



2011-2012

Parent Handbook

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McMinnville Montessori School Non-Discrimination Policy

The McMinnville Montessori School admits students of any race, religion, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to all students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its education policies, admissions and hiring procedures, scholarship and loan programs, or any other school-administered programs.

Table of Contents

<u>Content(s)</u>	<u>Page(s)</u>
History of School	3
School Organization	3
Fundraising	4
Staff Bio's	4
Board Members	5
Admission Policy	5

Practical Matters: Policies for Routines at School

Daily Schedule	5
Attendance/Promptness	6
Arrival/Departure	6
Communications	9
Weather Closures	9
Primary Students: Cubbies and Personal Items	9
Clothing	10
Bathroom Habits	11
Immunizations	11
Illness	12
Medication	13
Allergy	13
Snack/Lunch Guidelines	14
Sharing	16
Holidays	17
Birthdays and Invitations	17
Before School Care (BSC)	18
After School Care (ASC)	18

The Bigger Picture: Operations and Philosophy

Discipline Policy	19
Confidentiality	19
Financial Policy/Scholarships-Financial Aide	20
Withdraw Policy	21
Learning about Montessori Education	21
Classroom Work	21
Parent Conferences	22
Classroom Observation	22
Transition to Extended Day	22
Transition to Elementary	23
Parent Involvement	23
Montessori at Home	24
Reading for Parents	26

HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL

McMinnville Montessori School was founded by two families, the Moore's and the Roberts, as a single primary-age classroom in the fall of 1982. Both families were bound together by the desire for their children to have the benefits of a Montessori education. In 1985, ownership and operation of the school was transferred from the Moore's and the Roberts to McMinnville Montessori School, a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. The organization was a parent membership with a parent Board of Directors. In 1994 the school purchased the building which is its present site. In 1995, members of the larger community were invited to join the board, and many changes began to take place. The school hired a full-time Director in 1996, and in 1997 the building was remodeled and an elementary classroom was added to the program. As of 2002, the school has been administrated by dual Directors and overseen by the Board. In 2009 the building was further updated to better accommodate the after school program. Now in its 29th year, the school serves many of the community's children as it opens its door for the 2011-2012 school year.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Welcome! We would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new and returning parents to the 2011-2012 school year. You are now part of the McMinnville Montessori School community. The school is managed by the Site Directors and Board of Directors. The Staff and The Board of Directors work together for the well being of the school. Our singular goal is the smooth and successful operation of our school, to benefit both our children and the community at large.

Board of Directors

The Board consists of a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Board can be a blend of community professionals and parent members. The Board manages the human resources needs of our school, involved in long-range planning for the school, annual budget, assists the teaching staff with problem resolution, fundraising, and all legal matters. The Board is self-generating, and has fiduciary and policy-making responsibility for the school.

The board meets regularly on the first Wednesday of each month, at 5:30 pm, at the school. Parents are always welcome to attend these meetings to participate and give board members direct input. Feel free to call or email any board member with your ideas for the coming school year.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's program or progress, please address them first with your child's teacher. If you should have further questions or concerns about the school, its policies, or its programs, please address them in writing with The Board.

Fundraising Overview

Each year the school holds two major fundraisers to benefit the school. The funds supplement the school budget, enrich the learning environment, and financial aid support. Additional improvements to our school will require additional fundraising efforts. Traditionally, the dollars raised are earmarked for music, language and art programs. Families are required to fundraise a minimum of \$300 per school year. There are several fundraisers throughout the year to fulfill this requirement. You have the option of opting out of this commitment by paying a \$400 opt out fee.

If you have any questions or ideas regarding fundraising, please direct them to our Board members.

ABOUT OUR STAFF

Maria Eustrom, Elementary Teacher

Maria begins her fifteenth year at MMS with over eighteen years of teaching experience. A native of Sweden, Maria moved to Oregon from San Diego where she earned her Montessori certification for both Primary and Elementary through 12 years of age. Maria has a four-year degree in Recreational Therapy from Vaxjo University in Sweden.

Leslie Scott, Primary Teacher

Leslie first joined our school as a parent in 1995. Now joining our staff for her fourteenth year, Leslie received her AMI Primary teaching credentials at Montessori Institute Northwest in Portland. She has lived in various U.S. States and Germany. Leslie is a graduate of MSU.

Rommie Christiansen, Primary After School Care Teacher

Rommie joins us for her first full school year. Rommie is a graduate from George Fox University specializing in Theatre. She has worked with young children in different aspects of childcare such as Camp Counselor and Nanny. We are pleased to have Rommie as our Primary After School Care Teacher.

Elaine Paulman-Roman, Office Manager

Elaine begins her first year at MMS with over eleven years in office management experience. Elaine went to the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

BOARD MEMBERS

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ADMISSION POLICY

All children regardless of race, creed or national origin, three years of age through sixth grade, are eligible for admission, subject to openings for appropriate age groups. Priority admission status is granted to children who have siblings enrolled in the school. Children must be toilet trained prior to enrolling in any program offered by the school. A child who is fully toilet trained is defined as one who recognizes the need to use the toilet and can do so independently.

The primary program (3-6 years) is a three year program. The class is a balance of boys and girls of each age group (3, 4, and 5). The majority of openings each year are for 3 year olds. Children are admitted on a space available basis.

Three year old siblings are given first priority for the first primary year. Siblings entering for the second or third year are given priority over other children of their age and gender.

