



# Toddler – High School

## 2023-2024

### Community Guide



Montessori Academy, Inc. is a Tennessee not-for-profit corporation per IRS code 501(C)3.

The Board of Directors functions to oversee the financial viability of the school as well as the strategic path upon which it travels. The board is involved in major financial issues if they arise, approves the annual review of tuition levels, and sets governance policy. The board also oversees the Head of School.

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[www.montessoriacad.org](http://www.montessoriacad.org)



**AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY®**

education that transforms lives

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Montessori  
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Accredited School





Welcome to Montessori Academy!

You have chosen to send your child to one of the few accredited Montessori schools in Middle Tennessee which provides a holistic and meaningful education, and which works continuously to cultivate the intellectual, social and emotional development of the child while also instilling a life-long love of learning.

Each child at Montessori Academy will be gently guided to discover one's inner strength and courage, to develop a sense of compassion and to be provided with a socially and emotionally safe environment in which each child will be able to continue to grow and to learn.

As you know by now, independence is also a key component of our (and Maria Montessori's) philosophy. One way in which MA encourages this independence is through emphasizing a respect for oneself and for the environment by helping guide children to make choices as to what they work on and to learn to manage their time to be able to get work done that is needed for their learning.

Our multi-age classes allow for older children to serve as mentors to younger children. We believe this helps to foster the development of critical thinking, problem solving and leadership skills as well as encourages respect for different levels and stages of learning. The multi-age environment also helps children to develop a strong sense of community by providing an opportunity to teach and to learn from each other.

In communication and partnership with parents/guardians we will encourage growth in all areas of the child's life. It is through what we view as a *partnership* between us and the parents/guardians that we believe children will thrive at home, at school and in society.

The first step in developing this important partnership between MA and you is for you to read this guide carefully to ensure you are aware of our policies and procedures. The goal of this guide is to represent the spirit of Montessori Academy and its stakeholders as well as to explain the expectations of everyone within our school community.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions, concerns or ideas to share.

We look forward to an exciting educational journey with your family.

Warmly,

Jacqueline DeSelms-Wolfe, MEd

Head of School

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# Table of Contents

## Mission, Vision, and Philosophy

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|   |   |
|---|---|
| Our Mission                                       | 6 |
| Our Vision  | 6 |
| Our Philosophy of Education at Montessori Academy | 6 |

## Accreditation and Organization

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|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Affiliations and Accreditations | 7 |
| Child-Care Licensing            | 7 |
| Organizational Structure        | 7 |

## Montessori Academy Community

---

|                            |    |
|----------------------------|----|
| Parent Responsibilities    | 10 |
| Teacher Responsibilities   | 10 |
| Student Responsibilities   | 10 |
| Parent Coordinator Program | 10 |

## Enrollment and Student Records

---

|                   |    |
|-------------------|----|
| Enrollment Policy | 11 |
| Withdrawal Policy | 11 |
| Student Records   | 12 |

## Tuition & Fees

---

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Tuition                                   | 12 |
| Policy for Payment by Electronic Bill Pay | 12 |

## General School Information

---

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Safety & Security                                     | 12 |
| Health  | 15 |
| Medicine Policy                                       | 16 |
| Attendance and Absence Policy                         | 17 |
| General Arrival and Dismissal Procedures              | 17 |
| Specific Arrival Procedures                           | 18 |
| Tardiness Policy                                      | 19 |
| Specific Dismissal Procedures                         | 20 |
| After School Care                                     | 21 |
| Room Placement  | 22 |
| Student Support Protocol & Support Teams              | 22 |
| Discipline Procedures (Student Behavior Expectations) | 24 |
| Anti-Bullying Policy                                  | 25 |
| Harmful Behavior                                      | 29 |
| Avenues of Communication                              | 29 |
| Office Hours  | 30 |
| Classroom Observations                                | 30 |
| Time Management/Homework Policy                       | 31 |
| Field Trips   | 31 |
| Chaperone/Field Trip Driver Responsibilities          | 32 |
| Former Student Visits                                 | 32 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Incident Weather and Unforeseen Circumstances | 32 |
| Videotaping School Programs/Events            | 33 |

### **Classroom Guidelines**

---

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Lunch and Snack                                 | 33 |
| Dress Code                                      | 34 |
| Rest Policy – Primary Students                  | 36 |
| Independence in the Restroom – Primary Students | 37 |
| Enrichment Classes                              | 37 |
| Extra-Curricular Activities                     | 38 |
| Birthday Celebrations                           | 39 |
| Electronic Device & Cell Phone Recommendations  | 39 |
| Cell Phone & Smart Watch Policy                 | 40 |
| Acceptable Use of Technology                    |    |

### **High School Specific Information**

---

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| Student Drivers         | 42 |
| Leaving Campus          | 43 |
| Graduation Requirements | 44 |

### **Appendix**

---

|     |  |    |
|-----|--|----|
| A.1 | Acknowledgement of the Community Guidebook & Child Abuse Information | 45 |
| A.2 | Field Trip Permission Form   | 46 |



## Mission, Vision & Philosophy

### Our Mission

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Our mission is educating and inspiring life-long learners.

