

# Village



## Montessori Center

Parent Handbook  
2014-2015

[www.VillageMontessoriCenter.com](http://www.VillageMontessoriCenter.com)

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*“Free the child’s potential, and you will transform him into the world”  
Maria Montessori*

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## Partnership Agreement

School and parents enter a cooperative relationship at School. The Parent side 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 associations 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 side is to follow the commitment to develop the whole child – emotionally, socially, physically, and academically, to model and participate human virtues and practices, to communicate effectively with parents and to maintain high standards in the program, guides and curriculum.

A Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form is located on the School website or through the front office. This parent handbook answers many frequently asked questions and outlines school policies. After reading, sign the Acknowledgment form which lets us know that you are in agreement with the philosophy, goals and mission of Montessori Education and agree to adhere to school policies. Please return this form to the front office; this will be a part of your child's student records.

## Welcome to Village Montessori Center

### Mission and Philosophy

Our mission is to prepare our students socially, emotionally, and academically to be fulfilled individuals who make a positive contribution to family and society.

Our philosophy is founded on the Montessori Method of Education as developed in the early 1900's in Rome, Italy by Dr. Maria Montessori and which is applied in schools all over the world.

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.

### 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 the FIVE MAIN GOALS:

1. **Concentration**: The ability to observe and comprehend, the ability to remain focused on a task for ever 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).

With these goals in mind, each child is guided in development at FIVE LEVELS:

1. Physical – potential learning problems can first be spotted in a young child's ability to control movements.
2. Emotional – young children need patience and guidance to learn to control and express their feelings.

3. Intellectual – young children are collectors of knowledge (they absorb it from their environment)
4. Mental – to know, to experience, to use all known information for experiments and problem-solving.
5. Spiritual – develops strength of character, revelation of true personality, and desire to be of service to others.

### **School History**

Located in Mission Viejo, Village Montessori Center (VMC) was founded in 2011. We are a private; non-sectarian school. We serve over 100 families with children ages zero thru 6 years old.

### **Affiliations and Accreditations**

American Montessori Society (AMS) Member  
Our school has been affiliated with AMS since 2011.

International Montessori Council (IMC) Member  
Our school has been affiliated with IMC since 2014

All Primary Lead Teachers must hold a Montessori Credential in the level they are teaching. The credentials must be issued by a teacher education program accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE).

### **Montessori History**

Montessori education dates back to 1907, when Maria Montessori opened the Casa dei Bambini, or Children's House, in a low-income district of Rome. Her unique philosophy sparked the interest of educators worldwide, and in the following decades Montessori schools opened throughout Europe, in North and South America, and finally, on every continent but Antarctica. Countless books and articles about Montessori have been published in nearly every language. Dr. Montessori first described her approach in *Il Metodo della Pedagogia Scientifica applicato all'educazione infantile nelle Case dei Bambini*, published in 1909. The book's English-language version, titled *The Montessori Method*, was a success on both sides of the Atlantic.

In 1929 Dr. Montessori established the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) to support the increase of Montessori schools, teacher education programs, and national organizations around the world. In the United States, Montessori caught on quickly, propelled by prominent advocates and glowing media reports. But by the 1920's the movement had declined, and 40 more years would pass before Montessori schools would return in substantial numbers. The leader of the American revival was Nancy McCormick Rambusch, a vibrant persuasive educator intent on bringing about change. In 1960, Dr. Rambusch launched the American Montessori Society, the first – and still the largest – of several modern era organizations supporting Montessori in America.

## **School Administration and Support**

### **Faculty Information**

The school aims to ensure that the Toddler and Early Childhood teachers are trained in Montessori pedagogy under the guidance of the American Montessori Society (AMS) or Association Montessori International (AMI). The school prides itself on the quality, educational depth and talent of its faculty. All Lead Teachers are MACTE credentialed teachers which is the only recognized training body of American Montessori Schools. All trained assistants undergo specific Montessori Assistant training both in-house and from independent trainers, so that a consistency is achieved throughout the school.

As required by the Department of Social Services, all Lead Teachers and Assistant Teachers hold, at minimum, twelve early childhood education (ECE) units. All staff members are Live-scanned and have received fingerprint clearance thru the Department of Justice, the Child Abuse Hotline and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In addition, all staff members hold their CPR and First Aid training.

### **Montessori Credentials**

AMS issues Montessori credentials to successful graduates of AMS-affiliated teacher education programs who hold a BA or BS degree (or higher). An associate credential for Infant & Toddler and Early Childhood levels is awarded to those who have completed high school but do not hold a college degree.

Montessori is a complex approach to human development, from birth to maturity, based upon universal principals. Lectures, seminars, the preparation of materials and curriculum texts, observation, and practice teaching are all carried out under the direct supervision of the training center. Each course lasts one or two academic years; these courses are thorough and require intense study.

### **Professional Development**

Faculty are required to add to their training each year by completing a minimum of 16 hours of additional professional development, which may include attendance at national or local conferences, university courses, or in-service training by VMC. The school supports ongoing professional development of its staff by providing both funds and time off.

### **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 three days prior to the start of school for classroom preparations and staff development. Usually this is the three days prior to the Labor Day weekend.

In addition, faculty are actively working in the classrooms at least one week prior to the opening of school in the fall and several days after school dismisses for the summer, 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 faculty to prepare and maintain. Consequently, Montessori schools typically devote more days to preparation than other schools do.

### **Faculty Changes**

VMC faculty includes lead teachers, assistant teachers, support staff and substitute teachers. Many have come to VMC after serving many years in other schools, bringing a depth of experience to our school. With over 20 staff members, unfortunately, faculty turnover is inevitable from year to year. Changes in faculty for the upcoming school year are formally announced, after contracts are signed. Any changes after school year begins are communicated to parents by letter.

## Parent Involvement

### Community Building Events

VMC offers a variety of events throughout the year designed to bring families together and build community. This year, events include the Winter Holiday show, Scholastic Book Fairs, Mother's Day Party, Donuts with Dads, Parent's Night Out and Parent Education Nights.

Please see school calendar for specific dates.

### Participation Opportunities

Participating in the life of the school puts you in the life of your child. Some of the on-going available activities are:

#### **Room Parents**

Offer assistance throughout the year with picture day, classroom projects, teacher appreciation events and material making.

#### **Parent Readers**

Early Childhood classrooms are seeking parents interested in listening to our children read. This is an excellent opportunity to support our young, budding readers and also those who's confidence and ability are soaring.

#### **Field Trip Chaperones**

Attend and chaperone field trips for our Early Childhood Classrooms.

#### **Teacher Appreciation Week**

Help show our gratitude and say thank you to our teachers by planning and organizing Teacher Appreciation Week.

#### **Party Helpers**

Arrive early to set up and stay late to clean up for our classroom parties.

## School Communities

*"Education is a natural process carried out by the human individual, and is acquired not by listening to words, but by experience in the environment."*

*Maria Montessori*

### Infant and Toddler Community (I/T)

The first three years of a child's life is a time of rapid development and discovery. It is during this time that the child begins to reveal the man he is to become. 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.

In our Toddler classroom, the environment has been prepared by a specially trained and certified Montessori Guide (Teacher). 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.

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

### **Early Childhood (EC)**

Our Early Childhood community offers multi-aged grouping for ages ~3 - 6 years. 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 Early Childhood guides (teachers) prepare the classrooms 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.

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.

We choose work, determine the steps or actions required lay out what we need, do our 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.

This community offers a unique cycle of learning designed to take advantage of the child's sensitive years between birth and 6 years, when they can absorb information from an enriched environment.

**The final year within the Early Childhood Classroom (age 5 at the start of school) 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.

### **Student Assessment**

We provide a qualitative evaluation of a child's performance that takes into consideration the whole child, including strengths, limitations, and social, physical, and creative achievements; the education your child receives at VMC extends far beyond basic skills in math and language. Traditional grades provide a quantitative 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 actually reduces creativity, as students aim for work that will be safe and acceptable to the adult. And therein lies a third 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, VMC does not "grade" children.

### **New Student Six-Week Review**

In any new environment, students experience a process of transition. The goal in the early weeks is to introduce the areas of the classroom, learn the ground rules based on respect and embark on the lessons in the classroom. When a child is in harmony with his environment we call this reaching 'normalization'. Within about six weeks, most students settle into the Montessori environment with ease. Parents of new students will receive information about their child's progress after about six weeks of joining the class.

### **Conferences Reports**

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

In the fall and spring of each 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 call the teacher for a discussion.

### **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*. It falls into two basic categories, for adults and children alike. First is the work we do for ourselves, to improve ourselves, to pursue our own interests and dreams. This work could be an extension of work done on the job or at school, or it could be an unrelated activity or hobby that is meaningful to us individually. The line between *work* and *play* can become blurred here, just as work the children do at school is often fun.

We hope that all children leaving VMC 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) will be sent home books that are at their level – helping to make this special time successful for the child.

### **School Programs**

<b>Half day</b>	<b>8:30am – 12:00pm</b>
<b>Full School Day</b>	<b>8:30am – 3:00pm</b>
<b>Extended Day</b>	<b>7:00am – 6:00pm</b>

*For all children ages 0-24 months, the maximum number of hours in attendance per day will be 10 hours. After 10 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.*

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.

