



THE NEW SCHOOL MONTESSORI CENTER

Growing Minds, Nurturing Spirits

PARENT HANDBOOK 2020 – 2021

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WELCOME

On behalf of our teachers, staff, and administration, it is a pleasure to welcome you to The New School Montessori Center. We are honored that you have chosen to entrust our school with your child'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, cognitive, social, and emotional development.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with the policies and procedures of the school in addition to the laws and regulations governing our facility and programs. Additionally, this handbook serves to express the philosophical principles that guide our academic programs, mission statement, and vision for the future.

First and foremost, we have a steadfast commitment to provide 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 safety and security guidelines throughout this handbook, as we rely on 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, and welcome to The New School.

Sincerely,



Julie Schroer
Head of School

“

"The greatest gifts we can give our children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence."

Maria Montessori



HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

History

In the late 1970s Ceres Schroer created a training center for Montessori teachers. By June of 1984 this entity evolved into The New School (TNS) and the North Carolina Center for Montessori Teacher Education (NCCMTE). Both organizations operated as a single institution until 2016, when the training center and school divided into separate organizations.

The school acquired its non-profit, 501(c)(3) status in 1984 in addition to earning an affiliate membership with the American Montessori Society (AMS).

The school quickly outgrew its original site in Raleigh and moved to Johnson Pond Road in Apex. Shortly afterwards, a second location was established on Rand Road in Garner.

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.

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.

Over the past 35 years, the school has established additional programs and has also emerged as a leader for Montessori education within the community. Now providing programs from infants to eighth grade, the school has sights to eventually extend programs to include high school grades.

In May of 2019 the school purchased two adjacent land parcels bringing the total area of the property to 11 acres. This purchase will facilitate the construction of additional buildings for our growing school community, provide space for outdoor working areas, and expand access to natural spaces for our students to explore.

Mission

The New School Montessori Center provides a child-centered, individualized, nurturing Montessori education to cultivate the cognitive, intellectual, social, and emotional development of each child.

Vision

The school's vision is to empower each child with the independence, confidence, and life skills to embrace the challenges of a 21st-century society.

Philosophy

The New School's philosophy combines the Montessori approach to education with other successful pedagogical models.

Our programs focus on the intellectual, physical, and social / emotional 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 and authentic hands-on and project-based learning
- Learning strategies geared toward active engagement with 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, providing freedom to pursue interests
- Promoting respect for self, others, and for the environment
- Focus on independence, time-management, and other executive management skills

- Fostering a lifelong love of learning, teaching children how to learn to enhance their skills independently
- Promoting self-regulation and critical thinking skills
- Supportive of children's holistic psychosocial development
- Nurturing a strong self-esteem in each child
- Engaging environments and curricula that promote exploration and complex problem-solving skills

COMMUNICATION

School Contact Information

Address

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

Phone: (919) 303-3636

Fax: (1 844) 558-2579

Email: info@montessoricenter.org

Website: www.montessoricenter.org

Communications from the School

The school employs a variety of methods to keep parents connected to important school announcements, news, and events. We rely primarily on digital communication including emails, SMS messages, the school website, and e-newsletters to minimize our environmental impact and to conserve resources.

School Website

The school's website (www.montessoricenter.org) is an excellent resource for information, news, calendars, and educational resources. For convenience, we have summarized a list of the most important information and links on our *Parent Resources* page.

Brightwheel

Brightwheel serves as the school's attendance tracker, parent messaging system, and progress reporting app. Parents are asked to download this app to receive instant messages from teachers and administration (available for both iPhone and Android devices).

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

Families enrolled in the elementary or MAP program have access to an account in Transparent Classroom. This resource provides teachers, families, and administration with a centralized location to share details about children's academic and developmental progress.

E-Newsletters

The school regularly sends out e-newsletters on events, updates, and general school news. Please make sure to read these thoroughly as they often contain information aimed at addressing frequently asked questions. Often, the school uses MailChimp to send newsletters. Families should check with their email providers to accept permissions from this service. All e-newsletters are archived on the school's website.

MemberHub

MemberHub is an online platform for staff and parents to communicate in an internal, secure environment. Families are able to adjust notification settings in MemberHub in addition to requesting SMS notices.

Teachers use this tool to upload general class pictures, calendar events, and send announcements. Administration also uses MemberHub to send a "*This Week at The New School*" update every Sunday. This update contains important notices, resources, and reminders for the upcoming week. Please note all messages from MemberHub automatically forward to the parent email addresses in our system.

Social Media Sites

The New School posts frequent updates on its Facebook and Twitter pages. We are grateful to those who follow us on our social media platforms and welcome your feedback and participation. Please note the school reserves the right to exclude external posts that are self-promotional, inappropriate, or offensive.

Weekly Folders

The school occasionally sends home folders containing fliers, children's work, or materials for families. If there is anything to distribute, these folders are sent home with children on Wednesdays (or Tuesdays for families with a two-day schedule). Families should return the empty folders by the Friday of the same week.

Families will be notified in the weekly Sunday email if the weekly folder is scheduled to arrive home on a given week.

Classroom Representatives

Each year, volunteer parents (or other family members) offer to fill the role of classroom representative. This position involves assisting teachers with general communications on events and classroom needs. Family members serving in this role may also assist with coordinating events or other activities.

Classroom parents will only distribute communications via our MemberHub platform using the emails or listed phone numbers in this system. Parents will not have access to physical addresses or other confidential information.








Smart Tuition

The school utilizes the services of Smart Tuition, an external tuition management company. Invoices and billing statements will be emailed directly from Smart Tuition. Parents are also able to log on to a billing portal to view their accounts and download statements.



If you are missing any communications, please check your spam folder and set permissions to accept emails from all of the services listed above.

Important Communication Links

	School Website: www.montessoricenter.org
	Brightwheel: www.mybrightwheel.com
	Text Notifications: www.montessoricenter.org/community/parent-resources/text-messaging/
	MemberHub: https://newschool.memberhub.com/
	Transparent Classroom: www.transparentclassroom.com
	Facebook: www.facebook.com/newschoolmontessoricenter/ Twitter: www.twitter.com/tns_montessori
	Smart Tuition: www.parent.smarttuition.com/Default.aspx

Contacting the School

Email is the most effective way to communicate with the school for general questions, suggestions, feedback, or concerns. The administration checks the main school's email (info@montessoricenter.org) throughout the day and will respond within 2 business days. Billing questions should be directed to billing@montessoricenter.org.