### Our Vision

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Our vision is to be a community that supports, encourages, and empowers all students to reach their full, unique potential. We accomplish our vision by fostering social, emotional, physical, and academic development in an environment that encourages curiosity, exploration, and a love of learning.

### Our Philosophy of Education at Montessori Academy

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- Montessori Academy is a safe place where students feel accepted, secure, and loved. Each of our students is treated with kindness and respect.
- Curriculum extends beyond the State of Tennessee curriculum requirements and is comprehensive, rich, and effective.
- Instruction is carried out individually, and in small and large groups.
- Our positively stated ground rules help to develop and maintain a community that reflects harmony and respect for the environment, one's peers and oneself.
- Multi-age students bond as a community that reflects peace and respect. Each year first-year and new students move into established classrooms. Older students *mentor* the first-year students and become the leaders in the class.
- Each classroom is guided by Montessori certified and trained teachers.
- Teachers and students speak quietly in the classroom. Students respect the need of their peers to concentrate during work time.
- Montessori materials are sequentially arranged. The materials invite hands-on learning and stimulate motivation.
- Students organize their daily/weekly plans and are expected to do most work at school. They work independently and can finish their work without being stopped by the "bell".
- Students become increasingly excited about learning.
- Accountability and responsibility are basic tenets of Montessori philosophy.
- Use of the peace rose (in Lower Elementary) teaches conflict resolution skills.
- Students develop confidence and leadership skills.
- Students are exposed to foreign languages beginning in Primary and through High School.
- Life skills are taught at every level at Montessori Academy.
- In Lower Elementary (LE) and above, students have "Character Development" discussions and lessons, concentrating on developing accountability, confidence, conflict resolution, leadership, motivation, organization, self-respect, and responsibility.
- A strong partnering of teachers, parents/guardians and students enables students to achieve their maximum potential academically, physically, socially, and spiritually at Montessori Academy.

# Affiliations, Accreditation, Licensing and Classroom Organization

## Affiliations and Accreditations

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Montessori schools vary greatly in interpretation, consistency, and teacher training. In the United States, there are over 5,000 Montessori schools with varying degrees of competence, standards, and sizes.

In the mid-1990s, Montessori Academy became jointly accredited by AMS (American Montessori Society) and Cognia (formerly the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools). There are only 220 AMS accredited schools in the nation.

In Tennessee, there are only three AMS accredited schools: Montessori Academy, our satellite school in Clarksville (Amare Montessori) and Lamplighter Montessori in Cordova, Tennessee. Montessori Academy is also accredited by the International Montessori Council (IMC).

As an accredited school we strive to embody the values and high standards set forth by AMS and IMC.

## Child-Care Licensing

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Our Toddler and Primary Programs are certified by the Tennessee Department of Education. A copy of the *Rules of the Tennessee Department of Education State Board of Education* is in the Administrative Office and is available for review by parents/guardians.

## Classroom Organization

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### **Toddler: (18-36 months)**

A Toddler class begins the educational process during the sensitive period for language and movement, from 18 months – 36 months. In this class, Toddlers are encouraged to have independence and to explore and make choices in a safe environment. Toddlers are given many opportunities for learning, including being taught to care for their own needs and the needs of the classroom. They love to help set the table for snacks, fold laundry, sweep crumbs off the floor, wash dishes, and learn to put their belongings away. They also have available Montessori materials, which teach language, counting, sorting, and all about the world around them. The learning environment is home-like and fully equipped with Montessori materials, an outdoor play area and a full-size gym. Montessori Toddler programs worldwide are very successful in meeting the developmental needs of Toddlers and allowing children the freedom to develop in a rich and joyful environment.

In the Toddler Department we implement Home Visits as a way to connect with our families and students in a comfortable and familiar environment. These visits are relaxed, informal visits and help strengthen our teacher- family connection. They are scheduled by the classroom teachers and take place before the children start school.

A child may be ready for our Primary program when the child ...

- Turns three by September 30 of desired school year (Turns five on or before Aug. 15 for the Kindergarten year of Primary)
- Can separate from the parents/guardians with little difficulty.
- Can communicate wants and needs.

