



# Parent Handbook 2020-2021



Dr. Maria Montessori

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# INTRODUCTION

## Forward

Please review this Handbook **immediately** for important and/or updated information concerning school procedures, and then please read it again carefully and completely. We hope it will offer clarity and facilitate family discussion, especially since MSM will be a major part of your child's life, and one in which you, as parents, will be involved to varying degrees. This handbook establishes and explains some of the policies, philosophy, and rationale involved in the formation of both the partnership and contractual relationship between home and school. We look forward to a fruitful relationship with you!

Please keep this information booklet and subsequent school correspondence readily accessible throughout your student's tenure at MSM. It contains information pertinent to both student and parent.

## Non-discrimination Statement

The Montessori School of McLean admits students of any race, religion, sex, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The school does not discriminate in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and other school administered programs.

## Welcome

Welcome to our "children's house". We hope that each year will be a wonderful learning experience for your child!

Each of us on staff wishes to help your child become self-directed, independent, and self-confident. We aim to stimulate curiosity, expand intellect, and help your child learn to live in the world as a friendly, considerate and out-going individual.

The Montessori School of McLean is in reality a child's "home away from home". All of the policies have been made in order to make the child's life happy, meaningful, and safe here, and to help the staff implement Dr. Montessori's approach to the education of your child. Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or suggestions.

We are most happy to have you and your child as part of our "family". Once again, welcome. Let us become friends and co-workers in the exciting and challenging work of helping your child attain the maximum development of personality and intellect!

# Mission Statement

*Cultivating each child's unique ability to flourish in mind, body, and spirit.*

Our mission is to nurture the whole child and to inspire an enduring love of learning that prepares children to live joyful lives as responsible, compassionate citizens, therefore contributing to a peaceful and benevolent society.

## Core Values

The Montessori School of McLean offers a fully accredited Montessori primary and elementary educational program. In carrying out our mission, MSM's concern is for the whole child's cognitive, physical, social-emotional, spiritual, and psychological development.

To that end, we

- ◆ Embrace Maria Montessori's philosophy and pedagogy, in which it is understood that all children are born with the inherent ability to achieve their full potential. As such, children are active participants in their learning, and the teacher is the dynamic link in this process.
- ◆ Provide a strong, integrated academic and enrichment program.
- ◆ Create a warm, welcoming, and peaceful learning environment where all children are respected and loved as unique individuals.
- ◆ Prepare a multi-age, child-focused, interactive learning environment that offers meaningful, productive, and gratifying work; allows children to learn using all aspects of their being and to freely choose their work; encourages exploration and reflection; and offers opportunities for both individual and cooperative work.
- ◆ Cultivate each child's ability to respect themselves, others, and the environment, and to become peaceful, compassionate citizens and responsible stewards of the planet.
- ◆ Meet each child where they are: recognize his or her individual strengths, needs, and interests; tailor lessons accordingly and provide guidance so that each child can experience success and acquire skills without competition.
- ◆ Cultivate a joyful, enduring love of learning, while fostering independence, responsibility, and self-discipline.
- ◆ Encourage and model the values we expect from all individuals, including respectfulness, honesty, integrity, good manners and peacefulness.
- ◆ Promote community and cultural awareness in our classroom environments, and celebrate the diversity of our students and staff.

- ◆ Foster community in our school by welcoming families as partners who are dedicated to the Montessori philosophy and by creating opportunities for them to actively participate in the successful education of our children.
- ◆ Attract, support, and retain teachers, staff, and families dedicated to fulfilling our mission for the benefit of the whole child.
- ◆ Commit to continually improving, enhancing and refining all aspects of our educational programs and school management in order to responsibly serve the needs of the child.

The Montessori School of McLean is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation administered by a Board of Directors committed to the Montessori philosophy and principles of education. Its focus is child-centered, family-responsive and community-oriented. Therefore, MSM shall strive to provide an educational and developmental experience that is:

- ◆ holistic, that is, addressing the academic, social, emotional, physical and ethical needs and development of the child and fostering independence, self-direction and motivation, responsible decision making and respect for self and others;
- ◆ individualized, that is, responsive to the unique abilities, learning styles and interests of each child, aiding in the realization of each child's potential;
- ◆ nurturing of the child's love of learning by encouraging intellectual curiosity and self-confidence;
- ◆ conducive to education for life by preparing children for future educational and life experiences and their effective roles in the world community;
- ◆ inclusive, that is, welcoming children of diverse abilities and cultural, religious, racial and socio-economic backgrounds, in a cooperative atmosphere.

MSM shall strive to offer a caring, safe and stable environment grounded in the Montessori Method and philosophy, including:

- ◆ qualified, dedicated, professional staff;
- ◆ specially prepared, fully equipped, and enriched facilities.

MSM shall strive for excellence in its programs, operations, staff and children by being:

- ◆ proactive in its planning and administration;
- ◆ responsive to the changing needs of its students and families;
- ◆ responsible in utilizing sound business practices to ensure fiscal stability.

MSM shall strive to be an integral part of the community by contributing to its enhancement and availing itself of its resources.

# Educational Goals and Philosophy

General objectives of the program at all levels are to:

- ◆ nurture self-confidence, independence, concentration, coordination, a sense of order, and an awareness of self, community and the world
- ◆ encourage and direct the natural desire to learn, choose and solve
- ◆ provide a carefully prepared environment and personnel to support learning as it moves from the concrete base to greater abstraction

## History and Governance

The school was founded in 1973 by Ms. Joan Marie Parasine to meet the demand for quality Montessori education in the Northern Virginia area. The school began with one preschool and one elementary classroom.

The Montessori School of McLean is an independent day school in which the principles and practices of Dr. Maria Montessori are followed in all classes from preschool through the elementary grades.

The school is composed of three divisions. The Elementary division (age 6-12) includes grades one through six for children with previous Montessori background; the Primary division (age 3-6) includes children from age three through Kindergarten; the Pre-Primary (Toddler) division (age 2) includes children 24-36 months.

The school offers many enrichment programs in addition to the Montessori curriculum, including art, music, physical education, Spanish, drama, library, science and technology.

In 1980, the school changed from a sole-proprietorship to a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, administered by a Board of Directors. The current Board members are Joan Marie Parasine, Thomas Le Grand, Shawn Pastor, Sara Rychener, Ethel Seneca, and Kathy McNeill.

## Home and School Partnership

A child's education occurs both in and out of school. We at the Montessori School of McLean believe that a strong, positive relationship between a family and the school is essential to a student's well-being and to the fulfillment of the school's mission.

We are an engaged learning community. The best outcomes come about when every adult and every child is a constructive and contributing member of the community. We

work together to create a climate of trust, open-mindedness and mutual respect that allows for learning and growth on the part of the community.

As we work together on behalf of our students, we expect all members of the MSM community to support the fundamental values and policies of the institution and to understand the respective responsibilities of both school and families.

### **Adult Responsibilities**

Parents and guardians can expect that the MSM faculty and staff will:

- ◆ treat children and family members with respect and courtesy.
- ◆ communicate openly and honestly.
- ◆ schedule opportunities to meet with teachers and appropriate administrators.
- ◆ respond in as timely a manner as feasible to parent phone calls, emails and notes.
- ◆ strive to understand their child and his/her learning needs as fully as possible and to offer their best, most considered professional advice.
- ◆ recognize parents' knowledge of their own child and collaborate with them to maximize effectiveness with their child.
- ◆ provide thoughtful written reports that indicate a child's progress and performance.
- ◆ give early warnings to parents when issues present themselves.
- ◆ attempt to keep parents fully informed as to the school's program and activities through a variety of communication tools.
- ◆ welcome thoughtful questions and suggestions.

MSM expects that parents and guardians will:

- ◆ treat all members of the MSM faculty, staff and administration courteously and respectfully, understanding that they are professionals with deep commitment to children and substantial expertise in their fields.
- ◆ complete all school forms in a timely manner and inform the school immediately when essential information changes.
- ◆ make appointments when they wish to speak with a teacher or visit the classroom. Respect the classroom and not expect the teacher to speak with them when s/he is teaching.
- ◆ read the materials the school distributes to inform parents about the program and activities of the school, including this *Handbook*, *The Friday Note*, classroom newsletters, progress reports and emails.
- ◆ take advantage of opportunities the school provides to discuss their child's performance and/or the educational program and related matters with the faculty and administration. Attend Parent/Teacher Conferences.
- ◆ attend at least two of the many Parent Education opportunities offered at the school.
- ◆ respond promptly to messages from the MSM staff.
- ◆ communicate concerns and questions openly and constructively to the teacher or administrator closest to the problem. Efforts to lobby other parents and negative social media postings are viewed by the school as counterproductive.

- ◆ model integrity and support for taking responsibility for dubious behavior.
- ◆ ensure that their child arrives at school on time and is healthy and fully prepared for the day's activities.
- ◆ ensure that their child is in school as much as possible and misses classes only for illness and emergencies.
- ◆ ensure that the home atmosphere is conducive to study.
- ◆ fulfill their financial obligations to the school in a timely manner.

### **Communication (more on communication in the Policies and Procedures section)**

A free flow of information between the school and parents is essential to ensure that both are aware of the significant events and issues that impact a student's life. The MSM staff works hard at providing many opportunities for parents to know and understand the school's mission and philosophy, program and activities, and the children's progress.

## Programs

**Pre-Primary (Toddler):** for children 2 years of age (24-36 months). Hours are 8:45-12:00.

**Primary:** for children 3-6 years of age. Hours for children younger than 5 years are 8:45-12:00. Children 5-6 years may enroll in the full-day Montessori program until 3:30.

