

2017-2018

The New School Montessori Center

PARENT HANDBOOK



“Education should no longer be mostly imparting of knowledge, but must take a new path, seeking the release of human potentialities.”

~ Maria Montessori



AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY
education that transforms lives

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“The education of even a small child, therefore, does not aim at preparing him for school, but for life.”

~ Maria Montessori

Welcome

Dear Parents,

It is our pleasure to welcome you to The New School Montessori Center. We are honored that you have chosen to entrust our school with your children's care and education.

We invite you to participate actively in our Montessori community and in your child's educational experience. We believe in fostering an interactive community where parents, teachers, and administrators partner together in fulfilling our mission to nurture and support our children's academic, social, and emotional development.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with the rules and regulations of the school including some of the pertinent laws governing our facility and programs. Additionally, this handbook serves to express the philosophical principles guiding our academic programs, mission statement, and vision for the future.

First and foremost, we have a strong commitment to providing a safe and nurturing learning environment for each child. We place the physical and emotional well-being of your child at the heart of all we do. Accordingly, please pay particular attention to the security guidelines throughout this handbook, as we need your cooperation and support to ensure we maintain a safe and productive environment.

We look forward to working with you to provide an exceptional educational experience for your child.

Thank you again for joining our community.

Sincerely,

Jonathan and Julie Schroer
Head of School and School Director

"We cannot create observers by saying "observe," but by giving them the power and the means for this observation and these means are procured through education of the senses."

~ Maria Montessori

History and Philosophy

History

The New School Montessori Center (NSMC) was founded in June of 1984 starting with a small Children's House classroom in Raleigh. In the same year, the school became affiliated with the American Montessori Society (AMS) and acquired its non-profit, 501(c)(3) status.

The school quickly outgrew its original site and moved to Johnson Pond Road in Apex where we offered infant and toddler programs in addition to two Children's House classes. Our second location on Rand Road in Garner housed one elementary class and an additional Children's House class.

To consolidate, and to allow for further expansion, the school built a new, purpose-designed site at its current location on Sunset Lake Road in Holly Springs. Classes started at this site in early 2000.

Over the past 30 years, the school has continued to grow in reputation and size, now providing programs from infants to eighth grade.

In the fall of 2014, The New School entered its next phase of expansion as it launched a Montessori Adolescent Program for grades six through eight.

Due to our growing school community, and the desire for our adolescent program to grow, the school is currently looking to purchase a second property.



Mission Statement

The New School Montessori Center provides a child-centered Montessori program that fosters each child's natural love of exploring, learning, and independence with the goal of empowering students to confidently embrace the increasingly complex challenges of today's society.

Philosophy

The New School's philosophy combines the Montessori approach to education with other successful strategies emerging from contemporary pedagogical research.

Our programs focus on the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional developmental needs of each child with the goal of preparing them with the requisite skills to succeed

in all aspects of their lives.

Key philosophical principles and program features include:

- Individualized programs tailored to varying learning styles
- Meaningful hands-on and project-based learning strategies that lead children to being actively rather than passively engaged with their work
- Multi-faceted approach employing a variety of teaching strategies
- Multi-aged groupings that promote peer teaching, observational learning, mastery of concepts, and the continuity of educational experience
- Focus on children developing a sense of their own unique potential giving them the freedom to pursue their interests
- Promoting respect for others and for the environment
- Focus on independence, time-management, and other important life skills
- Fostering a lifelong love of learning and teaching children how to learn and enhance their skills independently
- Promoting critical thinking skills
- Skills development in adaptability, social connectivity, and collaborative activities
- Engaging, carefully planned environments and curricula that promote exploration, maximize academic performance, and focus on developing higher order thinking skills.

Communication

School Contact Information

The New School, Inc.,
5617 Sunset Lake Road,
Holly Springs, NC 27540

Phone: (919) 303-3636
Fax: (919) 303-3605

Emergency Phone Numbers

Jonathan Schroer: (919) 422-2535
Julie Schroer: (919) 422-3172
Alternate: (919) 367-6042

Please use the emergency phone contacts only in the event of an emergency and/or if unable to contact the school using the number listed above.

Communications from the School

The school employs a variety of methods to keep parents connected to important school news and events. We strive to be environmentally friendly and to conserve resources by minimizing the distribution of paper communications and by relying heavily on digital communication such as emails, our website, and e-newsletters.

- **School Website:** The school's website (www.montessoricenter.org) is an excellent resource for comprehensive information, news, calendar of events, and educational resources. For convenience, we have included much of the information pertinent to enrolled families on our *Parent Resources* page.
- **Text Notifications:** Families may enroll in our text notification system via our website for important school-wide announcements on closings, weather delays, and more.
- **Transparent Classroom:** Each family, with the exception of the Infants and Ones, will be provided with an individual account in Transparent Classroom. This program provides teachers, families and administration a centralized location to share details about each child's academic and developmental progress.
- **Weekly Folders:** Families are responsible for making sure they collect their folders each week. The folders contain fliers, permission slips, updates, etc., from the school and your child's classroom. Folders are generally ready by Wednesday (or Tuesday for families with a two-day schedule). Please return empty folders by Friday of the same week.
- **E-Newsletters:** The school frequently sends out e-newsletters regarding events, updates, and important news. Please make sure to read these thoroughly as they contain information that addresses some of the most frequently asked questions.
- **MemberHub:** MemberHub is a web-based portal that provides an online venue for staff and parents to communicate, collaborate, and coordinate in a private and secure environment. This will be the easiest way for you to access information about classroom events.

You will find a link to MemberHub on the Parent Resources page on our website, or you can access it by visiting: www.newschool.memberhub.com.

- **Social Media Sites:** The New School posts frequent updates on its Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn pages. You can find links to these pages on our website and in our e-newsletters. We invite parents to share links and comment on topics relevant to the school, but we ask that parents do not use these sites for self-promotional purposes. We also reserve the right to exclude posts that are inappropriate or offensive.
- **Classroom Parents:** Each year, volunteers offer to fill the role of Classroom Parent. Classroom Parents assist the school and teachers with general communications, event planning, and other responsibilities. Classroom Parents will only distribute communications via our MemberHub program using emails or listed phone numbers. Classroom Parents will not have access to other parents' physical addresses or other confidential information.



To stay informed, please check your email frequently, read all school notices thoroughly, reference the school website, and read the information in your folders.

Email Communications

Email is usually the most effective way to communicate with the school. The administration checks the school's email (info@montessoricenter.org) throughout the day and will respond to messages as soon as possible, usually within 24 hours.

Each faculty member and administrator at the school has a montessoricenter.org email address. Typically, these addresses consist of the teacher's first name followed by @montessoricenter.org. You can access a complete list of these addresses on the *Faculty and Staff* page of our website.

Communication by Phone

Please feel free to call the school's office if you have any questions or concerns. However, we ask that you submit schedule changes, classroom assignments, changes in pick-up, or other situations that affect your child via fax, letter, or email for our records. For brief communications, you may text the school at (844) 414-5282. Please indicate your name and reason for the text.

Contacting your Child's Teacher

The easiest way to contact your child's teacher is via email. When emailing a teacher, please use their Montessori email address. Do not use the teacher's personal email address.

Please do not request a phone conversation with your child's teacher during the normal school day unless the call is urgent. Each teacher will provide parents with the best means and times for contacting them via phone or in person.

Lines of Communication

Parents play a vital role in the school's team-based approach to education. Your collaboration and input are very important to us, since they serve as a valuable tool in helping us maintain a high-quality program and learning environment. Your input also helps provide the teachers with the necessary support and information to meet the individual needs of your child.

If you have a question or concern, please don't hesitate to contact the necessary teachers and/or administration. We all serve as strong advocates for the wellbeing of our students and are eager to make sure that issues are dealt with in a positive and efficient manner. Only by being informed of parent concerns can we work to address them.

When addressing questions or issues involving your child's progress or classroom-related topics, we ask that you please follow these guidelines in the following sequence:

- First, please contact your child's teacher directly to discuss your questions or concerns. Parents should not direct questions or requests for information to classroom assistants, as they may not have all of the information to inform parents accurately.
- If any issue remains unresolved, and you think the situation would benefit from a

third party-perspective, please include administration in your continued email exchange with the teacher.

- If a satisfactory solution to the issue has not been reached, you may request a preliminary meeting between parents, teachers, and administration.
- Should there be no resolution to the original issue, you may request a meeting with the Head of School or the School Director.

For general school concerns, please contact an administrator for assistance or guidance. Should there be no resolution, you may request a meeting with either the Head of School or the School Director. Parents are asked not to approach the Classroom Parent with either classroom or other concerns.

Online Communications

The school prohibits the use of any of its online resources and accounts including our social media sites and MemberHub to contact other parents without their permission, to promote a business or cause, or to publish anything negative, offensive or inappropriate.

The school reserves the right to remove any posted item and to block anyone who has misused any of our online resources or sites.



School Programs

Program Times

The New School academic year runs from late August to late May or early June. Our week runs Monday through Friday, and we are open 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (and to 5:30 p.m. during summers). Please check the current Academic Calendar on our website for holidays and teacher workdays.

Program	Arrival	Dismissal
Before School Care (all ages)	7:30 a.m.	8:15 a.m.
Half Day Toddler & Children's House	8:30 a.m.	12:00 noon
Extended Day Children's House	8:30 a.m.	3:00 p.m.
Elementary Sibling Children's House	8:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
Full Day Toddler & Children's House	8:30 a.m.	4:30 p.m.
Elementary & Adolescent Program	8:30 a.m.	3:30 p.m.
After-school care for Extended Day Children's House	3:00 p.m.	6:00 p.m.
After-school care for Full Day Toddlers & Children's House	4:30 p.m.	6:00 p.m.
After-school care for Elementary Sibling Children's House schedule	3:30 p.m.	6:00 p.m.

Before and After-School Program

Our before and after-school programs are available as a convenience to families who need to drop their child off early or pick them up later than the regular program hours.

The Extended Class Hours listed below refers to students assigned to either the Extended Day or Elementary Sibling Schedules. The relevance of this distinction is related to how this time is billed on the monthly invoice.

Program	Hours
Before School Care (Applicable to all students)	7:30 a.m. to 8:15 a.m.
Extended Class Hours Applies to children not enrolled in a full-time program (i.e., either the 3:00 p.m. or 3:30 p.m. schedule)	12:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. (dependent on schedule)
After School Care for Toddlers and Children's House (Ages 0 to 6)	4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
After School Care for Elementary & Adolescent Program (Ages 6 to 15)	3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

There is no need to sign up for before or after-school care, as you will be billed for the time you use (rounded to the nearest quarter hour) on your following month's invoice. However, we do ask that you contact the school to inform us if you are going to use this service if it is not your typical schedule, and if your child is unaware they will be picked up late. This will help prevent unnecessary worrying for your child.