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

Brightwheel is ideal for immediate short questions or comments. These messages populate to the administration and classroom teachers' Brightwheel apps. Response times to these messages are faster than email responses.

Additionally, families are welcome to contact the school via phone at (919) 303-3636. However, for important requests or concerns, authorization for unfamiliar contacts to pick up a child, medical authorizations, or other information that requires a written verification or record, please email the school rather than call.

Contacting Teachers

The most effective communication tool to contact a child's teacher is via the Brightwheel app. However, for more involved or detailed communication, parents should use the teacher's Montessori email address.

Parents are asked not to communicate via a teacher's personal email address or via a text to their personal phone number.

Lines of Communication

Parents play a vital role in the school's team-based approach to education. Parent collaboration and input are very important, since they serve as valuable tools in addressing the individual needs of each child and the classroom community.

If a question or concern arises, parents should contact the necessary teachers and / or administration. We all serve as strong advocates for the well-being 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 one of your child's lead teachers (not classroom interns or assistants) directly to discuss questions or concerns.
- 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 a school administrator or the Head of School.

For general school concerns, please contact a member of administration for assistance or guidance.

Online School Platforms and Resources

The school prohibits the use of any of its online resources or 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.

SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Academic Year and Summer School

Our academic year runs from late August to late May or early June and is usually followed by a one-week closure for the teachers to transition to our summer camp program.

The summer session is not a continuous part of the school year, but rather a separate program which requires an additional application. Summer camp typically lasts anywhere from 9 to 11 weeks and offers theme-based activities along with a traditional Montessori work cycle for pre-elementary students.

Elementary and middle school students enjoy a variety of week-long themed camps such as art, sports, chess, science, Lego engineering, survival skills, and many more. Summer

enrollment is open to alumni and siblings of currently enrolled students, in addition to new students who are enrolled to join in the fall of the same year.

Hours of Operation

We are open from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (and to 5:30 p.m. during summers), Monday through Friday. Teacher workdays, early releases, and school vacation dates are listed on the school's academic and events calendar which can be found on our website.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Programs

The school offers programs ranging from infants to eighth grade. As a Montessori school, most of our classrooms are structured on a multi-aged model reflecting a two or three-year cycle.

Our programs and associated ages are as follows:

Program	Abbreviation	Ages	Grade
Infants & Ones	Inf & Ones	6 weeks – 2 years	N/A
Toddler Twos	Todd	2 years – 3 years	N/A
Children's House	CH	3 years – 6 years	Pre-K & Kindergarten
Lower Elementary	LE	6 years – 9 years	Grades 1 - 3
Upper Elementary	UE	9 years – 11 years	Grades 4 - 5
Adolescent Program	MAP	11 years – 16 years	Grades 6 - 8

Before and After-school Programs

Our before and after-school programs are available as a convenience for those who need to drop off earlier or pick up later than their child's regularly scheduled hours.

We offer Annual Childcare Plans allowing parents unlimited use of this extra time. However, parents do not need to enroll in these programs prior to utilizing before or after-school care.

For those not enrolled in an annual plan, a daily charge will be applied to the family account for utilizing before or after-school. We also ask that parents not enrolled in an annual plan to notify the school prior to utilizing these programs.

After-school Clubs

We offer a wide variety of after-school clubs including chess, art, soccer, golf, science, private piano lessons, Lego robotics, Minecraft, crafts, and much more. 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.

A current list of clubs is available on the school's website (*Programs / Specialty Classes*) along with pricing and enrollment details. Please note that additional after-school fees apply.

Enhancement Programs

We highly value providing our students with a wide array of experiences, resources, and space for personal expression and exploration. To this end, we offer several classes offered by specialty staff. These may include Spanish, physical education, art, music, sign language, chess, and others.

In-Class Presenters and Field Trips

In addition to our enhancement classes, we also schedule in-class presenters and field trips throughout the year to supplement our curriculum. Field trips also serve an important socialization function for children of all ages.

Each year our elementary and MAP students embark upon an extended multi-day field trip. Destinations include Camp Don Lee for our Lower Elementary students and locations such as Washington D. C., Charleston, S. C., North Carolina mountains and coastal areas, and more.

PROGRAM SCHEDULES

Daily Schedules for Pre-elementary Children

Children in the Inf & Ones, Todd, and CH programs may enroll for either a half-day or full-day schedule. Siblings of children enrolled in our Elem or MAP programs are eligible to enroll in the Elementary Sibling Children's House schedule (8:30 am to 3:30 pm).

General Program Schedules

Program	Schedule (Mon - Fri)	Arrival	Dismissal
All programs	Before-school	7:30 am	8:00 am
Toddler & CH	Half days	8:25 am	12:00 pm
CH	CH Sibling	8:25 am	3:30 pm
Toddler & CH	Full days	8:25 am	4:30 pm
Elem & MAP	Regular	8:25 am	3:30 pm
Toddler & CH (full day only)	After-school	4:30 pm	6:00 pm
CH Sibling, Elem & MAP	After-school	3:30 pm	6:00 pm

(Key: CH – Children’s House; Elem – Elementary; MAP – Montessori Adolescent Program)

Weekly Schedules for Pre-elementary Children

To maintain a high-quality program, consistency is crucial. Attending five days per week provides children with an optimal learning schedule to maximize their full learning potential.

Benefits of a five-day program include:

- Children are able to assimilate into the classroom environment more easily without significant gaps in their attendance.
- Five-day attendance substantially minimizes separation anxiety.
- Students who attend five days per week have more exposure to the Montessori materials and the prepared environment. These students often demonstrate faster progress in their academic, social, and independence skills than those who attend 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 student's 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 if each day has a different composition of students. Because our Children's House curriculum is carefully planned and designed to allow for exploratory and mastery learning, providing consistency each day allows for more streamlined planning for 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 offset the inconsistency of part-time enrollments, assist teachers in lesson planning, and to track progress, families enrolling in fewer than five days are expected to enroll according to the following schedule:

Two-day schedule:	Mondays and Tuesdays
Three-day schedule:	Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays

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 schedule exceptions are at the sole discretion of the school administration. As such, these exceptions may be rescinded or altered at any time to ensure optimal enrollment within each classroom.



