holidays and Cultural events involving parents are integral to the life of the school. Many of these celebrations revolve around the activities of the individual classes, while others bring the larger community together. Whether small and informal or organized for the whole school, celebrations and rituals highlight and affirm the values and vision of our school; with knowledge comes understanding. Building community based on this understanding and respect will further our goal of a more peaceful world community.

Holidays are celebrated in each classroom according to the discretion of the teachers. A few of our favorite holidays will be celebrated school wide and we appreciate parent help with these events.

In an effort to expose children to different cultures we will celebrate various holidays in our classrooms. Although we introduce these holidays to the children, we do not go into depth about the religious holidays. The school remains neutral on all political and religious views. If your family celebrates a specific holiday and you would like to share with your child's class, please speak with the teacher to arrange a time for you to visit the classroom and share your celebration.

STUDY OF LIVING THINGS

At Village we study, observe and may care for an assortment of plants, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, fish and mammals. We may have classroom pets, through which children learn humane treatment of living things.

WATER PLAY AND SAFETY

At Village we enjoy many aspects of water; from actual work in the indoor classroom and in our "outdoor classroom" such as in watering gardens to playing with water tables. For the safety of your child, we will limit water activities to aforementioned uses and will not have wading pools on school premises.

BIRTHDAYS

Both the Infant and Toddler and PrePrimary Montessori communities may bring a low sugar snack or fruit tray to share with their class.

The Primary and Kindergarten communities celebrate birthdays with the "Montessori Birthday Celebration". The birthday child is the 'center of attention' of his/her class by holding the globe and walking around the "sun" and the months of the year as a story of his/her life is read. This is a lovely and natural way to symbolically experience the passing of years and the children thoroughly enjoy this celebration. Each class has its own variation of this theme. Please talk to your child's teacher ahead of time, if you wish to participate. A low sugar snack or fruit tray may be brought to celebrate the occasion. If the student wishes, they may invite their parents to attend this special celebration.

We also suggest donating a book or other item to the class in honor of their child's birthday.

Birthday Party invites – Invitations are not to go into the classroom unless all children are invited, nor are invitations to be handed out by teachers in the classrooms or playground. Invitations may be placed directly into the Friday Folders or sent via email. Class directories are available by contacting your child's teacher or through the front office: info@villagemontessoricenter.com

Balloons, class decorations, goodie bags, paid entertainment and high sugar snacks are not allowed in class.

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips are encouraged for our Primary and Kindergarten students. Although some outings may include the whole group, smaller group outings may be initiated under the guidance of the Lead Teacher. The purpose of field trips is to foster independence by making connections with the world beyond their community to support ongoing classroom work.

Guidelines for Field Trips:

- Parents are welcome and encouraged to participate on our field trips. All children ages 2 or 3 years of age will require a Parent or Chaperone to attend. Children age 4 or older, may attend the field trip without a Parent or Chaperone.

- All parents must sign a consent form for each field trip. You will be notified in advance of each field trip and parental permission must be obtained in order for your child to attend.
- All transportation will occur with either a contract School Bus or thru Parent drivers (following all car seat laws).
- Children attending field trip must wear their Village Montessori school t-shirt
- Children not attending field trip may stay behind in a different classroom as a "helper". The classroom may be a younger age group.

Parent Chaperone responsibilities:

- Parents must commit to escorting children from school to the field trip and from the field trip back to school. No side trips are permitted. Parent chaperones may not leave the group at the field trip site to return home.
- Parents must be in charge of and aware of the children they are responsible for at all times on the trip.
- Parents are asked to refrain from using cell phones while chaperoning.
- Parents must follow the plan and guidelines established by the teachers prior to the trip.
- Parents may not bring younger siblings on the field trip. They cannot give their full attention to the students they are responsible for if they have another child in tow.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We want to be in partnership with parents in the education of children and welcome parent involvement in our school. This might include helping with classroom parties, assisting teachers with projects or accompanying field trips.

DONATIONS / FUND RAISERS

We appreciate any donation parents wish to make to the center. See the director for a list of things the school uses often. Throughout the school year special fundraisers may be scheduled to supplement our operating budget. Each year we desire to replace items that become worn or to purchase new items for the program. Every family is encouraged to participate in these events and we greatly appreciate your support. Our fundraisers may include:

- Book Fairs
- See's Candy Fundraiser

BABYSITTING, ATTENDING CHILDREN'S PARTIES

To maintain the professional integrity of our school, babysitting and/or attending children's parties by Village students is strongly discouraged. If you have references to offer for mother's helpers, babysitters or nannies, please provide the contact information. We will keep on file in our parent resource file.