After-School Clubs

The school offers many after-school clubs including chess, art, soccer, golf, science, piano lessons, and French, among others. These clubs are presented by individuals or companies with expertise in their area. Some clubs run year-round while others rotate in eight or ten-week sessions.

Please visit the website for a complete list of our clubs along with pricing and enrollment details (Programs/Specialty Classes).

Enhancement Classes

We strive to provide a wide variety of experiences and resources to all our students. To this end, we offer several classes offered by specialty staff. These may include Spanish, physical education, art, music, sign language, and chess. We also schedule various in-class presenters throughout the year to supplement our curriculum.

Summer School

The academic year usually ends in late May followed by one week when the school is closed for teachers to work in their classrooms. Our summer session begins in early June.

Summer classes for our Toddler and Children's House programs offer a continued Montessori classroom experience in addition to summer-related activities such as water days, gardening activities, in-class field trips, etc.

Our elementary summer program is a compilation of week-long themed camps. These camps combine a variety of academic topics, fun activities, field trips, hands-on projects, visits to a local pool, and others.

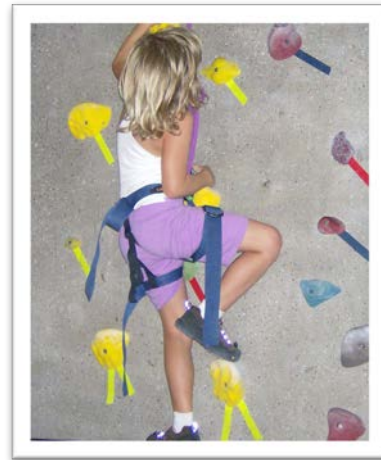
Typical summer camps include: sports, music, art, chess, animal studies, science, Lego engineering, physics, survival skills, and many more.

Please visit our website for a complete list of summer camp offerings.

Summer enrollment is open to alumni and siblings of currently enrolled students.



Please note that our 10-week summer school is billed separately from the regular academic year.



Schedules

General Guidelines

Infants, one and two year-olds, and Children's House children (ages 3 to 6) may enroll for either the half-day or the full day program. Students enrolled in a Children's House program are also eligible for the Extended Day program (8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.).

Siblings of children enrolled in our Elementary program are eligible to enroll in the Elementary Sibling Children's House schedule (8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.).

All kindergarten-aged children should be enrolled in the Extended or Full Day program unless they have been granted a waiver from the school.

Weekly Schedules

To maintain a high-quality program, providing students with consistency is vital. Attending five days per week offers an ideal schedule to provide an optimal learning environment for the students and the classroom.

Benefits of a five-day program include:

- Children are able to assimilate into the classroom environment much easier without significant gaps in their attendance.
- Five-day attendance substantially minimizes separation anxiety.
- Students in five-day schedules demonstrate faster progress in their development of academic, social, and independence skills than those attending fewer days per week.
- Ages three to six are critical ages to enhance many skills needed for success in elementary school and beyond. Higher attendance maximizes the potential for

children to solidly develop these skills.

- By attending five days, children won't miss enhancement classes, visitors, social events, and other opportunities.
- Children who attend all week are able to fully benefit from the individualized nature of our programs. When children attend five days, it facilitates teachers in tracking their development more readily than if they attend periodically. Once a student is presented with a lesson, the teacher relies on subsequent days to closely monitor the students' ability to master the material. If there is a gap in attendance, this often resets the process, as time has lapsed between the lesson and practice.
- Planning classroom projects and lessons becomes very difficult for teachers if each day has a different composition of students. Because our Children's House curriculum is designed to cultivate important skills and develop a strong knowledge base, it is very important that we strive for consistency for our teachers.

However, we understand that for various reasons parents are not always able to enroll their children for a full-time (5-day) schedule.

To help offset the inconsistency of part-time enrollments, assist teachers in lesson planning, and to track progress, students are expected to enroll according to the following schedule:

Two-day schedule:	Mondays and Tuesdays
Three-day schedule:	Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays
Four-day schedule:	Any four days (subject to availability)

Please note that the only exceptions to this are:

- Current families who have been grandfathered into an alternate schedule
- Families who have enrolled siblings with alternate schedules
- Families who have agreed to alter their part-time schedule to free up a space for another student
- Children of current faculty and staff may also request an altered schedule to accommodate their work schedule.

All exceptions are at the sole discretion of the Head of School and School Director, and as such, these exceptions may be rescinded or altered at any time to ensure optimal enrollment within each classroom.

Adjusting Schedules

The school strives to be flexible for parents who want to alter their initial schedule during the academic school year. However, for students enrolled in a part-time schedule (fewer than 5 days), it is important to note that space fills up quickly

throughout the year. Consequently, we may not be able to honor all requests for schedule adjustments.

We strongly recommend that parents plan as far ahead in advance as possible when notifying the school of a schedule change. Because we limit new enrollments by reserving spaces for requested schedule changes, we reserve the right to charge a fee to hold a space for longer than one month.

Attendance

Regular attendance is required for all age groups. A regular schedule provides children with consistency, helps normalize the classrooms, minimizes separation anxiety for younger children, fosters an interest in learning, and reinforces important academic and social skills.

The school cannot refund tuition because a child is absent for any reason. Tuition pays for a guaranteed space in our classrooms, not for the number of days a child has attended. In order to maintain the required teacher to student ratio, the school cannot grant any make-up days.



Requesting a Temporary Schedule Change

Parents may request to add or alter a day within a week in the event of a personal scheduling issue (not including school holidays or early release days falling on a day their child is scheduled to attend).

The school will honor requests if the altered or added day does not interfere with the stability of the classroom. Please note that a fee is charged for temporary schedule changes.

Lunch Schedules

Students who attend a half-day program may not be able to stay with their classroom for lunch. Parents should check with their child's teacher and with administration before leaving their child in a classroom for lunch. This confirmation is necessary as classrooms may not be adequately staffed or prepared for unexpected students during the lunch period.

Admissions Policies and Procedures

Terms of Admission

Children can be accepted at any time during the school year based on availability. The school determines availability based on ratios, class sizes, and other factors impacting the classrooms or school as a whole.

Eligible students are generally prioritized for admission in the following order:

1. Children of current or past New School faculty and staff
2. Siblings of children currently enrolled in the school
3. Transfer students from other Montessori schools
4. Families applying based on a referral from a current family
5. Children entering the Montessori program for the first time

Waiting Lists

Waiting lists are kept when classes reach maximum capacity. As openings occur, students on the waiting list are contacted and admitted based on the criteria listed above, the application date, desired starting date, requested schedule, and receipt of the application fee or deposit. We also prioritize families applying for a five-day schedule.

Please note that we cannot guarantee a space in a classroom unless the application is accompanied by the relevant fee or deposit. Other applications may supersede an application that is not accompanied by the appropriate fee.

Enrollment

Enrollment is subject to a thirty-day trial period for new and returning students. Parents will be notified during this period in the event of any problematic issues that may prevent long-term enrollment at the school.

Continued enrollment is based on the following criteria:

- Approval of the teacher(s) responsible for the student
- The intellectual, emotional, physical, and psychological needs of the student, including any other factors that may affect the child's success in our school environment
- The family's and student's adherence to the requirements of the school as outlined in this Handbook and the enrollment contract
- Receipt of all necessary documentation and paperwork by the deadlines provided by the school. Enrollment will be suspended until all requested paperwork is submitted.
- Remaining current with tuition payments

Classroom Placements

The Head of School and School Director are responsible for classroom assignments. Our goal is to balance the demographics of each class in terms of age, gender, and prior Montessori experience to provide a well-balanced and successful Montessori

experience for all children in the room.

Parents are required to complete a Classroom Request Form to request a placement or transfer of classrooms. Such requests will be accepted only in exceptional circumstances.

We make every effort to honor parental requests to assign their child to a specific classroom. However, in the interests of all students we must balance our classrooms and evenly distribute the number of students enrolled. Consequently, we may not be able to honor all requests.

Program Transitions

Student transitions or promotions into the next appropriate program are determined by several factors. To ensure student success, transitions are monitored by teachers of the current classroom, teachers of the student's next classroom, and the administration.

Factors that impact the timing of transitions include age, social and developmental needs, concentration and focusing abilities, and academic skills.

The teachers and administration will work closely with the parents during this process and welcome input and feedback. All final decisions are at the discretion of the school.

In general, students in our Infant and Toddler One's program must move into the Toddler Two's program upon turning two.

Transitions from the Toddler Twos to the Children's House program are determined (in addition to the factors mentioned above) by the child being adequately potty trained. The child must also demonstrate that they are socially ready to adjust well to their new environment.

All transitions from Children's House to Lower Elementary must begin at the start of the academic year. Students transitioning from the Children's House to Lower Elementary must be six years old as of August 31st to qualify for elementary enrollment (unless there are exceptional circumstances). The final decisions on early transitions are at the discretion of the school.

Transitions between Lower and Upper Elementary and also the Adolescent Program occur only at the beginning of the school year. Again, promotions are determined by several factors and the school will make all final decisions in cases of uncertain placement.

Classroom Ratios

All class sizes are designed to be large enough to optimize each child's learning experience, but small enough to allow for appropriate guidance and supervision. Because the Montessori classroom has a three-year age range, ratios are typically adjusted to maintain the efficacy of this structure.

Withdrawal

All enrolled children are subject to attending for an initial 30-day provisional period. The school or the parents may discontinue enrollment within this period without requiring a 30-day notice to withdraw. The school reserves the right to extend this period to determine whether the child is benefitting from attendance.

In the event a parent wishes to withdraw their child, and the provisional period has expired, the parent must provide the school with a **30-day written notice** to withdraw their child. This must be submitted 30 calendar days prior to the projected last day of attendance. Please make sure you receive notice from the school acknowledging that your request has been processed.

If 30 days **written** notice is not given, you will be charged for the next 30 calendar days from receipt of such notice, regardless of your child's attendance.

In the event your child is dismissed from the school for any reason, including disciplinary issues, your account will be assessed for the next 30 days as if written notice was given.

Nondiscriminatory Policy

The New School Montessori Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its education, admissions, hiring, or personnel policies, or any other school-related activities.

Student Records

Medical and Immunization Records

For each child enrolled at The New School, we are required by the State of North Carolina to have an up-to-date medical form on file, signed by a licensed medical doctor. If your child is a new student, the state allows a 30-day grace period of the time from the first day of school to have this form on file. If the 30-day grace period elapses without the form being filed, the State requires us to remove the child from the school.