All Kindergarten-aged children should be enrolled in five full days unless they have been granted a waiver from the school.

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.

Attendance

Regular attendance is required for all age groups. A regular schedule provides children with consistency, helps normalize the classrooms, 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.

ADMISSIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Terms of Admission

Students can be enrolled at any time during the school year based on availability. Classroom capacity is based on student / teacher 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 created 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 enrollment application and contract 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 30-day trial period for new students. Parents will be notified during this period in the event of any issues that may prevent long-term enrollment at the school.

Once admitted to the school, continued enrollment is based on the following criteria:

- Approval of the teacher(s) responsible for the student
- 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 or re-enrollment contract
- Receipt of all necessary documentation and paperwork by the stated deadlines.
- Remaining current with tuition payments and fees
- All families seeking to return to the school after our summer session are required to complete a re-enrollment form every year no later than the stated deadline.

Classroom Placements

The school's administration is responsible for classroom assignments. Our goal is to balance the demographics of each class in terms of age, gender, and prior exposure to a Montessori

education to provide a well-balanced and successful Montessori experience for all children in the room.

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, executive management and self-regulation capabilities, 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.

Transition into the Toddler Program

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

Transition into Children's House

Transitions from the Toddlers 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.

Transition into Lower Elementary

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. The school may grant exceptions based on mitigating circumstances.

Transition into Upper Elementary & MAP

Transitions between Lower and Upper Elementary and also into 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.



We strongly caution against advancing a child to another program prematurely. The downside of such a move far outweighs any benefits. All teachers are capable of extending their curriculum to provide an appropriately challenging program to each individual student.

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.

Withdrawals

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 of time. The school reserves the right to extend this trial period if additional time is needed to determine if the child is benefitting from attendance.

Parents may withdraw their children from the school by submitting a written withdrawal notice to the school's administrative email (info@montessoricenter.org).

The withdrawal notice must contain the following: the date of notification, the student's name, a reason for the withdrawal, and the withdrawal date.

If a withdrawal notice is received prior to the school's official winter break, the parents are responsible for 60% of their total annual tuition and fees. For withdrawals posted after the winter break, families are required to pay 100% of their total annual tuition and fees.

Nondiscriminatory Policy

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

STUDENT FORMS AND RECORDS

Emergency Contact Form and Annual Medical Update

For each child enrolled at the school, we are required by the State of North Carolina to have an emergency contact and annual medical update form on file on the first day of school. No child may attend the school if this form has not been submitted to the school. Please list all persons who may pick up your child. Additionally, please indicate all authorized adults who may be contacted in an emergency in the event we are unable to reach the primary guardians.

This form must be updated and resubmitted to the school every year. However, you may change the information at any time by sending the school a request via email.

Please inform the approved contacts listed on the form that they must show picture identification if they come to the school to pick up your child.



Please remember to notify administration of updated phone numbers, addresses, and contact information **immediately** if any changes occur.

Medical and Immunization Records

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 from the first day of school to have this form on file. If the 30-day grace period elapses without receipt of the form, we are required to revoke the child's attendance 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.



For students who require emergency medication, such as an EpiPen, the medication and appropriate paperwork **must** be provided before the student attends class. If either the medicine or paperwork expires, the student may need to remain home until the school receives the medication and / or accompanying forms.

Disciplinary Policy

North Carolina childcare regulations require that you have a copy of our disciplinary rules and policies. The school is 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 are in agreement with them.

Student Files and Record Transfers

All information in a student's file is confidential and only shared with the child's teachers and the school administration.

Upon request, the school will send conference reports, testing results, and medical forms to the student's next school upon written request. Parents may also request information to be shared with outside professional services, such as a student's speech or occupational therapist, counselor, or other service.

Submitting Forms

The school utilizes SignNow to email all forms for completion. All digital signatures included on these forms are considered as equally legally binding as a handwritten signature. Incomplete forms or old printed copies of our former documents may not be accepted.

The school also utilizes a secure, encrypted file transfer link for medical records requests from physicians in addition to transcript requests from other schools.

BILLING

Application Fee

A one-time \$200.00 non-refundable application fee is required when you enroll your child. For families on our waiting list, this check is not cashed until a space becomes available.

Annual Tuition

Annual tuition for each student is based on the program fee for the traditional academic year. Please note the annual tuition does not include any part of the summer program (which is billed separately).

Parents may pay the entire annual tuition cost in one payment for a small discount. Alternatively, parents may take advantage of the semester, 10-month, or 12-month

payment plans. For later enrollment dates, the payment plans may be modified based on the start date.

Regardless of the payment plan selected on the enrollment or re-enrollment contract, all final tuition payments are due on **May 1** of the academic year. Any additional fees incurred at the end of the school year prior to summer will be billed as soon as possible after May 1.

Enrollment and Re-enrollment Deposits

Tuition deposits are based on the payment plan selected by parents on the enrollment and re-enrollment contracts. Deposits are considered part of the annual tuition cost. However, deposits are not directly deducted from the first tuition invoice, rather the annual tuition cost is reduced by the amount of the deposit.



Billing Example

If a total annual tuition costs \$10,000, and a parent selects an option requiring a deposit of \$1,000 for a 10-month payment plan, the payment structure would be as follows:

\$1,000 due upon receipt of contract

\$900 would be the monthly tuition (starting August 1 and ending May 1)

Before and After-school Charges

Only children enrolled in the school are eligible for before and after-school care. There is a daily rate for these services. Parents should refer to the school website and their contracts for updated rates.

Based on staffing availability, the school **may** offer a grace period of 15 minutes at the end of the student's scheduled program for full-day Children's House, Elementary, and MAP students at the rate of **\$6 per day**. After this grace period, the daily childcare charge will be applied to the family's account.

Parents picking up students after 6:00 pm (or after 12:00 pm for half-day students and 5:30 pm for our summer session) are not eligible for a grace period. The charge for picking up after these times is **\$1 per minute**.

All students not signed out by the end of the day are automatically logged out of Brightwheel at **6pm**. Consequently, childcare charges may also include times when students have not been signed out by a parent on a given day.

Please note that families who remain at the school with their child after checking out may incur childcare charges.