### **Summer Program (Early Childhood)**

Registration for the monthly summer program is separate and begins in March. 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 enrolled in at least four weeks during the summer session. If you are unable to attend for the minimum four weeks, you will need to re-enroll your child and be placed on the wait list, as we will be unable to hold their current spot. This "four weeks" of tuition credit is only applied during the months of July and August.

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

### Summer (Infant and Toddler)

The infant and toddler communities are year-round classrooms and therefore, do not require separate registration for the summer months.

### Enrichment Programs (EC)

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.

## **Admissions Policies and Procedures**

### Admission Process

- School Tour
- Application
- Prospective Parent Meeting, if offered
- Acceptance of Qualified Students
- Parent Orientation/Classroom Visit
- Six week Assessment

### Admission Decisions

Children are evaluated on the basis of readiness for school and potential for success in a Montessori classroom. It is equally important to determine whether the parents' educational philosophy is compatible with that of VMC.

### Financial Policy

School Enrollment assumes good faith intent to attend a complete academic school year. There is no reduction of tuition for absences due to illness, vacations, early withdrawal or any other extended absence from school. **All admission, re-enrollment and material/activity fees are non-refundable.**

Tuition payments are based upon an Annual Tuition and are prepaid. The tuition payment is based upon the enrollment plan selected and not on the number of days in each month or the number of days of attendance.

Payments are prepaid and include the following payment options:

1. Single payment option, paid in full by August 15<sup>th</sup>
2. Two payment option, 50% due by August 15<sup>th</sup>, 50% due by January 15<sup>th</sup>
3. Monthly payment option, due between the 25<sup>th</sup> and the last day of the month
4. Two week payment option, due every other Friday

Each family will be asked to choose a payment plan upon enrollment. The payment plan may not be changed mid-year. Families will be given the opportunity to change payment plans each September.

Tuition due reminders will be emailed. Tuition is late when received after 6:00pm on the due date. A late fee of \$25 will be applied to all accounts that are past due. If the tuition payment is not received by the third day after the due date, the school reserves the right to suspend attendance until the account has been brought current by way of cash or cashier's check. If no communication is received by the parent/guardian by the fifth day after the due date, the child will be dropped from the program and the School reserves the right to fill the vacancy with another child. All tuition and late fees will continue to be accrued until a 30-day notice of withdrawal is received.

If a family withdraws during the school year and wishes to re-join the school at a later date it will be treated as a "new enrollment" with applicable fees and your child will be placed in the waiting pool until an opening occurs.

There will be returned check fee of \$25 assessed for all returned checks.

A 10% sibling discount will be applied to the lesser tuition for all siblings enrolled in the school.

### **Student Records**

Student records must be complete prior to scheduling the child's first day, home and/or school visits. The school stresses the importance of protecting the rights and privacy of children, their families, and our teachers. The practice of maintaining the confidentiality of verbal information and written records is a policy of the the 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 to the student's file. A staff member must be present whenever records are reviewed.

The ADMISSION AGREEMENT AND OTHER REQUIRED FORMS are specific for each school year and therefore are required to be completed annually.

### **Immunizations**

Each child enrolled or admitted must meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the CA. Dept. of State Health Services. The Physician's Report and copy of the immunization card must be submitted prior to the first day of enrollment. If not received within ten days of the enrollment, the child may be asked to remain at home until the proper documentation is submitted.

A child may be exempt from immunization requirements when (a) his physician recommends against immunization on medical grounds and a letter is received by the school, or (b) his parents sign a medical release based on religious beliefs.

### **Hearing and Vision Screening**

The school will offer optional vision/hearing screenings each March for all children over the age of 3.

### **Observation**

Parents are encouraged to visit the school and observe the classrooms at any time. Perspective parents will schedule tours with the front office prior to acceptance into the school.

Classroom observations are scheduled during the school year, after new students have settled in. Montessori DVD's from AMS and AMI are available on their websites and are highly encouraged for viewing. Professional observations inside the classroom from other schools and parents should be scheduled with the front office.

There are guidelines for entering classrooms and recording observations without disrupting the working children. Staff is available after observations to answer questions.

### **Open Door Policy**

Parents are free to visit the school at any time during school hours to observe their child and program activities. Unannounced classroom observations are done from outside the classroom window to protect the concentration of the children working and the classroom environment.

### **Family Supportive (Breastfeeding)**

Our school strives to support a healthy family life. In that effort, if you are nursing an infant, please let our front office staff know and we will happily accommodate you and your child.

### **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.

Late pick-ups are documented by the parents "signing out" their child and the time of pick-up.

**There is a late pick-up charge of \$1/minute. Late pick-up after 6:00 is \$1/minute after 5 minute grace period is paid directly to the teacher who assumed responsibility for your child.** Continued lateness will be addressed first with a written warning, second with a meeting with the parent and teacher, and if the lateness continues, the child will be removed from the program.

## **Classroom Placement/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). VMC 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 Transition**

#### **Transitioning into the Toddler Community**

When at all possible, we suggest the following schedule for introducing our community to both parents and child:

- First, we ask the parent to observe the class in session to begin to envision your child as part of the group.

- We then invite the child and parents to a “School Visit” for about half an hour prior to their first day of school, giving the child time to explore his/her new environment. Ideally, this occurs during the outside playground time. We suggest at least two “School Visits”. This allows the child to see that the parent is comfortable at the school and builds trust between the parent and the teachers.
- Finally, if the child is ready, he may start his normal enrolled schedule. However, if the child still needs help during the transition into attending school, we will ask the child to attend for a minimal amount of time on his first day (perhaps one hour). This time will increase slightly each day until the child is comfortable. Each child is different and each child will take a different path to become comfortable. Often this is completed within one to two weeks.

*To ease the transition it is suggested that the child have experienced some separating from parents with either family or friends before attending the school.*

### Transitioning into the Early Childhood Community

When at all possible, we suggest the following schedule, especially for children who have never been away from home in a school or childcare setting.

- Parent and child are invited to visit the school during playground time, for about 30 minutes.
- Child/Teacher meeting (about 30 minutes with the child entering the classroom without parent(s).
- First day is a half day; leaving at noon. Second day is extended day; leaving at 3:00pm
- Third day is regular schedule.

### **Moving from one Community to the Next**

#### Transition from the Infant (IC) to Toddler (TC)

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

- Infant teacher will schedule with the Toddler teacher to observe the child for at least 30 minutes.
- We recommend that the parents observe the new classroom for about an hour prior to the child’s move. After this observation, parents can bring questions to the TC or Director.
- Infant 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 Toddler teacher and the child’s parent will take place to share information and discuss the changes:
  - Larger classroom and more materials
  - Mixed age group; two years old to three/three and half years
  - Expectation for the level of work and concentration will increase.
  - Food preparation and snack are group activities in the toddler 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 the Toddler (TC) to Early Childhood (EC)

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:

- Toddler teacher will schedule with the EC teacher to observe the child for at least 30 minutes.
- We recommend that the parents observe the EC classroom for about an hour prior to the child's move. After this observation, parents can bring questions to the EC or Director.
- Toddler teacher will bring the child to visit the EC 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 EC 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.

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/Dismissal Procedures**

The safety of our children always comes first; therefore, use of the drive-through lane is **mandatory** for **ALL** students arriving/departing at these specific times and will be strictly enforced. Parents and children are not permitted to walk to/from school during designated **drive-through times**.

8:20 - 8:30 Morning Arrival

12:00 ½ day Dismissal EC

2:30 Ex-day Dismissal Toddler & EC

2:55 Ex-day Dismissal Lower Elementary

During dismissal the children are gathered at the entrance of the school under the covered area and walked to their car by a teacher. Parents are not permitted to walk to collect their child during designated drive through times. **THEIR SAFETY IS OUR MAIN PRIORITY.**

Before School Arrival – arrivals between 6:30 – 8:20 a.m. parents are asked to escort their children into either their classroom (Toddlers) or the Community Room (EC and Lower Elementary)

After School Dismissal – Dismissal after 2:30 (2:55 Elementary), please pick your child up from their classroom door and wait outside the classroom for your child to put away his work.

Late Arrival

Should your child arrive after morning drive-through (8:30), please park your car and bring your child to the lobby, where a staff member will escort him/her to the classroom. **Parents are not permitted to escort their children beyond the lobby after 8:30 a.m.**

### **Guidelines for Safety**

- **Drive very slowly** on driveway, parking lot and carpool lane. Young children are difficult to see.
- **Stay in your car** while in drive through. Children will be assisted out of the car by the drive through personnel.
- **Children are to exit/enter on the passenger side.** Please arrange youngest child's safety seat on this side.

16

- 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. **Staff will not place a child into a vehicle that does not appear to meet these requirements.**
- **By law, the use of cell phones while driving is prohibited in school zones.** This includes our drive through lanes. MHFC asks that all parents refrain from cellular use while in the parking lot and/or while dropping off or picking up your child.
- If you have business inside, drop off your child first, then park and enter school after drive-through.
- Call the school if you have a message to relay (no notes or verbal instructions in drive-through)
- **You are responsible for your child's safety entering and exiting the school.** Do not permit your child to walk to/from school without you.
- Please support the school policy that ONLY staff and adults push the "Red Button" that releases the door lock.
- Fire Lane - The drive through lane is included in the fire lane for our school. **It is against Fire Marshall Ordinances to park and/or leave your car in this lane at any time.** This lane is to remain accessible to emergency vehicles at ALL times.