At the beginning of each academic year thereafter, the medical form for each child must be updated.

We are also required by the State of North Carolina to have an up-to-date immunization record on file for your child. Contact your pediatrician or the North Carolina Department of Health to get information concerning your child's required immunizations.

Emergency Contact Form

For each child enrolled at The New School, we are required by the State of North Carolina to have emergency contact information on file on the first day of school. No child may attend the school if the Emergency Contact Form is not on file. Please list all persons who may pick up your child from the school. You may change the names at any time. Please inform the people listed on the form that they must show picture identification when they come to the school to pick up your child.



Important! Please remember to notify the Administration of updated phone numbers, addresses, and contacts throughout the year whenever they change.

Disciplinary Policy

Childcare regulations of the State of North Carolina require that you have a copy of our rules and policies. We are required to have a signed form on file, stating that you have received a copy of our rules and policies and that you understand and agree with them.

Student Record Transfers

When a child leaves our school, conference reports, testing, and medical reports will be forwarded to the next school upon written request by the child's next school.

Billing Procedures

A one-time \$200.00 non-refundable application fee is required when you enroll your child in The New School. Families who re-enroll after withdrawing, for whatever reason, are also subject to this fee.

Annual tuition is based on costs per student for the entire traditional academic year. (The annual tuition does not pay for any part of the summer program.) This annual amount is then divided equally between either ten or twelve installments, depending on the payment plan selected by the family during enrollment or re-enrollment.

Invoices

Invoices are emailed to families and payment is due on the 28th of each month. If we need to send the invoicing email later than usual, we adjust the due date accordingly. To request paper copies of both invoices or statements, please contact the office.

Our online invoicing system generates auto-reminders and account overdue emails. Please let the school know if you have made a payment that is not reflected in these emails.

If there is a change in a child's age level placement or length of day attendance during the school year, invoices will be revised to reflect such a change.

Before and After-School Charges

Only children enrolled in the school are eligible for before and after-school care. There is an hourly rate for these services. The invoiced amount for these services is determined from the hourly charge multiplied by the sign-in and sign-out times from the record sheets (recorded by TNS staff) and on our Procure system. The childcare fee is charged in 15-minute increments, rounded up to the next quarter hour.

Please note that parents who remain at the school with their child after checking out on Procure may continue to accumulate childcare charges. (See below for information if you forget to sign out with Procure.)

Parents arriving after school closes (6:00 p.m. during the school year and at 5:30 p.m. during the summer), will be charged a late pick-up fee of \$1.00 per minute. As such, parents are recommended to immediately sign out using the Procure system upon arrival.

Childcare charges for prior months will be included as a separate line item on the invoices after the total attendance time has been calculated. If a child has attended before and/ or after-school care, this charge will be reflected on the current month's invoice, or it may be added to a later invoice.

Billing Periods and Summer Program

The academic school year and our summer program are billed separately. This allows flexibility for families who do not attend during the summer. Families attending the summer program may wish to enroll for the 10-month payment plan (July 28 through April 28), as opposed to the 12-month payment plan (May 28 through April 28), to minimize overlap of invoices.

Summer invoices for base tuition are split into three payments. The first payment is due upon submission of the summer application form and is non-refundable. The second payment is due on May 28, and the final payment is due on June 28.

Procare

The accuracy and timeliness of our billing system requires parents to use Procare every time they check into or out of the building. The only exception is when parents drop off or pick up students during carpool, which is processed by a staff member.

We will contact parents who do not use Procare consistently. We will help parents with a reminder or assist them in finding a solution if there is a technical problem. If parents forget to sign out on a particular day, and then later remember, they may contact the school by email and request an adjustment to the recorded time.



For both security and billing purposes, it is essential that parents use Procare every time when picking up or dropping off their child(ren). Once the school has closed, all children who have not been signed out by a parent (or guardian), are automatically signed out at 6:00pm (5:30pm in the summer). The school uses Procare data to help calculate childcare charges. Consequently, parents who consistently forget to sign their children out may notice higher than usual childcare charges. Should this occur, please contact the school to arrange for a review of your childcare usage and adjustment of your invoice, if appropriate.

Payments

Parents may pay by cash, check, or credit/debit card (via PayPal or PlastiQ). This electronic service is available only on our website. However, please note that if paying by credit or debit card, there is a percentage-based surcharge for using this electronic service. The school is not able to directly process credit card payments at this time.

Please mail all tuition payments to:

The New School, Inc.
5617 Sunset Lake Road
Holly Springs, NC 27540

You can also submit payments at a secured designated place in the office (tuition box).

Please note that the school reserves the right to apply any payments to prior outstanding balances.

Late Fees

All parents are required to pay tuition promptly by the 28th of each month. There is a five-day grace period from the due date. Monthly late fees will be \$15 or 1% of the overdue amount per month, whichever is greater.

Delinquent Accounts

We advise families who encounter difficulty paying their tuition to meet promptly with administration. We may be able to help develop a plan for a payment schedule. Should parents encounter changes in their financial circumstances, we may suggest that they apply for financial aid. More information on scholarships and tuition assistance may be found on our website. The school will be as accommodating as possible when parents encounter financial difficulties.

If outstanding balances accrue, and a payment plan has not been established or adhered to according to the agreement with the school, formal collections may be undertaken. Should this occur, families are responsible for late fees as well as court costs and attorney's or collections fees incurred by the school. We reserve the right to discontinue enrollment without notice due to a delinquent account.

Parent Billing Portal

Parents will be provided with a link to access an online private and secure billing portal. This service will allow parents to view all current and archived invoices, track payments, and download statements.

Arrival and Dismissal

Being on time is essential. The beginning of the school day is vital time for your child to transition into work mode. Teachers encourage students to become immediately engaged in an activity to help set the tone for the morning work cycle. Additionally, entering late, when others are already working, can disrupt the class and negatively affect the students' focus.



Elementary and Middle School students who arrive later than 8:30 a.m. will be marked tardy in addition to missing valuable organizational meetings and lessons.

Please note that all children must be placed under the care of a staff member upon arrival. Under any circumstances, do not drop your child at the office, classroom door or parking lot curb, then drive away.

Early Arrival

Between 7:30 a.m. and 8:15 a.m., parents must escort their child into the school building. All children are watched in the before-school room until 8:00 a.m. when they are walked to their own classrooms. Please make sure to sign your child in using our Procure system upon entering the school. Please consult the website for current charges for before-school care (Admissions/Tuition Fees).

Morning Carpool

Morning carpool is available to all students except infants and toddlers. We strongly encourage families to use this service to reinforce independence in the children and to minimize parking issues. The administration will sign all carpool students into our Procure system in the morning.

Morning carpool runs from 8:15 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. Staff members are present to assist children as they exit their vehicle. Please pull up to a staff member, discharge your child and drive away to make room for the next vehicle. The staff members stationed at the door will watch your child to make sure they reach their classroom safely.

If you wish to enter the building with your child, you should park your vehicle and walk with your child into the building. Please say good-bye to your child before they enter the classroom. Entering the classroom with your child may intensify any separation anxiety when you leave. It also causes confusion and distracts the children and teachers already in the room.

For the safety of the children in the classroom, please do not engage your child's teacher in conversation during classroom time. He or she is very busy overseeing the arrival process and needs to greet and assist children as they enter the classroom. Also, do not converse with other parents in the classroom. Such conversations disrupt the classroom's smooth operation and the students' concentration.

Dismissal

Please be on time for pick-up. Picking your child up promptly helps the child feel more secure in their routine and also prevents you having to pay childcare fees.

After children have been signed out for the day, they are not permitted to play on the playground structures for safety and liability reasons.

Please inform anyone picking up your child of all safety rules outlined in this handbook. For the child's safety and security, we require picture identification from anyone we do not recognize. This requirement includes parents with whom we are not yet familiar.



Whenever you arrive or depart the school with your child, always interface with the appropriate staff member and make sure they know your child has arrived or is leaving. Also, please remember to sign your child in and out using our Procure system every day.

Afternoon Carpool

Afternoon carpool is available to all elementary students and their siblings enrolled in our Children's House Sibling program (provided they meet our safety requirements). It begins at 3:25 p.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. We ask that parents remain inside their vehicles, and a staff member will escort each child to the car. If your child is delayed, you may be asked to park and enter the building to pick up your child. For those who use our afternoon carpool, administration will sign these students out on Procure.

If you wish to pick your child up from their classroom during this time, please park in a parking spot and enter the building through the car pool door. If you do so, please sign your child out using Procure. Parents are charged a childcare fee for any time after 3:30 p.m. However, this charge is waived for parents picking up their children during afternoon carpool.

Late Arrival and Early Departure

Any student arriving late to school or leaving earlier than their scheduled departure time must be signed in or out by their parent or guardian at the front office, providing a reason for the change. This requirement is necessary to track attendance throughout the day and supports a consistent educational experience for the child. For more information, see the Student Attendance section.

If you know ahead of time that you will be late picking up your child, please email the school with details so we can inform or remind your child. If you pick up your child during a lesson or group time, please do so quietly with the least possible interruption to the classroom.

Changes in Pick-up Routine

Please send a note to your child's teacher or to the school ahead of time regarding any planned changes in your child's pick-up routine. This procedure applies to any change, such as early pick-up times, carpooling with another family, or if someone unfamiliar to the school is picking up your child.

Upon occasion, children can sometimes think they are going home with a friend for a play date. Unless we receive written notification or an email from a child's parent or guardian, children will not be sent home with anyone but their parent, guardian, or other authorized person.

We cannot accept verbal notification over the phone for alternate pick-up plans unless the person is listed on your emergency contact sheet as an authorized contact. In the case of an emergency, please send an email or fax to the school to authorize someone not listed on your emergency contact form to pick up your child.

Emergency School Closings

The school makes every effort to remain open during its regular hours. However, on rare occasions, severe weather may prevent us from operating safely.



Please note that we do not follow the Wake County schools' closing or delayed opening schedules.

If the administration decides to close the school for safety reasons, you will be notified by one or all of the following methods:

- Our website will display an announcement indicating the closing time
- Updates on WRAL TV5 and other local listings
- Email or MemberHub announcement
- Mobile phone text notification from the school (Please register for this service via our website.)

If the school remains open during inclement weather, parents may, at their discretion, pick up their child.

Parking Lot and Supervision Guidelines

Because student safety is paramount, we require parents to observe and exercise extreme caution at all times when driving or parking in our parking lot.