Smart Tuition Invoices & Statements

The school engages the tuition management services of Smart Tuition. Parents pay an annual fee of \$40 per family (not per child) to enroll in this service. Each family will have access to an online Smart Tuition portal where they can view invoices, review their account, request free ACH bank drafts, process check or online payments, and print statements for any time period.

Smart Tuition automatically generates and emails invoices 20 days prior to the due date, with the exception of families enrolled for the ACH service who will receive invoices 10 days prior to the due date. This system also generates auto-reminders for past due amounts.

If there is a change in a child's age-level placement or daily schedule during the school year, invoices will be revised to reflect such a change. However, please note this adjustment may take several weeks to process.

Childcare charges for prior months will be included as a separate line item on the invoices after the total number of days (or minutes) have been calculated. If a child has attended before and / or after-school care, this charge will be reflected on either the following month's invoice or a later invoice depending on the dates these services were used.

Additional fees, such as lunch or pizza fees, field trips, and other items, may also appear as a separate line item on Smart Tuition invoices.

Annual Childcare Savings Plans

Parents who require frequent childcare coverage may benefit from enrolling in an Annual Savings Plan. These plans are heavily discounted compared to the daily childcare rates. These plans can be added to the annual tuition cost and distributed according to the selected payment plan. Please refer to the school website and enrollment contracts for further details on costs.

Summer Billing

The academic school year and our summer session are billed separately. This provides flexibility to families who prefer not to attend during summer.

Families attending the summer program should request a 10-month payment plan to minimize the overlap of invoices.

Discounts

We offer tuition discounts for enrolling multiple siblings in the school. Families with two children enrolled will receive a discount of \$100 off the annual tuition per child. Families with three children will received a \$200 discount off the annual tuition per child, and families with four or more children will received a \$300 discount off the annual tuition per child.

The school also offers a pay-in-full discount. Please email billing@montessoricenter.org for details.

Tuition Assistance

The school utilizes the FAST tuition management system to process financial aid requests. Tuition assistance awarded via FAST is financed by the school's scholarship fund (based on available finances). Applicants for FAST Tuition assistance must submit a minimum of a non-refundable \$190 deposit (includes a \$40 Smart Tuition Fee) to be considered for assistance.

If applying for financial aid, it is important to do so before the stated due date. Applications processed after this date may be declined or take several weeks or months to process. Families are expected to make tuition payments for the full tuition cost to maintain enrollment while a decision on tuition assistance is pending. Please visit our website under *Admissions* and *Tuition Assistance* for more information.

Disability and Opportunity Scholarships

Families applying for tuition assistance from the school via FAST first need to verify eligibility for either the opportunity or disability scholarship offered through the State of North Carolina. Please contact the school for additional information and important due dates to apply for either of these grants.

Volunteer Requirements

Families agree to complete volunteer hours based on the number of children enrolled in the school as outlined in the enrollment or re-enrollment contracts.

Families will be charged \$10 per hour for any incomplete volunteer time at the end of the academic year. Charges for incomplete volunteer time will be added to either the last tuition statement on May 1, or to a later invoice if the volunteer hours were completed during the month of May. Please note, families are responsible for reporting these hours no later than the stated deadline to receive credit for this time.

Payments

Payments are due on the first of each month. Families may pay by any of the following methods:

- Automatic bank draft / ACH (via Smart Tuition)
- Cash
- Check (made payable to the school and should include invoice number in memo)
- Credit or debit card (via PayPal, Plastiq, or Smart Tuition)

The optimal payment method is to enroll in the free automatic ACH draft service via Smart Tuition. Parents can also access online credit and debit card payment options via Plastiq and PayPal on our website's *Parent Resources* page.

Please note that Plastiq processing fees are lower than Smart Tuition's fees. Additionally, debit card processing fees are lower than credit cards.



It is important to note that your monthly payments are **not** associated with the number of days attended in each month. Rather, these payments reflect a total annual charge divided equally by the number of months in the family's payment plan.

For example, invoices in December will be the same as other months within the same academic year despite missed days during the winter break.

Late Fees

Parents are afforded a five-day grace period after the due date of the first day of the month, after which family accounts are assessed late fee charges of **\$20.00 (or 1.0% of the total overdue balance, if greater)** per month.

Families who fall behind in payments should contact the school immediately to establish a payment plan. The school reserves the right to either temporarily or permanently discontinue enrollment at any time based on any outstanding balances.

Severely delinquent accounts without an official payment plan from the school may also be subject to additional fees of **\$40 and 1.5% of the overdue balance per month** charged by Smart Tuition as part of their collections process.



Make sure to depart the classroom and sign your child out of the Brightwheel system **before** the scheduled dismissal time to avoid childcare charges.

Default of Financial Obligations

In the event of a default on a family's account, both parents are jointly and severally liable for the tuition and fees owed to the school. Parents are required to pay all costs and fees incurred by the school as a result of the collection process including, but not limited to, collection agencies, attorney's fees, and court costs.



Late fees on unpaid balances in excess of 30 days increase to 1.5% of the total amount owed per month.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Arrival

Being on time to school is essential. The beginning of the school day is vital time for children as they transition into work mode. Teachers encourage students to become immediately engaged in an activity upon arrival 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 Adolescent Program 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. Parents may not drop their child off at the office, classroom door, or parking lot curb, then leave before confirming a staff member is actively supervising their child.

Early Arrival in Before-school Care

Between 7:30 am and 8:00 am during the academic school year, parents must escort their child into the school building.

All children are supervised in a designated before-school room until 8:00 am, at which time they are invited to join their own classrooms.

Please make sure to sign your child in using our Brightwheel system upon entering the school. Please consult the website for current charges for before-school care.

Morning Carpool & General Arrival Procedures

Morning carpool is available to all students except infants and toddlers. We strongly encourage families to use this service to reinforce their child's independence and to minimize parking issues.

Morning carpool runs from 8:15 am to 8:30 am. School staff will provide a QR code for parents to sign in during carpool via the Brightwheel app and will assist children as they exit their vehicle.

Please pull up as much as possible to an available staff member to discharge your child, then 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.

For those who missed carpool, please either drop off your child at the classroom's exterior door or at the office depending on the current procedures in place.

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, as such conversations disrupt the students' concentration.

Dismissal

It is important to pick up promptly to maintain reliable routines for children and to avoid childcare fees.