#### **Procedures for Release of Children or Changes in Pick-up Routine**

Your child will be allowed to leave the school only with parents or persons designated on enrollment form. In an emergency, or if there are temporary departure arrangements, the parent must send a written note giving the name, date and identifying information about the person picking up the child. This person must give proper identification, such as a valid driver's license. We will make a copy of their license and keep it in your child's file.

#### **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 security for children; a sense of security enables children to learn more readily.
- 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 make every effort to ensure your child's regular attendance. In this regard, we specifically request that you:

- Schedule family vacations and trips to coincide with school holidays.
- Schedule appointments with doctor, dentist, orthodontist, or other professionals outside of the classroom hours.

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

17

#### **Tardiness**

School starts promptly at 8:30. Attendance is taken at by 8:45 a.m., children arriving after that are considered tardy. 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 more than five tardies for the semester 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 excessive.

A family considering MHFC should determine if their schedules and family circumstances permit consistent ontime attendance before enrolling in the school.

#### **Communications**

##### **Business Hours**

6:30 – 6:00 Hours of Operation

9:00 – 1:00 Business Office (tuition, statements and procurement)

8:00 – 4:00 Head of School (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.

Head of School

Barbara Nelson

Student progress, classroom directory, classroom events, calendar and afterschool care.

Your Child's Lead Teacher

Tuition

Business Manager

Pam Nelson

Enrichment Programs & before/afterschool activities

Administration

Neelo Surty

Parent Committees/Participation & visitors Administration

Norma Ortega

Student records & catered lunch program

Administration

Yaneth Poo

Waiting Pool status, classroom placement and general questions

Administration

Jennifer Morris

### **Change in Contact Information**

Contact information must be kept current at all times. If you have a change of address, e-mail, or phone number, notify the school immediately (Yaneth Poo). It is vital that we have current contact information in the event of emergencies.

### **Classroom Communication**

Each classroom has a "classroom page" located on our web site [www.montessorihouseforchildren.com](http://www.montessorihouseforchildren.com)

All classroom information, important dates, pictures and videos are available on your classroom page.

18

Classroom pages are password protected – you will be prompted to create a user name/password. The school/teacher will grant parents access once account is established. Parents are expected to follow the classroom/privacy agreement.

### **Contacting Your Child's Teacher**

We value open and consistent communication regarding your child. During parent orientation, teachers will let you know of 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 oral messages to the teacher via the classroom assistant, front office or drive-through staff.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Parent/teacher conferences will be held twice yearly, during the Fall 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, 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.

### **Communication from School**

Classroom Page: All classroom specific information including events, updates, important reminders; parents are automatically emailed as updates are made. \*must create an account to access

E-mail: Tuition statements, whole school notices/updates/news letter \*must sign up for school news letter

Facebook page: "Montessori House for Children" to receive fascinating information

Website: Lunch Menu, School Calendar, Important Dates, School Forms, Parent Resources, Parent Handbook, etc.

Family Folder (located in the lobby) – this folder is used for extra-curricular communications, birthday invites

and weekly communications. Please check your folder on a regular basis.

### **School Closings & Other Emergencies**

Sign up for school alerts at [www.montessorihouseforchildren.com](http://www.montessorihouseforchildren.com)

School closings will be posted on web-site, updated through Facebook and left on our school phone answering machine. In the event of a school wide emergency, parents will be sent a message via email (through our Child Care Manager Data Base) and through an automated message service. **It is important that parents keep the school up-to-date on emergency contact information and an e-mail address that will reach you by day.**

### **Classroom Life**

#### **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.

19

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" within the social media sites.

#### **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 (many materials come from Holland).

Any small object you may find in your child's lunchbox, 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.

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, "then must be in it's place", "you need this at your school", or "the children need this for their work".

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 also be a sign of love for his school, or a need for security, but never theft at this age.

#### **Nutrition**

MHFC is a **low-sugar facility**. This policy is to be followed in breakfasts, 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 home with your child.

The U.S. Government's Dietary Reference Intakes recommend that added sugars not exceed 25% of total calories (to ensure sufficient intake of micronutrients).

To calculate the percentage of calories from sugar in your food/drink:

- Multiply the grams of sugar per serving by 4 (there are 4 calories per gram of sugar).
- Divide this number (calories from sugar) by the total number of calories per serving.
- Multiply this number by 100 to get the percentage of calories from sugar.

The school serves water and milk. Drinks from home must be low sugar, water or milk. **Juice drinks and Sippy cups are not allowed.**

Lunches from home must have ice-packs if containing perishable items; hot items must be in thermal containers (school does not have the ability to heat lunches).

Children are encouraged to eat but will not be forced to do so. Any recurring eating problems will be discussed with the child's parent.

Breakfast, snack and lunch menus are posted on the web site and in the front lobby. Catered hot lunch menus offer vegetarian and halal options.

20

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.

Packed lunch guidelines:

- Healthy and balanced meal providing a protein, whole grain fruit and vegetable
- Do not pack gum, candy, chips, cake, cookies, soda or fruit juice.

- Do pack sandwiches, soup, yogurt, hard-boiled eggs, cheese, fruits, veggie strips, popcorn, crackers and milk (water is always available).
- Cloth Napkin or paper napkin with cutlery

**Breakfasts and lunches from fast food restaurants are not allowed.**

- Breakfast is available from 6:30 – 8:00 a.m. (8:30 toddlers) for full-day children.
- Snacks are offered mid-morning for all children and mid-afternoon (schedules vary per class) for full-day children. Food prep is also a part of the classroom, and this is in addition to snacks listed on our menu.
- Parents have two lunch options: 1) MHFC offers an optional lunch program from our catered family-style hot lunch provider, or 2) if home provided lunches are preferred, please make sure it meets nutritional guidelines set forth by the school and state.

**Produce Baskets**

Every classroom has weekly rotational schedule for the produce basket (voluntary). Parents are encouraged to offer the class a variety seasonal fruits, vegetables, fresh flowers, etc. (list may be provided). Fresh produce adds to the expanding tastes of the child, who will often try new things that he/she has helped prepare in the “practical life, food prep” work within the classroom.

**Laundry & Laundry Baskets (EC/Elementary)**

Laundry of all bed linens and toddler training pants is done on-site, weekly or more often as needed. EC and Elementary classrooms have daily laundry baskets that are sent home on a rotational basis (voluntary sign up by parents). We preferentially use cloth for hand towels to practice good stewardship of natural resources. The restoration of hand towels is intended to be the work of the child (with parent supervision of laundry process) and the folding can be done by the child or brought back to the school for a community folding activity. This is a first time community service project for many children and gives them a sense of belonging and responsibility to the classroom community.

**Nap**

MHFC provides each child (~4 ½ and younger) a sleeping mat, fitted sheet and blanket. Replacement mats, if needed, can be purchased at the school. Blankets and bed linens are provided and laundered at the school weekly, or more regularly if needed.

Every child has different sleep needs. Children are required to have a rest period but are not forced to sleep. Older children (EC community) who exhibit the following abilities will be invited by their teacher (with parent’s approval) to join the extended academic period, from 1:00 to 2:30 PM, and become “afternoon workers”:

- Strong concentration
- Long attention span (can work for an extended time)
- Controlled behavior (self-discipline)
- Follows instructions well

21

- 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 ~ 5 yrs. of age.

**Dress Code**

MHFC promotes an environment **FREE of media influences**. Please read our link on the website on TV and the effects on children. Support our effort to protect this environment by dressing children in attire (shirts, shorts, shoes, jackets, etc.) free of popular TV shows, movie characters (Cinderella, Spider Man, Hulk, Dora, Bratz, and other TV/movie stars).

**Blinking shoes and shoes that make sounds are a distraction are not permitted in school.**

Children should be dressed appropriately for weather, activities and comfort. Painting, gardening, water work and food preparation take place every day.

For younger children, unable to tie, we recommend Velcro, zip or slip-on shoes. Leather shoes and ‘tennis shoes’ are most practical for our playground surface.

Cowboy boots and flip-flops should not be worn, as they are safety concerns for your child and others.

Encourage your child to participate in choosing their own clothes.

Extra clothes (EC) - Each classroom has a supply of “extra clothes” marked MHFC, which are community owned and are there if/when a child gets wet or dirty. If your child wears MHFC labeled clothes home, please return them to school as soon as possible. If your child does bring extra clothes, please put them in a ziplock bag with his/her name on it.

Toddler children – easy on/off clothes. No clothes with snaps-in-the crotch/onesies. Additional guidelines are

available from your child's teacher.

### **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.

Behaviors which are contrary to our CODE OF CONDUCT 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).
- Destruction of school property (classroom & playground equipment, 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. In addition to meeting Texas Minimum Standards for discipline and guidance at all times, the following guidelines are followed by our guides:

1. Redirect the child to an activity or work that is appropriate and meaningful.
2. Use consistency.
3. Allow for natural consequences to take place that are understood and logical to the child, ex: Cleaning up after a spill.
4. Recognize and encourage concentrated and appropriate efforts.
5. Model appropriate behaviors and actions.
6. Use respect in all contacts with the child – what you say, how you say it and how you act.