- Is independent in the restroom.
- Can follow simple directions.
- Demonstrates age-appropriate ability to focus.
- Demonstrates age-appropriate independence.
- Can rest quietly for 90 minutes without adult one-on-one attention (occasional rest time of approximately 30 minutes for kindergarten students)
- Has completed all recommended screenings and/or evaluations.

### **Primary: (3-6 years, including Kindergarten)**

Primary classrooms are peaceful, beautiful, and orderly learning environments where children are guided by dedicated, trained Montessori teaching teams through a rich curriculum of multi-sensory, hands-on Montessori materials. Children are able to practice skills at their own pace, to achieve mastery, and to develop confidence and self-motivation. Our Primary teachers are models of kind and respectful behavior and focus not only on academics but on the full social, emotional, physical, and spiritual development of each child.

The kindergarten year is the culmination of Primary, when children reach their full potential and take on additional responsibilities, acting as leaders and mentors for the younger children. Kindergartners enjoy additional enrichment and special classes each afternoon while the younger children rest.

### **Lower Elementary (LE) (6-9 years, 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> levels)**

When the Primary student moves up to LE, the student is welcomed into a classroom of helpful students with beautifully arranged, more advanced materials. The ground rules are important, especially in the areas of respect, kindness and caring. Work time continues to involve the use of appropriately sequenced Montessori materials and more advanced science, history, and literature curriculum. Each classroom's library allows the student to develop research skills. The multi-aged classroom gives the younger student the opportunity to observe the older student complete advanced work. Mentoring is a critical life skill that is taught and practiced in our multi-level classrooms which helps to develop leadership skills. Beginning at the 3<sup>rd</sup> level, students take yearly standardized tests, as required by the TDOE.

### **Upper Elementary (UE) (4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> levels) and Middle School (MS) (7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> levels)**

Upon completion of LE, a student is welcomed into an already established UE class and is ready for the most advanced Montessori materials. Work time continues to be the concentration with the exploration of a variety of subjects. Students are expected to do most, if not all, of their work at school, edit their written papers, write the results of science experiments, give oral reports, and improve computer keyboarding skills in speed and accuracy.

An important component of Montessori educational instruction is to design a classroom environment which is conducive to learning. The students continue to move from concrete toward abstract thinking, working from the big picture to increasing detail. The foundational materials, which serve as the backbone of the Montessori philosophy, will continue to be utilized and expanded upon as needed. The math, science, language, history, and geography materials give the students full advantage for comprehension and application of basic concepts as well as continue to build higher level thinking skills including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Standardized testing for all UE and MS students up will be conducted each school year as required by the TDOE.



## High School (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> levels)

Maria Montessori described the high school environment as a “center for study and work.” Students work with their teachers and advisors to evaluate their previous coursework, current interests, and future goals to choose classes and electives that best meet their needs.

A student’s day consists of self-study, Socratic seminars, service-learning projects, foreign language, career development, limited direct instruction in core subjects, and our exceptional fine arts programs with offerings in art, band, strings, and chorus. Curriculum is uniquely presented through an integrated approach.

Where applicable, curriculum can be technology driven with electronic textbooks and assessments through an educational portal with student and instructor access.

Beginning in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, students have the opportunity to participate in dual enrollment courses at local community colleges.

Standardized testing will be conducted for all HS students as required by the TDOE. The ACT counts as an approved standardized test for those students who decide to take it.

## Middle School & High School Roadmap for Success



# Montessori Academy Community

## Parent Responsibilities

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- Be positive and supportive community members.
- Speak kindly and respectfully to all school staff.
- Be proactive about requests your teachers make concerning your child.
- Be sure your child arrives on time each day.
  - Toddler/Primary by 8:15 a.m. and LE & Older by 8:00 a.m.
- Build independence in your child through daily responsibilities at home.
- Communicate with teachers (ex. going out of town, new baby, death or change in family).
- Read the school-wide newsletter and communication from the administration and teachers.
- Attend Conferences and “All School Events” and become involved in the school community.
- Look over your child’s work in the Friday Folder (for Primary through Upper Elementary) and return the folder on Monday.
- Observe in your child’s classroom to gain a better understanding of how the classroom functions.
- Enjoy and explore the world through nightly reading with your child.
- If you have any concerns or questions, contact your child’s teachers or Director.
- Read the Community Guide and sign the Acknowledgement Form (Appendix A1). (DOE Requirement)
- Help develop family and personal routine for a successful school week.