PRACTICAL MATTERS: Policies for Routines at School

DAILY SCHEDULE

School hours Monday through Friday:

Half-day Primary	8:30am to 11:45am
Extended day Primary	8:30am to 2:30pm
Elementary	8:30am to 3:00pm
Before School Care	7:30am to 8:15am
After School Care Primary	12:00 to 6:00pm or 2:30 to 6:00pm
After School Care Elementary	3:00 to 6:00pm

The school's door will open at 7:30am. Children arriving before 8:15am will go into the Before School Care program. Children should arrive between 8:15am and 8:30am for the classrooms.

Children may be picked up between **11:45 and 12:00** for half-day, or **2:30 to 2:45** for extended day, and **3:00 to 3:15** for the elementary. If you will be late to pick up your child, please call the school and ask if your child may join After School Care. All children must be picked up by **6:00pm**.

ATTENDANCE AND PROMPTNESS

Children have a great need for consistency and order in their daily lives. Consistency in attendance helps children develop a positive attitude toward their work and also helps them develop social skills and a greater sense of community. In order to benefit fully from the Montessori environment, it is important that your child come to school on time every day.

Arrange your morning routine to give your child plenty of time to get ready for school. A relaxed and predictable preparation time helps children arrive at school happy and eager to learn.

Please help your child arrive on time each day. You may bring your child as early as 7:30, and all children should begin arriving at 8:15am. It is **important not to be late** because your child may feel left out if the class has already started when he or she arrives. In addition, **late arrivals tend to disrupt the class.**

Whether your child's day ends at 11:45, 2:30, 3:00, or 6:00pm, please pick up your child on time. Children become anxious when their parent is late. There will be a late penalty charge of \$1.00 per minute for children picked up after 6:00pm.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

Due to the increase of traffic that we bring to our residential location, our morning drop off procedure expedites the process for everyone and keeps good relations with our neighbors. **Please read carefully the following arrival procedures.**

When bringing your child **from 7:30am, but before 8:15am**, please park on the street (on the south side and not blocking anyone's driveway, **including ours!**) and walk your child into the foyer. The sign-in sheet includes an area for messages and the staff checks the sheet each morning. Please note if there will be any change to your child's pick up routine for the day. You may ensure your child has put items away in his/her cubby. **Please remain with your child until the staff in the foyer greets your child.**

From 8:15 to 8:30am: This is the general arrival time. Following this drop-off procedure will help everyone: Please approach the school from the east (Logan Street is the nearest cross street). Pull up to the front of the school alongside the curb.

A staff person will be there to assist your child in getting out of the car. Make sure your child has his or her belongings ready to go. Say a quick goodbye to your child and then drive on. A staff member and/or an older child will escort your child into the building.

If your child is unduly distressed or experiences difficulties in getting out of the car, please pull over and park and walk your child to the staff person at the drop-off area. Say goodbye to your child, and leave, even if your child seems distraught. The staff is experienced and well trained in helping children make the transition to school.

If traffic at the drop-off begins to back up slightly, please make sure you are not blocking any of our neighbor's driveways.

Prepare your child for the morning procedure by discussing it with him or her. Telling your child exactly what will occur at the drop-off and what is expected of him or her will be reassuring. In time, the drop-off will be familiar and comfortable for your child. Parents have reported that the drop-off in the morning really does help the day begin with fewer struggles for the parent and child. We appreciate your cooperation in helping to simplify this very busy time.

If it is your child's very first day of school, you are welcome to walk him or her inside. Explain that just for this day you will come inside the building and help with the lunch box and cubby. Wait for a staff person to greet your child in the entryway. **Please avoid entering the classroom in the morning**, as it is disruptive to the other children, and actually may prolong your child's adjustment period. Often it is the parent having difficulty-saying goodbye, and your child will sense this and manifest it for you! Children usually quickly dry their tears and get involved once they settle into the classroom. A staff member will call you in the unlikely event that there really is a problem with your child adjusting to the classroom.

Pick up time: Park your car on the street and come into the school's entryway (or the play yard) and a staff member will bring your child to you, if your child would like to show you something, on occasion, you may of course obtain advance permission from the staff to come into the classroom. Please be especially aware that if you pick up your child at 11:45, class is still continuing for other children, and perhaps a later time would be better for your short visit.

Please park your car on the proper side of the street and avoid blocking staff parking, the drop-off area, and neighborhood driveways. Parents have received parking violations for various infractions, and the city requires that staff cars be parked in the parking lot. Please drive slowly and respect the speed limit of 20 mph.

After retrieving your child from the classroom, sign out by notating the time and then initial. It is important that your child be picked-up promptly upon your arrival. If the class is in the play yard, retrieve your child, enter the building to pick up your child's things and sign out. **Be sure to notify a staff person that you have picked up your child, so that we don't think your child is missing!**

Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.

Children may not leave the building without an Adult!

Each family has a designated folder by the sign in/out sheet. There is a box for Elementary students and one for Primary students. If you have children in both classrooms, your family's folder will be filed in the Elementary file box. Checking your folder is a very important habit to get into, as it is the surest way the school or your child's teacher can communicate to you any necessary information. Bills, upcoming events, book orders, your child's work and notes about your child's progress all go home this way. In an attempt to go as paperless as possible, we also send information by email.

If someone else is to drop off or pick up your child, make sure he or she understands the procedures. We ask that you inform the staff when your child will be picked up by any of the people listed so they can make the transition smooth for your child. It is helpful to bring the person and introduce him/her to the staff ahead of time. Remember that your child will only be released to an individual preauthorized on your release form, unless otherwise notified in writing. Please send a note if someone not on your registration form will pick up your child. Identification may be required so, make sure the person comes prepared to present ID if the staff does not already recognize him or her. This is, of course, for your child's safety. Following these procedures will avoid awkward situations for the child, the staff and your family and friends.