22

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 grounds, 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 occurrence: parent/teacher conference to discuss a plan of action involving the triangle: parents, teacher and child.
- Second occurrence: parent, teacher and director conference to discuss further options available to help the child.
- Third occurrence: 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/director will be documented for use of all sides.

### **Possessions**

What Not to Bring to School

- Clothing with media related characters
- Backpacks (Elementary students may bring backpacks)
- Shoes with lights
- Toys and electronic devices
- Sippy cups, bottles or pacifiers
- Accessories that cause distraction for others
- Valuables

What to Bring to School

- Items of interest (EC children have "show & tell" every Friday)
- Please see your community packet, Toddler or EC, for specific items needed for school.

### **Lost and Found**

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

### **Birthdays**

The Toddler communities may also bring a low sugar snack to share with their class and we also suggest donating a book or other item to the class in honor of their child's Birthday.

The Early Childhood (EC) communities celebrate birthdays the "Montessori Way". The birthday child is the 'center of attention' of his/her class by holding the globe and walking around a "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 child thoroughly enjoys this. 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.

In Lower Elementary the child celebrates this special occasion by decorating a small box filled with special mementos. These treasures can be anything from baby's first tooth to their favorite rock. This "ME BOX" 23

represents the child's life and all the special things that have happened to them during their life span. The "ME BOX" is a special, powerful and commemorative tradition in Lower Elementary.

\*In addition, the student will donate a book of their choice to class. If the student wishes, they may invite their parent to attend.

Birthday Party Invites – Invitations are not to go into the classroom and are not to be handed out by staff.

Invitations can go directly into the family folders or sent via e-mail. Class directories are available by contacting your child's teacher or through the front office: [Jennifer@montessorihouseforchildren.com](mailto:Jennifer@montessorihouseforchildren.com)

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

### **Cultural & Community Events**

Cultural/Community events involving parents are integral to the life of the school. Many of these celebrations revolve around the activities of 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 peaceful world community.

### **Study of Living Things**

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

### **Water Play & Safety**

At Montessori House for Children we enjoy many aspects of water; from actual work in the indoor classroom and in our "outdoor classroom"/ (watering gardens) to playing in sprinklers and 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.

### **Illness**

#### **When to keep a child home**

We are not licensed to provide get-well care or to isolate children who cannot participate in school activities.

Your child should not be brought to school,

- If your child's illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in the normal activities of the day (including outdoor play),
- If your child is required to have more than one breathing treatment/ medicine treatment during the school day.
- If there is an oral temperature of 101 degrees or greater and accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness;
- If there are 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 one or both eyes that are itchy, red or crusty, DO NOT BRING THEM TO SCHOOL.

This is an indication of Pink Eye, which is contagious. If a child develops any signs of eye infections, 24

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 their 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 other children. If it is difficult for you to get to MHFC 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 hrs. before coming back to school. We will provide you an “Illness Report” letting you know what symptoms your child experienced at school. This note will explain the 24 hr. rule for returning to school.

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

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

#### **Guidelines for Head Lice**

Treatment: Parents/guardians should consult their physician, pharmacist or Texas Lice Squad for advice on the proper use of an approved medicated shampoo for the head lice.

Exclude from attendance: Yes

Re-admission Criteria: Student’s scalp is free of lice and nits.

#### **Medications**

The school administers prescription medications only.

Medications are to come into the school in their original container with prescription date, doctor’s name and child’s name. These are checked in at the front desk and a Medical Authorization Form filled out (also located on our web-site)

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

Prescriptions and breathing treatments are given once daily and usually given after lunch.

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

#### **Sunscreen & Insect Repellants**

If you would like your child to wear sunscreen or insect repellent at school, please apply it to your child prior to sending them to school that morning. Those parents who wish for sunscreen or insect repellent to be reapplied on their child in the afternoon are to provide the school with sunscreen and insect repellent. These items 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.

25

#### **Health & Safety**

##### **Accidents and Emergencies**

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.). All of our staff members have been trained and certified in both First Aid and CPR.

All significant incidents, accidents, injuries and illnesses will be documented on a “Incident/Illness Report” and the parents will receive a copy to be signed; one copy will remain at school and the bottom copy will go home with the parent.

##### **Travel Alert Status**

As you travel abroad please be aware of health and safety precautions that could prevent the spread of infectious disease. The America Red Cross advises travelers coming back into the State from SARS affected areas to stay home from work or school for at least 10 days in order to monitor any symptoms that may or may not appear. This procedure may also help prevent the spread of other contagious diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, influenza and severe diarrhea disease. To find out more about Travel Advisories and health visit the World Health Organization’s website at [www.who.int](http://www.who.int) or the Center for Disease Control at [www.cdc.com.gov](http://www.cdc.com.gov).

##### **Emergency Preparedness Plan**

The emergency management plan will go into effect in response to situations that require us to evacuate the school or the campus, or to shelter in place. Examples of such situations include fire, severe weather, toxic spills, or acts of war.

##### **Types of Evacuation**

School Evacuation

Monthly fire drills practice one form of school evacuation. Students exit the building and go to their designated gathering spots in each playground.

Campus/Area Evacuation

If necessary, students would evacuate to McNeil Elementary, located across the street from the school.

H.F. McNeill Elementary School  
7300 S. Mason Rd. Richmond Tx.  
Main Office (832) 223-2800  
Fax: (832) 223-2801  
Shelter in-Place

Students and teachers will shelter in place in the event of a tornado, nearby chemical spill, or other events that require us to seek shelter indoors.

In the event of a chemical spill or other airborne hazard, the ventilation system carrying outside air will be shut down.

26

While sheltering in place, the school will be open as long as students need to be here. The school has stores of bottled water and food for such a situation.

In the event that a shelter-in-place is declared, we strongly discourage parents from coming to the school until instructed to do so.

### **Communication during an Emergency**

The school will communicate with parents via e-mail through our Child Care Management system. It is very important to alert the front office of any changes in your e-mail address.

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

### **CONTACT NUMBERS:**

- SHERIFF'S OFFICE: 281-342-6116
- SCHOOL BUSINESS MANAGER: 281-468-0160
- SCHOOL DIRECTOR: 713-875-3347

THIS EMERGENCY PLAN IS ON OUR WEBSITE AT: [WWW.MONTESSORIHOUSEFORCHILDREN.COM](http://WWW.MONTESSORIHOUSEFORCHILDREN.COM) and in the school office, where employees and parents may view at any time.

**Sign up for school alerts at:** [www.school-alerts.com](http://www.school-alerts.com)

### **Building Security**

Our school has two security systems. The first is a badge that allows entry into the building, the second is a sign-in PIN code that automatically signs your child in and opens the interior door.

At all times except drive through times, you should use your badge. Always have your badge with you. The doorbell is primarily for visitors. If you misplace your badge, please request a new badge – replacement badges can be purchased at cost.

All visitors and volunteers must be checked-in through the front office and are accompanied from there by a staff member. Family members (other than parents) who wish to visit must have parental permission and should be arranged in advance. We ask all families to please keep in mind that when a child sees a family member at school, they think it's time to go home.

### **Transporting children**

Our school has a policy that no enrolled child be transported to or from the child's home to the school by faculty.

Elementary children will have occasional 'going out days'. Notifications with parental consent forms will be sent prior to the occasions. Parents will have the option of transporting their own child or will ask for transport from a parent volunteer.

27

### **Policy on Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting**

State Law and Licensing requirements state that child care personnel are required to report immediately to the police or Child Protective Services (CPS) if they suspect child abuse, neglect or exploitation. Please visit the lobby corkboard for information and warning signs that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect. All Employees are required to undergo annual training on laws regarding childcare professionals and the duty to report suspected child abuse & neglect. This training also includes warning signs of abuse & neglect and how to report to Child Protective Services. (CPS)

If you are the parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect, please call the Child Abuse Hotline for assistance and intervention. Child Abuse Hotline (800) 252-5400 or visit [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us)

### **Babysitting, Attending Children's Parties**

Babysitting and/or attending children's parties by staff members is strongly discouraged. If you have references to offer for mother's helpers, babysitters or nannies, please post your referrals in our parent resource book.

### **Gang-Free Zone**

Texas House Bill 2086 requires all schools and child care centers to notify parents/guardians that gang related criminal activity or anyone engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of a child care center is in violation of the law and is subject to increased penalty under state law.

### **Local Licensing Office**

(713) 940-3009 1110 Ave. G (271-6) Rosenberg, TX 77471

The Director has available a copy of the minimum standards for your review. Montessori House for Children's (MHFC's) most recent Licensing inspection report is posted on the cork board in the middle room and can also be found at: [www.dfps.state.tx.us/](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/)

### **Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted on school property or at school related functions.

28

### **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's 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 just how much their children can contribute from an early age.