Employees of Village must refrain from discussing the School's students or issues when they are in the company of Village parents before or after school hours; ex: public encounters, sports events, etc. Mini-conferences must not occur away from school; please contact during school hours to schedule an appointment.

PHOTOGRAPHY / VIDEOGRAPHY

From time to time, we may wish to photograph, videotape, or quote students and or their work in a variety of school-related activities. These reproductions may be displayed or published in school related forums such as yearbooks, newsletters, notices to parents, bulletin boards, website and other social media. By signing that you have received and read this handbook, you are consenting in advance.

HEALTHY SCHOOLS ACT

The Healthy Schools Act requires all California Schools and child care centers to notify parents and guardians of pesticides they expect to use during the year. We do not expect to use any pesticides at this time. We do plan on using bleach and water solutions as well as all-purpose liquid soap to clean the classrooms.

School Communication

BUSINESS HOURS

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 7:00am – 6:00pm | Hours of Operation |
| 8:00am – 4:00pm | Director (by appointment) |
| 7:30am – 3:30pm | Lead Teacher hours (by appointment) |
| 8:00am – 4:00pm | Business Manager/Owner (by appointment) |

PROPER LINES OF COMMUNICATION

| For matters related to: | Please see: |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| School mission, goals, faculty, policies/procedures, safety & security. Unresolved matters related to academic counseling and/or curriculum | Director Jenny Johnson |
| Student progress, classroom events, calendar, specific classroom questions, Montessori birthday celebrations, share items | Your child's Lead Teacher |
| Tuition, statements, and payments | Business Manager/Owner Jenny Johnson |
| Classroom Directory, enrichment programs, before/afterschool activities | Administrative Assistant Bree Yazdizadeh |
| Student Records and hot lunch questions | Administrative Assistant Bree Yazdizadeh |
| Enrollment, Admissions, Wait List, Tours, classroom placement and all other general questions | Administrative Assistant Bree Yazdizadeh |
| Unresolved matters after discussing with Director | Business Manager/Owner Jenny Johnson |

CHANGE IN CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact information must be kept current at all times. It is the Parent's responsibility to provide current contact information at all times, including home and work details. If you have a change of address, email or phone number, notify the school immediately. It is vital that we have current contact information in the event of an emergency.

CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Important school information such as the school calendar, tuition, lunch menu, school forms, and Parent Handbook is available on the school website at www.VillageMontessoriCenter.com.

The school will also regularly send parent reminders and important information via email. Emails from the parents are encouraged and will be responded to as soon as possible.

Each classroom will have a Parent Board with specific classroom information, such as monthly newsletters, monthly themes, upcoming events, daily reports, and snack sign-ups.

Friday Folders – this folder is used for “work” to be sent home, flyers, birthday invites and any other papers to be sent home. Please check your folder on Fridays or on a regular basis.

CONTACTING YOUR CHILD’S TEACHER

We value open and consistent communication regarding your child. During parent orientation, teachers will let you know the best way to contact them. In general, we use two primary forms:

- Call the front office and leave a message for your child’s teacher, a timely response will be given.
- Contact via email at the address provided by the teacher during parent orientation.

Please avoid:

- Dropping by the classroom to speak to the teacher during the school day.
- Sending verbal messages to the teacher via the classroom assistant or front office.
- Speaking to the teacher during drop off/pick up, especially while the children are on the playground.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

For children enrolled in the PrePrimary and Primary programs, Parent/Teacher conferences will be held twice yearly, during the winter and spring sessions. Daily questions, concerns or updates will be addressed in a timely manner, outside of the children’s work period. If you would like to talk, email or call the school and leave a message for your child’s teacher with the front office. If you have an immediate question or concern, the front office will be able to help.

For children enrolled in the Infant and Toddler program, the Needs and Service plan will be updated quarterly. Daily questions, concerns or updates will be addressed during drop off or pick up. If needed, a parent teacher conference may be scheduled.

SCHOOL CLOSING AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

In the event of a school wide emergency, parents will be sent a message via email and the school phone answering machine will be updated. **It is important that parents keep the school up-to-date on emergency contact information and an email address that will reach you during the day.**

Illness

DAILY HEALTH CHECK

We are not licensed to provide get-well care or to isolate children who cannot participate in school activities. A daily health check is given upon each child's arrival at school. **If your child's illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in the normal activities of the day (including outdoor play), your child should not be brought to school.** If your child is required to have more than one breathing treatment/medicine treatment per day, your child should not be brought to school. If your child appears to have symptoms of illness during the day, a parent is contacted and a request is made for the child to be taken home. It is our policy a child must be fever free for 24 hours or have a doctor's permission to return to school.