**Elementary:** for children 6-12 years of age. Hours are 8:30-3:30.

**Extended Day:** for children 2-4 years of age. Hours are 12:00am-3:30pm.

**Aftercare:** for children 2-12 years of age. Hours are 3:30-5:30. (No Aftercare offered in the fall of 2020, and possibly for the full school year)

(See Appendix 2 for modified arrival and dismissal times)

# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## Arrival and Dismissal

### **General**

Strict arrival and dismissal procedures have been developed for the safety of all our children.

If you cannot come for your child at the regular time, please telephone the office immediately.

There is NO parking on the circle by order of the Fire Marshall. Park in allotted parking places in front of the school or the gravel lot. There is NO parking behind the church.

It is the parent's responsibility to inform drivers picking up or dropping off their child of school arrival and dismissal procedures. Please supply them with your car number.

Virginia law states that children under four years or 40 pounds must be in a carseat. Children 4-8 years must be in a booster seat.

### **Arrival (see Appendix 2 for modified arrival procedures)**

Elementary students should arrive between 8:15 and 8:25, and be ready to start their day at 8:30. Primary and Toddler students should arrive between 8:25 and 8:45 a.m. Parents should drive around the circle and stop in front of the doors. If there is a line, parents of ALL students MUST wait in line. Please do not try to pass others in line. (On several occasions in the past, children were nearly hit by drivers in a hurry to go, or cars have crashed into each other for the same reason.) We know you don't like to wait, but the children's safety must come first! For safety, we need children to exit the car on the passenger side (to not walk between cars). Children must not be allowed to get out of their cars without assistance from a staff member. A staff member will take preschool children from their cars. Parents should NOT get out of cars as this slows the line and blocks the driveway. If you arrive after 8:45 a.m., please park in a space (not in the Fire Lane) and escort your child to the office to check in. An office staff member will walk them to the classroom.

### **Dismissal (see Appendix 2 for modified dismissal procedures)**

All children will be issued a "number" card at the beginning of the school year. Drivers picking up children should hold up their numbers as they enter the driveway. As the line moves around the circle, please keep your number visible, STAY IN YOUR CAR and pull up around the circle close to the door. Your child will be escorted to your car.

At dismissal time, buses are loaded and leave first. Noon dismissal for car children begins at 12:00 for all classes. Afternoon dismissal begins at 3:30. Please do NOT arrive before the scheduled time as this creates a traffic jam that spills out onto Kirby Road. While it may seem impersonal, dismissal time is not a good time for talking with the teachers as the pressure of waiting cars precludes effective communication.

**If your child stays for childcare after 3:30**, you will park in a parking space, not the Fire Lane, and come in to pick up your child. Parents/caregivers should pick children up in their classrooms (or playground), and sign their child out on the Aftercare teacher's list. **Please note: the office closes promptly at 5:30**, and we ask that parents make every effort to pick up their child(ren) no later than that. If a parent or caregiver is unable to arrive by 5:30, we ask that they arrange for another authorized person to pick up on that day.

If your child is to go home with someone other than the parent or the regular driver, please send a Notice of Change Form to that effect to the school office. **Notice of Change** forms are available in the office and on the website for this purpose. **CHILDREN WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO ANYONE OTHER THAN THE REGULAR DRIVER WITHOUT WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION.** It is a good idea to provide the office with a photograph of anyone other than the parent (baby sitter, aunt, uncle, grandma or grandpa) who is authorized to pick up the child. Photo ID is required of anyone who is unfamiliar to the school staff.

If your child is departing earlier than the normal dismissal time, please check in at the office **to sign your child out** on the sign-out sheet at the front desk. The office will call the classroom to have your child sent up to you.

### **Late Pick-up Policy**

Parents/caregivers who are late picking up children more than three (3) times will be assessed a Late Pick-up Fee of \$1 per minute, per child, each time thereafter. After the third late pick-up, the fee will raise to \$5 per minute.

### **Car Pools**

MSM normally encourages the use of car pools, but for cohorting purposes does not encourage them during the time of COVID-19. A Parent Directory is available to help you arrange car pools. If a **permanent** car pool is established with other families, all families involved must notify the office in writing. There are **Permanent Notice of Change** forms available in the office and on the website for this purpose. Included on the form are:

- ◆ names of the children involved
- ◆ names of the drivers (especially if someone other than parents are picking up)
- ◆ the days of the week and the duration of the car pool.

If a **temporary** car pool arrangement is made, parents should notify the office using a **Notice of Change** form available in the office.

Remember, CHILDREN WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO ANYONE OTHER THAN THE REGULAR DRIVER WITHOUT WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION.

## Attendance Policy (see Appendix 2 for COVID-19 modifications)

Students and their parents are responsible for ensuring that they arrive on time. We ask that Elementary students not arrive earlier than 8:15 a.m., and Primary and Toddler students not arrive before 8:25 (unless they have an Elementary sibling). **Arrivals after 8:30 and 8:45 a.m., respectively, must check in with the MSM receptionist. If you do not check in with the office, your child will be marked absent.** Tardiness in each instance presents a problem for the student and the entire class, frequently disrupting the work cycle of the class and taking time away from important pursuits. Students need to arrive on time in order to start their day with focus, bond with classmates, and feel like a member of the group. MSM believes that each and every student must attend classes and do so in a timely manner. When children attend school regularly and do not miss days for entertainment purposes, it reinforces the importance of school – school matters!

In accordance with Virginia State regulations, for students K-6 each “tardy” will be counted as one third of an absence. Therefore, **three tardies equal one absence.** Tardiness and absences matter in a child’s records. **Fairfax County now considers over five (5) absences to be excessive.**

Further information about attendance:

- ◆ Regular attendance is essential to good progress in school. Should a student be unable to attend school for any reason, the school should be contacted as soon as possible.
- ◆ **Elementary students should arrive as early as possible, as the morning meeting begins at 8:30. If students are habitually late, it takes away time from the entire class.**
- ◆ When a student is ill, parents are required to keep the student at home for their own well-being, and to not risk spreading the illness at school. If a student becomes ill at school, the school will contact the parent to take the student home.
- ◆ The School Calendar is provided to assist families who may be making vacation plans. Parents are expected to cooperate with the school by scheduling family vacations during scheduled holiday breaks, not during school or conference times.
- ◆ On the elementary level, if a student attends school but is not able to participate in the physical education program, notes or emails must be sent indicating this, one to the classroom teacher and one to the physical education teacher.
- ◆ Doctor and other necessary appointments should be made after school and during holiday breaks, when possible. When it is necessary to miss school for an appointment, we ask that you send a note or email to the school office indicating this.
- ◆ Unless their excuses have been cleared through the school by parents, students are to be present on campus and in duly assigned locations from the beginning of the

school day through the end of the final period of each day. Unauthorized absence from school may result in suspensions.

- ◆ If your child is absent for an extended period due to illness, contact the school to coordinate home study activities with the teacher. Children should not be absent from school for extended periods due to vacation.

## Birthdays and Other Celebrations (birthday snacks may not be brought to school this year)

We are fortunate to live in such a diverse area! MSM uses personal, cultural and religious holidays as an educational opportunity to broaden and deepen students' understanding of themselves, their peers and society, and other cultures and beliefs.

Children's birthdays at MSM are a recognition of their special development and place in history. Each classroom may have its own individual practices regarding birthday celebrations. Contact the teacher at least one week prior to your child's birthday to coordinate plans for a celebration at school. Parents may send a treat to share at snack or lunch time. Birthday treats do not have to be sweet. We encourage fruit kabobs, muffins, or other non-sugary treats. Each classroom uses the **Lemonade Bakery** for birthday treats, which makes dairy-, egg-, and nut-free cupcakes and cookies. Your child's teacher will provide you with information on the Lemonade Bakery. Please do not send candy, chocolate or peanut products as some children and staff have life-threatening allergies to these items. **MSM HAS A STRICT NO TREE NUT OR PEANUT PRODUCT POLICY, including products produced in a facility that processes nuts.** You may send party napkins and drinks as well if you wish. DO NOT send goody bags or balloons. If your child has a summer birthday, you may make arrangements with the teacher for a special time to celebrate during the school year.

Please refrain from using the school as a dispensary of gifts or party invitations; class lists and directories are provided for your use for that purpose.

Most teachers celebrate birthdays with the BIRTHDAY WALK, which is a delightful experience. In this celebration, the child walks the globe around a sun candle for each year of their life. They talk about what the child was doing during each of those years. We like to have the child bring a poster/timeline with pictures from their life, representing each year. Parents can make a list of special events in their child's life to be shared with the class. The Birthday Walk and the poster/timeline is a wonderful way to celebrate a child's life, and helps children understand the passage of time.

Many families like to present something to the class or the school in honor of their child's birthday. Any such gifts are most welcome. A book or plant for the classroom is quite suitable. Please inscribe the inside cover with the child's name as donor and the occasion. A gift to the ANNUAL FUND DRIVE in your child's name would be most gratefully received. It is a wonderful way to celebrate your child's life by contributing to the school's life.

Cultural and religious holidays focus on a celebration of the event as a part of life, either natural or societal. Group presentations, individual activities or cultural/geographic topics may focus on the holiday, and children may choose related work or projects. The goal of the celebrations is to enrich the children's awareness, understanding and appreciation of the rich and vital heritage of many lands and beliefs. They allow children to respond to such events individually rather than as a part of a group or adult-initiated project. **(Parents will be able to join celebrations virtually this year.)**

## Classroom Policies

### Placement

The Montessori School of McLean does not discriminate in the placement of students with regard to race, color, religion, ability, national or ethnic origin.