18 months-3 years old

- \* Turn off lights while being carried. \* Carry in the newspaper or mail.
- \* Get own cereal or snack from kid-friendly containers. \* Pick up toys and clothes.
- \* Wash tables and counters with damp sponge. \* Wash vegetables, tear lettuce, stir.
- \* Put soiled or wet diaper in the diaper pail. \* Help set the table.
- \* Help clean up after meals and play. \* Feed and water pets.
- \* Run simple errands around the house. \* Wake up siblings.
- \* Help put groceries away. \* Help make beds.
- \* Carry in light groceries. \* Scramble eggs, make toast.
- \* Put plastic dishes in the dishwasher. \* Make salads.
- \* Bring recyclables to the garage. \* Lead family prayers.
- \* Put own clothes away. Take clothes out of the dryer. \* Clear dishes from table.
- \* Tell you when the traffic light turns green. \* Seal and stamp envelopes.

4-6 years old

All of the above, plus:

- \* Help find grocery items in the store. \* Help fold towels and wash clothes.
- \* Pour things. \* Give you a back rub or foot rub.
- \* Help measure ingredients. \* Water plants.
- \* Count goods at the grocery store. \* Put gas in your car.
- \* Sort white clothes from dark clothes for laundry. \* Help younger siblings.
- \* Help with vacuuming, sweeping and dusting. \* Help plant a garden.
- \* Take library books and videos to and from car. \* Wash the floor.
- \* Put dishes in the dishwasher. \* Haul things in the wagon.
- \* Measure soap for dishwasher and start cycle. \* Make a simple meal.
- \* Be responsible for compost buckets. \* Assist in meal planning.
- \* Empty dishwasher and stack dishes on counter. \* Help wash pets.
- \* Rake leaves for short periods of time. \* Prepare own lunch.
- \* Walk well-behaved pets. \* Start to manage own money.

7-10 years old

All of the above, plus:

- \* Get him/herself up in the morning. \* Help read recipes.
- \* Help wash and vacuum car. \* Wash dishes.
- \* Fix snacks and light meals. \* Change sheets on bed.

\* Run washing machine and dryer. \* Bathe younger siblings.

29

\* Help with projects around the house. \* Address and stuff envelopes.

\* Read to younger siblings.

11-15 years old

All of the above, plus:

\* Cook meals. \* Buy groceries from a list.

\* Wash windows. \* Change light bulbs.

\* Make appointments. \* Wax car.

\* Order out for family. \* Mow lawn.

\* Help in parent's business. \* Baby sit.

\* Operate saws for home projects.

16-18 years old

All of the above, plus:

\* Balance family check book. \* Run errands.

\* Handle their own checking account. \* Maintain car.

\* Help with family budgets. \* Take care of animals.

\* Take care of house/garden/yard. \* Take care of siblings.

\* Help younger children with homework

10



Contents

THE MONTESSORI CURRICULUM .....	27
PHILOSOPHY .....	27
MISSION STATEMENT .....	27
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES .....	27
ADMISSION .....	27
INFANT PROGRAM .....	27
PRE-PRIMARY PROGRAM .....	28
MONTESSORI PRESCHOOL PROGRAM .....	28
MONTESSORI KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM .....	28
REGISTRATION .....	28
ENROLLMENT PLANS .....	28
PAYMENT POLICY .....	28
TUITION DEPOSIT .....	29
MATERIAL FEE .....	29
EMERGENCY KIT FEE .....	29
SUMMER ENROLLMENT POLICY AND SUMMER VACATION POLICY .....	29
WINTER BREAK .....	29
ATTENDANCE .....	29
MORNING AND AFTERNOON DAYCARE .....	30
LATE PICK-UP POLICY .....	30
EARLY WITHDRAWAL AND REDUCTION OF SCHEDULE .....	30
EARLY WITHDRAWAL FROM KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM .....	30
SCHOOL CALENDAR .....	30
IMMUNIZATIONS .....	30
AFTER SCHOOL EXTRACURRICULAR CLASSES .....	30
PREPARING FOR SCHOOL .....	30
ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE .....	31
DRESS CODE .....	31
CHANGE OF CLOTHING .....	31
DISCIPLINE .....	31
DISMISSAL FROM SCHOOL .....	31
BITING POLICY .....	31
STUDENT RECORDS .....	31
FIELD TRIPS .....	32
BIRTHDAYS .....	32
NUTRITION .....	32
GUIDELINES FOR LUNCHESES PREPARED AT HOME: .....	32

SNACKS.....	33
FOOD ALLERGIES.....	33
SPECIAL EVENTS & HOLIDAYS .....	33
TOYS AND SHARE DAYS .....	33
RELEASE AUTHORIZATION .....	33
STRANGERS ON CAMPUS .....	33
COMMUNITY CARE LICENSING AND CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES RIGHT TO	
INTERVIEW AND AUDIT .....	33
ILLNESSES AND MEDICATION .....	34
SUNSCREEN AND OTHER LOTIONS, OINTMENTS .....	35
SAFETY PROCEDURES .....	35
EMERGENCY CARE/ACCIDENT PROCEDURES.....	35
EMERGENCY/DISASTER PREPAREDNESS .....	35
EMERGENCY KITS.....	36
OBSERVATION OF CLASSROOMS .....	36
CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION.....	36
PARENT EDUCATION.....	36
NAP POLICY .....	36
PARENT CONFERENCES .....	36
NONDISCRIMINATION.....	36
POLICY CHANGES .....	37

## **THE MONTESSORI CURRICULUM**

### **PHILOSOPHY**

The main tenant of the Montessori philosophy of education is that all children carry within themselves the person they will become. In order to develop physical, intellectual and spiritual potential to the fullest, the child must have freedom – a freedom which is achieved through order and self-discipline. Montessori educators understand the world of the child is full of sights and sounds which at first appear chaotic. From this chaos, children must gradually create order, learn to distinguish among the impressions that assail their senses, and slowly but surely gain mastery of themselves and their environment.

Dr. Maria Montessori developed what she called the Prepared Environment. The Prepared Environment possesses a certain order which allows children to learn at their own pace according to their individual capabilities in a noncompetitive atmosphere. The years between two and six are the years in which children learn the rules of human behavior most easily. These years can be constructively devoted to “civilizing” children, freeing them through the acquisition of good manners and habits to take their places in their culture.

Dr. Montessori recognized that the only valid impulse to learning is the self-motivation of the child. Children move themselves toward learning. The teacher prepares the environment, directs the activity and offers the child stimulation. It is the child who learns and who is motivated through work itself, not solely by the teacher’s personality to persist in a given task. Montessori children are free to learn because they have acquired an “inner discipline” from their exposure to both physical and mental order. This is the core of Maria Montessori’s philosophy. Social adjustments, though a necessary condition for learning in a classroom, are not the purpose of early education. Patterns of concentration, perseverance and thoroughness, established in early childhood, produce a confident, competent learner in later years. Montessori teaches children to observe, to think, to judge. It introduces children to the joy of learning at an early age and provides a framework in which intellectual and social development goes hand in hand.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission at Village Montessori Center is to encourage a lifelong love of learning in a nurturing Montessori environment which allows each child to become happy, confident, respectful, and self-disciplined individuals. We strive each and every day to guide children to reach their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The main objective of our school is to provide a carefully planned, stimulating environment within which children will develop the necessary habits, attitudes, skills and ideas which are essential for a lifetime of creative thinking and learning. All concepts will be presented in a safe, secure, loving and respectful environment. The specific goals for the children who attend the school are:

- Develop a positive attitude toward school and learning.
- Develop a sense of healthy self-esteem.
- Build the basic skills necessary for a lifetime of learning.
- Grow and foster an abiding curiosity.
- Develop habits of initiative and persistence.
- Increase sensory-motor skills in order to sharpen the abilities to discriminate and judge.
- Develop socially acceptable behavior.
- Increase each child’s innate, ultimate potential through high self-expectations.
- Enlarge a child’s love of learning through a process which is FUN and ENJOYABLE

### **ADMISSION**

We are open year round and our academic year is from September to June. However, we will enroll a child mid-year, if we have availability. Children from birth to 6 years of age may be considered for admission into one of our programs. A personal interview is required of prospective students so that proper placement may be determined. 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 your child. Parents are also required to tour the facility and meet with the Director prior to admission.

### **INFANT PROGRAM**

Children ages 6 weeks to 24 months will be considered for enrollment into the Infant Program. This program is based upon the guidelines outlined by the American Montessori Society Montessori Infant Program 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 that reinforce the rhythmic patterns of activities of individual infants and not upon a rigid schedule.

## PRE-PRIMARY PROGRAM

Children ages 2 to 3 years old will be considered for enrollment into the Pre-Primary Program. This program is a training program designed to help prepare the children for the Montessori environment and is not designed to be daycare. Children need not be toilet trained, but must show a social maturity to adapt to the group interactions and activities. As the children master language, toilet skills, and respect and knowledge of the work, they may be considered to “graduate” into a Montessori preschool room.

## MONTESSORI PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Children ages 3 to 5 years old will be considered for enrollment into the Montessori Preschool Program. This program is a training program designed to help prepare the children for the Montessori Kindergarten environment and is not designed to be daycare. Children need to be toilet trained, and must show a social maturity to adapt to the group interactions and activities. As the children master the academic environment, gain respect and knowledge of the work, and have been recommended by their Preschool teacher, they may be considered to “graduate” into a Montessori Kindergarten Program.