Your child should not be brought to school if they have one of the following, unless medical evaluation by a health-care professional indicates that you can include the child in the child-care center's activities:

- If your child has a fever (measured by an oral temperature of 100 degrees or greater, a temporal artery temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater, armpit temperature of 99 degrees or greater) and the fever is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill.
- If your child has had to have fever reducing medicine or has had fever within the past 24 hours.
- If your child has started antibiotics in the last 24 hours. Children must stay home for the first 24 hours of taking the first dose of antibiotics.
- They have had any nasal congestion or drainage that is anything other than clear and is not associated with allergies within the last 24 hours. Green or yellow discharge is not normal and usually indicates infection.
- They have an undiagnosed rash.
- Conjunctivitis or Pink Eye Policy – if your child has one or both eyes that are itchy, red, or crusty, **DO NOT BRING THEM TO SCHOOL.** If a child develops any signs of eye infections, the parent will be called to pick up the child. Children going home due to possible eye infections shall remain home for at least 24 hours before returning to school and have at least 3 doses of medicine, or a note from the pediatrician saying when they may return to school.

When returning to school after an illness, please let the school front office know of the nature of the illness and that your child has been cleared to return to normal activities at school.

Should your child become ill during the course of the day, you will be notified immediately. You must arrange to have him picked up as soon as possible – we are not licensed to provide care for sick children. Your child will await your arrival in a safe area away from the other children. If it is difficult for you to get to Village within a reasonable time (30-45 minutes), please designate another person to pick up your child.

Children sent home due to fever or vomiting/diarrhea must be symptom free and without need for fever reducing medicine for 24 hours before coming back to school. We will provide you an "Illness Notice" letting you know what symptoms your child experienced at school. This note will explain the 24 hour rule for returning to school.

If your child has been diagnosed with a communicable illness, please notify the school so that the other parents may be alerted to watch for symptoms.

GUIDELINES FOR HEAD LICE

Village Montessori is a nit-free school. A child will only be re-admitted by the administration office. Treatment or a Doctor's note will not automatically guarantee re-admission, only being free of lice and nits will guarantee readmission.

MEDICATIONS

The school administers prescription medications only.

Medications are to come to school in their original container, with prescription date, doctor's name and the child's name. These are checked in at the front desk and a Medical Authorized Form will need to be completed.

Any exceptions need to be accompanied by a written-doctor's note indicating dosage for the child.

Prescription and breathing treatments are given once daily and usually given around lunch.

Medications, such as diaper rash crème, etc., will be handled on a case by case basis.

SUNSCREEN AND OINTMENTS

Sunscreen is most effective if applied prior to sun exposure. Therefore it is school's policy for parents to apply sunscreen before your child arrives at school. Those parents who wish for sunscreen to be reapplied on their child are to sign a "Sunscreen Use Permission Form" and provide the school with sunscreen. Those parents who wish for any other ointment to be reapplied are to sign a "Ointment Use Permission Form" and provide the school with ointment. The sunscreen/ointment must be labeled with the child's first and last name and for safety reasons, will only be used on the child whose name is on the bottle. If at any time you change brands, you need to fill out a new form.

ESSENTIAL OILS

Happy and Healthy children are our highest priorities. Our young children are building their immune systems and are extremely susceptible to the many germs that are easily passed from child to child. We constantly clean the classroom throughout the day, wash hands, and have hired a professional janitorial service to clean the classrooms at night. However, sometimes the germs continue. We are open to new ideas and new products to keep the classrooms healthy and clean. To this end, some classrooms may elect to diffuse Essential Oils throughout the day, especially during the naptime portion of the day. Some of the oils which may be diffused are DoTerra OnGuard and DoTerra Lavender. If you would like any additional information in regards to the effects and the benefits of these

Essential Oils, please visit www.Doterra.com/US/en/p/on-guard-oil. You may also see the front office for more information.

ACCIDENTS

Should your child be injured while at the school, we will advise you as soon as possible. Our first and immediate concern will be to care for your child. Depending upon the severity of the injury, you will be contacted and consulted about the procedures you want followed (doctor or hospital, etc.). Our staff members have been trained and certified in both First Aid and CPR.