Supervision by Parents

When parents are dropping off their child or picking them up from school, supervision of the child is the parent's responsibility. Parents are expected to observe all safety and supervision rules.

- Children should not be allowed in our parking lot without parent supervision.
- For liability reasons, children are not allowed on any of our play structures once they have been picked up by a parent.
- Parents must always have their child close by and keep them within their sight.
- Parents must enforce our "no running" rule when inside the school or on paved areas outside including the parking lot.
- Always hold your child's hand in the parking lot. (If you have more than two children in tow, they can hold each other's hands.)
- At all times during the day, lock your car doors. TNS assumes no liability for theft, loss, or damage to personal property.
- All supervision rules apply to siblings of students who do not attend the school but who visit our property.



No child should be in the parking lot without an adult. Do not leave children unattended in your vehicle under any circumstances!

Should a parent abuse any of the rules of our parking lot, the school will implement the following measures:

1. Parent will receive a verbal request to remind them of our rules in addition to a follow-up email.
2. On the second event, the school will suspend carpool privileges to the parent pending a formal meeting with administration.
3. For persistent infractions, the school will deny access to the parking lot until further notice.

Please note that the school reserves the right to deny parking lot use without notice to any parent whose actions pose a danger. Any parent who has been denied access to the parking lot, will either need to park on the road or arrange for another person to transport their child to and from school.

Driving and Carpool Lanes

When dropping off or picking up your child, please use the carpool lane along the yellow curb.

- At drop-off and pick-up times we ask that you stay in one of two lanes only (that is, no cutting in and out of lanes). One lane (the curbside/fire lane) is for student drop-off and pick-up. The other lane (furthest from the curb) is for those parking cars and for the lead drop-off car to join once they are ready to leave.
- If you need to drive by other vehicles pulled over in the car pool lane, you must drive very slowly. Children are exiting vehicles at this time. Incautious drivers can create a very unsafe situation.
- Please drive slowly, be patient, and be aware! Our parking lot has a strict **5 mph** maximum speed limit. Parents who exceed this speed or who drive unsafely in our parking lot may be asked to park along the roadside.
- If your Elementary child is late leaving the premises at pick-up time, please park your car and walk in to pick up your child.

Carpool Drop-off

Please follow these safety guidelines when dropping off your child during carpool.

- Your child must remain in their car seat or with their seat belt on until the car has reached one of the carpool staff members. The staff member will assist your child in exiting the vehicle. There is no need for the parent to exit the vehicle as this often slows down the carpool process.
- Have your child ready (shoes on, access to lunch box, etc.) to help expedite drop-off.
- The curbside is our fire lane. If you are walking your child into the classroom, park your car in a non-curbside parking space. If our parking lot is full, please park along the tree area of our playground.
- For elementary and middle school families, we strongly encourage you to be in carpool no later than 8:25 a.m. to allow for your student to make it to their classroom on time.
- Teachers must be in their classroom no later than 8:30 a.m. We ask that parents not pull up to the carpool curb past this time, which would place the teachers in an uncomfortable position. Parents who are running late may stream in around the 8:30 a.m. start time. The excess vehicles can drag carpool on for a further 5 to 10 minutes, making teachers late for lessons. All teachers use their cell phones as timepieces for accuracy. We ask that parents also use their mobile devices to help synchronize the timing of carpool.



Disciplinary Policies

The New School is an Associate Member of the American Montessori Society and adheres to the AMS Code of Ethics (located on our website).

We require everyone in the school to treat all others with care and dignity. To this end, two primary behaviors are forbidden:

- No child or adult will hurt another child or adult in any way.
- No child or adult may mistreat the property of the school in any way.

These rules of conduct apply to any student, teacher, parent, or visitor in the school.

We use positive methods of discipline appropriate to the age and developmental level of the child. We promote this by the use of logical consequences and privileges, as opposed to rewards and punishment.

Discipline is not intended to control the child, but rather to help a student toward the goal of self-control. We also consider any environmental factors at home or in the child's life that may be influencing behavior.

Children internalize rules and societal norms easier and faster if expectations are consistent between home and school and within each environment. When behaviors are acceptable at home but not at school, the disparity can confuse the child, exacerbating behavioral issues. We expect parents to work closely with teachers and administration to supplement our approach, thus supporting the child's success at home and school.

Disciplinary measures are implemented only in the case of the breaking of an established rule previously outlined for the child.

All disciplinary action will:

- be appropriate to the problem.
- be consistent and applied fairly.
- be intended to help the child internalize the rule.
- be positive and will never be intended to lower a child's self-esteem.
- never involve food or drink.
- never be physical unless a child's safety is at risk.
- not be administered with anger
- occasionally require the teacher to express disappointment in the child's behavior

Incident Reports

Appropriate conduct and language is expected from children. We use Incident Reports to document behavioral issues that require intervention beyond redirection, or an

incident where a child was hurt or negatively affected. This report is shared with parents of children involved in the behavior or incident. No children's names are included in these reports other than the child of the parent receiving the report. Parents are asked to sign these reports and return to the administration.

Upon occasion, we may require parents to pick up their child during the day for certain behaviors that are creating a serious disruption. Parents must adhere to this request and pick their child up in a timely manner. Depending on the nature of the issue, parents may be asked to keep their child home for a period of time as determined by the administration.

Criteria for Discipline or Expulsion

One of the advantages of enrolling your child in our school is that your child is not merely a number to us. Each child's safety and well-being is at the center of all we do here at The New School. Because we are a small school, we can provide each child with personalized attention to ensure their safety and success.

To create a safe environment for students, teachers and staff, we must enforce rules of conduct and establish criteria for disciplinary measures should other interventions fail.

The following are grounds for disciplinary measures up to and including expulsion:

All Students

- **Physical Aggression:** Any child who displays overt physical aggression toward peers or teachers
- **Disrespect:** Any child who shows continued and disruptive disrespect toward peers or teachers
- **Vandalism:** Any child who vandalizes the school, school property or other children's possessions
- **Weapons:** Any child who brings a weapon of any type to school
- **Classroom Behavior:** Any child who excessively disrupts the class

Additional Criteria for Elementary and Adolescent Programs

- **Excessive lateness in arrival or excessive absenteeism:** Excessive tardiness or absenteeism from class, unless excused by a medical doctor (see Student Attendance section)
- **Theft:** Any student who steals from the school or from any other student
- **Drugs:** Any student who brings any illegal substance onto school property or to school functions
- **Language / Gestures:** Any student using foul language, obscene language, or displaying obscene gestures
- **Schoolwork:** Any student who refuses to do the required class work

- **Bullying / Intimidation:** Any student who persists in bullying or intimidating other students

In addition to the issues listed above, the school may also require families to leave the school if:

- Their child demonstrates behaviors over an extended period of time that indicate they are not benefitting from the program
- Families that are un-supportive of the Montessori philosophy or who are destructively or publicly critical of teachers or the school
- Families who do not follow the guidelines and requirements included in the Parent Handbook and their Enrollment Contract

Procedure for Disciplinary Action Plans and Expulsion

We truly hope that we never have to expel a child from our school, and expulsion is always the last resort, but we must have the process in place should the need arise.

Both the teachers and administration will do all they can to offer each family the support they need for their child to be successful in our environment. We ask that parents work with the school as closely as possible to assist with behavioral concerns.

Should problems arise, disciplinary measures will follow a set course of action outlined in sequence below. Please note that depending on the nature and severity of the issue, the process may be accelerated, and consequently, the sequence of events may need to be altered. For example, certain behaviors involving overt physical aggression or bullying, etc., may warrant a child to be placed on probation or expelled immediately.

- The child's teacher will contact the parents when issues or problematic behavior patterns arise. This communication will either be via phone, email, Incident Report, via a meeting with the parents, or a combination of these. The teacher will also keep the administration informed during this process. Parents are not contacted every time any issue is encountered. Our teachers are trained to deal effectively with minor disciplinary issues, and the great majority of issues are resolved without the need to contact parents. Typically, there needs to be either an issue with an elevated degree of severity or a pattern of problematic behavior that is escalating.
- Should there be no resolution or improvement to ongoing problematic behavior, or if the original behavior was severe enough, the teacher will request a meeting between the teachers, parents, and a member of administration. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss options and create an action plan for the child. Follow-up meetings and behavioral requirements may be needed for continued enrollment in the school.
- If the original action plan(s) have not been successful, or if a child's behavior or action has been severe enough, the administration will need to place the child on a probationary status for a length of time to be determined by the Head of School or the School Director. The notification of probationary status must be acknowledged and signed by both parents/guardians before the student returns to school. During probation, TNS uses the following procedure in the event of

further issues.

- If there is an incident or behavioral concern during the probationary period, a meeting will be scheduled with the parents, the teachers, and the Head of School or School Director. A plan of action will be determined including procedures to follow should problems continue. The administration may request an in-home suspension.
- Subsequent issues or concerns while a child is on probationary status will require an indefinite extended suspension from school. Suspension will end when teachers and administration have determined that the child can safely and successfully return to the environment.
- If there is no apparent resolution to the issues in question, the school reserves the right to expel the student from the school. Depending on the situation, parents may be given advance notice of a termination date to allow them to find an alternative arrangement. However, if there are safety concerns or other pressing issues, the parents may be asked to withdraw the child immediately, without notice.

Health

Medical Incidents

If we have health-related questions, or if a child is exhibiting concerning symptoms while in the school's care, we will immediately notify a parent (or emergency contact if the parent cannot be reached) with this information. Depending upon the severity of the situation, we will either simply inform the parent of our concern or request that the child is picked up immediately.

The school strives to avoid sending a child home needlessly. However, when we observe symptoms of concern, we may ask parents to seek medical advice before their child returns to school. For the safety of all children, the school reserves the right to request a physician's note for the child to return to school following any illness.



As required by state regulations, parents must call the school as soon as possible and inform the administration if their child contracts a contagious disease or infection to enable the school to distribute a contagious illness notification to the other families the class. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the school for safety reasons.

Parents are required to have pick up arrangements in place at all times in case their child needs to be picked up for medical reasons.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of a suspected medical emergency or injury, the school will call emergency services (911) immediately in addition to contacting the child's parents. Should the school be unable to reach either parent, the emergency contacts and/or physician on record will be contacted.

In the event a child is transported by ambulance to a hospital and the parent is unable to make it to the school before transport, a staff member of the school will accompany the child along with their student file containing all contact and medical information.

Please note that there are CPR and First Aid certified staff members present in the school at all times. Most staff members have also taken an anaphylaxis workshop and our infant and toddler teachers have successfully completed SIDS training.