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

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. Please inform anyone picking up your child of all safety rules outlined in this handbook.



Whenever arriving or departing, please make sure to interface with a staff member to make sure they know your child has arrived or is leaving.

Afternoon Carpool

Afternoon carpool is available to all elementary and MAP students and any siblings enrolled in our CH Sibling program (provided they meet our safety requirements).

Afternoon carpool begins at 3:20 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. A staff member will visit each car with the QR code to log out their child in Brightwheel. If your child is delayed, you may be asked to park until your child is ready.

Parents not using carpool should park and retrieve their child either at the exterior door of the classroom or the office depending on the current procedures in place. Additional QR codes have been posted in several places around the building to facilitate a fast and convenient dismissal.

Please note, the school refreshes QR codes frequently preventing them from being used when not on the school property.

Late Arrival and Early Departure

Students arriving late to school, or leaving earlier than their scheduled departure time, must be signed in or out by their parent or guardian. We also ask that parents please message the school via Brightwheel indicating the times and reasons of the altered schedule.

Changes in Pick-up Routine

Please send a note to your child's teacher via Brightwheel ahead of time regarding any planned changes in your child's pick-up routine. This procedure applies to any change, including 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 or permission for alternate pick-up plans unless the person is listed as an authorized adult on the family's emergency contact sheet.

In the event of an emergency, please send a written confirmation via email or Brightwheel in the event someone not listed on the emergency contact form is picking up your child.

PARKING LOT AND SUPERVISION GUIDELINES

Parent Supervision

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, including the following:

- Children should not be allowed to walk in our parking lot with our parent supervision.
- Always hold onto your children's hands in the parking lot and have them in sight at all times.
- For liability reasons, children are not allowed on any of our play structures once they have been dismissed for the day.
- Parents must enforce our "no running" rule when inside the school or on paved areas, including the parking lot.
- Unattended cars should remain locked at all times. The school assumes no liability for theft, loss, or damage to any personal property.
- All supervision and safety rules apply to siblings of students who do not attend the school but who visit our property.

Parking Lot Safety and Carpool Guidelines

The school requires all drivers to observe and exercise extreme caution when driving or parking in our parking lot.

Overflow parking is available on the school's playing field during times students are not present. The adjacent property to the school (the field accessible via Jones Family Road) also serves as overflow parking at any time.

Parking on our carpool / fire lane is strictly prohibited regardless of the length of time parked.

Parking Lot Guidelines

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 parents remain in one of two lanes only (i.e. no cutting in and out of lanes).

The curbside / fire lane is for student drop-off and pick-up. The interior 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.

Drivers must proceed slowly and with caution as they pass other vehicles in the carpool lane. Drivers must be vigilant of children exiting vehicles during carpool and of those crossing with a parent to a parked vehicle.

Along with our strict speed limit of **5 mph**, drivers must pull away from a parked or stopped position **very** slowly and cautiously.

The curbside is our fire lane. Drivers are not allowed to park along the fire lane at any time.



No child or student of any age should be left unsupervised either in a car or our parking lot. Depending on the level of concern for any infraction of this nature, local authorities may be notified.

Carpool Arrival & Dismissal

All drivers are required to abide by the following safety guidelines during carpool arrival:

- Children must remain in their car seat with their seat belt on until the car has reached a carpool staff member. The staff member will assist the child in exiting the vehicle.
- Children should be prepared to leave the car quickly (shoes on and access to lunch box, etc.).
- If cars are backed up and a driver wishes to park, they may do so either in the parking lot or on the playing field.
- For elementary and MAP students, we strongly suggest arriving in carpool no later than 8:25 am to allow students to arrive in time for morning meeting and scheduled lessons.
- Carpool staff must be back in the building no later than 8:30 am. We ask that drivers not pull up to the carpool lane after 8:30 am.
- Drivers are asked to remind staff members of the children they are picking up. If a staff member is unfamiliar with the person picking up a child, they are required to ask for picture identification.
- If an unfamiliar individual arrives to pick up a child who is not listed on the family's Emergency Contact Form (or authorized to pick up via written permission from a legal guardian), the individual is required to park and await confirmation from a staff member that they can take the child. If the legal guardians cannot be reached, then the school will not release the child to the individual.

Parking Lot Safety Infractions

Should any parent, family member, or visiting adult abuse any of the safety rules of our parking lot, the school will implement the following measures:

1. The individual will receive a verbal and written caution.

2. On the second event, the school will suspend carpool privileges to the individual pending a formal meeting with administration.
3. For persistent infractions, the school will deny the individual access to the parking lot until further notice.



The school reserves the right to deny any individual access to the parking lot without notice based on dangerous driving or several infractions of our safety procedures. Anyone who has been denied access to the parking lot must either park on the adjacent field or arrange for another person to transport their child to and from school.

STUDENT HEALTH

General Health

All children must be in good health and free of communicable diseases or illnesses on each day of attendance. Parents are required to inform the school of any and all acute or chronic medical conditions, potential medical or allergic risks, and any medications being administered for medical issues.

Parents are also required to contact the school if the child has been given any fever reducing medication prior to arrival. Parents should include the type of medication administered and explain why the child was medicated.

The school makes every effort to avoid sending a child home. However, if an injury or concerning symptoms emerge during the day, the school personnel are not qualified to diagnose medical occurrences or determine a medical course of action. Consequently, for the safety of each child and the classroom environment, school staff are required to request a child be picked up by a parent or emergency contact if in any doubt of a health-related risk or concern.

Parents who may be inaccessible during the day must have contingency plans in place to have their child picked up promptly in the event their child becomes ill.



Parents must inform the school if their child contracts a contagious disease or infection and should keep the child home until they have recovered. The school is required by state regulations to distribute contagious illness notifications to all families who may have come into contact with a contagion.

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.

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



The Allergy Care Plan is only valid for the current school year and must be updated before the beginning of the next academic year or if there are any changes made to the plan.

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, lunch or other school events, including birthday treats, do not contain any peanuts or tree nuts.

Also, please check to make sure the product was not manufactured on equipment that is shared with peanuts or tree nuts.

Medical Incidents

If a child is exhibiting concerning symptoms or suffers a minor injury while in the school's care, either a teacher or administrator will contact a parent (or emergency contact if the parents cannot be reached). Depending on the severity of the situation, we will either inform the parent of the issue or request the child be picked up immediately. The school reserves the right to request a physician's note for the child to return to school following any illness.