## Classroom Guide Responsibilities

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- Create a peaceful, stimulating environment where children can learn.
- Convey friendliness, caring, and respect to students and parents/guardians.
- Communicate with parents/guardians.
- Clarify academic and social requirements to students and parents/guardians at each level.
- Facilitate the students’ social and emotional development.
- LE-HS: Meet with students regularly to discuss assignments, issues, and review progress, prepare daily/weekly and monthly assignments.

## Student Responsibilities

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- Know and follow the classroom Ground Rules.
- Dress in accordance with our Dress Code.
- Be polite, considerate, mannerly, and courteous to peers, teachers, and adults.
- Be a contributing, positive member of Montessori Academy’s student community.
- **LE-HS:** Help develop family and personal routine for a successful school week.
  - Be responsible for book bag/backpack, lunch box, and personal property.
  - Complete weekly/monthly assignments on time and to the best of your ability.
  - Complete unfinished work at home and return it to school promptly.

## Parent Coordinator Program

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This program gives parents/guardians the chance to volunteer for the Montessori Academy Community. Parent Coordinators help in organizing school picnics, raising money for teacher professional development and school needs, coordinating food and toy drives, all school beautification days, and assisting teachers with classroom projects. Please contact Kara Holt - [kara.pound@gmail.com](mailto:kara.pound@gmail.com) for more information.

- **Please note:** All Parent Coordinators and volunteers are required to be fingerprinted and background checked per TDOE. MA will provide the necessary information for volunteers to get fingerprinted when needed. The cost is approximately \$37.
- To start the process, fill out the forms here: [TBI Fingerprint Forms](#)

## Enrollment & Student Records

### Enrollment Policy

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Montessori Academy admits students of any race, gender, religion, or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to any student. Montessori Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin, or ethnic origin in administration or educational policies or in any school programs.

**Kindergarten Age Admission Policy:** Children entering Kindergarten shall be 5 years of age on or before August 15. Our Montessori 3-6 program allows for children to continue to be challenged academically and excel as they grow socially and emotionally. Unlike traditional classrooms, there is no “ceiling” on what a child can learn in any of our classrooms. Sometimes children who turn 5 on or before Aug. 15 may still need an additional year in Primary before beginning the K year. Any questions about readiness for kindergarten should be directed to the Primary Director.

### Montessori Academy reserves the right...

Montessori Academy reserves the right to suspend, dismiss, or require the immediate withdrawal of any student or family at any time if, at the sole discretion of Montessori Academy’s Head of School, a student’s work or the conduct or influence of a student or parent/guardian (on or off campus) falls below acceptable educational or social standards. Each student’s enrollment is subject to the rules and policies of Montessori Academy, as interpreted by the Head of School. Additionally, if a parent acts inappropriately towards any staff member or other members of our community, does not maintain healthy boundaries, or does not show the ability to work in partnership with MA staff, MA reserves the right to suspend, dismiss or require the immediate withdrawal of the family at the sole discretion of Montessori Academy’s Head of School.

### Withdrawal Policy

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Montessori Academy has a well-established withdrawal policy that is included in the “Enrollment Agreement.” If you have any questions about this policy, or if you have any special circumstances that are not addressed in the policy, please feel free to discuss your concerns with the Level Director or Head of School. (See the Discipline Procedures section of this Community Guide for other dismissal circumstances.)

The withdrawal policy is as follows:

- To be released from this contract, an e-mail must be sent to the Head of School with a full calendar month notice of intent to withdraw, or tuition will be owed for the following month.
- A student’s enrollment is subject to the general statements, rules, policies, and financial terms of Montessori Academy (as stated in the Community Guide and future revisions).
- Student transcripts and records will not be released until all financial terms are fully met regardless of time of withdrawal.

## Student Records

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Files are kept for each student at Montessori Academy. Access to the files is limited to the Administration, the student's parents/guardians and the student's teachers. Any request for records to be sent to another school must be approved by parents/guardians via a signed form. Student records will not be released if there is a balance owed on the account. Student immunization forms and standardized test scores will be kept permanently.

## Tuition & Fees

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Tuition is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each month. A \$25 late fee must accompany payments received after the 4<sup>th</sup>. If necessary, a parent may temporarily make weekly payments to avoid going into arrears or losing the child's space. Montessori Academy reserves the right to fill a child's space if tuition is not paid in full by the 4<sup>th</sup> of each month unless arrangements have been made with the Director of Finance & Operations and the Head of School.

You will not receive a bill unless you are late on your payment. If receipts are needed, email your request to [cprather@montessoriacad.org](mailto:cprather@montessoriacad.org). If paying by check or cash, bring it to the box on the wall beside Mrs. Prather's desk. Please do not send your check in with your child or give it to a teacher.