Allergies and Dietary Restrictions

Parents are asked to inform and update the administration of all allergies and dietary restrictions for their child. If parents indicate their child has an allergy, the school creates a personalized Allergy Care Plan. A copy of this plan is provided to the child's teacher and any other adult who may be responsible for the child at any time during the day. The Allergy Care Plan is valid for the current school year and must be updated before the start of the next academic year.

We strongly suggest that children with multiple food allergies bring with them a special snack that can be kept in the classroom.

Peanut and Tree-Nut Policy

For safety reasons, all of the classrooms in our school are peanut and tree nut-free. Please make sure that all food items you bring into the classroom for your child's snack or lunch or for birthday treats do not contain any peanuts or tree nuts. Also check to make sure the product was not manufactured on equipment that is shared with peanuts or tree-nuts. Please note that we do not allow home baked goods in the school for birthday celebrations.

When to Stay Home

Please keep your child at home if she or he shows one or more of the symptoms below. Your child is unlikely to be healthy enough to attend school if there is:

- An inability to go outside during recess
- A temperature (non-medicated) of 100 degrees or more
- Deep coughing
- A listless and/or "droopy" feeling
- An upset stomach
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- An undetermined rash
- An undetermined swelling of any body parts
- Possible sign of pink eye
- Whenever it is debatable on whether they are healthy enough to attend school



We strictly enforce our illness policy, so please help us by having arrangements made ahead of time for any periods of illness your child may have. Thank you in advance for helping keep the school's children and staff healthy.

Returning to School after an Illness

The following table lists common illnesses that occur in schools. Your child **may not return to school** until they meet the criteria listed in this table. These measures are required by the health care regulations of the North Carolina Department of Child Development and Early Education ("DCDEE").

Illness	When a child can return to school:
Fever	A child must have a normal (non-medicated) temperature for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
Upper respiratory tract infection	A child's time at home depends upon the severity of the illness and physician's instructions. In the case of the common cold symptoms (runny nose, coughing), it is advisable to keep the child home until the acute state subsides, usually one or two days.
Vomiting	The child may return to school 24 hours after the last episode.
Diarrhea	The child may return to school 24 hours after the last episode.
Strep throat	The child must be on medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	The child must be on medication for at least 48 hours, and there must be no more "sand" around the area of the infected eye before returning to school.
Chicken pox	A child must remain home for seven to eight days from the onset of blisters or two days after the last blisters have scabbed over. Incubation averages from 13 to 17 days.
Undiagnosed rash	A child must receive treatment before returning to school.
Croup	Depending on the severity of the case, the child may return to school when the deep, "barking" cough has subsided.
Scarlet fever	A child may return to school after antibiotic treatment has rendered the child completely recovered.
Impetigo	A child may return to school after treatment has rendered the condition no longer contagious. The doctor may allow the child to return to school if the area is treated and covered.
Ringworm/pinworm	With proper treatment, a child may return to school.
Head lice	A child must be louse and nit free to return to school. Continue checking the child to verify the condition is under control.

Our general policy is that the child may return to school after he or she is symptom-free and the above criteria are met. We are aware that keeping your sick child at home can be a burden. Extending the period for full recovery makes the child comfortable and helps prevent relapse. It also limits exposure to the rest of the students and staff.

Please always make sure that your child feels well enough to return to school, even if symptoms are gone and the required time period has elapsed.

Medication

If a child must receive medication during the school day, an administrator or teacher will assist the child as per the written instructions of the parent and prescribing physician. All prescription medications at the school are stored in a locked box in the refrigerator or, if refrigeration is not required, in a locked cabinet in the child's classroom (with the exception of EpiPens and emergency inhalers, which are stored in an easily accessible but safe location).

Parents must complete, sign, and date a *Permission to Administer Medicine Form* to permit the school to administer prescribed medicine or other over-the-counter products. Please note that this form will need to be renewed at various intervals depending on the medicine or item in question (please see below for details).

Parents and all school staff must observe the following guidelines when dispensing medication:

- **Prescription medication for chronic illnesses**

Permission form expires 6 months after date of submission

The *Permission to Administer Medicine Form* must be signed and dated by a physician before long-term prescription medication may be administered to students. Parents must resubmit this form every 6 months for the school to continue administering the medication.

Please note that parents must ensure that students have all necessary medication at the school at all times. In the case of EpiPens, inhalers, or other items intended for emergency medical use, parents must have either a duplicate medication at home or submit the medication on a daily basis to the office.

Failure to ensure the school has all necessary medication will result in the parent needing to keep their child home until such time that the medication is made available to the school.

- **Short-term prescription medications and over-the counter items**

Permission form expires on date indicated by physician

Parents are also asked to submit a *Permission to Administer Medicine Form* for short-term prescriptions such as antibiotics or other medication to be taken two weeks or less following an acute illness. A new form must be completed to extend the length of time for the medicine to be administered.

The medication must be brought to school in the original bottle or container with the pharmacy label showing the name of the child and the prescribing physician and must also be accompanied with a signed note from the parent stating how, when, and for how long the medication should be given in addition to the appropriate dosage.

- **Over-the-counter medications**

Permission form expires 30 days after date of submission

Items such as Tylenol, Benadryl, vitamins, cough drops, etc., may be administered on an as needed basis.

Parents must provide clear written instructions indicating when, how, and for how long the medication should be given in addition to the appropriate dosage.

- **Other products**

Permission form expires one year after date of submission

Products such as antiseptic ointments, sunscreen, lip balm, diaper cream, and so forth must be provided in the original container with the student's name, name of medication, dosage and time for administration clearly marked.

For the safety of our students, the following regulations are strictly enforced with no exceptions:

- No student may self-administer medication without adult supervision.
- All transfers of medication and restricted products (items marked "Keep out of the Reach of Children") must be passed from adult to adult. Students may not transport medication or restricted items to, from, or within the school.
- All medication and restricted products must be handed directly to administration with the appropriate forms, not to teachers or staff members.
- All medicine must be labeled with the original prescription instructions, child's name, and name of the prescribing physician.
- When submitting medication to the office for processing, please ensure that all necessary paperwork is submitted at the same time. No medication may be administered without the required documentation.
- We cannot accept verbal instructions under any circumstances. All instructions must be in writing and signed by a parent and/or physician.
- The school will not administer any medication that has expired.

Safety and School Security

General Safety Measures

The school prides itself on maintaining rigorous safety and security procedures, which are periodically reviewed and modified as needed. The school employs the following measures to ensure the safety of the children in our care.

- All doors are locked at all times. Please inform the administration if you find an outside door propped open without a teacher present.
- No one is allowed to enter the building through the carpool door without a faculty member present. If you are exiting through this door, please do not hold the door open to allow others to enter, with the exception of a faculty member you recognize.
- The school is closely monitored inside and outside by closed-circuit TV cameras. Images from these cameras are recorded in and stored in our system.

- All classrooms have two-way radios and an intercom system to contact the administration when they need assistance. Teachers also take the walkie-talkies onto the playground or any time they are outdoors.
- Parents and all school employees are given a code to enter through the office door. This code may only be shared with family members or other individuals who are listed on the family's emergency contact list. Children must not be given the code. If a staff member observes a child using a family code, the number will be deactivated and the family will be issued a new one.
- Unoccupied classrooms must have their windows closed.
- When picking up your child, please directly interface with a teacher to confirm they know your child is leaving.
- Parents are asked to use our Procare attendance system when either dropping off their child or picking them up. The only exception to this is during morning or afternoon carpool. This system helps the school track which children are present and also to confirm which parent or guardian picked up the child from school.
- Please note that all employees must request identification from any adult on the property they do not recognize.
- Occasionally parents may have the need to send someone who is not on their emergency pick up list to collect their child from school. In this event, the parent must send an email or fax in addition to a phone call for the school to release the child. Please ensure that the adult picking up the child is aware of our policy to request identification from any adult picking up a child from school.

To ensure the safety of the children in our care, we also frequently implement several drills throughout the year.

Fire Drills

Monthly fire drills are required by the Wake County Fire Department. The majority of these will be unannounced drills. All faculty and staff have pre-arranged responsibilities in the event of a drill or a real fire.

In the event of a real fire, activation of the school's fire alarm will automatically summon the local fire department. Upon evacuation, all classrooms will gather on the large playground, and parents will be notified.

Severe Weather Drills

The school runs severe weather drills during certain times of the year. During a severe weather watch or warning, an administrator continually monitors the school's weather alarm and local news stations for updates.

For their safety, students are asked to wear their outdoor shoes during all severe weather watches and warnings.

Stranger Drills and Lock Down Procedures

Practice and drilling are key elements in ensuring the school is as prepared as possible for potentially unsafe and threatening situations. In the event of an unknown or potentially threatening individual or situation on our property, the school has protocols to address multiple scenarios.

The administration will periodically schedule stranger drills to make sure the process runs as smoothly as possible.

Low-Level Lock Down

The school will enter a low-level lockdown if there is an unknown/concerning individual or situation on or near the school property, or if other local schools are in lockdown. During the lockdown, children will not be allowed outside, and carpool will be cancelled.

Parents will be able to access the building during a low-level lockdown, but once they leave the building, they must leave the premises immediately.

High-Level Lock Down

The school will initiate a high-level lockdown in the event of a threatening situation on or in close proximity to the school property.

For security reasons, the school does not publish the details of this lock down procedure. During a high-level lock down, the school will alert 911 via a panic button and/or by calling emergency services, or by other means. Once it is safe to do so, parents will be alerted to the status of our situation via email and/or text.

For the safety of everyone present, we ask that parents **do not** attempt to enter the school building if we are in full lock down. Please note that during a full lock down procedure, all door codes will be deactivated and no staff member will be available to open the door for parents to enter.

All lock down modes will remain in place until the school determines that the situation is completely safe.

Emergency Management Plan

Because the school is within a ten-mile radius of the Shearon Harris nuclear plant, we have established an emergency management plan in the event of an incident or concern.

In the event of any irregularity or emergency at the plant, the Wake County Emergency Management department will contact the school with instructions. The instructions could entail staying in place and implementing a lock down procedure, administering the KI drops to all students with valid permission forms, and/or evacuating to our assigned site located at Southeast Raleigh High School (6200 Rock Quarry Road in Raleigh). In the event of an evacuation, the students will be evacuated by school buses provided by the local authorities and/or staff vehicles if necessary.

Parents will be contacted in the event of a shelter-in-place lock down or an evacuation as soon as it is safe to do so.



In the event of an evacuation, parents must meet their child at the evacuation site listed above. Attempting to pick up a child at the school during an evacuation may compromise everyone's safety. Following the emergency evacuation plan is the quickest and safest method for each child to access a secure location and medical personnel.