In the event of an injury, the school will provide an injury report with details of the accident. Parents are required to sign and return this report to the school.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of a suspected or confirmed 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 travel to the school before the ambulance departs, a staff member of the school will accompany the child along with their student file containing family contact and medical information. The school makes every effort to inform emergency personnel of the parents' hospital of choice, however, we have no power to make the final determination based on the nature or severity of the medical emergency.

The school does not assume financial or legal responsibility for any and all decisions related to contacting or requesting the assistance of any emergency services based on concern for a child's well-being, health, or safety.

If parents are able to arrive at the school prior to the departure of an ambulance, they may request a staff member be available for additional information and accompaniment to a hospital (if available).

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 completed SIDS training.

Illnesses: 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:

- A temperature (non-medicated) of 100 degrees or more
- Deep coughing
- Listlessness or unusual fatigue
- An upset stomach
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- An undetermined rash
- An undetermined swelling of any body part
- Possible sign of pink eye
- Whenever it is debatable on whether they are healthy enough to attend school

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 Division 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.

Children may return to school after they are free of symptoms and the above criteria are met. However, we also ask parents to ensure children generally feel well enough to return to school.

We are aware that keeping a sick child at home can be a burden. However, extending the period for full recovery not only assists the child in healing, but it also helps prevent a relapse of the illness. It also limits exposure of lingering contagions to the other students and staff.

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 (Note: EpiPens and emergency inhalers are stored in an easily accessible but safe location).

Administering Medication

Parents must complete, sign, and date a *Medication Administration Permission 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.

Prescription medication for chronic illnesses
Permission form expires 6 months after date of submission
The <i>Medication Administration Permission Form</i> must be signed and dated by a parent 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.

Short-term prescription medications and over-the counter items

Permission form expires on date indicated by physician

Parents are also asked to submit a *Medication Administration Permission 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.

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 on the *Medication Administration Permission Form*.

Other products

Permission form expires one year after date of submission

Products such as antiseptic ointments, 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.

This form is called the *DCDEE Permission to Administer Topical Ointment / Lotion / Powder Form*.



Our licensing body (DCDEE) requires all forms to be current. The school is not able to administer any medicine without the appropriate form. Verbal permission to administer medication is not accepted.

For the safety of our students, the following regulations are strictly enforced:

- No student may self-administer medication without adult supervision.
- All transfers of medication and restricted products (items identified by a “Keep out of the Reach of Children” disclaimer) 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, not to teachers or staff members, with the appropriate forms.
- 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.
- We cannot accept verbal instructions related to the administration of medication. All instructions must be in writing and signed by a parent and / or physician.
- The school will not administer any medication that has expired.
- Parents must ensure they have any necessary medication for their child 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.
- All prescription medications 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.



Failure to ensure the school has all necessary medication or required medical documentation will necessitate the child staying home until such time the medication or required documentation is made available to the school.

Families will continue to incur tuition charges during any time a child missed due to medication or documentation requirements.

SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY

General Security Measures

The school prides itself on maintaining rigorous safety and security procedures, which are frequently reviewed and modified.

The school employs the following measures to ensure the safety of the children in our care:

- Exterior doors are locked at all times (unless supervised outdoor activities are in progress). Please inform the administration if you find an outside door propped open without a teacher present.
- Parents and school employees are provided with a 4-digit 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 access 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 code.

- No one is allowed to enter the building through an exterior door without a faculty member present.
- The school is closely monitored inside and outside by closed-circuit TV cameras. These cameras also record sound. Images and audio files from these cameras are recorded and stored in a database.
- All classrooms have two-way radios and / or an intercom system to contact the administration to request assistance. Teachers also take the two-way radios with them onto the playground or any time they are outdoors.
- When picking up your child, please directly interface with a teacher to confirm they know your child is leaving.

- 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 listed on their emergency pick-up list to collect their child from school. In this event, the parent must send an email or Brightwheel message 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 unfamiliar 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 drills will be unannounced. All faculty and staff have pre-arranged responsibilities and protocols in place to address a real fire or a fire drill.

In the event of a real fire, activation of the school's internal alert system will automatically alert the local fire department and emergency personnel.

Upon evacuation, all classrooms will gather on the large playground or on the adjacent field.

Severe Weather Drills

The school also periodically runs severe weather drills. During these drills, students are asked to assume shelter in a designated area.

During a severe weather watch or warning, an administrator continually monitors the school's weather alarm and local news stations for updates.

For 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. The school is required to conduct quarterly stranger or intruder drills.

Low-Level Lockdown

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 Lockdown

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 lockdown procedure. During a high-level lockdown, the school will alert 911 via a panic button and / or by calling emergency services. Once it is safe to do so, parents will be alerted to the status of our situation via email, Brightwheel message, or text notification.

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

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

Emergency School Closings

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

If the school decides to close for safety reasons, parents will be notified by:

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



If the school remains open during inclement weather, it is up to each family to determine whether or not it is safe to travel to the school. Often, conditions vary considerably based on local conditions. The school also considers the ability for staff to travel in inclement weather when deciding to open or close.

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 lockdown 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 lockdown 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 reach a secure location.

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.

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, the local police department, or both depending on the severity of the situation. The school is not obligated to inform the parents of a filed report.

Abandoned Child

If a child has not been picked up by 6:30 pm (or by 6:00 pm 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 the 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 adult taking a child, the staff member in charge will usher the child to safety immediately and, if deemed necessary, will call 911 in addition to the child's parents or legal guardians.

If the unauthorized adult becomes physically confrontational and takes physical possession of the child, or if it is apparent that interference will cause an imminent threat to the child, the staff member will not exacerbate the situation but will release the child and provide detailed information to 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 notify 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.

Separated Families and Domestic Legal Issues

It is disruptive for a parent to involve the school (or any employee) in any domestic legal dispute. Parents must promptly reimburse the school for all expenditures incurred by the school as a result of any domestic legal dispute, including, but not limited to divorce and custody proceedings, disagreements related to the placement of students in the school, or other family related matters.

These costs may include, but are not limited to: reasonable attorney's fees to prepare for depositions, trials, or hearings; responses to subpoenas; copying or producing documents; and an employee's time related to communication or research demands or requirements that extend beyond typical school responsibilities; hiring substitute teachers for a teacher's court appearances, and travel expenses. Parents agree to reimburse school for such costs within 30 days of the school billing a parent for accrued expenses.