In placement, the School endeavors to achieve a balance of age, gender, and ability in each class and may give special consideration to siblings of enrolled students, to students transferring from other Montessori schools and students returning to MSM. MSM assigns to each class a balance of ages in a three-year cycle (vertical grouping).

Consideration is given to a child's strengths, needs and personality; to class dynamic and child-adult relationship; and to the possible strength of the match of child/family to the school.

Child Visits are conducted as part of the admissions process, usually between December and March. A teacher visits with the child in the classroom and works with them individually and/or in a group.

Prospective elementary students from MSM preschool and newly enrolled elementary students (transfer students) are invited to spend a morning or full day with an elementary class. Elementary students may also be asked to participate in some readiness or achievement testing to determine their readiness or suitability for an elementary Montessori program.

Placement is determined by the Academic Head and Director of Admissions, who will consult with teachers and will review information (of parents and child) and any other pertinent school or evaluation records.

Consideration may be given to parents' preference for a certain teacher, and the school endeavors to honor that request, but cannot guarantee it.

### Certified Teachers

MSM assigns one certified Montessori teacher a maximum number of children that is appropriate for the age level and classroom size. Montessori teachers are certified by the American Montessori Society (AMS), Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), or

another teacher training center approved by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE).

### **Child/Adult Ratios**

The overall ratio of children to teaching staff (both Montessori certified and assistant) is appropriate for the age level as follows:

◆ Toddler – 8:1    ◆ Primary – 14:1    ◆ Elementary – 25:1

These ratios are Montessori recommendations and accepted by the Commonwealth of Virginia for Montessori schools. We generally have a smaller ratio, but the above ratios meet the requirement.

### **New Children – Returning Children**

The first three days of each school year are set aside for the returning children only (except in the Elementary). This allows the returning children to get reacquainted with each other and their classrooms, and to be prepared to be helpers for the new students. The new students begin school on the fourth day, coming into an environment with older children who are ready to help them ease into a new school routine.

### **Full Day Five-Year Old Primary**

The full day 5 year old Primary sessions (8:45 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.) are available to children who meet the Virginia age requirement for Kindergarten (5 by September 30). These students are the leaders of their Primary classrooms and are considered Kindergarteners. Younger students must be enrolled in Extended Day in order to stay at school until 3:30.

### **Student Behavior**

**Code of Good Behavior:** Each member of the school community is expected to act in a manner designed to ensure smooth interactions and functioning of the school. Students treat one another's person and property with courtesy and respect just as they would like to be treated.

**Class Ground Rules:** Class Ground Rules outline expected behavior and rules. It defines our rationale for them. The Discipline Policy outlines the possible consequences for students who break the rules, implementation of these consequences, and our rationale for them.

In a successful Montessori setting, a cohesive understanding is worked out among teachers, parents, and children regarding responsibility, freedom and respect. Montessori teachers are responsible for creating and maintaining a stimulating and useful environment and for putting the child in touch with it. They are facilitators who provide whatever help is needed and who refrain from interfering, controlling, and giving unneeded assistance. Montessori adults set limits within which children are free to act.

Freedom of choice is important to the Montessori classroom. This choice, however, is based on knowledge. Children are not free to do only what they want, but must operate within the structure of the curriculum and the classroom community. If these responsibilities are not accepted, the freedoms of the classroom cannot be retained.

Our rationale is respect for the children. Our goal is that children develop confidence in themselves and independence of thought and action so that they make decisions on their own with an understanding of their responsibility for their own actions and learning. Our intention is to increase children's curiosity about the world around them and to instill a sense of obligation to help others when needed.

We work toward these goals indirectly by helping them with a sense of order, independence, sharing of attention, self-control, responsible stewardship, learning and perseverance.

Negotiable Situations: Certain rules of behavior may be modified by the supervising adult if the situation warrants it. An example would be the rule of walking instead of running in the classroom and school building. Running on the line may sometimes be a part of rhythm activities and, therefore, running would be allowed in that situation.

**Discipline Policy:** MSM believes that discipline is a process rather than a method, something the student is supported in developing rather than something an adult uses. Our approach is to help children learn that they are responsible for what they do and that their actions have logical consequences. The basic class rules are explained, and the children are involved as much as possible in the formulation of new rules. These rules are based primarily on respect for one another and the classroom, e.g. not hurting or disturbing others. Whether the problem involves only two people or the whole class, staff members try to help students learn to solve these problems on their own.

Responses should be consistent and fair. Children who are disruptive and break one of the rules are reminded of the rule. They may be redirected to more positive activities, or it may be appropriate that they be asked to take time out by sitting in a specific area until they feel under control and ready to participate appropriately. The staff member offers the time as an opportunity for children to collect themselves and be in control of their choices.

Helping children develop inner discipline is a challenging, joint task. As children develop increasingly greater control over themselves, they have an increasingly greater degree of freedom. How much external control the adult imposes varies from individual to individual and changes as the child changes. Through role modeling and group discussions, the children see and understand acceptable behavior. Through positive redirection and purposeful activity, the children often avoid classic behavioral "problems".

Staff members may use the following methods to encourage appropriate behavior:

- ◆ Verbal praise
- ◆ Granting earned independence
- ◆ Notifying parents of positive behavior

Staff members may use the following methods to discourage inappropriate behavior:

- ◆ Restricted independence, e.g. sitting next to the teacher, teacher selection of activity
- ◆ Constructive experiences, e.g. writing a letter, removing crayon marks from wall, etc.
- ◆ Withdrawal of privileges, e.g. not participating in play period
- ◆ Time out

MSM does not, under any circumstances, permit the use of corporal punishment, including spanking and shaking, or emotional punishment, e.g. humiliation, unmonitored isolation, or shouting as a means of modifying child behavior.

In cases deemed by the classroom teacher to be chronic or extreme disciplinary concerns, the Teacher or Head(s) may contact the parents to explore other consequences for unacceptable behavior, or suspend the student for an appropriate length of time. Repeated, deliberate violation of the rules concerning profanity, violence, and willful acts of defiance or major property destruction are grounds for suspension or dismissal from the school. A written warning will be issued to the parents on the first offense; a second warning and one day suspension will be issued at the second offense; the student will be involuntarily separated, i.e. expelled, from the school on the third offense.

**Students' Rights at MSM:** Students have the right to:

- ◆ Be afforded respect and understanding.
- ◆ Be directed at their own pace through an educational program designed for individualization.
- ◆ Be safe.
- ◆ Be nurtured as a whole person and helped in all areas of growth: intellectual, emotional and physical.
- ◆ Be provided with an environment and staff prepared to offer an excellent education.
- ◆ Be encouraged to think, question, explore and achieve their fullest potential.
- ◆ Be supported in responsible handling of independence.
- ◆ Be valued as a special, unique and contributing member of the school community.
- ◆ Experience childhood as a time of learning, growth and enjoyment.

**Students' Responsibilities at MSM:**

- ◆ Treat fellow classmates, teachers and guests at MSM with respect and kindness.
- ◆ Do one's very best.
- ◆ Try all tasks presented, no matter how challenging they may seem.
- ◆ Help others, including teaching other children tasks that one has mastered, when asked to do so by the teacher.
- ◆ Care for others' personal property and school property as if it were one's own.
- ◆ Respect all living things in the environment; assume responsibility for the care of plants and animals in the classroom.
- ◆ Use good manners as follows:

- a. Respond with a “yes” or “no”, or “yes Mrs. Jones”, or “no Mrs. Jones”; negative gestures or shrugs are rude and impolite.
  - b. In conversation use polite terms such as “please, thank you, excuse me, pardon me”.
  - c. Acknowledge others in a cheerful and polite manner and hold the door for those who follow.
  - d. Introduce peers, adults, and visitors politely.
  - e. Shake hands firmly and engage the other person eye to eye.
  - f. While waiting to enter the classroom, stand OUTSIDE the classroom until the students inside have exited.
  - g. Use chairs properly when sitting, leaving chair legs and feet on the floor.
  - h. Employ good table manners while eating.
  - i. Allow fellow students to make their own errors without the benefit of correction from peers.
  - j. Walk on the right side of the hall as a courtesy.
- ◆ Refrain from the following behaviors:
    - a. Running within the building.
    - b. Leaving the grounds without permission.
    - c. Chewing gum.
    - d. Using profanity.
    - e. Assaulting others, physically or verbally.
    - f. Throwing anything – except appropriate articles at appropriate times.
    - g. Destroying or defacing school property or the property of others.
    - h. Bringing I-Pods, MP3 players, cell phones or video games to school.
    - i. Bringing fire crackers, knives or other weapons to school.
    - j. Bringing water guns or toys from home, except when specific prior permission has been granted by the teacher.
    - k. Eating in an unauthorized area.
    - l. Littering.
  - ◆ Follow all school and class rules.
  - ◆ Make responsible, informed decisions. Accept the consequences of one’s behavior, depending on one’s age.

These rules and consequences will be reviewed with students during the first week of school and as frequently as needed thereafter.

**Homework:** Homework is an integral part of every elementary student’s responsibility at MSM. It is given to reinforce skills learned in the classroom, to develop individual assignments, and to establish independent work habits. Homework requires a consistent home schedule with a regular time and place to work away from distractions. We expect students to complete and turn in homework as assigned. Parents are asked to encourage and guide their children in the completion of homework, and to ensure that all work turned in is the product of the student’s own efforts.