In case of a UFO School Invasion, you will be notified ASAP. For an Alien to remove your child from school, they must be on your Child's pick-up list in the school office, or have a signed and dated letter authorizing the pickup. Said Alien must be prepared to show ID in the form of an Oregon Drivers License or Galaxy ID for those Aliens traveling off their home planet.

In addition to the above procedures for pick up and drop off of your child, the school also has these steps in place for the safety of our children.

The main door is locked at 3:15pm when children are outdoors playing after normal elementary school hours. The side entrance door is used during after school care hours. If the children are outside, we ask that parents come into the play yard directly to check out with the supervising staff and pick up their child. Belongings can be picked up inside, and families can exit through the ASC side door, with it remaining locked behind them.

COMMUNICATIONS

Phone calls to members of the teaching staff are best made between **8:00am-8:15am, 11:30am-12:30pm, and 2:30pm-3:30pm.**

You may also send a written note, e-mail, or leave a telephone message. You will be contacted as soon as possible. Notes for the staff can be given to the morning greeter at the drop-off area.

Important Messages for students will be delivered by a staff member. Please do not make phone calls to students except in matters of extreme emergency.

WEATHER CLOSURES

If inclement weather forces closure of the school for a day, it will be announced on the school website, and the local radio station, KLYC AM 1260, or KEX. In general, we will follow the McMinnville Public School closures. *Note: Days missed due to weather are not made up.

PRIMARY STUDENTS CUBBIES AND PERSONAL ITEMS

Each child will be assigned a cubby. This provides a space for lunches and other personal items. Please let your child be responsible for putting away his or her own things.

The following is a list of items that should be kept in a bag within your child's cubby.

Everything should be clearly marked with your child's name.

- Soft soled shoes or slippers for classroom wear (no heel-exposed slip-ons)
- Comb and brush
- Blindfold (an elastic headband works great)
- Full change of clothes, even for older children: water spills and such happen
- Plastic bags for soiled clothes
- Boots for muddy outside play (these do not need to be kept in the bag)
- Warm Rainwear with hood or hat
- Sun hat for spring/summer

Parents who would like their children to use **sunscreen** should apply long-lasting sunscreen at home. We also encourage parents to provide sun hats for outside wear.

CLOTHING

Please send your child to school in casual clothing that will not restrict his/her activities. When clothes are tight, it restricts their freedom of movement, when clothes are too large it interferes with their ability to manipulate materials gracefully and their movements are hindered and clumsy. Your child needs to wear clothing that can be put on and taken off easily by him/her. It will help your Primary child's growing sense of independence if he or she can use the bathroom without having to ask an adult for help with clothing.

The easiest to manage clothes include elastic-waist knit pants, low shoes (slip-ons or Velcro), and clothing with manageable front fasteners. Buckles and ties do provide learning opportunities when the child can manage them. Please practice with them at home.

Shorts and skirts should come NO HIGHER THAN MID-THIGH and LOOSE FITTED, NOT SKIN TIGHT. Students should be able to sit comfortably, cross-legged on the floor.

If your daughter prefers to wear skirts or dresses, please make sure she wears shorts under them.

Clothes that seem particularly difficult for young children to manage include high-top tennis shoes, boots, overalls, and tight-waist jeans with zippers and snaps. Flip-flops or thong shoes do not help support the child's feet or protect from rocks on the play ground. Keep in mind that school clothes will sometimes get paint, dirt, or food on them. Also, children will need to wear clothing for playing outside in all kinds of weather.

Please choose clothing or accessories that will not be distracting to your child or to their classmates. Some distracting accessories may include jewelry, temporary tattoos, hair items, watches and anything that lights up or has glitter.

Our School is a perfume free zone due to allergies/ asthma issues. Please refrain from allowing children to use perfume or cologne before coming to school.

Jewelry is a source of needless distraction throughout the day. Necklaces are often in the mouth, taken off and traded. Bracelets and rings often scratch our wooden tables and Montessori materials. Jewelry can be broken or lost and a cause of children's tears. Please keep jewelry to a minimum. The teacher will help the child put any jewelry that continues to cause disruption in the parent file folder.

The creators and advertisers of media characters have done a remarkable job of making media characters over-stimulating to children. In some children, media characters from favorite cartoons, movies, and TV shows can rouse strong behavioral reactions that can be obstacles to the kind of growth that is the goal in our classrooms. We endeavor at MMS to create a calm atmosphere where children can focus on the materials, the teachers, their own growth and the

other children in positive ways. We appreciate parents' efforts to keep the media characters off the clothing, shoes, bedding and lunch boxes brought to school. Everything should be clearly marked with your child's name. Items with or depicting violence is strictly prohibited.

BATHROOM HABITS

Make sure that your child knows how to use a toilet and toilet paper. At times a child will have difficulties with bathroom hygiene or not be able to manage clothing. Our staff is instructed, for personal safety and liability reasons, to offer only minimal help with children in the bathroom. If your child has special needs in this area, please discuss them with your child's teacher.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Students must have an immunization record on file with the school. All students are required to meet Health Department standards for Immunizations. Unless your child meets exemption requirements, they must be considered "up-to date" or "complete" by their birthday. You should receive notification from the school and/or the Health Department when your child does not meet the Health Department standards.