All teachers observing a minor incident will fill out an "Ouch/Incident Report" for small injuries such as scrapes, bumps, and bruises. All significant incidents, accidents, injuries and illnesses will be documented on an "Incident/Illness Report" and the parents will receive a copy to be signed; the signed copy will remain at school and be placed in the child's file. The original signed forms will be placed in the child's file, a copy will be provided upon request.

In case of a more serious injury we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. If we can't reach you we will call the child's physician. If necessary, we will also call emergency care services. Until the parent, physician, or ambulance arrives, we will make all necessary decisions about the care of the child. The school will maintain a parent's signed consent form agreeing to this provision. It is to your child's benefit, and therefore extremely necessary, that you keep the school up to date on phone numbers, emergency numbers and other pertinent information.

Safety and Emergency Preparedness Plan

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

In an emergency requires calling for an ambulance, Police, and/or Fire Department, the following procedures should be followed:

| | |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Ambulance/Police/Fire | 911 |
| Poison Control Center | (800) 222-1222 |
| Red Cross – Orange County Chapter | (714) 481-5300 |
| Fire Department | (714) 573-6000 |
| Police Department | (949) 770-6011 |

For all area-wide emergencies, listen to the radio for instructions from emergency personnel.

PRIMARY SAFE MEETING PLACE

Inside fenced playground in back corner near the shopping center.

SECONDARY SAFE MEETING PLACES

If the danger extends to our fenced in playground, we may locate to the main parking lot of the shopping center.

If the danger requires an evaluation of our School Grounds, we will meet at:

**Glen Yermo Elementary School
26400 Trabuco Road
Mission Viejo, Ca 92691
Main Office: (949) 586-6766**

Once we are en-route to our Safe Meeting Place, no child will be released until we have reached our destination. A parent's responsibility should she/he arrive during our safe movement to our site, is to assist in whatever may be needed. We will release children only when we have received advisement from local authorities.

ANNUAL INSPECTION

Fire extinguishers and Building inspections are done annually by local county, fire and safety inspectors.

DAILY INSPECTION

An admin person conducts grounds inspection on a daily basis. However, all employees are responsible for reporting anything that looks unsafe or poses a potential safety hazard. If you encounter a hazard, remove it and notify admin immediately.

STAFF ORIENTATION TO THE EMERGENCY PLAN

All employees are oriented to the Emergency Plan at least annually. Orientation includes review of employee's roles during an emergency and our emergency procedures.

MESSAGE TO PARENTS

Each year all parents are asked to complete and sign the emergency contact and release forms that provide updated emergency and releases for the child and designate persons who are authorized to pick up the child.

TRAINING AND DRILLS

In accordance with State laws, fire drills are conducted monthly and Earthquake drills are conducted quarterly. All students and staff are required to participate in these mandated drills. The office staff will maintain a record of these drills. Staff members are required to be certified in CPR and First Aid. Staff will receive training on the school's Emergency Plan implementation, including their respective assigned emergency response functions and use of supplies in the disaster kits.

EMERGENCY KITS

Individual emergency kits must be provided upon enrollment and updated every three years. Parents may purchase an emergency kit from the school or provide one with comparable supplies. Emergency kits are the property of the program and are not taken when a child leaves the program.

SHELTER IN PLACE

Should we need to "shelter in place" or "lock down", no parent will be allowed in or out of the building until we receive advisement from local authorities.

STRANGER ON CAMPUS

Any person entering the school, who is not a parent or authorized pickup person or an unknown person to the staff, is considered a stranger. Upon entering the school, such persons must identify themselves, state their purpose and show some form of picture identification in order to pick up a child.

PARENT NOTIFICATION IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY

If possible, parents will be notified by email and we will leave a message on the answering machine in the school office. Teachers will make calls by cellular phone should there not be enough time to notify parents by email or

change the message on the answering machine. If cellular phones are inoperable, the children will remain with their teachers at the Safe Meeting Place until a parent or approved adult arrives to retrieve them.

Note: Whether we are in our Safe Meeting Place or in our building, we will ONLY release children to those whose names are on the approved pick up lists provided by the parents.

COMMUNICATION DURING AN EMERGENCY

The school will communicate with parents via email through our School email system. It is very important to alert the front office of any changes in your contact information.

How parents can communicate with the school: Depending on the circumstances, communications may be limited. In the event that the phone lines remain open, they may be tied up if there are multiple calls that come in at the same time.