# Clothing

## General

MSM maintains a dress code, and all students and staff are expected to abide by it. Both staff and children are required to wear neat, appropriate, clean, washable clothing in good repair with no war armaments or distasteful motifs/logos daily. Shoes should be non-skid and closed toed. Socks must be worn. In keeping with Montessori's stress on self-care, children's clothing should be simple, comfortable, and able to be managed by the child. Except in severe weather, the children go outside daily; children should bring appropriate outerwear. Classroom activities may include painting and gardening; please keep this in mind when choosing clothes appropriate for school. Costumes (superheroes, etc.), party clothes, boots, flip flops, clogs, Crocs, high heels, blue jeans, etc. are not appropriate school attire. Also consider the need for the child to move quietly, comfortably and safely (i.e. no noisy boots). Hats are worn outside only as they often create distraction when worn inside. Jewelry is not permitted. Umbrellas should not be brought to school since they can become a safety hazard.

At the beginning of the year, your child's schedule for physical education (PE) and art will be given to you. Please keep in mind when dressing your child, that clothing should be appropriate for the activities of the day. Elementary parents may use this schedule to remind their child of PE day.

**All outerwear** must be labeled with the child's name. This includes all sweaters, raingear, coats, overshoes, each mitten and glove, scarves, hats, and the like.

Please check the "Lost and Found" in the office for missing items of clothing. Unclaimed items are periodically donated to charity or placed in the school's extra clothing box.

## Elementary:

**Uniforms should be purchased at Lands' End – Preferred School Code: 9000-7368-5**

All elementary students wear school uniforms. Please read the uniform policy carefully before you purchase any items of your child's uniform. Many parents come after they have purchased something that is not specified in the guidelines to ask for an exemption from the policy, only to be told that an exemption is not allowed. One observant parent noted that it is almost impossible to tell her own child to follow the rules if the child observes other classmates who infringe upon them.

We believe that following the rules is a form of courtesy and respect for one's school and one's peers. We do not want to embarrass your child or hold him/her responsible for decisions made by parents. Please take a moment to explain the rules to your child and help him/her understand and obey them. In order to enforce the uniform policy, we may ask your child to change clothing if it does not conform to the school's uniform policy. Please follow these guidelines in choosing clothing for your child:

**Shoes: NO ATHLETIC SHOES IN THE CLASSROOM.** Brown, Black or Blue shoes with low heels, non-skid, non-marking soles and Velcro or laced uppers are appropriate for classroom use. “Slip-on” shoes may also “slip-off” at inappropriate times and are not ideal for the classroom or the playground. Socks must be worn with shoes.

### **Girls Uniform**

- Shirt: A shirt or blouse in white, light blue or navy blue. A dress shirt, button-down oxford shirt, knit golf or polo shirt is acceptable. A turtleneck shirt may be worn in cold weather. No collarless shirts or T-shirts.
- Sweater: A navy blue cardigan or pull-over may be worn for cold weather.
- Jumpers: Drop waist jumpers in navy blue or khaki (no plaid), with skirt length coming to the middle of the knee. Knee length Bermuda shorts or uniform skorts are also acceptable. No v-neck styles or skirts.
- Slacks: Tailored twill pants in navy blue or khaki may be substituted for a jumper in cool weather. No jean styles, denim, cargo pants or stretch fabric.
- Socks: Plain, white or navy blue, knee high or ankle with no logos, tights in winter.

### **Boys Uniform**

- Shirt: A shirt in white, light blue or navy blue. A dress shirt, button-down oxford shirt, knit golf or polo shirt is acceptable. A turtleneck shirt may be worn in cold weather. No collarless shirts or T-shirts.
- Sweater: A navy blue cardigan or pull-over may be worn for cold weather.
- Pants: Tailored twill pants in navy blue or khaki. No jean styles, denim, cargo pants or stretch fabric.
- Shorts: Must be Bermuda length (slightly above the knee), navy blue or khaki.
- Socks: Plain, white or navy blue, knee high or ankle with no logos.

### **PE Uniform: Boys and Girls**

Navy blue or white short-sleeved shirt  
Navy blue athletic shorts  
Navy blue or white sweatshirt  
Navy blue sweatpants  
White socks  
Athletic shoes (no light up shoes!)

**Kindergarten:** Kindergarten students have the option of wearing the uniforms described above. While uniforms are not *required* for Kindergarteners, we do encourage parents to consider this option. Wearing a uniform allows our Kindergarteners to identify more with the older students, and it instills a sense of pride and leadership. Kindergarteners who choose not to wear a uniform should follow the dress code described below.

### **Primary and Toddler**

There is no designated uniform for preschool children. Preschool children’s clothing should be chosen using the general school clothing guidelines. On PE days preschool

children should wear sneakers and soft, non-binding clothing, such as a sweat suit in colder weather and shorts and T-shirt in milder weather. ALL preschool children, including 5 year old students, should have a labeled **change of clothes** at school. This change of clothing should be brought in a Ziploc plastic bag; soiled clothing will be sent home in the same bag. If your child uses the extra clothing, please launder and return them the next day. Please remember to change extra sets of clothes with the season and with your child's growth.

In keeping with Dr. Montessori's teaching of "self-care", one of the basic goals of our Montessori preschool curriculum is to assist the children in feeling capable and independent about taking care of themselves, especially when it comes to their clothing. While there is no official uniform for our preschool students, we ask that the children only wear clothing that they can take on and off by themselves without an adult's assistance. We recognize that disagreements about clothing are common in the preschool years. In the classroom, clothing frequently becomes a distraction. Therefore, we encourage you to explain to your child, **early and often**, that some of their favorite clothes may not be appropriate school clothes.

When choosing your child's clothes for school, please remember that the children work on the floor, play outdoors (in cold and warm weather) and may have to wait their turn to use the bathroom. While snap pants with belts or party dresses may be the height of fashion, they are not functional in a busy Montessori classroom. If a teacher finds that a child is having difficulty with a particular piece of clothing, they will send home a note asking you to not send your child to school in that item. Any question about what is appropriate school wear should be directed to the teacher.

Listed below are a few clothing guidelines for the preschoolers:

◆ **ALL CLOTHING SHOULD BE MARKED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME**

- ◆ Pants: no belts, buckles, buttons, difficult snaps or suspenders
- ◆ For those precariously toilet trained, or those who have difficulty reaching the bathroom on time, elastic or loose fitting pants
- ◆ No character clothing (Disney, Warner Bros., etc.) or costumes (including tutus)
- ◆ No expensive party dresses, as they may be stained by markers, paints, etc.
- ◆ If a dress is worn, we recommend that shorts, leggings or tights are worn under them
- ◆ No heavy hiking boots (they make sitting and working on the floor uncomfortable and they are dangerous on the playground)
- ◆ No fancy party shoes, jellies, Crocs, sandals, high heels or platform shoes
- ◆ All shoes should have flat shoelaces instead of round shoelaces (they stay tied better). If your child's shoes come with round laces, we suggest that you replace them with flat laces (available at most supermarkets and drug stores)
- ◆ No jewelry
- ◆ No hair bows, clips, headbands, etc. that causes the child to be distracted. As long as the child can keep them in their hair, they are okay
- ◆ No headbands with ears or unicorn horns (these are very distracting)
- ◆ No shoes or clothing that light up

- ◆ No shoes or clothing that makes noise or has music
- ◆ No watches for children who do not tell time
- ◆ No watches that light up or make noise
- ◆ **NO EMPTY BACKPACKS.** Your child may use a backpack if bringing something to school, but bringing an empty backpack to and from school every day is an unnecessary distraction.

### **Physical Education (PE) Clothing**

Elementary students wear PE clothing outlined above on Page 17.

At the beginning of the school year, your child's teacher will send home a schedule showing the activities that your child will be participating in each week. **Please note the day on which your child has PE.** Weather permitting, the children may be outside on our fields for their PE time. On all PE days, please send your child to school in the following appropriate PE clothing:

- ◆ Good support sneakers (such as a cross trainer)
- ◆ Comfortable, loose fitting shorts
- ◆ Comfortable, loose fitting T-shirt
- ◆ In cooler weather, sweatshirt and sweatpants

Due to the risk of injury, the school reserves the right to not allow your child to participate in PE if they do not have appropriate clothing or shoes.

### **Winter/Rainy Weather Guidelines**

Children should be dressed for the weather, especially in winter. The school makes every effort to take the children out each day (except in the rain). Here are some guidelines for winter/rainy weather:

- ◆ No umbrellas (the school provides umbrellas for arrival and dismissal)
- ◆ Easy to pull on boots or waterproof shoes. The children should bring their indoor shoes to school in a bag and change into them.
- ◆ Easy to fasten winter coats. Zippers and snaps should be "kid friendly"; chances are if you are having difficulty fastening them, then so will your child.
- ◆ On snowy days, please send in clothes to play in the snow (boots, snow pants, hat, mittens/gloves, coat, scarf). These clothes should be brought in a bag and the children will change in the classroom. If you are not sure if the children will go outside, send the snow gear anyway. It is better to have it and not need it than to need it and not have it. Please remember to label these items, also.

### **Items to School**

Special and appropriate items brought to school may enrich the school experience. Books of specific interest, objects related to foreign cultures, nature, small living insects or animals (in a container, please) are all appropriate.

Do not send toys, guns, candy, gum or money to school in that they are disruptive to the class. Ask your child's teacher for guidelines for "Show and Tell" items and schedule.

Please label any items sent in to school.

### **Items from School**

If your child brings home any small block, bead, and the like – anything remotely resembling Montessori material – please return it to school immediately. Young children have a fascination with small objects and pockets!

Montessori materials are expensive. Some parts are irreplaceable or may take weeks to replace, therefore possibly rendering the activity useless for the classroom.

If a child deliberately damages materials or the environment, he/she is asked to repair or perhaps restore/replace the damaged item. In such replacement instances, you may have the child earn money for it at home. If the item cannot be repaired or replaced, we will look for appropriate and creative restitution.