Volunteers and Drills

Volunteers and parents present at the school during a fire drill must evacuate the building promptly via the nearest exit and rejoin the class they were assisting on the playground.

For all other drills or emergencies, volunteers should go to the nearest classroom, or the office if closer, and follow the instructions of the staff members present.

Volunteers are expected to assist any child in their care during any of our drills or in the event of a real emergency.

Abandoned Child

If a child has not been picked up by 6:30 p.m. (or by 6:00 p.m. in the summer), and the school has been unable to reach either the parents or the emergency contacts listed, the staff member present may need to call emergency services to report an abandoned child.

In the event the child has been taken to safety by social services or the police department, parents and emergency contacts will be notified by phone messages and email. Additionally, a note will be left for the parents at the front door detailing arrangements made for the child and who to contact.

Please be assured that every attempt will be made to contact parents or guardians before reporting an abandoned child.

Unauthorized Pickup

In the event of an attempted unauthorized pickup, the staff member in charge will usher the child to safety immediately and will then call 911 in addition to the child's parents or legal guardians. If it is apparent that interference will cause an imminent threat to the child, the staff member will not exacerbate the situation, but will provide as much information as possible when contacting the authorities and parents.

Please note that the parent(s)/guardian(s) are responsible for producing any court documents intended to prohibit a legal guardian from picking up their child. Without documentation to the contrary, we are obligated to release children to their legal guardian of record.

However, if there is an unclear situation or concern, the school reserves the right to request that the person attempting to pick up the child remain on the premises until such time as the school can verify the situation with all responsible guardians.

Lost Child

The school has many procedures in place to ensure the safety of the children in our care both on school premises and on field trips. However, no safety measure is complete without an established protocol for the worst-case scenario.

Should a child leave the building or school grounds without our knowledge or permission, the staff members in charge will radio the administration for assistance and immediately conduct a search for the child. Administration will collect other staff members to join the search in addition to contacting 911 and the child's parents.

If a child leaves their group on a field trip, one teacher will immediately conduct a search while another adult remains with the class and contacts 911 and the school. The administration will then contact the child's parents.

If the child cannot be found quickly, the school will request an Amber Alert to be issued immediately.

Abuse and Neglect

The New School is required by law and ethical considerations to report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the Wake County Department of Social Services and/or the local police department depending on the severity of the situation. The school is not obligated to inform the parents of a report.

School Events

Celebrations

The school strongly values diversity and strives to promote tolerance of the variety in cultures and belief systems recognized around the world. As such, classrooms celebrate holidays by coordinating educational projects related to the holiday and may also choose to host special events in conjunction with the research.

Calendar of Events

Classroom and school-wide events and activities are updated on the school website. We also post these events in our e-newsletters, on the MemberHub calendars, and via a monthly paper calendar.

The following provides an overview of the school's main annual events and activities:

Parent-Child Nights

The children become guides for their parents during this evening as they display some of the materials in the classroom and share some of their accomplishments. This is a good opportunity for parents to ask questions specific to the curriculum and to find out more about the Montessori materials and environment.

Open Houses

Held periodically throughout the year, our open houses provide an opportunity for the public to learn more about the school. Also, current parents with students who will be transitioning to a new level within the school can use the Open House to learn more about the program into which their child will be graduating.

Parent Information Sessions

Typical topics include Montessori philosophy, Montessori in the Home, and evenings for individual subject areas such as math, language, social studies, science, practical life, etc. These evenings provide an opportunity to learn more

about how the materials are used and the philosophical framework behind our programs. We also invite professionals from a variety of fields to talk on pertinent topics such as special needs, child development and health.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Teachers hold two conferences per academic year. Parents are given a written conference report and are invited to attend an in-person conference with their child's teacher(s). Parents must sign a form indicating they have received their written conference and that they were offered an in-person meeting for both the fall and spring conference sessions.

International Night

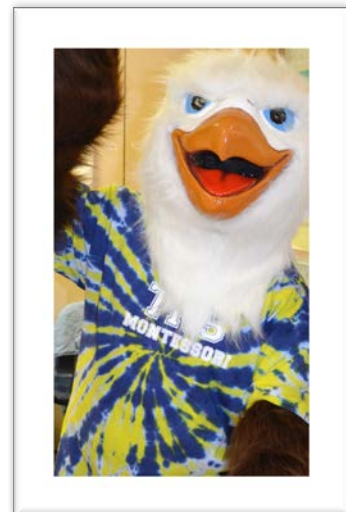
International Night is one of our largest events during the year. The purpose of this evening is to celebrate diversity among the world's cultures and to promote tolerance of individual differences. At the beginning of the year, each classroom selects a country to study. During International Night, their classrooms are transformed by decorations, music, food, costumes, research, children's work, and performances to represent and celebrate their chosen country. This event is free and open only to enrolled parents, students, and faculty.

Fall Festival

This annual community event is open to all members of the school in addition to the general public. The goal of the festival is to provide a fun social event for our staff and families and to promote and raise visibility for the school. The festival is centered around a different theme each year. These themes are related to charity organizations or causes that increase awareness of important topics. Each classroom selects its own projects related to the theme for research and artwork.

Fundraising Events

In conjunction with parent volunteers, the school hosts a variety of fundraising events or drives throughout the year. Our focus is to find fundraising opportunities that provide our families with value or entertainment. We also look for fundraising opportunities that take advantage of money parents would be spending regardless of the fundraiser, such as our Scripps Cards or offering lunch opportunities at the school.



Field Day

We generally schedule our field day at the end of May. This is a day of games, music, bouncy houses, free pizza, and fun for the children. Parents may earn volunteer time by helping to supervise this event.

Early Release Days

Early release days provide our faculty with an opportunity to update their environments, attend meetings and training sessions, review student individualized programs, process paperwork, and more.

School Community and Academic Information

Dress Code

Because children engage in a wide variety of indoor and outdoor activities, we request that each child dress in comfortable, washable, durable clothing.

All students regardless of their age must have a change of clothes available in the school in the event of accidents or spills. Please give daily consideration to the weather and scheduled activities when providing extra clothes.

All Students

Children are required to dress in a clean and neat manner, and to avoid inappropriate clothing such as the following:

Pants

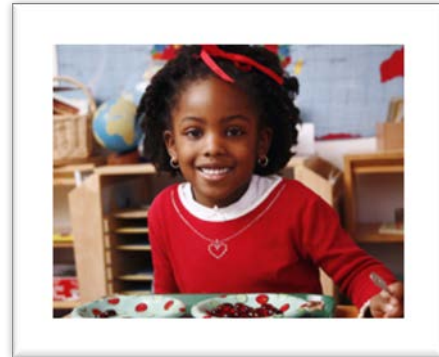
- Pants that do not fit appropriately around the waist
- Torn or frayed pants
- Extremely tight fitting or very loose (baggy) pants

Outdoor Shoes

- Improperly fitting footwear
- Open-toe shoes (may be worn inside only)
- Flip-flops (may be worn inside only)
- Platform and high heel shoes

Shirts or Sweatshirts

- Any clothing with wording or pictures that administration determines is offensive or in poor taste
- Loose fitting or low-cut shirts or blouses
- Shortened tops that do not reach the child's waist
- Spaghetti strap tops (straps must be a width of at least 3 fingers)
- Torn or frayed shirts
- Shirts without a full back



Shorts, skirts, and dresses

- Skirts, dresses, and shorts must be lower than the student's middle finger when their arms are placed at their sides.
- None of this clothing may be overly tight

Hats, sunglasses, and bathing suits

- Hats, hoods, and sunglasses may not be worn into the school building
- Sunglasses may be worn outside only when not actively playing on structures or running on the field
- All children must either have a full bathing suit (no two-piece suits) or a t-shirt and shorts for water activities

General

- Any article of see-through clothing is unacceptable
- Proper undergarments are required at all times

Additional Criteria for Elementary and Adolescent Programs

We discourage, but do not prohibit, children from wearing earrings. However, the following items are unacceptable:

- Pierced nose, lip or other body rings (other than earrings)
- Jewelry that administration determines is offensive or in poor taste
- Excessive jewelry

We discourage, but do not prohibit, the use of a reasonable amount of makeup. However, an excessive amount of makeup is unacceptable.

Students wearing any article of clothing that is considered inappropriate or that detracts from classroom productivity will be required to adjust or remove the clothing or will be sent home, as needed.

Please note these guidelines also apply to all field trips.

Toys and Personal Belongings

The school strongly cautions against bringing in valuable or unnecessary items from home. Only items required for classroom use should be brought to school. Please ensure your child leaves the following at home:

- Toys and electronic games
- Money (other than to pay for classroom or field trip needs)
- Wallets and purses
- Expensive jewelry or items of sentimental value
- Candy, gum, and other similar products

Children's House students may bring in a blanket and item of comfort to use during their scheduled rest period.

Also, students in our upper elementary and adolescent programs may bring in technological items as approved by the classroom teachers.

Lost and Found

If you discover that your child has misplaced one of their possessions, and you are unable to locate it in their classroom, please check with the front desk to make sure it was not turned in to the lost and found.

The teachers and children make every effort to see that articles of clothing do not get misplaced or lost. There are a few things that you can do to assist us with our efforts.

- Label all of your child's clothing. Many children wear the same designs and sizes. For safety reasons, please use only your child's initials, not their full names.
- Label your child's lunch box (this is required by the DCDEE).
- Attach your child's gloves or mittens to your child's coat sleeves.

Periodically, parents and students should check the lost and found for missing items.

School Belongings

Sometimes children like to take home “mementos” from the school. A small pink cube, for example, may be very intriguing to the curious mind, but is also an important component of our Tower of Cubes teaching material. If you should find unfamiliar objects in your child’s possession that belong to the school, please return them as soon as possible.

Students in our elementary and adolescent programs may be responsible for bringing materials to and from the school such as books, flash cards, loaned materials, etc. We ask that parents assist their child in finding a safe place at home to ensure these items are not damaged or lost.

Field Trips

We often need and greatly appreciate parent drivers and chaperones for our field trips. Field trips are designed to increase the child’s awareness of our local community, supplement our educational programs, and provide an entertaining and engaging social experience.

Some field trips may require an admission or a transportation fee, or both. Parents must submit payment in full before the field trip, or otherwise make a payment arrangement with the administration.



A permission slip will be sent home including relevant information about the trip. No child is permitted to take part in a scheduled field trip unless we have a signed permission slip from the parent. Also, parents of children under the age of 8 years or under 80 pounds must supply a car seat for the child on the day of the field trip.

The school adheres to strict safety guidelines and procedures for all field trips. All chaperones will be given these rules and procedures prior to the trip.