In case of a contagious out-break, The Health Department may ask that specific children be excluded from attending school for a specific period of time. We follow the Health Department Guidelines regarding immunizations and contagious diseases or illnesses.

Children who are not immunized due to religious or medical exemptions at the Oregon Health Department standards, may be excluded from school at their own expense (no refunds on tuition/fees will be given).

If a child's records show that they are not in compliance, they will not be allowed to attend school until these requirements are met.

Remember to update your child's immunization record when they receive new immunizations!

ILLNESS

Children who show signs of illness should not be in school. This is for your child's health as well as that of all the other families in our school community. Children should not be in school if they have one of the following symptoms:

- Fever over 101 degrees. Children should be free of fever at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool per day)
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Severe cough
- Sore throat
- Unusual yellow color to skin or eyes
- Skin or eye lesion or rashes that are severe, weeping, or puss-filled
- Stiff neck and headache with one or more of the symptoms listed above
- Difficult breathing or wheezing
- Complaints of severe pain
- Communicable diseases including head lice, scabies, etc., which require treatment

Children who are or who become sick at school will be sent home. **Likewise, any child who is not well enough to play outside is not well enough to come to school.**

If you feel your child is not well enough to go outside, then he/she should stay home, as all children will go outside as scheduled. If your child will be absent, it is helpful if you call to advise the school of the absence.

If your child contracts a contagious disease such as chicken pox, measles, pin worms, impetigo, pink eye, etc., report it to the staff immediately. The other families will be notified of the symptoms. No mention will be made of the child's name. We follow Health Department Guidelines regarding contagious diseases.

If your child becomes ill during school, either you or an authorized contact person will be notified to pick up your child. Children will feel more secure about this situation if you have previously discussed with them where they will be taken and by whom, should they become ill.

In case of extreme medical emergency, if you cannot be reached, your child will be taken to the nearest facility for treatment. We will make every effort to reach you and let you know the nature of the emergency and what actions have been taken.

Permission to Transport Form is included in the registration packet to assist in gaining emergency help for your child. The treating physician will make treatment decisions concerning your child's care, if we are unable to locate you. Please be sure yours is on file in the office and keep it updated.

MEDICATION

School staff will only administer prescribed medication or “over the counter” medications or vitamins with written authorization. **Forms are available in the FORMS section of this handbook or contact the school office.** If your child needs medication **DO NOT SEND IT WITH THE CHILD.** Give it directly to the staff so that it may be safely stored until it needs to be administered.

All prescription medication must be in the original prescription bottle or container clearly labeled with the child’s name, the drug, the dosage, and the name of the prescribing doctor. If the child is to take medication at home also, the druggist can issue the medication in two separate containers. Over-the-counter medication (including vitamins) should be in its original bottle, and also labeled with the name of the child, the drug, and the dosage.

ALLERGY

NOTE: Currently, our outside environment includes a walnut tree and hazelnut shells used for landscaping.

McMinnville Montessori recognizes that food allergies, in some instances, may be severe and even occasionally life threatening. The foods most likely to cause allergic reactions are peanuts, tree nuts, dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, fish, and shellfish. Although most food allergies produce symptoms that are uncomfortable, persons with allergies to the above-listed foods can suffer more serious consequences. McMinnville Montessori has created this policy to reduce the likelihood of severe allergic reactions of students with known food allergies while at school.

A CHILD WITH FOOD ALLERGIES IS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE THEIR OWN SNACK AND LUNCH.

McMinnville Montessori cannot guarantee that a student will never experience an allergy-related event while at school. McMinnville Montessori is committed to student safety, and therefore has created this policy to reduce the risk that children with allergies will have an allergy-related event.

Good hygiene is practiced in the classroom with food tables wiped down after lunches and snacks, and hand washing by staff and students.

Students are not allowed to share food from their lunches.

Snack and lunch times are supervised by staff.

Students are not allowed to eat food outside of snack and lunch times.

All staff will be informed of any child’s allergy before classes begin.

Staff has been trained in First Aid, CPR and Epi-pen use.

The school maintains an Epi-pen for emergency use in the First aid kit.

A student with a severe food allergy may bring their own snack from home, or may eat snack separately from other students if necessary. Parents of students with ***life-threatening allergies*** must provide the school with emergency medications and a written medical treatment action plan for their student for addressing allergy-related events.

A sample Food Allergy Action plan is available from the office and is also located in the FORMS section of this handbook for use by parents with their health care provider. This form comes from FAAN, the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network.

SNACKS

The School serves snacks each day to primary students, one mid-morning and one or two in the afternoon. Snacks consist of protein, carbohydrate and a fruit or vegetable. Please make sure the staff is aware of any allergies or dietary restrictions. Elementary students are required to bring a healthy snack such as a piece of fruit/veggie and or cheese and crackers each day. The school does not provide elementary snacks.

LUNCHESES

These lunch guidelines are extremely important for all students especially the primary aged child. They allow the child an important opportunity to develop their will and gain independence!

All children attending school past 12:00 will have lunch at school, and parents are responsible for providing their child's lunch. The focus of lunch should be a nutritious, well-balanced meal with appropriate social graces. Sugar based foods, artificially sweetened foods, and refined carbohydrates should be avoided. **Please do not send candy or sugar based desserts in your child's lunch.** Nutritional aspects aside, sugars in the lunch bag promotes any number of unpleasant situations during a time of day in which we strive for increased calm.

If you want to send a special treat, children enjoy a picture or short note.