## **Communications**

### **Communication from Home to School**

MSM encourages open, supportive communications. The office staff is available from 8:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. daily (4:30 while Aftercare not being offered). Messages regarding illness, a change in the child's schedule, appointments, etc. are received through the office. When a child is out of school, notify the office of the reason. The school office will inform the teacher. Please notify us immediately of change of address, phone number and/or carpool arrangements.

Teachers are not available to receive telephone calls or emails during school hours as it takes time away from the children. Please leave a message with the office staff. Your teacher will return your call as soon as possible after class. Please send all written messages to the teacher or office staff at arrival. Do not send messages in lunch boxes or backpacks, as they are not retrieved until midday, if at all, and often are soiled and illegible when received. The answering machine receives messages when the office is closed.

### **Communications from School to Home**

The FRIDAY NOTE serves as our primary communication from the school. It is e-mailed to you on Friday afternoons. **Please review it promptly.** The FRIDAY NOTE contains such things as news of what is going on at school, reminders of school closing dates, announcements of upcoming events, notification of any illness that is in school, and has the calendar at the end. Each teacher also has an individual class newsletter

that is e-mailed to you, and the Parents Association e-mails a weekly update on Wednesdays. **If you do not read these communications, you will miss important information about school!**

### **Communicating Student Progress: Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Parent/Teacher Conferences are an important way for parents and teachers to share and understand student progress. They are held in the fall and late winter of each school year, and also at the end of the year for Elementary classes. These days are set aside specifically for this purpose, and parents are expected to make their conference on scheduled conference days. Teachers may not be asked to schedule a conference at a different time, except for extenuating circumstances (family vacation is *not* an extenuating circumstance). The school closes for two days, usually a Thursday and Friday, in order for there to be time to accommodate all parents. The school calendar lists the scheduled dates for conferences; please mark them in your personal calendar. It is preferable that both parents attend these conferences, and we frequently have babysitting set up at school for this purpose (during your conference time). The conferences are for adults only; children may not attend. Conferences are scheduled through the office, and you will be sent a confirmation of your conference date and time.

### **Communicating Parental Concerns**

Parents having concerns regarding a student or class should contact the classroom teacher first. If the parents and teacher need assistance, the Head(s) may be invited to join the conversation. We understand that concerns arise, and expect concerns to be brought forth in a respectful manner.

The administration handles personnel matters, admissions, class placement, observation, classroom needs, and curriculum development.

If your child is resisting going to school for any reason, please inform us. Together, we can discover and solve the problem. Behaviors demonstrated at school are best handled/resolved at school, although parents may be notified and called upon for support. MSM is committed to working with families in an effort to understand and support each other for the benefit of the children within a Montessori environment.

### **Communicating the Montessori Message**

Montessori is more than an education method; it is a wonderful way to experience life! Parents are the most important influence in a child's life. MSM provides opportunities to create consistency between the child's work in the Montessori classroom and the rest of his/her day. For example, we periodically offer "Parent Information Evenings" and parent education articles in the Friday Note, and we maintain a Parent Library.

# Continuity

## Continuity between Home and School

Creating continuity between home and school is probably the greatest support parents can offer their child in the school experience. Keeping in mind that families who choose Montessori generally share values, goals and attitudes compatible with Montessori philosophy, families and school can build a progressive relationship to enhance the child's development.

Mutual education and communication are the primary components of such progress. Similar expectations, responses and objectives will help the child understand what behavior is appropriate at school.

Through educational programs and opportunities for communication, MSM helps parents create consistency between home and school to assist their children in their intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth.

## Continuing Montessori Education

MSM anticipates parents will commit to the educational continuity afforded by MSM where a child can be guided in a consistent method from preschool through elementary school.

MSM encourages parents to visit classes at the succeeding levels to see what wonderful possibilities await the child.

MSM expects parents to discuss the possible transfer of a student to another school *prior* to decision-making.

# Emergency School Closing Policy

MSM **DOES NOT** follow Fairfax or Arlington County Public Schools on whether or not to delay or close school due to inclement weather. The decision to close the school or open late is made, of necessity, by 6:00 a.m. based upon the best available reports of road conditions and weather forecasts at that time. Even if the weather improves or clears later in the day, the decision must be made by 6:00 a.m. In making this decision, our primary concern is the safety of the children.

In case of inclement weather, such as snow, school will either:

1. Close for the day.
2. Open one hour late with all of the children attending.

3. Open two hours late with only full day (5 year olds and older) children attending with the understanding that if the weather conditions worsen, a later decision may be made to close for the day.
4. Close early if weather begins during the day.

**Parents will be informed of closures and delays by these methods:**

**Main Methods:** MSM is using the **One Call Now** app to make emergency announcements this year. Announcements will also be made on **Fox 5 News** and the school's **Facebook** page. To help you with the Facebook notification, please "like" us at <https://www.facebook.com/Montessori-School-of-McLean-161172673938902/> .

**Secondary Methods:** Provided there is no power outage, a message will be on the school answering machine, it will be posted on our website, [www.mcleanmontessori.org](http://www.mcleanmontessori.org), or you may receive an e-mail from the school office. **We will make every effort to notify you by all methods, but do not presume that there is no change if you do not receive an e-mail. Please confirm with one of the Main Methods listed above.**

## Enrollment Policies (See Appendix 2 for information on virtual admissions)

Children are accepted for potential enrollment subsequent to:

- ◆ parent observation.
- ◆ submission of application forms and fee.
- ◆ child visit.
- ◆ submission of previous school records/information if applicable, fees and contract.

Children are placed as appropriate openings occur, taking into consideration the goal of age, gender and ability balance in each class, and of appropriate placement for the child/family. Preschool enrollment is open to children aged 3 through 6, provided they have begun a Montessori program by age 4, and are toilet trained. Elementary enrollment is open to children 5 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> through 12 years of age who have attended at least one year of Montessori preschool and are ready for the advanced program.

MSM may give special consideration to siblings and transfers. Parents may send an Application for Admission form and application fee for younger siblings at any time before their age of eligibility. These applications are maintained in an "Applications – Siblings" file. Enrollment and Tuition Contracts are sent to parents the February just prior to the sibling's eligibility, along with the Re-registration Agreement of the already enrolled sibling.

The first thirty-day period following a child's admission to preschool is a conditional period during which both the parents and the school may evaluate whether or not the child and the environment are suited to each other. Parents pay for this conditional period whether or not the child remains with the school.

## Field Trips (See Appendix 2 for information on virtual field trips)

MSM encourages field trips to take advantage of educational opportunities in the Washington, D.C. area. Their purpose is to enrich and augment the curriculum. Announcements of upcoming field trips are made in the class newsletter. All field trips are arranged through the school office, and school buses are generally used. Students are expected to attend when a trip is planned, dress appropriately, and arrive on time. The office must have on file a general Permission for Field Trips form, current and signed, for each child going on the field trip. Parent participation is greatly appreciated, and suggestions for field trips are always welcome.

## Finances

A parent's standard financial commitment to the school includes: enrollment deposits, tuition fees, materials fee, activity fees, any additional services, and bus fees if transportation is used. Parents are responsible for the full year's tuition, regardless of the payment option chosen. An exception can be made in the following cases:

1. If there is a documented medical, psychological, or related professional evaluative reason.
2. If the family moves from the McLean/surrounding area.
3. If a new preschool student, who has started school, withdraws during the initial 30-day trial period, parents are responsible for only the one month's tuition.

No student will be enrolled in the second semester until the first semester tuition is paid. Exceptions are made if tuition is being paid monthly or other arrangements have been made with the Head(s), with Board approval.

Academic records may not be forwarded to other schools if an outstanding balance remains.

If more than one child per immediate family is in the school, there is a discount of 10% of the lower tuition per sibling per school year. Cousins do not qualify for the discount.

There can be no reduction of fees when a child is absent due to vacation or illness as the child's space is being reserved during the absence.

In the first instance of a returned check, the check must be replaced with a certified check, money order or cash within 48 hours. A \$25 fee plus bank service charges will be levied. Returned checks will not be submitted for payment a second time.

In the second instance of a returned check on a subsequent payment, the check must be replaced with a certified check, money order or cash within 48 hours. A \$25 fee plus bank service charges will be levied, and personal checks will no longer be accepted for payment.

## **Application Fee**

The application fee is a non-refundable processing fee paid when an Application for Admission is submitted to the school.

Wait Pool: Families in the wait pool who cannot be accommodated by the opening day of school will be contacted to see whether they wish to be taken out of the wait pool or whether they wish to remain in the wait pool. At any time before the school can accommodate a child, the parent may ask, in writing, to be removed from the wait pool.

## **Enrollment Deposit**

The non-refundable enrollment deposit is a form of “security deposit” paid by families at the time of initial entry (with the original contract) into the school to reserve a place in the school’s enrollment. Enrollment Deposits are returned after the child leaves the school permanently, as long as the child has completed the three-year-cycle in which s/he is enrolled, and all fees have been paid.

## **Tuition Advance**

The tuition advance is the tuition for May of the upcoming school year paid by returning students at the time of re-enrollment, which indicates your commitment to continuing at MSM. Failure to submit the tuition advance by the date specified in the Re-enrollment Letter may result in forfeiture of the child’s place in the school’s enrollment. The tuition advance is refundable only in circumstances outlined in the Tuition Contract.