- Approved car seats are required by law for all children under the age 8 or under 80 pounds.
- Chaperones may not depart from the trip until a school staff member has visually verified that children are secured in their car seat.
- Drivers must be 21 years of age or older and have a good driving record.
- Drivers must submit valid driver’s license and car insurance information.
- Children may not under any circumstances occupy a front seat of a car equipped with passenger air bags.
- Each field trip will provide accompanying adults to ensure a sufficient amount of adult supervision throughout the trip.
- Chaperones should ensure they have enough gas in their vehicle to complete

the trip without needing to stop.

- Chaperones may not visit or stop along the route for any reason while on a field trip without the express permission of both the teachers and the school administration.
- Should a chaperone become detached from their group or get lost en route, or if they anticipate returning to the school later than the arranged time, they should pull over to a safe location and call the school immediately.
- Chaperones are responsible for performing supervisory or other tasks assigned to them prior to or on the field trip.
- Chaperones and teachers may not use their cell phones for calling or texting while driving or directly supervising children.
- Upon completion of the field trip, students are to return to school for normal pick-up unless they have contacted the school prior to the trip with alternate plans.
- Students may be asked to wear a particular color or other identifying item to make supervision easier by distinguishing the class from other school groups visiting the same event.
- Students and chaperones are provided with guidelines on where to go and what to do if they become separated from the group.
- The school reserves the right to remove a parent from the authorized chaperone list should a concern with a parent's ability to drive or safely chaperone students arise. This also applies to any parent who demonstrate inappropriate behavior on a trip that is concerning to the staff or students.

Siblings (older and younger) are not allowed to join field trips unless approved by teachers and administration. We also ask that parents refrain from pulling a child from another class to join a sibling on a field trip.

If administration approves a sibling to accompany a field trip, the parent may not be able to use the time to satisfy their volunteer requirement, as they will be restricted from driving or supervising other children on the trip. This policy ensures our ratios are appropriate and that there are no unsafe distractions.

Children who display a lack of self-control or who fail to follow adult supervision on a field trip may not be permitted on future field trips.



Additional Criteria for Elementary and Adolescent Programs

During the academic school year, field trips for older students are considered to be an integral part of the curriculum. Missing a field trip, or any part of it, is considered the same as missing part of their workday.

Any Elementary child not attending a field trip (or whose tardiness makes him or her unable to participate in the field trip) is still expected to attend school for that day. Provisions for classroom supervision and class work of a student not attending a field trip will be arranged ahead of time with the classroom teacher.

For elementary and adolescent field trips, only siblings over the age of 3 will be considered for administrative approval to attend with the class.

One goal of field trips is to promote confidence and independence. Parents attending field trips with older students are therefore asked to be as hands-off as possible with their own child. Frequently, chaperones will be assigned children other than their own to optimize the dynamics of the group and to maximize educational value.

Montessori Academics

We strongly suggest parents become active participants in their child's Montessori experience by carefully reading all school messages, attending parent information sessions and open houses, and researching the Montessori philosophy. We are also continually adding information to the Parent Resource page of our website for families interested in learning more about what we do and how we implement the Montessori philosophy.

All parents receive a short overview of our philosophy during their initial tour, but there are many facets to our program that cannot be conveyed in a quick visit.

The essential features of our program focus on fostering independence, a love of learning, confidence, critical thinking skills, and creativity. Today's students need to be problem solvers, creative, adaptive, independent thinkers, technologically adept, and confident. Our Montessori trained teachers, curricula, and classroom environments combine to guide students toward developing these skills in addition to promoting a sense of self-worth, tolerance, and peace in each child.

Our curriculum adopts a constructivist and developmentally coherent approach to learning. Through experiential activities, hands-on materials, and meaningful projects, students develop a deeper understanding of the nature of what they are studying and how it relates to them personally and to the world in which they live.

Instead of a plethora of rote memorization tools and worksheets, parents will instead see a mastery-based, interdisciplinary-style of teaching and learning. We encourage parents, no matter how long they have been with our school, to ask questions about our curriculum, materials, or strategies. The school is always happy to share this information as we want parents to not only understand what is happening in the classroom, but to support our strategies at home.

Above all, our programs are highly individualized for each child. A child's learning style, interests, strengths, and areas of concern are all considered when developing a child's learning program.

Referrals for Evaluations or Supplementary Services

Occasionally we encounter situations that suggest a child may be experiencing a developmental delay or other concern that may require additional resources. If a teacher suspects a developmental issue, learning difficulty, or observes recurring behavioral issues with a child, they will inform the parents in writing of their concern.

In these situations, the teachers, in conjunction with the parents and administration, will develop an intervention plan and implement a variety of strategies within the classroom. This plan may include suggesting that parents seek outside resources such as visiting a pediatrician, learning specialist, speech or occupational therapist, or others as needed.

Because it is critical to identify issues early for optimal intervention strategies, it is important to pursue these resources as soon as possible. Should an issue be identified, our teachers and Exceptional Needs administrator will then be able to work together using the information from the specialists to refine the student's individualized program to best meet their needs.

Conferences and Reports

During the academic year, teachers will hold two parent-teacher conferences, one in the fall and one in the spring. The lead teacher will contact you individually to schedule these conferences. The purpose of these conferences is to share with you observations of your child and their activities and to report on their progress. Both parents should attend if possible.

These conferences are among the most significant modes of communication between teachers and parents. During the conferences, teachers present a profile (including a report card) of your child. Please use this occasion to discuss your own observations or concerns. Other conferences may be scheduled during the year if a parent or teacher feels it is necessary.

In addition to the conferences, parents also have access to additional details on their child's progress via Transparent Classroom (discussed earlier in the handbook).

Teacher Consultations

Teachers are also available to communicate with parents throughout the school year as needed.

Parents and teachers are asked to communicate all concerns, questions, or issues of significance, including feedback on action plans or to request in-person meetings, via email.

Changes in the Child's Environment

Please inform either a teacher or administration of any changes in the emotional environment of your child, especially a death in your family (including a pet), if a parent has changed jobs or job schedule, if a parent is going on an extended business trip, if a baby is born, if there is a change in the status of family life (such as a separation or divorce), or if there are other departures from your normal family routine.

The emotional environment of your child is just as important to his or her well-being as the physical environment. Please help us to support the emotional aspect of your child's development. All information provided is confidential and is shared only with your child's teachers and for the benefit of your child's wellbeing.

Infant, Toddler and Children's House Communities

Clothing

Parents of young children are asked to dress their child in practical clothing that they can manage on their own. This helps improve their dressing skills and also promotes independence.

Pants with elastic waists are preferable until the child can handle more difficult fasteners. Overalls are suitable only if children can fasten and unfasten them independently.

Shoelaces should have tips and be long enough to tie easily. In rainy or snowy weather we recommend shoe boots (which fit directly over the socks) since these seem to be the simplest for young children to manage themselves.

We require two full changes of clothing for all children age five and under to be left at the school in case of an accident. This change of clothing should include shirts, pants or shorts, underwear, and socks.

Extra underpants are helpful for newly toileting children. When soiled clothing is sent home, replacement clothing must be sent with the child on the next school day. From time to time, a child may be required to borrow another child's clothing. Please wash and return the article of clothing as soon as possible. Parents will need to change the extra clothing according to seasonal changes and the growth of their child.

School Snack

Part of the Children's House and Toddler tuition fees cover either one or two snacks per day depending on the child's schedule. The school serves only wholesome foods and we avoid items with extra sugar added. Any sugars in the snack items are natural. The snack selections include, but are not limited to: fruit, raw vegetables, raisins, crackers, cheese, and so forth.

All classrooms are peanut and tree-nut free to protect our students with allergies to these food products. Parents must notify the school of any special nutritional needs of the child.

Lunch

Parents are responsible for providing lunch for children who stay after 12:00 p.m. We strongly encourage children to carry their own lunchboxes and place them in a pre-assigned location in the classroom. Once the majority of the class has arrived, the teachers then take the lunch boxes to the school refrigerators for storage.

Occasionally, we receive requests from parents who have children enrolled in a half-day program for their child to remain in their classroom for lunch. Unfortunately, it is not always convenient for the classrooms and can also place an additional burden on the teachers. We ask that parents only request this in the case of an urgent scheduling conflict. The school reserves the right to deny any special arrangement requests based on the needs of the classroom.

Please note that uneaten food will be placed back in the lunch box and sent home with the child at the end of the day. We make a point of returning the uneaten food to let parents know what and how much their child has eaten for lunch.

Children are given ample time to eat lunch. They are taught to use proper table manners here at school. We ask that parents require the same table manners at home and in restaurants so the child can internalize these expectations.

When you pack your child's lunch, please take note of the following guidelines below. Many of these rules are imposed and governed by the DCDEE. Please note the school is required to enforce all regulations to maintain its licensure and good standing with all regulatory agencies.

- Parents are required to have a label on their child's lunch box indicating the name of the child and the day's date. Using strips of masking tape is one easy way to do this.
- Proper nutrition plays a crucial role in children's development and concentration throughout the day. The DCDEE monitors our lunch servings during compliance visits to ensure children are being served nutritional snacks and lunches. Parents are required to follow the lunch serving guidelines:
 1. Milk – must be fluid, 1/2 to 3/4 oz.
 2. Meat or Meat alternate (any of the choices) 1/2 to 3/4 oz. (Lean meat, OR cheese, OR eggs, OR cooked peas/ beans, OR yogurt)
 3. Vegetable or Fruit (two different servings) 1/4 to 1/2 cup
 4. Grains/Breads – must be enriched or whole wheat-Bread (1/2 slice), Cornbread, OR biscuit, OR roll, OR muffin (1/2 serving), OR cold dry cereal, OR hot cereal, OR pasta/grains
- If a child does not have a lunch that meets these requirements, the school is required to supplement the lunch. The charge for this is \$5.00 per lunch.
- Do not pack candy, carbonated drinks, or other forms of junk food.
- Read the food ingredient labels to ensure a nutritious lunch for your child. The state requires that the school, children are provided with one-third of their daily nutritional needs.
- Children are encouraged to be as independent as possible during lunch, so parents are asked to pack foods that make this process easy. Crumbly foods or messy desserts often frustrate the children in their efforts of independent clean up.
- To avoid food waste, consider how much your child will eat. Please break down pre-packaged items, such as yogurt, canned fruit, and so forth into smaller re-closable containers. The original larger packages often cannot be resealed and food goes to waste after one bite.