The school will provide beverages (2 % milk, 100 % juice, or water). If you send a beverage with you child's lunch it should meet lunch guidelines. Please save Chocolate drinks for home.

Any uneaten foods will be sent home in the lunch bag so that you are aware of which foods are eaten and in what quantity. All foods should be sent in re-sealable containers. Practice with your child to ensure he or she can easily open and close the containers. This will increase the child's sense of confidence and independence.

Children should bring their own tableware when needed. Napkins will be provided in the classroom, but your child may wish to bring a special placemat and cloth napkin from home.

Please choose for your child's lunch one of the lunch boxes available in beautiful colors, or simply a reusable paper bag that your child has decorated. Often the design on plastic lunch boxes is large stickers. These can be removed and replaced with appropriate stickers or designs created by your child.

Please, no pictures of weapons, media characters or personalities.

Lunch guidelines and examples

Lunches should include:

1. A protein-rich food:

- A Sandwich – peanut butter, almond butter, cheese, tuna, egg salad, etc.
- Cheese – a hunk or slices
- Nuts – peanuts, cashews, almonds, etc., alone, or with raisins, sunflower seeds, etc.
- Peanut Butter – in celery sticks or stuffed in an apple
- Cottage cheese or cheese or cheese spread – in celery sticks, cucumber boats, or plain
- Tuna salad or egg salad – in celery sticks, cucumber boats, squash boats or wrapped in a lettuce leaf
- Chicken, turkey or other meat, in cubes, slices, or hunks
- Meat loaf slices
- Hard cooked eggs (shelled if appropriate)
- Plain yogurt

Luncheon meats, beef jerky, hot dogs, etc. contain nitrates and preservatives, and are highly salted, so should be used in moderation, or as a change of pace.

A note on sandwiches: A sandwich is usually 60 % bread, so it is important to use nutritious bread. Whole – wheat or whole- grained breads are the best choices because all the “enrichment” is there naturally. (Remember, if it says “enriched”, it only means the manufactures have put back some of the nutritive elements that were processed out.) Crackers can provide grain food, and variety, when you don't pack a sandwich.

2. A Vegetable:

Carrot sticks	Celery Sticks	Cherry tomatoes
Tomato wedges	Squash slices	Snow peas/beans
Mushrooms	Green pepper strips	Turnips
Salads	Sweet Potato	Snap peas
Cucumbers	Jicama	Broccoli
Brussels sprouts	Cauliflower	Spinach

3. A Fruit:

Fruit can be fresh, canned, or dried, depending on the fruit, and season.

Apple	Applesauce	Peaches
Orange -quartered	Banana	Seedless grapes
Nectarine	Apricots	Mandarin-orange
Blueberries	Melons	Pears
Tangerine	Pineapple	Raisins

4. Something Special:

For children with larger appetites:

Popcorn	Graham Crackers	Pretzels
Bagels	Granola Bars	Trail mix

SHARING

Children occasionally like to bring interesting items to share with the class. One of the main purposes of sharing is to help children express themselves verbally. You can help your child prepare to tell the class about what he/she has brought. Let him/her take the lead: Ask him/her what they want to say. Help him/her figure out a simple, logical way to say it. Don't give more information than she/he can absorb.

Please help your child make a good choice **before** he/she arrives at school with the item to be shared to avoid possible embarrassment or disappointment.

These are very appropriate things to bring:

- Something your child has made
- Something natural your child has found (rocks, shells, leaves)
- Items from other cultures
- Interesting pictures, posters, newspaper articles
- Photos of family members, homes, vacations, etc.
- Books, especially those depicting a real-life situation. One at a time, please. You may mark their favorite page.
- Animal specimen. If live, you should accompany your child, or it should be released back into its environment at the end of the day.

Please do not allow your child to bring toys (including Lego types), trading cards, knives, and watches with media characters or disruptive sounds, money, or candy to school. These items are distracting or dangerous and will be confiscated for the day.

HOLIDAYS

Many holidays are ENTRENCHED in imagination and fantasy – cupid shooting arrows for love, a rabbit that carries a basket and delivers eggs and gifts, flying reindeer, a jolly round man who delivers gifts down a chimney, etc. The child under 6 is still learning about the real world and the nature of the things found in it. Young children believe all that you tell them.

For these reasons, in keeping with Montessori philosophy, we do not celebrate holidays in the traditional manner. We observe the changing of the seasons and focus on the true nature of life and its history.

Our learning space is protected, and we encourage each family to celebrate holidays in the tradition of your family at home.

BIRTHDAYS, INVITATIONS & THANK YOU CARDS

Birthdays are an important holiday to a small child. It is his or her own special day. In celebrating this event in the classroom, we want to portray a birthday as a milestone in time and indication of the child's growth. We ask parents to provide photos of your child at birth and each year of age. These photos are shared as part of the birthday ceremony at a gathering. Parents are welcome to attend the birthday ceremony. Check with your child's teacher to schedule a time.

If you are sending cards, invitations or other such items, please be sensitive of the feelings of the children who are not participants. We ask that you do not hand out invitations or pick up invited children at the school. Please use the US Postal Service or email for invitations. We

ask that this is taken care of outside of school for the respect of others. Thank you cards should also be distributed in the same manner.

You may bring in the stamped sealed invitations with the child's name written on the envelope. We will address the invitation and mail it for you. Any invitations placed in folders will be returned.