## **Tuition Payment Plans**

**FACTS:** Tuition is payable through FACTS by one of the options noted below. **All families must enroll with FACTS.**

The following tuition plans are offered by MSM:

- ◆ **Annual Option:** Enrollment Deposit for new students or Tuition Advance for returning students are due upon return of the contract. All remaining fees for the school year, including materials and activity fees, are paid in one lump sum and are due September 1 of that school year.
- ◆ **Semester Option:** Enrollment Deposit for new students or Tuition Advance for returning students are due upon return of the contract. First semester balance, including materials and activity fees, is due on September 1; second semester payment is due on February 1.
- ◆ **Quarterly Option:** Enrollment Deposit for new students or Tuition Advance for returning students is due upon return of the contract. Quarterly payments are due on September 1, including materials and activity fees; November 1; February 1; and April 1.

- ◆ **Monthly Option:** Enrollment Deposit for new students or Tuition Advance for returning students are due upon return of the contract. The first month's balance, which includes the materials and activity fees, is due on September 1. Monthly payments are due thereafter on the first of each month through April for returning students, and May for new students. (There is no June payment.)

### **Refund of Deposits – Returning Students**

The Enrollment Deposit is refundable the July 31 after the child leaves the school permanently, provided that all other outstanding fees have been paid.

In the case of a child who had been re-enrolled, but subsequently withdraws, the deposit and tuition advance are non-refundable.

### **Refund of Deposits – Newly Enrolled Students**

For newly enrolled families who pay the Enrollment Deposit and subsequently withdraw, the Enrollment Deposit is refundable *only* if the family moves out of the area for reasons beyond their control, or if the child has a medical reason that he/she cannot attend school. The deposit is non-refundable in any other case.

### **Late Payment**

You will receive statements from FACTS in the format you choose. If tuition payments are in arrears of more than thirty days, the student may be suspended or dismissed from attendance at school until the accounts are brought up to date. The parent is not relieved from the conditions of the Enrollment and Tuition Contract and is responsible for the school fees for the school year from the first date of attendance in that school year. The child may not be readmitted until the entire amount in arrears is paid.

### **Late Payment Charges**

A \$50 late fee per payment will be added to your account if payments are past due.

## **Health** (See Appendix 2 for COVID-19 health policy changes)

### **Emergency Forms**

Each child is required to have an Emergency Form on file by his/her first day of school annually. This form contains:

1. child's name, address, and telephone number
2. parents' names, home and work addresses, email addresses and all telephone numbers including work, home and mobile phones
3. child's physician and dentist with telephone number

4. names and telephone numbers of parent substitutes who are authorized to call for the child or to be contacted if parents cannot be reached in an emergency
5. parent instructions for treatment in emergency if they cannot be reached, including acknowledgement of responsibility for expenses incurred, as well as hospital and form of transportation preferred.
6. any known allergies or conditions the child has, including signs of allergy and treatment that may be necessary.

Student Emergency Forms are created from the information that you supply in your online forms, and are maintained by the office. Parents must notify the office in writing of any changes to the information on the form as soon as they occur. A new form is completed every year.

### **Health Forms**

The Commonwealth of Virginia REQUIRES that a "School Entrance Physical Examination and Immunization Certification" form be on file in the school office for each child who is enrolled. The school is required to **EXCLUDE FROM CLASS ANY CHILD FOR WHOM IT DOES NOT HAVE THIS FORM.** The Virginia "School Entrance Physical Examination and Immunization Certification" form is given to each family and is available on the website. This form is also available through your child's doctor. Please have your child's doctor fill it out and return it to the school office **BEFORE** your child's first day of school. This certification needs to be updated by the child's doctor when additional health information is added, for example, additional immunizations or a booster shot.

### **Prohibition of Attendance during Illness (strictly adhered to and enhanced during COVID-19)**

In accordance with Department of Social Services guidelines, students are excluded from attendance if any of the following conditions exist:

1. Above-normal temperature (child should be at normal temperature **without medication for at least 24 hours** before return to school). **Children with a temperature of 100.0 will be sent home.** Special note: Even if the temperature is caused by a non-contagious illness, the child should not attend school. A fever indicates that the body is under stress or is fighting infection. In this condition, complications can arise; therefore, we cannot assume the responsibility of monitoring a sick child.
2. Rash
3. Discharge from ears or eyes; inflammation of eyes
4. Sore throat or persistent cough
5. Fresh cold with green or yellow nasal discharge

6. Child not well enough to play outside
7. Diarrhea or vomiting, the night before or the morning of attending school
8. Any type of contagious or infectious diseases
9. Extreme tiredness or irritability of an unexplained nature

Children with a strep infection should be kept home until 24 hours after they start antibiotics. Untreated strep infection may lead to heart valve damage and/or other complications.

Children with a communicable disease, such as, measles, mumps, strep, whooping cough, influenza, may not return to school until the doctor indicates they may return; the usual time is one week from onset of disease. Parents should check with the doctor to be sure.

Children contracting chicken pox are contagious a few days before the actual lesions erupt. Infection is spread through droplets from the nose and mouth. Once the lesions erupt, the infection is spread by shedding from the lesions and not from the nose and mouth. Children are contagious as long as the lesions are forming and are open. They are no longer considered contagious when there are no new lesions and all the old lesions are crusted and dry; this is generally six days after the appearance of the first lesions. Children may not return to school until seven days after the first appearance of the lesions and until all lesions are crusted and dry.

A child **MUST** be kept home at least two days or more following the onset of a fresh cold.

Should a child become ill during the course of the day or arrive with symptoms of illness or is too ill to participate in the activities of the day (in the opinion of the teacher in consultation with the Head(s) and/or Health Coordinator), the parent will be notified and asked to take the child home. If a parent is unavailable during the day, it is still the responsibility of the parent to make arrangements to have the sick child picked up immediately from school after notification of illness. Ill children are isolated in the health office and monitored until parent arrival. Parents should retrieve their sick children as soon as possible, within an hour of notification. Please be sure contact info is current.

**Parents are to notify MSM within 24 hours or the next business day if their child or household member contracts a contagious disease so that parents of other children can be advised of possible exposure.** Children who are in contact with groups of other children, especially for the first time, will go through a period of frequent colds. This will diminish after a while. In the meantime, parents help keep children healthy by encouraging good nutrition, hygiene, and adequate rest.

If a child is recovering from an illness, the child should remain at home until well enough to participate in all aspects of the school program.

## Medication

If a child is well enough to be in school but must take medication during school hours, State law requires that the parents, **not the child**, must give the medication, along with a completed "Authorization for Medication" form (available through the office), to the Health Coordinator or another office staff member. **DO NOT SEND ANY MEDICATION, NOT EVEN COUGH DROPS, VITAMINS, OR HOMEOPATHIC MEDICATION, IN YOUR CHILD'S LUNCH BOX OR POCKET. ANOTHER CHILD MAY FIND AND CONSUME IT, AND IT IS AGAINST THE LAW.**

## Nutrition (See Appendix 2 for important lunch and snack adaptations)

### No Tree Nuts/Peanuts and Candy Policy

MSM emphasizes good nutrition and asks that food brought to school emphasize the same. **NO SODA, GUM, CANDY OR JUNK FOOD**, please. Because we have many children with severe to life threatening allergies, and the children eat in their work space, we have a **NO TREE NUT OR PEANUT POLICY. All foods brought to school must be peanut and tree nut free, and not made in a facility that processes nuts.**

### Lunch

MSM uses a lunch service called Smart Lunches. Any student who stays full-day may purchase lunch through this service.

Many children choose to bring a lunch from home. Please send a simple nutritious lunch. Suggestions include a meat and cheese sandwich or other sandwich of your choice (no peanut butter), a piece of fruit, yogurt, fresh vegetables or raisins, and milk, juice or water for a drink. You may include a couple of small cookies or small bag of chips. Do not send more than your child can or will eat. All children are encouraged to eat a reasonable amount of their lunch, but no child will be forced to eat more than he or she wishes. You may wish to include a place mat and a napkin. Children are encouraged to practice good table manners during lunch. **Please ensure that all granola bars and such are nut free, and are not made in a facility that processes nuts.** Your child's teacher may request that you send an ingredient list for a food item that appears to be a nut product. Any food containing nuts or nut products will not be served. A cold pack is recommended by the Health Department to help keep perishable food fresh.

### Snack

Snack is served daily in the Toddler, Primary, and Lower Elementary classrooms. The daily snack is provided by the parents on a weekly basis. Cups, plates/bowls, and napkins are provided by the school. We require nutritious snacks for daily consumption. The snack need not be elaborate, and servings do not need to be large. See the

Birthday section for birthday snack recommendations and special allowances for birthday celebrations. **Again, no tree nut or peanut products.**

We strongly discourage any highly sugared treats at any time. Some research supports the position that surplus sugar has harmful side effects. Our own experience conclusively shows that the children are super-active, less attentive, and more disruptive the days following Halloween and Valentine's Day. Children readily accept strawberries or fruit kabobs as special treats in the place of the highly sugared ones. Your teacher will give you a list of snack suggestions.

Please keep in mind that **SOME FOODS CAUSE YOUNG CHILDREN TO CHOKE.** Round, hard foods are especially dangerous to young children. Seeds, popcorn, hard candies, and un-cut grapes are all foods that may be potential choking hazards. Therefore, please do not send them.

## Observations

Classrooms are open and accessible to parents and visitors. **(Parents will not be able to observe during COVID-19.)** We do ask that you schedule your visit through the office to avoid having too many visitors in one classroom at the same time. Observations are welcome after October 15 in order to allow the classes to establish their routines and begin normalization. Please stop at the office to check in and to receive a visitor pass and information that may facilitate your observation experience.

We especially encourage parents to visit their child's classroom. Your child's portrayal of school may be limited to a description of snack or playtime. A visit to the classroom will give you a chance to learn more about the full Montessori experience. Please keep in mind that it is not unusual for a child's behavior to be influenced by the parent's presence. Therefore, it may not be a completely typical day for your child. Children, however, do appreciate the interest of a parent visit, and it is an opportunity to watch the class function. Parents of children in the primary classes are also encouraged to visit the elementary classes.