## MONTESSORI KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Children ages 4.9 to 6 years old will be considered for enrollment into our Montessori Kindergarten Program. Our Montessori Kindergarten Program does not group children by “grade level”. Rather, we group children according to their social and emotional needs. Our Montessori Kindergarten Program is incorporated within our Montessori Preschool Program, as originally suggested by Maria Montessori in her studies.

*The Montessori Kindergarten Program is based on a ten (10) month academic year which runs from September through June. Tuition is due for the entire year notwithstanding any early withdrawal regardless of reason.*

## REGISTRATION

The registration process includes submitting a **non-refundable registration fee** and may include a tuition deposit and/or a materials fee and the completion of the registration form. The registration package will be provided at this time and must be completed before the child’s first day. Children will not be admitted until all of the required registration forms have been submitted to the school and an Admission Agreement has been signed by both parent and the school.

## ENROLLMENT PLANS

Village Montessori Center is open every weekday of the year, except national holidays, or as otherwise specified. We offer two enrollment plans. Please refer to the current fee schedule and calendar.

*Plan A - Year Round:* The enrollment period begins in July (see specific school calendar for start date) and continues for one full year. The annual tuition is divided into equal payments depending upon the payment plan chosen. Tuition may be paid annually, monthly, or bi-weekly. Returning students that choose the year round option receive priority over those that do not attend the summer session. Each new child entering the school will be required to attend the entire summer session, beginning in July. Notice must be given in writing thirty (30) days prior to withdrawal at the end of June.

*Plan B – September thru June (School Year):* The period of enrollment begins that first Tuesday in September and continues thru to the last day of school in June (generally this is the fourth Friday in June); see the school calendar for specific dates. The school year tuition is divided into monthly or bi-weekly payments. Notice must be given in writing thirty (30) days prior to withdrawal at the end of June. Returning students are required to attend at least four weeks of the summer session to secure their space for the fall session.

## PAYMENT POLICY

The Admission Agreement for either Plan A or Plan B is for the total yearly tuition. Tuition payments are based upon an Annual Tuition and are prepaid. The tuition payment is based upon the enrollment plan selected and not on the number of days in each month or the number of days of attendance. Tuition payments are not waived due to illness, vacation, or holidays. For your convenience all payments are **prepaid** and we offer the following payment options:

1. Single payment option, paid in full by August 15th
2. Two payment option, 50% due by August 15<sup>th</sup>, 50% due by January 15<sup>th</sup>.
3. Monthly payment option, due between the 25<sup>th</sup> and the last day of each month
4. Two week payment option, due every other Friday

Each family will be asked to choose a payment plan upon enrollment. The payment plan cannot be changed mid-year. For example, if the monthly payment plan is chosen, then you cannot change to bi-weekly until the following September.

The payment(s) are the same regardless of the number of days a child attends. If a child is enrolled mid-year, tuition is prorated. There are no reductions in tuition for illness, family vacations, and school closures or for any other reason.

A payment schedule will be issued to the parent during the enrollment process. Parents paying by the two week option pay **every other Friday** for the following two weeks. The first payment is due at the time of enrollment and will be calculated so that each all families are on the same payment schedule. If it is not received by **Friday at 6:00pm**, it is past due and a late fee of \$25 will be assessed on all accounts that are past due. Parents paying by the monthly payment option are due on the **25<sup>th</sup> of each month for the following month**. The first payment is due on August 25<sup>th</sup>, or at the time of enrollment. If it is not received by the **last day of the month at 6:00pm**, it is past due and a late fee of \$25 will be assessed on all accounts that are past due. If the tuition payment is not received by the third day of due date, the child will not be allowed to return to School until the account has been brought current by way of cash or cashier's check. If no communication is received by the parent or guardian by the fifth day after due date, the child will be dropped from the program and the School reserves the right to fill the vacancy with another student. All tuition and late fees will continue to be accrued until a 30 day written notice of withdrawal for infant/toddler, preprimary or preschool students only is received and back payments are brought current.

There will be a returned check fee assessed for all returned checks.

There is a sibling discount of 10% off the tuition amount for each additional child enrolled.

### **TUITION DEPOSIT**

All parents may be required to pay a tuition deposit which will be applied towards the first payment of tuition upon registration of the student.

### **MATERIAL FEE**

An annual material fee may be due at the time of registration. This fee covers additional materials required only for the Preschool and/or Kindergarten program.

### **EMERGENCY KIT FEE**

All parents may be required to provide an Emergency Kit each September with food and water for three days, a solar blanket, and a first aid kit. Parents may purchase one from the School or provide one with comparable supplies.

### **SUMMER ENROLLMENT POLICY AND SUMMER VACATION POLICY**

Our summer program is conducted during the months of July and August. In order to secure enrollment for the following academic year, the student must be enrolled in at least four weeks during the summer session. Failing to pay tuition for at least four weeks of the summer months will require re-enrolling your child and placing them on our waiting list, as we cannot hold his or her current position. We can only apply this "four weeks" of tuition credit during the summer months of July and August.

New students who register for enrollment in the upcoming school year will be required to attend the entire summer session.

There will be a one week vacation credit granted **only to those children who attend the school year round** (all twelve months). The vacation credit will only be granted to children **who have attended the school for at least six months prior to the request for vacation**. This would mean the child would have had to attend month of December prior to the request for vacation credit. **This credit can only be taken during the months of July and August, no exceptions**. Credit is given only to those families who actually take vacation; it is not intended to be used as "free tuition".

### **WINTER BREAK**

The School will be closed in observance of the Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Eve holidays. In addition, the School will be closed for up to one week of additional days for Winter Break. See specific calendar for exact dates of closure each year. Each family will receive a one week tuition credit for this Winter Break. The School may choose to stay open for 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 **nonrefundable** charge will be due at least two weeks prior to the scheduled daycare so that we can ensure proper student/teacher ratio.

### **ATTENDANCE**

The school offers both school-day and half-day programs. The school day begins at 9:00 am and ends at 3:00 pm. The half day begins at 9:00 am and ends at 12:00 pm. We offer five, four and three day a week sessions. The kindergarten program is a five school day program only.

If your child is enrolled part-time and absent on their scheduled day, substitutions are not permitted on non-scheduled days due to teacher/child ratio. Occasional attendance is available for a daily fee, but should be scheduled in advance to ensure proper teacher/child ratios. If a child is absent for more than two days, the School must be notified of the reason for the absence as well as the probable return date. Tardiness is very disruptive to the teachers and classes in session; therefore, we ask your cooperation in being punctual when dropping off your child. Habitual tardiness will be addressed first with a written warning, second with a meeting with the parent and teacher, and if the tardiness continues, the child will be removed from the program.

### **MORNING AND AFTERNOON DAYCARE**

The Montessori school day is offered from 9:00am to 3:00pm. Extended child care programs are available for children year round. Extended day care is offered from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. and from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. These programs offer the children a chance to socialize and engage in informal play and rest periods, if needed. Many of our extracurricular programs are offered during these hours.

Occasional daycare is available for an hourly fee, but should be scheduled in advance to ensure proper teacher/child ratios. Payment for occasional child care is due immediately unless other arrangements have been made with the office.

### **LATE PICK-UP POLICY**

The school closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. and all children must be picked up by that time. If there is an unforeseen emergency which prevents the parent from arriving by 6:00, the child will be attended to and a fee of **\$1.00 per minute per child will be charged**. This fee is payable at the time the child is picked up and must be paid directly to the person who assumed responsibility for the child. Continued lateness will be addressed first with a written warning, second with a meeting with the parent and teacher, and if the lateness continues, the child will be removed from the program.

### **EARLY WITHDRAWAL AND REDUCTION OF SCHEDULE**

If you wish to withdraw your child from the school, you are required to give 30 days' written notice or further tuition charges will accrue. A 30-day written notice is also required if you wish 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.

### **EARLY WITHDRAWAL FROM KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

*The Montessori Kindergarten Program is based on a ten (10) month academic year which runs from September through June. Tuition is due for the entire year notwithstanding any early withdrawal regardless of reason.*

### **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

The School is open every weekday of the year except holidays, other closures, and early dismissals as specified in our school calendar. Please refer to the current school calendar.

### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Prior to admission, it is required that the parents submit a physician's report which covers the child's general health, physical and emotional maturity, special needs, and immunizations. A child may be exempt from immunization requirements when (a) his physician recommends against immunization on medical grounds and a letter is received by the school, or (b) his parents sign a medical release based on religious beliefs. A child may not begin school unless immunization or exemption requirements have been met.

### **AFTER SCHOOL EXTRACURRICULAR CLASSES**

Each year various elective subjects are offered. Please refer to the current list and fee schedule. A child may attend these classes only after enrolling with the authorization of his/her parents. If the parent wishes to enroll the child, the application form and appropriate fees are to be submitted to the office. Extra-Curricular classes are held at the school for the convenience of parents only. The School does not participate or represent any of the classes offered. All questions and payments should be directed to the Extra-Curricular Class and not to the School.

### **PREPARING FOR SCHOOL**

Children attending school for the first time are bound to be apprehensive the first couple of weeks. This is normal. There are things you can do to prepare your child for school and few suggestions are:

- Take your child to visit the school prior to his/her first day.