BEFORE SCHOOL CARE

Children who need to arrive before 8:15am will be a part of the Before School Care. The staff will help the children make their transition to the school day through reading, quiet activities, and /or helping with the preparation of the classrooms for the day. Your child may bring a suitable breakfast to eat at this time. BSC is charged on a flat fee basis.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE

In recognition of the realities of our present day two income family world, we provide after school care for the children of working parents who would otherwise need to be transported to another care giver after the class is over. This program is managed by our Head After School Care Teacher. The program is licensed as an after school facility by the Child Care Division of the Oregon State Employment Department.

Children in this program will have a rest period (unless they are in extended day), participate in planned activities such as cooking, gardening, nature studies, arts and crafts, sewing, music, and creative dramatics. In addition, children will have individual time to read, create, think, and play. The Montessori philosophy of respect and space for individual growth and development will be integral to all activities in the program. An afternoon snack will be provided, and the children may elect to finish any uneaten food from their lunch box.

Parents should provide a cover sheet for the resting mat (a crib sheet works well) and a small quilt or blanket for their child. Other comfort items, such as favorite stuffed animal, may be brought for naptime use. Cover sheet and blanket should be taken home monthly for washing.

NOTE* Please, no media characters.

After School Care rates can be obtained at the office. Remember that the school closes at 6:00pm, and all children must be picked up before then. Families will be charged \$1.00 per minute after 6:00 for late pick up.

THE BIGGER PICTURE: Operations and Philosophy

DISCIPLINE POLICY

A major goal of the Montessori classroom is to help the child develop self-discipline. We attempt to provide an environment that both physically and psychologically fosters self-discipline. The freedom of choice the child has in the classroom also has limits and responsibilities. The basic ground rule of the School is respect. The children are taught daily to show respect for other children, for the adults, for the materials and for themselves. No child may hurt another in any way and no child may disturb the work of others.

When children are having difficulties, a variety of methods are used to help them regain self-control. The child may be redirected to another activity or be asked to move to a table where there are fewer distractions. The children are taught techniques of conflict resolution, but while these are developing in the child, an adult may mediate disputes between children. The appropriate behavior is explained in a positive way. Children who are having many difficulties may be asked to remain with an adult or asked to sit out from the group until they have regained their composure.

In the case of ongoing behavioral problems, the child's parents will be called in for a conference and a plan of action agreed upon with the teacher, if appropriate. Parents may be asked to consult with an outside professional for behavioral or learning difficulties that cannot be handled within the context of the classroom, or which are beyond the scope of the staff's training.

Continued violent or disruptive behavior will need to be addressed by the parents in a focused manner. In the rare event that the behaviors continue without improvement, the child may be suspended from school for a time, or the parents may be asked to find another situation for the child.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All of the children's records are kept strictly confidential, but individual parents may request access to their own child's record. Records will only be made available to other persons, schools, or professionals upon written authorization from the parents.

Likewise, all health or special needs, behavioral issues and other concerns regarding the children are kept strictly confidential between the staff and the parents of the child in concern, unless the parent has given permission to the staff that an issue may be made public e.g. It may be necessary or desirable for others to be aware of a health condition, allergies, etc. (For the child's safety). **NEVER** are issues within the classroom, before or after school care, of the

family or of any school outing to be discussed with any persons other than staff and the parents of the child.

We sincerely hope that other parents within the school who may observe behaviors or events regarding the children have the respect for the privacy of the child and family to keep those observations strictly to themselves.

Concerns regarding staff that is relevant solely to performance should be addressed in written form with the Board President. Much damage can be done to a school when perceptions, speculation or rumor is aired among parents without addressing the concerns first with those involved, or following proper channels for such concerns. Please be very responsible in your conversations regarding the school, the children or the staff with other community members. We appreciate your cooperation with our concern over confidentiality.

FINANCIAL POLICIES/SCHOLARSHIPS-FINANCIAL AIDE

Tuition is based on a yearly amount and then divided into ten equal monthly payments. These payments are to be made irrespective of month length, holidays, weather closures, family vacations, or days of absence. You will be billed on the 25th of the month for the next month's tuition payment plus any other charges incurred in the present month (ASC, BSC, pizza, activities, etc.). Payment is due by the 1st of the following month.

Payments made later than the 10th of that month will be charged a late fee of \$15. For accounts more than 30 days past due, interest will be charged at a monthly rate of 2% (APR of 24%). An account due over 60 days may result in your child being dropped from enrollment, and you may be subject to collection or legal proceedings. ***ALL accounts of current families must be paid in full by the end of June to guarantee their child's returning place in the fall.*** Please notify the bookkeeper if you anticipate problems in paying on time. Payments may be dropped off at the school in the office.

Each year a limited number of partial scholarships are available. **Scholarships** are granted for no more than one school year and families must apply each year to request financial assistance. Benefits may vary each year. Discounts range between 5% - 20%. Please note that if you receive **Financial Assistance**, you may not combine this with the Full Pay discount.

Each family is required to volunteer a minimum of ten SOS (School Operations Support) hours a year. There will be a SOS notebook in the foyer to log your hours. Please have a staff member initial your entry. **Any incomplete volunteer SOS hours will be billed at the rate of \$10 per hour and will reflect in the May billing cycle.**

In addition to volunteer SOS hours, each family is expected to fund-raise a minimum of \$300 for the school year. Options for fundraising are listed on your tuition agreement. Please choose

the option that is best suitable for the needs of your family. Other fundraising options can be accepted upon school approval. Fundraising amounts will be tracked through sales receipts. Please submit any necessary receipts to the school office. **Any unmet commitment balances will be reflected in the May billing cycle.**

Children **must be picked up within 15 minutes of class dismissal**, or by 6:00 pm. The late pick-up charge is **\$1.00 per minute** beginning at 6:00pm, up to a maximum of \$30 per day. This charge will be added to the next tuition bill or billed separately for families that pre-paid for the school year.

WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

A minimum of 30 days' notice is required to withdraw your child from the school. The notice must be given in writing to the Board President. The thirty days begins with the date the Board President receives notice. The family is responsible for any before or after school care charges incurred during this time. Tuition may be pro-rated for partial months, at the Board's discretion. ***Enrollment and the tuition agreement represents the full school year, therefore any withdrawal notice accepted on or after February 1st will still be subject to the full annual tuition.***

LEARNING ABOUT MONTESSORI EDUCATION

You and your child can receive the greatest benefit from Montessori education if you understand its principles and their application. Parent nights are held during the school year to provide opportunities for you to become better acquainted with the staff, to learn more about Montessori education and to get to know other parents. As the staff and parents join together in these opportunities, a bond of understanding, communication and mutual support develops. We encourage and look forward to your participation. If you would like to read about the philosophy and method of Montessori education, see the book list in Reading for Parents. There is also a small lending library in the school office that you are welcome to borrow from.

CLASSROOM WORK

Primary

Children from 3 to 6 years of age are process oriented, not product oriented. In the classroom, children are encouraged at all times to work for their own satisfaction, and not just to have something to take home each day for the parent.

Papers are collected every day and sorted at the end of the week. A selection of work may be sent home at intervals. Some work is kept for the child's file at school.

Responding to your child's work in a positive way with more general statements (e.g. "You worked hard on this", "you made a design", "you used a lot of blue", etc.) Rather than heaping praise or asking for an explanation, will aid the child in developing true self-expression.

Elementary

The elementary children will have notebooks in which to keep their work at school. Please check with the Teacher if you wish to review your child's notebook.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Regular parent conferences occur in the fall and spring. Dates for conferences are noted on the school calendar. Sign-up sheets will be posted prior to these days to schedule a time for your conference. You will get more out of the conference if you can observe your child in the classroom first. Contact the office to make an appointment to observe the classroom.

It is most beneficial for parents and the staff to establish and maintain an open channel of communication. You are encouraged to meet with the teachers at any time during the year. If you would like to set up a conference to discuss your child's progress, please leave a note in the staff basket requesting a meeting after school and suggesting a convenient time. The staff will call you at home or email you to confirm the appointment. We do not send home weekly or monthly progress sheets. The best way to find out what your child is doing is observe in your child's class or talk to your child's teacher.

OBSERVING THE CLASSROOM

Parents are encouraged to observe the classroom at work. This is the best way to learn about the practical side of Montessori education, as well as to become familiar with the kinds of activities that your child is involved in every day. Children are generally proud to show parents their special environment.

While parents may visit the school at any time, we ask that you make an appointment in advance with your child's teacher. There is an "observer's chair" in the classroom where you may sit. The children know that your "work" as an observer is to watch them, and that the observer is not to be disturbed. Please respect the children's work by sitting quietly and not engaging children in conversation. Please limit your stay to 15-20 minutes unless arranged otherwise with the Teacher.

TRANSITION TO EXTENDED DAY

Children will exhibit certain developmental signs when they are ready to move from half-day to extended day. Generally, children are ready when they near or reach their 5th birthday, can concentrate for long periods of time, are able to work on projects cooperatively, and want to

hold over work from one day to the next. Readiness for extended day should be discussed with the Teacher. The transition may take place at any time during the school year.

TRANSITION TO THE ELEMENTARY

Similarly, when children are ready for Elementary, some changes will take place. The child at this age becomes intensely social, needing to work, think and act in groups. The child's intellect builds and focus on the work is stronger.

The concept of time as a continuum becomes more understandable, and the child can project imagination into the future as well as the past. This begins somewhere around the child's sixth birthday, but of course the timing is very individual. Therefore, communication with your child's Teacher is important when these signs begin to be observed.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement is crucial in the operation of MMS for many reasons: it is important for children to see their parents taking an active role in their school, it builds a sense of community, and it keeps tuition as low as possible.

Parents often ask how they can help out at the school, and there are several ways. One answer is: the **School Operations Support Jobs (SOS)**! The SOS positions are an extremely important part of keeping the school beautiful and running smoothly and each family is required to volunteer at least 10 hours for the school year.

You will receive a preference form for the type of SOS jobs that are available for the school year. You will be assigned a job for the year to help fill a portion of your hours. Unfortunately there will be occasions when not everyone will receive their preferred job. If you have any questions concerning your assignment, please let your child's teacher know.

We will post, through the weekly e-mail news, other activities where you can volunteer to gain more hours. By taking advantage of these opportunities each family should be able to fulfill their required hours.

Please log your hours in the green binder in a timely manner. The binder is located in the foyer on the shelf under the parent folders.

Families are also required to **fund-raise** a minimum of \$300 per school year. There are two major fundraisers throughout the year to fulfill this requirement. You have the option of opting out of this commitment by paying a \$400 opt out fee. Please select one on your contract.

The SOS hours and the fundraising are two separate requirements for families. SOS hours still need to be done even if you opt out of fundraising. Any SOS hours not completed by the end of the school year will be billed at \$10 per hour.

Another way in which parents become involved is to offer a skill, information, or cultural objects to **present** to the children. Please inform the school of any specialty knowledge or skills that you might be able to share.