### Observation Guidelines:

- ◆ Seat yourself comfortably, quietly and unobtrusively where you can see the children work and interact with staff and peers.
- ◆ Please do not engage the teacher in conversation, as s/he is working with the students. If available, the teacher will invite questions.
- ◆ Please do not engage the children in distracting conversation. Respond only at their invitation. You may tell a child who wants to talk to you, "I have come to watch you work."
- ◆ Feel free to return to the office after your observation to ask questions and get more information. If you are visiting your child's class and have a question for the teacher, leave a message in the office, and the teacher will call you about your question.

Adults are welcome in the classrooms to observe, but we do not recommend that younger siblings or prospective preschool children attend observations.

### **Additional things to keep in mind while observing:**

#### **Purpose**

The parent observation is an opportunity for the children to share a dynamic picture of what life is like Montessori-style; friends, teachers, and learning materials, and the less tangible atmosphere that is “home” for the child for so much of his or her school day. What you see will be affected somewhat by your presence. If you are observing your child’s classroom, he or she will be excited at having you here. To minimize the excitement factor, we offer these hints for observing and interpreting what you see.

#### **Procedure**

When you enter the classroom, you will find one or two adult-sized chairs. Choose one; later you can move that chair to another vantage point. This will enable you to see the entire classroom area. When you sit down, children may approach you, either your child or others. Try not to engage them in conversation. A polite “hello” and a direct response as to who you are is fine. Then quietly suggest to the child that he or she return to work. The children have been told before you came that you are here to watch them work and they will understand your response to them in that context.

Do not be surprised if your own child cries, clings, acts silly, or ignores you completely. Children respond differently to having their parents in the classroom than they do in the normal course of the school day or at home. The classroom teacher will deal with your child’s response, and it is fine for you and your child to spend the observation time watching the class together if he or she is unable to leave your side or lap

Your child probably will offer you a snack while you are visiting. Although it may be a small snack, remember that your child is very proud to be able to put together and serve this food to you, so please do not refuse to partake of it even if it adds a few calories to your daily diet or if you are not excited by the choice of food. The joy that your child experiences when you eat the snack is a special delight to see.

The teacher may not be able to take time from his/her classroom duties to converse with you either during or directly after your visit. If questions occur to you while you are watching, please write them down. The teacher will be glad to answer these questions at a later time by telephone or e-mail, if necessary.

If you have been visiting your child’s class, make your goodbye brief and positive when you must leave. It is helpful if you prepare your child for the fact that your visit is limited, and that you will leave and then see him or her at the usual dismissal time. Some children will take your leaving in stride, while others will cry and want to leave with you. Be assured that even the most agitated child will calm down quickly after you leave.

### **While Observing:**

Parents may feel overwhelmed by the diverse activities when first entering the classroom environment abuzz with children. Here are some focal points for your attention.

- **Visual Perspective:** There is more to the Montessori classroom than the activities of a single child. The natural tendency of parents is to focus and follow their own child's activities. Try to observe in a context. Alternate between a wide-angle view of the classroom, and then focus in on your child. This helps your child not to be self-conscious and you will develop a broader context.
- **Aural Perspective:** Listen to the noise level as it rises and falls and try to see which groups or individuals are generating the sound. You will hear the normal hubbub of children together and the special pitch of children excited about learning. At times there will be a special peak of excitement of discovery. Try to differentiate between them.
- **Learning:** Notice that children learn in different ways. You will see groups of children working cooperatively, an individual child working alone with intense concentration, and some children walking through the classroom seemingly not engaged in any direct activity. Very often, children in the latter category are actively absorbing other children's activity and classroom materials through observation. Alternate your focus among these three learning patterns. Note also the ease and joy with which the children work. You will observe that this learning process affords the child great satisfaction.
- **Child-Child Interaction:** Listen to the style and content in which children talk to one another. Try to hear the level of respect as well as the normal pushes and pulls of childhood. Often observers new to Montessori are surprised that a child will guard his or her work and tell another classmate that he or she is disturbing this work, and that, as a result of this verbal interaction, the other child will leave. Other new observers are bemused by the politeness with which a child will ask another child, "Do you care for a piece of apple?" and the child will respond "Yes, thank you."
- **Teacher-Child Interaction:** Watch the way a teacher interacts with the children and compare it with the traditional classroom mode by which you were educated. Observe the way in which a teacher corrects a child and notice the instances in which she does not. Listen to the teacher's tone of voice with the child. Many parents wonder how a teacher can manage such a large group of children. The answer lies in this interaction process. The teacher is the facilitator of the child's autonomous learning process. She guides and gently directs. She prepares the environment, gives the child the tools to utilize the materials, and then does whatever else is necessary to help the child do it without assistance. Sometimes this "whatever else" involves direct encouragement, at other times indirect appreciation, and still at other times a wise and watchful absence. There is basic respect for each child's particular style of learning in the Montessori classroom. See if you notice it.
- **Sociability:** Watch the ways in which children offer assistance to one another with the materials and with everyday tasks and the ways that they are directly sociable with one another. The Montessori classroom contains a wide range of both ages of children and materials that are appropriate to the different levels of development. Note how children go to the material that is appropriate to their developmental level. Note also how the younger children absorb the older children's work simply

by being near them and how, conversely, the older children will assist the younger ones with work they have already mastered. These seeming “academic” activities have a strong social component to them that inculcates a sense of responsibility for, and community with, all those in the class.

Always present in the classroom are pockets of purely social activities. Children may be clustered around a table discussing the latest cartoon superhero or popular doll, or they may be making plans to play at one another’s houses that they have not yet told their parents about. Whenever a birthday nears, a child’s upcoming party is certain to be an important item of discussion. Children are children in the Montessori classroom and the child’s natural desires to form friendships and be part of an ongoing community are ever present.

- **Autonomy:** Absorb the independence of the children as they do for themselves in their classroom environment. Observe even the youngest child take responsibility for his or her personal environment. Observe how, however precariously, a glass pitcher of water or a tray with fragile materials is carried. Observe a child choose a piece of work, take it from the shelf, complete the work, and return it so that the next child can use it.

The generation of this autonomy is a function of the prepared environment of the Montessori classroom. What this means is that children will have available all needed materials, in good working order, to complete tasks that they have chosen. The structure of the Montessori environment provides the child with as much time as he or she needs to complete the task, and success is the primary reward. As you look around the classroom, notice the materials and how attractive they are in their placement, color, and cleanliness. Children are attracted to work and, through their work, to learn in this prepared environment.

We recognize that you may not be able to sort out and see all the dimensions of the classroom that are outlined here, and we hope that you are not disappointed if you are not able to observe them all in this one visit. Please feel welcome to come again. We are eager to share with you the excitement that we feel in being part of the child’s growing years.

## Parents and the School

**Parent Engagement** (See Appendix 2 for additional information. Parent volunteerism will look different this year.)

Volunteering is a vital component to a good school; each volunteer helps enrich the education and experience of all the students. Volunteers enhance the educational process by adding expertise and knowledge to the curriculum.

The Montessori School of McLean encourages active parent participation in many facets of the school’s activities. Despite the superior education and care students receive at MSM, tuition alone cannot fund all the expenses aimed at such excellence. As a private school, MSM is not afforded the opportunities of governmental or church-related subsidies. The school relies on parental involvement to help keep operating costs down.

Besides the tremendous support this participation gives to the functioning of the school, the children appreciate parent interest in their activities. Your commitment and dependability are crucial to the school and its students. Inquire at the office for information on possible volunteer positions. We are also interested in any additional ideas parents may have. Don't be shy! You are valuable, and we look forward to working with you and your child!

**Criminal Background Checks:** Because of changing regulations and societal concerns, MSM will now require criminal background checks for parent chaperones on overnight field trips.

(see also Visitor Policy)

### **Parent Development**

As you are a part of the MSM community, we expect that each family will participate in at least two parent development events per year. These events include: Cosmic Coffees, Journey of Discovery, Montessori at Work, and Primary parent development nights. New families are recommended to attend one Journey event in the course of their first year at MSM. MSM also sometimes hosts the Parents as Educational Partners (PEP) classes. MSM values and welcomes the opportunity to assist you in your own Montessori journey, so please take advantage of these functions to better understand your child's learning experience. We will keep track of parent education attendance and hope for 100% parent involvement!

### **Parents' Association**

During the 1976-77 school year, a Parents' Association was organized by the parents for the purpose of benefiting the school and promoting a spirit of community through get-togethers, picnics and fund-raising activities, such as, the Fun Fair, bake sales, silent auctions, gift wrap sales, art auction, fruit sales, and plant sales.

Every parent is a member of the Parents' Association and is encouraged to participate in its activities, though no one is obligated to do so. The association has voted to charge a fee per family for each school year, payable to MSM, to help defray costs of large functions (Fall Festival, Winter Holiday Party, Spring Fun Fair) and to help limit the number of small, minimally productive fundraisers. The fee also provides funding for field trips. The current Family Activity Fee is \$165.

MSM is grateful for the participation and support of the Parents' Association and the general parent population over the years. In addition to fun events, parent fundraising has contributed to the daily lives of the students and teachers, providing: the sports court, all of the playground equipment, picnic tables, sound and lighting in the multi-purpose room, numerous classroom materials, professional development, soccer field, gymnastic mats, musical instruments, technology, library books, computerized card catalog, greenhouse, and much more!