- Talk often about school and what a positive experience it will be.
- Do not let your child see any apprehension you might be feeling about leaving your child for what might be the first time. This will only reinforce and validate his/her feelings of distress.
- At home, emphasize the positive aspects of the day.
- Have your child help label and organize clothing and bedding for the first day.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

A brief loving good-bye is the beginning step towards independence. Drop off should be brief with a specific statement of when you will be returning, such as, after lunch, after nap, after snack. This gives them a mental time frame and something to look forward to for the first two weeks. Prolonging it only enhances frustration to both parent and child. A positive parental attitude is vital to your child's successful adjustment.

## **DRESS CODE**

All children must come to school with a clean, neat appearance and be dressed appropriately for the day's activities. Comfortable clothes which allow children to run, jump, and engage in various activities are encouraged. Clothes should be able to be taken off and replaced independently by the child. Overalls, for example, are difficult to maneuver for a child who has just recently been toilet trained. Additionally, art projects may result in clothes becoming soiled. A daily bath, clean hair, clipped fingernails and brushed teeth are expected. Additionally, costume type clothing (i.e., Batman shirts or princess clothes) which may be disruptive, is better left at home. Closed-toed shoes are expected and "flip flop" style shoes or other shoes that are prone to injuries or tripping while running are not allowed.

## **CHANGE OF CLOTHING**

Each child must bring a complete change of clothing that is clearly labeled, in a plastic zip lock bag. If the child uses them, they will be sent home and must be replaced on the following school day. It is the parent's responsibility to replace them as the child grows into a new size.

## **DISCIPLINE**

The staff does not use corporal punishment or other intimidating means of discipline. Our approach to discipline is that of communication with mutual respect. Problem behavior is redirected into positive action. Occasionally a child may need time to collect his or her thoughts and feelings. The teacher may invite the child to choose participating in an activity or taking a break with an open invitation to return when the child feels ready. If there is a persistent problem and it becomes necessary to involve the parent, it is done with a spirit of cooperation. If further professional help is required, it is done with all parties equally contributing their efforts to help the child. If such a program is entered into, the child's enrollment automatically becomes probationary, contingent upon the meeting of predetermined goals within a specific time period. This approach of school-parent-professional communication applies to academic and emotional concerns as well as to discipline situations.

## **DISMISSAL FROM SCHOOL**

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.

## **BITING POLICY**

We understand that from time to time children will bite. This is most prevalent in infants and toddlers. Young children have difficulty expressing their feelings into words therefore occasionally they will bite. We will work with you as much as possible, to help alleviate the problem. However, if your child continues to bite, we must follow our biting policy which is as follows:

The first time your child bites, we will notify you and together we will devise a plan to rectify the behavior. If the biting continues, we will call you immediately to have the child picked up from school and they cannot return to school for 24 hours. If the biting cannot be controlled we will have to terminate your child's enrollment. You are welcome to re-enroll when the biting has subsided.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

The School stresses the importance of protecting the rights and privacy of children, their families, and our teachers. The practice of maintaining the confidentiality of verbal information and written records is a policy of our school. This practice is in accordance with one of the primary principles of professional behavior in an early childhood setting. For this reason, parent volunteers working in the office are not permitted access to any records pertaining to a child or children other than their own. Parents and legal guardians who desire to review

these records are requested to call the office and request access to the student's file. A staff member must be present whenever records are reviewed.

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

## **FIELD TRIPS**

During the course of the year our preschool and kindergarten students will be taking a limited amount of field trips to enrich learning experiences. All trips will be well-chaperoned by parents and teachers. All field trips will be announced in advance and all children must have signed permission slips on file before participating. Usual transportation will include the rental of a school bus. Otherwise, parents may be asked to drive. Parent drivers are asked to provide proof of insurance and a copy of a driver's license. All car seat laws will be followed. There will not be available care from the school for parents who choose not have their child attend the field trip.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Children enrolled in the Primary and Kindergarten programs will celebrate each child's birthday with the Montessori Birthday Celebration. This is a special time for children and their families to celebrate their own personal time line. We encourage and invite all families to participate in this special celebration. Please contact your teacher for more information. Children may celebrate their birthday at school as long as the teacher is notified in advance. We ask that the low sugar policy be followed as much as possible during this time. Birthdays at school are not intended to be the child's primary celebration. Please do not bring balloons or other favors on the day. Birthday invitations for children's birthday parties will not be passed out at school unless all children in the class are included. This policy is intended to keep any child from feeling left out. You may use the School Directory to acquire names and addresses of the children you wish to invite.

## **NUTRITION**

The school observes a "low sugar" (sugar listed as fifth ingredient or lower) policy in the interest of the children's health and behavior. Please make sure that any food sent to school includes a healthy balance of the food groups. The children who do not utilize the schools lunch program must bring their own lunches to school. Standard size lunch pails should be used unless there is an all-day field trip, in which case the children should bring their lunches in a labeled, disposable lunch bag including a bottled water or canned fruit drink. We suggest that the children participate in the preparation of their lunches as an extension of their cooking and nutrition lessons at school.

Although proper nutrition is an important part of our day, we will not force a child to eat. We will encourage them to take bites and monitor their consumption; however we will not take recess away or punish a child for not completing their lunch. If a child does not participate in the school provided lunch, and brings their own food, any uneaten food will be sent home, to help parents determine appropriate amounts for their children.

## **GUIDELINES FOR LUNCHESES PREPARED AT HOME:**

### Include foods from the four basic food groups:

Fruits and vegetables; Meat, chicken, fish, other proteins; Dairy products; Grains and cereals.

### Sandwich Ideas (preferably on whole grain bread)

Beef (without nitrates); Chicken; Turkey; Cheese; Egg salad; Tuna salad

### Raw Vegetables

Carrot, celery, cucumber, green pepper, jicama, zucchini strips, cauliflower, cherry tomatoes, lettuce

### Dried Fruits

Apples, figs, dates, raisins

### Fresh Fruits

All kinds

### Nutritious Treats

Granola; Crackers with natural ingredients: homemade breads, such as banana, zucchini, carrot, etc.; pretzels (unsalted); Graham crackers (without sugared tops); yogurt

### Drinks

Milk; Pure fruit juices (100% juice); Bottled Water;

Food which requires refrigeration or heating may be brought in a large mouth thermos found in most supermarkets or drugstores. The school does not have the capability of heating individual lunches. If an unacceptable item (i.e. high sugar) is mistakenly included in your child's lunch, it will not be thrown away, but put in a labeled lunch bag to be taken home.

## **SNACKS**

As 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. Teachers will provide suggestions that meet our school's nutrition guidelines. Your child will help prepare 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.

## **FOOD ALLERGIES**

It is the School's policy to be sympathetic to those children with food allergies, especially nut allergies. Please let us know if your child has any food allergies at all, and the severity of the allergy. In order to maintain a safe environment for all children, we request that nut products not be sent to school. This includes breakfast, lunches, snacks, and birthday celebrations. Be careful of granola bars, trail mix, and any other products listing nuts as an ingredient.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS & HOLIDAYS**

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

In an effort to expose all 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. We, as a school, remain 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 let the teacher know in advance and we will arrange a time for you to come and share your beliefs. If you wish to view our holiday curriculum, please ask in the front office.

## **TOYS AND SHARE DAYS**

Games and toys are discouraged from being brought to school. Toys can become lost or broken and this can be very 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 Montessori Preschool classrooms, share days are every Friday. Each student is welcomed to bring a favorite book, postcard, a trophy, a picture, educational item, or item pertaining to the unit of study. Toys will not be shared and will be set aside until pick up.

## **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 people 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.

## **STRANGERS 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.

## **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 any 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

## ILLNESSES AND MEDICATION

An ill child will not be allowed to enter the classroom. If a child becomes ill at school, the parent will be contacted to arrange for the child's care. The child may be kept in the school office until the parent arrives. This child must be picked up by the parent or authorized person within 30 minutes of notification.

Children who are taking prescription medication must have a written authorization from their doctor detailing the exact dosages to be given. **Non-prescription drugs will not be administered at the school, without a written prescription from your doctor.** The medication must be presented to the school in the original container and it must state the child's name and dosage required. The prescription must be current. The parent must give the school written authorization to dispense any medication to the child. All medication must be handed to the director or administrator by the parent or legal guardian. **There is great danger in sending any type of medication to school in a child's lunch pail.** Any medication sent to school without following the proper procedures will be returned home and will not be administered to the child.

### **Children must stay home and not attend school if:**

1. They have had a fever 100 degrees or over in the last 24 hours. Children must be fever free for 24 hours prior to returning to school.
2. They have started antibiotics in the last 24 hours. Children must stay home for the first 24 hours of taking the first dose of antibiotics.
3. They have had diarrhea, vomiting or severe abdominal pain within the last 24 hours. Children must be vomit and diarrhea free for 24 hours before returning to school.
4. They have a cold, sore throat, or persistent cough within the last 24 hours.
5. 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 nasal discharge is not normal and usually indicates infection.
6. They have an open sore or open wound.
7. They have an undiagnosed rash.
8. They have red or swollen eyes.
9. They have an earache.
10. They have swollen glands around the jaw, ears, or neck areas.
11. They have any other symptoms suggestive of acute illness.
12. They have an infectious or communicable disease without a doctor's release.
13. They have a lice infection. All children must be "nit" free from any lice infections. If a child has been infected with lice, they must be re-admitted by the administration office. Treatment or a Doctor's note will not automatically guarantee readmission, only being nit free will guarantee readmission.