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 on the event screen in the main office.

Here are a few 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 visit 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 individual subject areas such as math, language, social studies, science, practical life, etc. These sessions 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 or virtual conference with their child's teacher(s). Parents must sign a form indicating they have received their written conference report 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 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 paid 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 PROTOCOLS AND 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 of our programs are very active outdoors. Children may be outside in light rain or on the rare occasion we receive snow. Our older students frequently visit wooded areas and the creek on our property. Bringing waterproof and durable clothing to school will facilitate these outdoor adventures!

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 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 fingertips when arms are placed at each side.

- Clothing may not be overly tight.

Sunglasses and bathing suits

- 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 inappropriate:

- 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, students are expected not to wear an excessive amount of makeup.

Students wearing any article of clothing that is considered inappropriate or that detracts from classroom productivity will be required to adjust or replace the clothing or may be sent home based on the circumstances.



Please note all clothing guidelines apply to all local and extended field trips in addition to overnight sleep-over events held at the school.

Toys and Personal Belongings

The school strongly cautions against bringing in valuable or unnecessary items from home. Only items required for school use should be brought to school. Please note the school is not liable or responsible for any lost personal property.

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 placed in our lost and found area.

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.

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 it is also an important component of our Pink Tower 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 MAP 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 and that they are returned to school.



Parents are responsible for replacing or paying for any damaged or lost materials or supplies that have been loaned to the student. Charges may also be added to the family's general billing account.

Field Trips

We 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.

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 airbags unless they are at least 80 pounds and 8 years old.
- Each field trip will provide enough 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 should also ensure that their cars are in good working order.
- Chaperones may not visit or stop along the agreed upon route for any reason while on a field trip without the express, and advanced, 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 during 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 be returned to school for normal pick-up unless parents 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 demonstrates 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 parents to refrain from pulling a sibling out of a class in the school to join a 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 elementary and MAP 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.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Montessori Approach

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 learning about the Montessori philosophy.

There are free Montessori reading materials available in the Parent Education Library in the main hallway of the school. We are also continually adding information to the *Parent Resource* page of our website for families interested in learning more about the school's approach to Montessori education.

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, 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.

Through developmentally appropriate 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 reliance on 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 these strategies at home.

Above all, our programs are highly individualized and holistic. 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

Teachers occasionally encounter situations that suggest a child may be experiencing a developmental delay, academic or behavioral difficulty, or other concern that may require additional resources. If a teacher observes evidence of a developmental issue, learning difficulty, or observes recurring behavioral or academic 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 parents seek outside resources such as visiting a pediatrician, learning specialist, speech or occupational therapist, psychologist, hiring a tutor, or other resource.

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, teachers and administration 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.



Please note that if the school recommends an outside opinion regarding a student, the decision to seek assistance from any external source or expert is the responsibility of the parent. The school does not bear any legal or financial responsibility, based on our recommendations, on the outcome of soliciting professional services. Rather, our recommendations are to encourage parents to either confirm or rule out issues that may be negatively impacting a child.

Conferences and Reports

During the academic year, teachers will hold two parent-teacher conferences, one in the fall and one in the spring. The purpose of these conferences is to share observations and progress of each child. Both parents should attend these conferences if possible.

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 their Transparent Classroom or Brightwheel account.

Disciplinary Policies

The New School is an Associate Member of the American Montessori Society and adheres to the AMS Code of Ethics.

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

- No child or adult may hurt, intimidate, or threaten another child or adult in any way, physically or emotionally.
- No child or adult may mistreat the property of the school in any way.

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

We use positive methods of discipline appropriate to the age and developmental level of the child. At the core of our disciplinary strategies is 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 them toward the goal of self-regulation. Please note 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 request parents work closely with teachers and administration to supplement our approach at home. This will ultimately support the child's ability to employ executive management and self-regulation skills.

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 and behavior
- 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 in nature unless a child's safety is at risk
- Not be administered with anger

Incident Reports

Appropriate conduct and language are expected from children. We use Incident Reports to document behavioral issues that require intervention beyond redirection, or an incident where a child was physically 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 them 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 well-being is at the center of all we do. Because we are a relatively small school, we can provide each child with personalized attention to guide their success and development.

To maintain a physically and emotionally safe and secure environment for students, teachers and staff, however, we must enforce rules of conduct and establish criteria for disciplinary measures should 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 another person'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 Program

- **Excessive Late Arrivals 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 or Gestures:** Any student using foul language, obscene language, or displaying obscene gestures

- **Required Assignments:** Any student who refuses to do the required class work
- **Bullying and 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 which indicate they are not benefitting from the program
- Families that are unsupportive of the Montessori philosophy and classroom programs, 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. 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 actions 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.

Level One

The child's teacher will contact the parents when issues or problematic behavior patterns arise. This communication will either be via phone and an email or Incident Report. The goal of the intervention at this level is to establish a short-term action plan to assist the child in modifying maladaptive behavioral or work-related issues.



Parents are not contacted every time a behavioral issue is encountered. Our teachers are trained to effectively deal with minor disciplinary issues, and the majority of concerns are resolved without the need to contact parents.

Level Two

Should there be no resolution or improvement to ongoing problematic behavior, or if the original behavior was severe, the teacher will request a meeting between the teachers, parents, and administration.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss options and create a detailed goal-setting action plan for the child. If the child is unable to meet these goals, or if parents are unable to assist the school in implementing the plan, the school may recommend consultation with external professional resources.

Additional parent meetings and behavioral requirements may be needed for continued enrollment in the school.

Level Three

If the original action plan(s) have not been successful, or if a child's inappropriate behavior or actions have continued or escalated, the administration will place the child on a probationary status for a length of time to be determined by the school's administration.

Failure to resolve the issues outlined in the action plan within the allotted time will result in additional disciplinary actions such as an at-home suspension or expulsion.

The notification of probationary status must be acknowledged and signed by both parents / guardians before the student returns to school.



Parent support during interventions and goal setting meetings is essential. Parents may be required to participate actively in establishing consequences at home to support the school's efforts to help the child manage their behavior.