# Rest

Inadequate rest is a frequent problem for some children. Fatigued students miss great opportunities. The amount of rest required by children can increase at times. Children starting school or entering a longer program may be tired and irritable in the afternoons. Be alert to your child's needs for adequate rest.

In the Extended Day program, 2 and 3 year olds will have a daily nap after lunch, and 4 year olds will have a quiet rest period after lunch. Nappers and resters will have a nap kit (sheet, blanket, pillow, and carrying bag) for their napping mat. These kits will be sent home on Fridays to be laundered and need to be returned to school on Monday morning.

# Restrooms

State law requires that a school have separate restrooms for adults and children, for the protection of both. There are a number of restrooms throughout the school building that are designated for children's use. The adult bathrooms are located in the lobby. Parents needing to take their children into the bathroom with them may use the family restrooms located down the sloping hallway to the right of the front office. There is a diaper changing table in one of the family restrooms.

# Room Parents (Room Parent activities will be limited this year.)

Each teacher will select one or more parents to serve as classroom representatives ("Room Parents") for the school year. These parents will help the teacher organize class activities and keep the parents from that class informed about school events. The specific duties of the Room Parents are determined by the teacher from year to year and may include:

- Organizing class parties and fieldtrips;
- Communicating with the other parents about class activities;
- Disseminating information about and securing volunteers for upcoming events;
- Organizing class-sponsored activities for the Fall and Spring Festivals;
- Organizing fundraising or community service projects;
- Helping the teacher with special tasks such as reading books to the class, preparing crafts, or copying materials, etc.

Room Parents should keep the teacher apprised of their activities and communications with other parents. Room Parents may solicit money from the other parents in the class for group gifts for the teacher, teaching assistants and other staff members. Participation in a class gift fund is entirely voluntary. Room parents will not be asked to solicit money from parents for ordinary class parties or activities, as those funds are provided by the Family Activity Fee.

While all academic questions should be directed to the classroom teacher or assistant, parents are encouraged to communicate other questions to the Room Parents, who will refer them to the appropriate school personnel. Your child's teacher will provide you with who your Room Parents are, and their contact information.

## Safety

### **Safety Awareness**

For their safety, students are reminded of acceptable procedures for use of the playground and classroom.

### **Fire Drills**

Fire drills acquaint the children with evacuation procedures. Two fire drills are carried out during the first two weeks of school, and then monthly for the rest of the school year. State law requires fire drills even in the cold weather. Children exit the building in their class groups and gather at pre-assigned locations along the fence or sports court on the far side of the school property. In an actual emergency, if the children could not assemble outside, they will be taken to the Church social hall.

### **Seat Belts**

Seat belts are used on all field trips and whenever the school buses are used.

### **Injuries**

In the event of a student's injury, MSM staff assesses and responds according to basic first aid training and/or guidelines. In the event of an injury severe enough to warrant professional medical attention, MSM will attempt to contact parents or emergency contact persons. If the emergency contacts are unreachable, the child will be transported to the nearest hospital, if necessary, by either staff vehicle or ambulance. Parent assumes responsibility for any resulting expense.

In the instance of a life-threatening emergency, 911 is contacted immediately.

### **Child Abuse**

MSM, as are all schools, is required by law to report to Child Protective Services any suspected child abuse (physical, sexual, or emotional). This agency and other child advocacy organizations provide us with information regarding signals of possible abuse to which the MSM staff are alert.

Any staff member who has reason to suspect that a child is abused should report that concern immediately to the administration. Teachers and classroom assistants are better placed to observe signs of child abuse because they see the child on a daily basis and

can better detect differences in the child. Child Protective Services (CPS) advises that the following are some signs of child abuse that one may notice:

- ◆ A child who has questionable injuries such as bruises, cuts, or burns.
- ◆ A child who is unusually withdrawn, angry, depressed, aggressive, or afraid to go home.
- ◆ A child who does not have enough clothes for the weather, is hungry and appears malnourished, is frequently dirty, is left alone at an inappropriate age, or is not receiving necessary medical treatment.
- ◆ A child who has venereal disease or other symptoms of sexual abuse.

The administration then discusses the concern with the parent. If the concern cannot be resolved, then the school will make a report of the concern to Child Protective Services.

## School Hours (See Appendix 2 for modified arrival and dismissal times and procedures)

We open our doors at 8:15 for Elementary arrival. Elementary students attend from 8:30-3:30. Toddler and Primary students begin arriving at 8:25. Half-day Toddler and Primary classes for children under five years of age are in session from 8:45 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Full day 5/6-year old students attend from 8:45 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Aftercare ends at 5:30. School is in session Monday through Friday. The school office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 (4:30 during COVID-19) p.m. weekdays. The office is closed on Saturday and Sunday.

## Separation Anxieties

### Children's Anxieties

**New Preschool Children:** Some children find it challenging in a new school. Below are several things you can do to make your child's new beginning easier:

1. Before starting school, practice leaving your child with a friend or babysitter for a short period. Reassure your child that you will return in a specified number of minutes or hours and then come on schedule. This gives your child confidence in your word. The foremost fear of a child three years of age and under is fear of abandonment.
2. Before arriving, be calm and reassuring about your reappearance and describe how you will come to pick up your child, (i.e. after playground time for noon dismissal).
3. In the morning, give a hug and kiss and say "Have a good day, and I'll see you at lunch time." Then quickly leave without looking back.
4. Even if your child is shrieking (and some do), continue out of the door to drive away from the school. We will step into the situation and help your child through this brief upset. By leaving this way, you are saying (and may even articulate) "I know this is a safe place for you; I have confidence in your ability to handle the new challenges, and I will reappear on schedule."

5. Be assured that even the most chilling screams are over in a few minutes, and crying at the door generally lasts only a few days.
6. Rather than being hard-hearted and uncaring, this leave-taking method can bolster the child's confidence more quickly.
7. Protracted leave-taking and emotional good-byes only prolong this adjustment.
8. If your child uses a security item and wants to bring it to school, say it will be in the way in class but can be left in the car and will be there at pick up time.
9. Understand and support the adjustment your child is experiencing. Keep your responses to this adjustment process positive, supportive and brief.

**Level-to-level Transfer:** Visits prior to promotion familiarize the child with similarities and differences between levels, (preschool to elementary, lower elementary to upper elementary).

**Older Transfer Children:** Children who join us at an older age may worry about acceptance by other children; a few suggestions follow:

Issues for the shy child:

1. Give suggestions for conversation (i.e. how to ask someone to play);
2. Arrange a carpool to produce an instant connection;
3. Invite another child home for the afternoon to give the child confidence in an ability to make friends.

Issues of expectation:

1. Help children understand that they will not be expected immediately to be able to do all the things other children in class do.
2. Casual direct comments such as, "The teacher doesn't expect children to know how to do that until after they have been in school for awhile," or, "If you are unsure of that, ask the teacher," can help reassure children that expectations aren't too high for them to achieve.
3. Parents are encouraged to observe their child. Children rarely give thorough details of the day.

All of these fears are expected at the beginning of school; however, if your child suddenly shows them later in the year, let us know, and we will try to find out what is causing the problem.

### **Parent Anxieties**

1. Parents may feel a loss when their child starts school. Remember that a parent cannot and should not hold a child back from a new direction.
2. Remember that parents are and always will be the most important people and the primary educators in a child's life.

## Student Record and Information

- ◆ Student records are confidential and accessible only by custodial parent(s) and appropriate, authorized staff or others approved by parents.
- ◆ Parents have the right to review and add written comment to their child's educational records.
- ◆ Release must be signed by parents to make records available to others.
- ◆ Non-custodial parents may have access to specific information about the student only as authorized by custodial parent.
- ◆ MSM maintains children's records for 7 years after student has reached the age of maturity.
- ◆ Academic records may be held until account balance is cleared.
- ◆ Students' file must contain immunization and health certificate, emergency form, and a copy of custody/guardian decree.

## Summer Camp Programs

MSM usually offers five one-week sessions of summer camp, from late June through July, for the primary level from 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon, with an option for extended day of 12-3:30, Monday through Friday. From time to time, elementary programs are offered and enrichment teachers offer special classes for a certain period. The qualifications for summer staff is the same as for the school year.

## Surveys

From time to time the school surveys parents, staff, and where possible, the students to assess the school's effectiveness and to improve the educational services the school provides for children. Results of surveys are published in or accompany the Friday Note.

## Testing

### **Student Evaluation/Testing**

Montessori Elementary classes are ungraded. Students advance at their own rate and work at their own level.

Report cards are not generally issued in a Montessori school. Students' progress is communicated to parents in parent/teacher conferences, along with a narrative report, which are scheduled twice a year. More frequent conferences are available if the situation warrants.

Standardized tests are administered to all elementary students each year, usually in April. Tests are viewed as only one of many ways in which student progress is monitored.

They are NOT the main means in which we evaluate student progress. The test scores are made available to parents. They are also made available to other parties at the written request of the parents. Test scores and/or written evaluations will not be released to any person without written authorization by the parents/guardians.

Reasonable and appropriate accommodation in the administration of standardized tests will be made for students with disability.

- ◆ Parents must sign a records release form before school records can be prepared and mailed.
- ◆ Parents must pay the form fee before the written evaluations are prepared and mailed.
- ◆ Schools generally require that all records be sent directly from one school to another in a sealed envelope.
- ◆ Parents may request a copy of the records that are sent.

## Visitor Policy (See Appendix 2 for modified visitor policy)

When coming to the school (except for school-wide functions) ALL parents and visitors must sign-in at the front office and obtain a Visitor Badge. These badges will confirm to staff members that the parent or visitor is a safe adult who has been cleared through the office. This policy is in place to provide safety for the entire school community.