**The School may determine that it is in the best interest of the School, that an ill child may be required to produce a doctor's note stating that the child is not contagious and is safe to be around other child, prior to readmission.**

For your reference, a list of COMMON CHILDHOOD ILLNESSES is included below:

**Chicken Pox:** Incubation period is 13-17 days. First symptoms: slight fever and rash. Period of communicability: not more than one day before, or 6 days after the appearance of the rash.

**Conjunctivitis:** An infection (viral or bacterial) in the eye. Symptoms include profuse discolored mucus from the eye, redness and irritation. Period of communicability: Treated with antibiotics, can be 48 hours. Viral conjunctivitis does not react to antibiotics and is contagious with the continued production of mucus or weeping tears.

**Coxsackie Virus:** The symptoms are fever and a rash with blisters in and around the mouth, hands and body. Period of communicability: One day before the onset of the fever and until the rash in blister form disappears (dries).

**Fifth Disease:** First stage symptoms include headache, body ache, sore throat, fever and chills, followed by a bright red rash in the cheeks that look like slap marks and sometimes a lacy rash on the arms and legs. Children are communicable while presenting these symptoms.

**German Measles:** Incubation period 14-21 days. Same symptoms as measles. Period of communicability: Four days after start of rash and catarrhal symptoms.

**Impetigo:** Highly contagious skin infection caused by streptococcus bacteria or staphylococcus bacteria. Symptoms include small red bumps that form clear or pus-filled blisters, which break and ooze. After a few days of blisters the skin appears with honey-colored, encrusted sores or dry erosions. Children must remain out of school until the sores are no longer blistering, oozing or crusting.

**Lice:** A common parasite that may infest in the hair of children and adults. Children may contract this from contact with an infested person or contact with furniture, clothing, bedding or brushes that are infested. Children with lice may first begin to itch behind the ears and at the nape of the neck. Lice appear as grayish tan in color and are cylindrical in shape. Their nits are tiny, oval-shaped and silvery in color, about the size of the eye of a needle. Children with lice are in need of medication to 'delouse'; all clothing, bedding, plush animals, etc. must also be treated. The school is a nit-free environment. Children may not attend school if believed to be carrying nits or lice and will only be re-admitted by the Director. Treatment or a Doctor's note will not automatically guarantee readmission – **only being nit free will guarantee readmission.**

**Lyme Disease:** An infectious disease caused by bacteria that are spread by infected ticks. First symptom is an unusual rash appearing three to thirty days after and at the site of the bite. Other signs may include burning, itching, hives, redness, and swollen eye lids. Further symptoms include: fever, stiff neck, aching muscles and fatigue, sore throat and/or swollen glands. Treated with antibiotics, the child may return to school once well enough to participate in all activities.

**Measles:** Incubation period 10 to 14 days. First symptoms: fever, runny nose, cough, rash. Period of communicability: from cough, runny nose- 9 days; after rash appears-5 days.

**Mumps:** Incubation period 12-26 days. Symptoms: fever, swelling and tenderness in salivary glands. Period of communicability: seven days before symptoms to nine days after symptoms have appeared.

**Roseola:** Incubation period 9 days. Symptoms include irritability, loss of appetite, runny nose, swollen glands, convulsions, and rash. Febrile period is from 3 to 7 days with a rash appearing for a few hours to days.

**Scarlet Fever:** This is a common, acute communicable, localized, hemolytic streptococcal infection. Symptoms include sore throat, headache, malaise, vomiting and fever. The child's face will appear flushed, but the mouth area pale; the child may also present fever with a rash. Fever may persist for up to 14 days with a sore throat lasting from 4 to 14 days. Treated with antibiotics, the child may return to school after period of communicability has passed, after 48 hours of treatment, and when well enough to participate in all activities.

**Strep Throat:** An infection and inflammation of the throat tissues caused by the streptococcus bacterium usually characterized by a severe sore throat and fever. Treated with antibiotics, the child may return to school after 48 hours and when well enough to participate in all activities.

## **SUNSCREEN AND OTHER LOTIONS, OINTMENTS**

The school will be happy to apply sunscreen or any other lotions and ointments on your child, under the following conditions. All items must be provided by the parent and should be labeled clearly with your child's name. A release and authorization form should be completed and left with the office prior to the item being applied on your child.

## **SAFETY PROCEDURES**

The school takes various measures in protecting the health and safety of the children. The safety of the children is our primary concern. All staff members are required to have current CPR and First Aid cards. All staff members are familiar with our emergency disaster plan and their assigned duties. First aid kits are available in all classrooms and on the playgrounds, to care for minor injuries, cuts or scrapes. Fire drills are conducted monthly; earth quake drills are conducted quarterly. Fire extinguishers are available in the classrooms. Evacuation signs are posted in each classroom and in the hallways. The emergency exit signs in the hallways are illuminated in case of a power outage. Each classroom is equipped with an outside emergency exit. Our playground equipment meets the highest safety standards for quality and design. We are aware that most accidents happen on the playground. Our staff is alert and aware when on the playgrounds. Please do not approach a teacher while she is on the playground. In order to provide proper supervision, all staff members need to be supervising while stationed on the playgrounds.

## **EMERGENCY CARE/ACCIDENT PROCEDURES**

In the case of illness, accident or injury to a child, the parent will be notified and instructions for the course of action will be obtained from the school or designated hospital.

In the event that a child is involved in a minor incident at school, the teacher will complete an Ouch Report. This form is used to report accidents such as playground injuries (bumps, scrapes, bruises) and minor injuries resulting from rough play (scratches, scrapes, and hurt feelings). The report is our means of informing parents of an out of the ordinary incident involving their child that may have occurred during the school day. If a laceration or a head injury occurs, the parent is notified immediately by phone, and a recommendation will be made whether the student should receive medical attention.

## **EMERGENCY/DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

In the case of a national emergency, the children will be supervised at the school until their parents arrive or for a maximum of 72 hours following a major disaster. We are equipped to provide food, water and shelter for up to three days, for all students and staff members. After this time the children will be taken to the nearest central disaster site where additional assistance and counseling will be available. We have an emergency disaster plan in place that outlines what to do in an emergency. The outline indicates tasks for each staff member and the proper chain of command. We also have an emergency book that contains contact information for each child and a photo of the child. The contact information indicates who is authorized to pick up the child. Photo identification will be required to release a child.

### **EMERGENCY KITS**

It is the school policy that each child must have an emergency kit available. These kits supply food and water for three days, a solar blanket and first aid for one child. Each student should provide a new emergency kit annually in September. You may provide a kit or for your convenience you may purchase a kit from the school.

### **OBSERVATION OF CLASSROOMS**

Parents are encouraged to visit the school and observe the classrooms at any time. Perspective parents need to schedule a tour with the front office prior to visiting the school. The best time for a tour is between 9:30 am and 11:00 am Monday and Wednesdays.

### **CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION**

Parents who have a talent, career, or hobby that they think would be interesting to the children are encouraged to make arrangements with the Director or teacher to set up a time to share this information with the children. Parents are also encouraged to share anything they may have to aid in our different curriculum studies. Parent volunteers are welcome and encouraged to participate in our program. Please notify the Director if you have an interest in helping out.

### **PARENT EDUCATION**

It is the school's intention to provide parent support and education throughout the year. There will be meetings to familiarize you with the different curriculum areas of the classroom as well as meetings designed to address various parenting issues. The school has a resource library covering a wide range of topics. Should you like information on a particular issue, please let us know and we will attempt to provide resources for you.

There are a number of books on the subject of Montessori education at the local library. Parents are encouraged to read at least one such book each year to enhance their understanding of the Montessori Method. The school will be happy to assist in any way.

### **NAP POLICY**

Children enrolled in the Infant Program are free to nap at any time and each parent will provide a general guideline for the napping schedule on their Infant Needs Program. Children enrolled in the Pre-Primary Program and Montessori Preschool Program will be offered a nap time daily. Children enrolled in the Kindergarten Program will be offered a small rest or quiet time, but will not be asked to nap. The children will be taking a nap in their respective classrooms on individual mats. The school will provide the plastic foam mat or a cot and the parent will provide all required bedding. Please include the following in a **labeled pillowcase**:

- Labeled crib sheet (used to cover mats)
- Small blanket
- Very small pillow (optional)

Every Friday these pillowcases, sheets, and blankets will be sent home with the child to be washed. Please return them on Monday morning.

### **PARENT CONFERENCES**

Parent conferences are scheduled twice annually, in the fall and again in the spring. Written evaluations will be issued in the winter and the last day of school. Special meetings may be scheduled at times that are mutually convenient for the parent and teacher.

Please refrain from discussing detailed subjects with your child's teacher when he/she is being dropped off. This is a time when the teacher must be free to greet all children entering the class.

### **NONDISCRIMINATION**

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

**POLICY CHANGES**

We reserve the right to change school policies at any time throughout the year.