- If a child forgets his or her lunch, the school will notify the parents. If the school needs to provide a lunch, the parent will be charged a \$5.00 lunch fee.
- We do not permit sharing of food at lunchtime. Sharing of food poses a risk to children with dietary restrictions or allergies.

Invitations to Birthday Parties

We ask that parents please use the birthday email list available on MemberHub when sending party invitations. If a parent or child wishes to distribute paper invitations at the school, please do so only if all members of the class are being invited to avoid upsetting children who are not being invited.

Birthday Celebrations

The school celebrates birthdays in a special way. During our circle time, the teacher lights a candle, which represents the sun, and the child walks around the birthday circle one time for each year of their life.

Sometimes parents and their child assemble a short “Story of My Life” that includes important milestones (e.g., when and where they were born, learning to walk, riding a tricycle or two-wheeler, trips, acquisitions of pets, house moves, siblings, pastimes, etc.). This can be represented as a book or a collage of pictures, for example, and can be displayed in the classroom for the day.

Birthday Snacks

If you wish to supply a special birthday snack for your child’s classroom, we ask that you email this request to the administration and to your child’s teachers at **least two weeks in advance**. The school will provide a list of approved food items from which to select the snack. Without this notice, the teachers may not be able to serve your birthday treat to the students. Also, the school is unable to serve any items that have not been selected from our approved list.

All parents within a class will be notified of upcoming birthday treats in advance. This will provide parents with enough notice to provide alternate snacks for their child should they have an allergy or sensitivity to the food that will be served.

In the event of two birthdays on the same day, both parents may bring in items, but the teachers may coordinate with the parents in terms of what to bring in to the class.

Please note that we have several children in our classrooms with severe allergies and/or food sensitivities. Consequently, **we are very strict about maintaining a peanut and tree nut-free environment**. Please make sure that the snacks you bring in are store bought and that you have read the ingredients to check for any allergy alerts. We do not allow home-baked goods.

Rest Periods

The infant rest period is initially tailored to each child’s schedule. As the children age, the rest period gradually becomes more structured for children to adapt easily to the Toddler Two’s nap schedule.

According to the DCDEE, all children five and under are required to have a rest period. This usually takes place between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. in the toddler and children's house programs. The rest period entails providing the students with the opportunity and space to rest or nap on their own mat.

Students who are aged five are typically involved in an academic extended day program. Younger students must begin the rest period on their mats, but will be furnished with books or materials should they become restless. If they do not take a nap, they are allowed to work quietly in a designated area. However, they will not be scheduled to join group lessons during this time as this is reserved for older students and our Kindergarten program.

Elementary and Adolescent Programs

Attendance

We are committed to providing a high-quality education. For students to reap the maximum benefits of our programs, we require regular attendance. Much of our instruction is hands-on and involves student-teacher or peer interaction. Consequently, it is difficult for students to catch up after missing significant time from school.

Regular attendance also helps set the stage for your student's attitude toward school, consistency of expectations, and to reinforce concepts and skills your child is learning. Excessive absences can lead to significant negative academic consequences.

Nonetheless, we understand that absences are occasionally necessary. Please notify the school as soon as possible, but no later than 8:15 a.m. if your student will not attend that day.

Students who are absent or anticipate being absent for two or more days may arrange to get assignments from their teacher ahead of time. Elementary students are responsible for making up work in a timely fashion when they are absent or tardy. However, make up work is not a suitable substitute for classroom instruction and assignments.

Excused Absences for Elementary Students

We encourage parents to schedule appointments and travel during non-school hours and on scheduled breaks. Valid conditions for **excused absences** as stated by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction are:

- Illness or injury that makes the student physically unable to attend school
- If your child has a contagious disease or infection (see *Health, Medical Incidents*)
- Medical or dental appointments
- Death in the immediate family
- Court or administrative proceedings

- Religious observance
- Educational opportunity



In the case of absence for educational opportunity, such as traveling, approval for such an absence must be made in writing to the administration and the student's teachers **at least one week** in advance of the absence

Unexcused Absences for Elementary Students

Teachers will contact parents in the event of a student missing an excessive amount of instruction time due to either excused or unexcused absences.

- An initial letter will be sent to the parents or guardians when a student accumulates ten absences. Another letter is sent after ten more absences. These absences may be any combination of excused or unexcused absences.
- In the event of continued absences, the Administration will contact the parents to determine if there is a problem.
- Parents should note that excessive absences may prevent students from advancing into the following grade.
- After more than thirty days total absences during one school year, the student's records will go before a review committee to determine if the student will be eligible to advance to the next grade level the following year. This committee will consist of the student's teachers, administration, and one other faculty member.

Student Tardiness

Students arriving after carpool ends at 8:30 a.m. are officially tardy. After 8:30am, parents are required to sign in their child at the office.

Tardiness affects your child and the other students in the classroom. The first part of the day is very important in socializing, setting up daily goals, checking work, and interfacing with the teachers.

Also, there are often lessons scheduled soon after arrival to make sure to cover all of the various groups. Our classrooms run on a tight schedule to allow teachers to provide as much instruction and guidance time as possible. Without enforcing our tardiness policy, teachers may encounter difficulty planning lessons and completing necessary activities.

Although we understand occasionally circumstances do arise where lateness results, we must, in the best interest of the students and staff, strictly adhere to our lateness policy.

Based on missed activities, lessons, and other important classroom events, due to excessive late arrivals, a teacher may issue an equivalent of an absence. The teacher will inform the parents should this occur.

Grade Advancement

All grade/class placements are based on the student's academic, social, and emotional readiness for the particular grade or classroom in question.

We ask parents to bear in mind that premature or ill-advised advancements (due to excessive absences or tardy arrivals, work performance, etc.) can compound into a larger problem later on down the road.

All final placement decisions are made by the student's current teacher(s) along with the administration and will be based solely on the best interest of the student.

Early Dismissal or Return

If you intend to pick up your child earlier than 3:30 p.m., please send administration or the teacher a note or email indicating the time the child will be picked up and when returning.

When you pick up your child inside the building, you will need to sign the "Late Arrival/Early Dismissal" record at the office. The same procedure is followed for return to school.

To be counted as present, the student must be in attendance at least one-half of the student day. If a student gets sick during the school day and needs to leave school prior to 12:00 p.m., they will be marked absent. Also, if the student comes in after 12:05 p.m. they will be considered absent for daily attendance records.

Parent Involvement

Observations and Visits

The school encourages parents to spend time observing their child's class. Four of our classrooms have observation booths, while other four rooms have a tinted glass pane in the door. Parents are invited to observe their child's classroom using these booths or by looking in through the tinted glass.

We request that all in-classroom observations and visits are scheduled at least one day in advance. Please contact the administration or lead teacher of the classroom to schedule a time to observe.

When observing, we ask that parents do not interact with the children or attempt to engage the teacher(s) in a conversation. We request that parents sit quietly and observe the children at work. We recommend an observation period of at least one hour.

Lead teachers have been instructed to ask parents to leave the classroom if:

- The parent attempts to interact with the children.
- The parent moves among the children disrupting their work period.
- The parent attempts to engage the teachers in conversation.
- The parent makes comments that are unsuitable for children or teachers.

Photography and Recordings

Cameras and video recorders are not allowed in the classroom (unless specifically permitted by the administration or teacher). Picture taking is very distracting to the children when they are trying to work. In addition, picture taking without permission may violate the privacy requests of other families.

Families are permitted to take pictures during special events. However, please note that the school does not permit the posting of pictures or video of children of other families on any social media or online site without the express permission of the school and of the other child's parents.

Anyone violating this policy, will be asked to refrain from taking pictures during future events and may be asked to remove any unauthorized postings.

Parents may, however, post photographs on MemberHub without permission, as that is an internal, password-protected site exclusive to the school community.

Parent Involvement

Parents are strongly encouraged to be involved in their children's education and in the school community.

We strongly encourage parents to take an active role in the following:

- Attending all parent-teacher conferences
- Attending parent information events
- Observing their child's class
- Attending and assisting with school functions
- Participating in school committees or initiatives
- Assist in promoting the school and its mission
- Reading and understanding Montessori philosophy

Parent Volunteer Opportunities

We welcome your involvement in the school. Any and all help is very much appreciated and reduces the strain on the school's staff.

To accommodate parents with time restrictions during the day, teachers or administration often have tasks that can be completed from home. We will post these needs on our website in addition to sending out requests via email.

Volunteer opportunities include:

- Serving on a parent committee (details on committees will be distributed at the beginning of the school year and also on our website)
- Assisting with school events, such as Fall Festival, International Night, classroom celebrations, science week, art festival, and more

- Gardening and performing basic maintenance tasks or assistance with IT needs
- Presenting a special talk in a classroom or to parents in a Parent Information Session
- Helping raise awareness about the school among our local business community
- Helping out with routine administrative tasks
- Contributing to our online and local community presence
- Contributing interesting posts to the school's various social media sites
- Purchasing supplies for special events
- Participating in surveys periodically distributed by the school
- Writing school reviews on review sites such as Facebook, Google, Greatschools.com, Schooldigger.com and others (please provide school with link to review for credit)

We hope that you will offer your time and special talents to the classrooms and the school. If there are volunteer opportunities we have not thought of, please let us know!

Parent Volunteer Requirements

The number of required volunteer hours is dependent on how many children you have enrolled in the school.

- Volunteer requirements for **one child** enrolled is **10 hours**
- Volunteer requirements for **two children** enrolled is **15 hours**
- Volunteer requirements for **three children** enrolled is **20 hours**
- Volunteer requirements for **four children** enrolled is **25 hours**

If you are unable to fulfill this requirement, \$10.00 for each hour of incomplete volunteer time will be added to your last tuition statement (April 28th).

Authorized volunteer time includes all activities that are approved by the administration and some classroom-related activities. For an activity to count toward volunteer time, parents must:

- actively assist the classroom or school
- attend one of our Parent Information Nights or Open Houses
- supervise students (aside from their own children) on field trips
- donate or contribute pre-approved supplies or services

Parents may not qualify for volunteer time by attending an event without assisting in some way. Also, for safety reasons, parents with young children may not qualify for volunteer time if supervising their child distracts from their chaperoning or volunteer duty.

The school will also grant volunteer time for successful referrals (parents who enroll in the school based on a referral). Please contact the administration to find out more about this opportunity.

Closing Comment

Our school would not exist without our supportive and dedicated parents. Thank you for choosing to be a part of our community and for taking the time to read through the important guidelines in this handbook.

We appreciate that there is a lot of information to process. However, our experience is that families who are informed and active in the community benefit from a more enriching experience.

Please contact us if you have any suggestions or comments for improving this handbook. We welcome your feedback.

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

~ Maria Montessori