Level Four

Should there be further incidents or behavioral concerns during the probationary period, a meeting will be scheduled with the parents, the teachers, and school administration.

The administration may request an in-home suspension or other action.

Subsequent issues 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.

Level Five

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.



Students on an in-home suspension are required to complete schoolwork remotely. Also, please note parents are responsible for their regular tuition payments during suspensions. The total amount of tuition charged is unaffected by any missed classroom time due to disciplinary actions.

Holistic and Developmental Considerations

Parents are asked to inform either a teacher or administration of any changes that may impact their child emotionally or physically including a death in the family (including a pet), changes in parent schedules, extended business trips, a new sibling, changes in regular home life (such as a separation or divorce), or other departures from their normal family routine. All information provided is confidential and shared only with a child's teachers and school administration as needed.

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 should change the extra clothing stored at the school according to seasonal changes and the growth of their child.

School Snack

The school serves only wholesome snack foods and avoids 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 lunch boxes 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 often very difficult to accommodate this request. We ask that parents only request this in the case of an urgent scheduling conflict.

Please note that uneaten food will be placed back in the lunch box and sent home with young children 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 alternative of 1/2 to 3/4 oz of lean meat, cheese, eggs, cooked peas / beans, or yogurt

3. Vegetable or Fruit (two different servings) 1/4 to 1/2 cup

4. Grains or Breads – must be enriched or whole wheat-bread (1/2 slice), cornbread, biscuit, roll, muffin (1/2 serving), cold dry cereal, 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 \$6.00 per lunch.
- 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 to independently clean up after themselves.
- To avoid food waste, please 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.
- We do not permit sharing of food at lunchtime. Sharing of food poses a risk to children with dietary restrictions or allergies.



Please do not pack candy, carbonated drinks, or other forms of junk food. Not only does this fail to meet licensing requirements for school lunches, but children's behavior, focus, and energy can be negatively affected by this type of food.

Invitations to Birthday Parties at Home

We ask that parents please use the 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 at School

The school celebrates birthdays of young children 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. Without this notice or knowing in advance what snack will be provided, the teachers may not be able to serve your birthday treat to the students.

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.



Please note there are several children in our classrooms with severe allergies and food sensitivities. Consequently, the school needs to be very strict about maintaining a peanut and tree nut-free environment. Parents should make sure any snacks brought into the school comply with our peanut and tree-nut free policy. For this reason, we do not allow home-baked goods to be distributed to students.

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 pm and 3 pm 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.

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.

Students who are aged five are typically involved in an academic extended day 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 if your student will not attend that day.

Students who are absent or anticipate being absent for two or more days may arrange to retrieve 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, reliance on extensive 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
- 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 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 communication requesting information or work requirements will be sent to the parents or guardians when a student accumulates 10 absences.
- Another communication will be sent after 10 more absences. These absences may be any combination of excused or unexcused absences. Upon missing 20 or more absences, a student may be placed on academic probationary status.
- After more than 30 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 am are officially tardy. Tardiness affects not only the student who is arriving late but also the other students in the classroom. The first part of the day is very important for setting up daily goals, checking work, and receiving lessons or directions from the teachers.

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 with each student.

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, a teacher may issue an equivalent of an absence for a number of late arrivals (based on the arrivals times

and frequencies). Cumulative missed time due to unexcused late arrivals will be used to assess the number of equivalent missed days.

The teacher will inform the parents should this occur, and the Unexcused Absence policies mentioned above would be implemented.

Grade Advancement

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

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.



Premature or ill-advised advancements that are in conflict with a student's developmental, academic, cognitive, or social preparedness can compound into a larger problem later in the student's educational experience.

Students should be allowed to develop at their own pace. Sometimes this pace accelerates or decelerates based on students' motivation, interests, or cognitive or intellectual preparedness. Pressuring or rushing students into circumstances they are not prepared for is often detrimental to the student's self-esteem and is linked to anxiety, depression, and other concerns.

All teachers are trained to address the students' academic needs and are able to challenge students appropriately as they advance through various subject areas. There is little risk associated with completing extra time in a grade or classroom that is better suited to meet the specific needs of the student. Developing a strong understanding of foundational skills is far superior than rushing through material for the sake of an unnecessary speedy advancement.

Early Dismissal or Return

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

To be counted as present, the student must be in attendance for at least one-half of the scheduled academic portion of the day.

SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Job Descriptions

The school faculty and staff consist of four principal teaching roles: lead teachers, interns or support teachers, specialty teachers, and teaching assistants. In addition to these roles, the school also employs administrators, office support staff, part-time after-school staff, and part-time substitutes.

Qualifications

Lead teachers are required to have experience and training specific to the Montessori method. Other positions vary in terms of qualifications. All staff are required to complete a background check every three years in addition to a TB test at the start of their tenure at the school.

Health and Medical Requirements of Staff

All staff are required to have a health status form on file to verify they are healthy and able to complete the duties required by their position.

Leave Time for Staff

Salaried staff are provided with paid time off based on the provisions in their contract. Hourly employees may also be eligible for paid time off based on their work agreement.

Procedures for Supervision and Regular Evaluation of Work Performance

All staff are evaluated informally and formally throughout the school year. This process is a combination of self-evaluation and administrative review. The purpose of the evaluation is to help the staff member toward his or her potential and for the administration to provide the staff with feedback and suggestions.

Resignation and Termination Procedures

According to North Carolina law, employees are considered to be “at will,” unless otherwise specified by contractual or other obligations. At-will employees may be terminated for any reason, without such reason being specified, so long as the termination is legal under applicable law (e.g., a termination is not due to discrimination). Staff are asked to give a written two-week notice to resign their position at The New School.

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.

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.

Teachers and staff 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
- Assisting in promoting the school and its mission
- Reading resources on Montessori philosophy

Parent Volunteer Opportunities

We welcome your involvement in the school. Any and all help is very much appreciated!

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 or as a Classroom Parent Representative
- 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
- Purchasing supplies for special events
- Participating in surveys periodically distributed by the school
- Assisting with grant writing or research
- 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 final tuition statement of the year.

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

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.

COVID-19 Amendment

Please note that the school's current COVID-19 related protocols override any information or protocol outlined in this handbook until further notice. Updated protocols can be found on the *COVID-19 Resources* Page on the school's website.



"Free the child's potential, and you will transform him into the world."
Maria Montessori