The elementary class is always looking for **chaperones and drivers** for their outings. You may find yourself traveling to some interesting places, learning new things and becoming intimately knowledgeable of the children's personalities. This requires an official copy of your driving record to be on file at the school.

MONTESSORI AT HOME

Your children are one of life's greatest gifts. Enjoy them. Share your life and your home with them. Encourage children to participate with the care of the home – cleaning, gardening, repair work, preparation for celebrations and festivals. Organize your home so that there is place for children in each room, which sends children the message that they are valued.

It can be as simple as having low hooks for hanging up small garments, a small table and chair so there is furniture that fits them. Make a partnership with the school to enrich your parenting and relationship with your child. If you can apply Montessori principles at home, your child will be able to continue the growth that begins at school. Attend parent night at the school.

The staff of the school can be valuable resources in your advantage. Following are some age-appropriate suggestions for applying Montessori principles in your home.

Primary ages 3 to 6

Children under 6 years of age are in a stage heightened to sensorial impressions, i.e., shape, size, color, taste, etc. Each object in the home is noticed at all times by them. The overall effect is that they “drink in” with a powerful “absorbent mind.” Know that the care and thought you put into the décor of your home is appreciated by your child.

During this time the language sensitivity is especially strong. Children learn vocabulary at a phenomenal rate. Teach them the names of objects in your home, the names of the flowers in the garden, the places you visit, etc. They glory in the very sound of the language. If someone in your family speaks a foreign language, encourage that person to speak with your child. The ear then opens to the new system of speaking, and will never completely close. Children have heightened ability to imitate sounds; never again will it be so easy to make the sounds of a foreign language.

“Teach by teaching, not by correcting”, is one of the maxims of Montessori. If your child is having difficulty with an activity, he or she will be very sensitive concerning it and will need reassurance.

You should demonstrate the activity using very slow movements so that they may be followed. Analyze such simple actions as closing a door, moving a chair, folding, etc., and your child will be grateful.

Is your child’s room too cluttered? The room should be very simple, with only as much in it as the child can keep order. “A place for everything and everything in its place” is a useful maxim for your child’s room. The bed should be low, so that the child can get in and out without help. The cupboard should be low, and the shelves should hold a limited number of toys.

If your child has too many toys, you may put some of them away, letting the child choose which go on the shelf to begin with. Rotate them periodically, again with the child’s help.

In this sensitive period for sensorial impressions, the artist’s eye and the musician’s ear are developed. Now is the time to play for your child the music you love, read the literature you love, and show the pictures that mean the most to you. Tell your children the names of the authors, artists and musicians, and they will remember. As music is played, mention the names of the instruments and they will remember. “Help Me Do It Myself” is the theme song of the young child. It is so strong that it may be the cause of some parent-child conflict.

Watch for it at home and help your child to be as independent as possible in the areas of care of the person, care of the environment, and doing for others. Montessori stresses that the greatest obstacle to development is the well-meaning, over-helpful adult.

The process of development of inner discipline, self-assurance, and preference for purposeful activity which takes place in children was called “normalization” by Montessori. It appeared to her, in fact, to be the normal state of the child, since it developed spontaneously when the environment offered the necessary means. Creating a home environment which fosters this development will benefit the whole family!

Elementary ages 6 through 12

Following these same principles, your elementary-age child’s needs could be met in your home, with more attention to the growing freedom and responsibility your older child requires. Caring for animals, doing household chores, and arranging his or her own space are home activities your child is ready for.

Children at this age are more socially focused and want to ponder the big questions such as: How does it work? Why are we here? Providing opportunities for your elementary child to get together with friends and explore the cultural or natural world as a group will be tremendously

stimulating. Pull the plug on that television and provide the group with some interesting raw materials to create with.

The need for order that was so strong in the younger child may virtually disappear and you may wonder if this untidy child in your home is really the same person. Don't panic. Your child has some big things on his or her mind and the mess is a creative manifestation of that process.

Help your child with how to organize his or her things, but leaving a little room for error is not a bad thing at this age. Cleaning will often become its own reward. As your child matures so will his/her desire for cleanliness and order; his/her ability to maintain an orderly environment will also develop. This may take time, so patience on your part is the key.

Again, real tools and materials for building and creating are the best "toys" for your 6-12 year old. Books about how, what, where and why, and about other children your child's age will draw your child in. Outside activities such as dance, music and martial arts are inspiring at this age, but don't over schedule! Leave your child time for contemplation of the world.

READING FOR PARENTS

A Child in the Family, Maria Montessori.

Explanation of the common sense rationale behind the Montessori methods and reasons for its success.

The Secret of Childhood, Maria Montessori. The intelligence, psyche and work of the child.

Montessori, A Modern Approach, Paula Polk Lillard.

An introduction to the Montessori movement in education. A history and philosophy of the Montessori Method.

Montessori Today, Paula Polk Lillard.

Excellent work on the child's need from 3 through the Elementary years, and how the philosophy and practice of the classroom addresses those needs.

A Parent's Guide to the Montessori Classroom, Aline Wolf.

A detailed look at a 3-6 year old classroom with black and white photographs of children working with the Montessori materials.

Maria Montessori – Her Life and Her Work, E.M Standing.

A biography of Montessori as written by a friend and disciple. Photos of Montessori children at work in many countries of the world.

Endangered Minds, Jane Healy.

Groundbreaking work on the process of learning and thinking in the brain and the effects of cultural and environmental obstacles to children's intellectual growth.

The Pink WHAT?, Deede Stevenson.

Reference guide to the curriculum materials in the Primary classroom.