Our first priority in the event of an emergency is to ensure that children and school staff are safe. Our second priority is to contact parents and to keep you informed.

The school will contact the Sheriff's Department in the event of an emergency and follows their instructions.

BUILDING SECURITY

In addition to our sign in/out requirements regulated by the State, we take these additional measures. The front door requires an access code to open the door. The lobby and front door also includes a visual security system.

RELEASE AUTHORIZATION

Children will not be released to any person other than a parent, legal guardian or someone duly authorized in writing by the parent or guardian. At the time of enrollment, parents are asked to list those person authorized to pick up their child(ren). If it becomes necessary to have someone not on your list to pick up a child, a written release must be provided by the parent. This person must be able to identify themselves with picture identification. It is against the law for the school to prohibit a parent from picking up their child unless the school is provided with documentation stating otherwise. Please contact the office in these circumstances.

All visitors and volunteers must be checked in through the front office and are accompanied from there to the classrooms by a staff member. Village has an open door policy and parents may visit at any time. Family members who wish to visit must have parental permission and should be arranged in advance. We ask all families to please keep in mind when a child sees a family member at school, they think it's time to go home.

SMOKING / ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES / GUNS & WEAPONS

We are a non-smoking facility. It is against the law to smoke any substance in or around the school, including the playground and parking lot.

Adults who appear to be intoxicated or otherwise impaired whether due to substance use, illness, or emotional crisis should not pick children up from school. Authorities will be called if we find it necessary.

Guns and weapons are not permitted at our facility.

POLICY ON CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT REPORTING

California Penal Code and Licensing requirements state that child care personnel are MANDATED to report immediately to the police or Child Protective Services (CPS) if they suspect child abuse, neglect or exploitation. If it is suspected that your child may have been abused, we are mandated to report it to the Child Abuse Registry. We are not required to notify the parents.

COMMUNITY CARE LICENSING AND CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES RIGHT TO INTERVIEW AND AUDIT

The parties to this Agreement are aware of Community Care Licensing Division's right to interview the child and audit records maintained by the School without securing the prior consent of anyone. They also reserve the right to observe the physical condition of the child, including conditions indicating abuse or neglect and to have a licensed medical professional physically examine the child.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Village does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation.

POLICY CHANGES

Village reserves the right to change school policies at any time throughout the year.

Tasks Children Can Do To Learn Responsibility

“Tasks children can do to learn responsibility.” *The Brown University Child and Adolescent Behavior Letter*, 1999.

Children learn responsibility by being responsible. Sometimes parents only give children tasks that relate to the child’s personal effects, such as picking up their belongings. One of the best ways you can teach your child helpfulness is to provide opportunities for him/her to contribute to the family. However, it is important not to give him/her only the “low dignity jobs” such as taking out the garbage and cleaning up the dog’s messes.

The following is a list of age-appropriate tasks. The list is by no means complete, but serves as a guide for parents who may not know how much their children can contribute from an early age.

| 18 months-3 years old | 4-6 years old |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Turn off lights while being carried | All of the 18 months-3 year old, plus: |
| Get own cereal or snack from kid friendly containers | Help find grocery items in the store |
| Wash tables and counters with damp sponge | Pour things |
| Put soiled or wet diaper in the diaper pail | Help measure ingredients |
| Help clean up after meals and play | Sort white clothes from dark clothes for laundry |
| Run simple errands around the house | Help with vacuuming, sweeping and dusting |
| Help put groceries away | Take library books and videos to and from car |
| Carry in light groceries | Put dishes in the dishwasher |
| Put plastic dishes in the dishwasher | Measure soap for dishwasher and start cycle |
| Bring recyclables to the garage | Empty dishwasher and stack dishes on counter |
| Put own clothes away. Take clothes out of the dryer. | Walk well-behaved pets |
| Carry in the newspaper or mail | Help fold towels and wash clothes |
| Pick up toys and clothes | Give you a back rub or foot rub |
| Wash vegetables, tear lettuce, mix salad | Water plants |
| Help set the table | Help younger siblings |
| Feed and water pets | Help with garden |
| Wake up siblings | Sweep and mop floor |
| Help make beds | Make a simple meal |
| Scramble eggs, make toast | Assist in meal planning |
| Make salads | Help wash pets |
| Lead family prayers | Prepare own lunch |
| Clear dishes from the table | Start to manage own money |
| Seal and stamp envelopes | Set table |
| Take off/put on socks and shoes | Clear table |
| Dress self | Read to younger siblings |
| Eat with a spoon and fork | |