It is a parent's responsibility to pay any NSF and bank fees that are incurred from returned checks, ACH debits, etc. These fees will be added to the Family Portal account.

For questions, please contact [Anna Sitter](#), Director of Finance & Operations.

### [2023-2024 Tuition Rates](#)

Here's how you can earn \$250 credit to your tuition:

1. Refer a family to MA and ask them to include your name on the application form.
2. Once the referred child is enrolled and begins at MA, you will earn a \$250 credit on your account per referred child enrolled! (If you pre-pay the entire year, then MA will write you a check.)

**We love referrals from those in our community!**

## Policy for Payment by Electronic Bill Pay

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The preferred payment method is ACH Automatic Debit: [ACH Authorization Form](#)

Payments can also be made via the online [Family Portal](#). An additional option is using your bank's online bill-pay system just like you electronically pay your other bills. Use your child's name as the account number. To allow five days processing time, put the due date as the 25<sup>th</sup> of the prior month for us to receive it on the first.

## General All School Information

### Safety & Security

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As part of our Safety & Security Protocols, it is required to obtain a visitor's pass in the front office of Building B if you are volunteering or observing in a classroom during school hours.

**All parents/guardians, visitors, and volunteers need to sign-in and get a visitor's badge.**

**DO NOT go directly to your child's classroom** without obtaining a visitor's pass from the front office.

Upon leaving campus, you will need to sign out at the front office as well.

Until staff members are familiar with who you are/whose parent/guardian you are, we will ask for a photo ID upon entering the building.

For classroom-wide or school-wide events, we will communicate visitor requirements if they are different than the above stated.

All parents/guardians who will be picking up and dropping off throughout the year will need a Montessori Academy parking sticker. These will be provided to all families and need to be placed on the rear window of your vehicle(s).

If you have another caretaker who will be visiting campus and/or picking up and dropping off your child s/he will need a parking pass as well. Please notify Cathi or Leanna at the front desk if you need one for your family in these circumstances.

Other visitors will need a visitor parking pass to hang from the rearview mirror of their car. These can be obtained at the front desk in the Admin Building (Building B)

Staff members at MA are CPR and First Aid trained and go through safety & security protocol training. MA also participates in fire, inclement weather and intruder drills multiple times a year to help prepare everyone in case of an emergency.

Montessori Academy also has a full-time concealed armed guard on campus who is here while students are on campus (school hours, after school care, events, summer camp, etc.).

### Possession of Weapons

Possession of weapons on school grounds is a violation of federal law. Any person who possesses a firearm, knife or other weapon on MA's campus will be subject to prosecution to the full extent of the law. Students who possess weapons on MA's campus or at any school-sponsored event will be subject to separation from Montessori Academy in addition to prosecution for violation of the law.

Persons who have knowledge of a violation must report it to the proper authority. Failure to report is a major infraction. Anyone making threats to another person is subject to separation from Montessori Academy. Failure to report weapon possession or threats of any kind is also a major infraction.

### Emergency Situations

Montessori Academy has procedures in place in the event of a weather emergency, fire, lockdown, bomb or other threat. All classrooms have designated "safe places" and exit plans, depending on the nature of the emergency. All staff members are trained in the procedures and classrooms have regular drills to practice evacuation and lock down procedures.

## Crisis Management Plan

The safety of children and staff is always our top priority. In the event of a crisis, highest ranking administrators will make safety and physical needs decisions based upon the information available at the time.

**Communication:** Communication with parents/guardians is offered in multiple formats. In the event of a crisis, not all communication forms will be available, but administrators will take the following steps to encompass as many forms of communication as possible:

1. Text message to parents/guardians via FACTS SIS Parent Alert
2. All school email blast
3. Phone list with parent phone numbers as well as parent approved secondary contacts

**Location of Children during and/or post crisis:** Keeping children on the MA property is always the first choice due to transportation issues. Parents/guardians are advised to check with their parent approved secondary pick-up list (grandparents, friends, etc.).

Children will be at one of these locations on campus (which we will communicate via above listed avenues):

- Normal campus locations (classrooms and after care locations)
- Normal "Safe Place" locations specified for each classroom.
- Gymnasium, Administration Building, Fine Arts Building
- Campus property – Ex. Baseball Field, Big Rock

If transporting children off campus is deemed the more appropriate choice as determined by local authorities during and/or post-crisis, we will notify parents/guardians of this as soon as possible.

As of August 2022, Granbery Elementary is the off-campus meeting point for all MA families.

The MA Safety & Security and the Emergency Recovery Plan allow room for flexibility as needed.

## Minor Accidents

Minor accidents that happen at school will be promptly treated by a staff member and the parents/guardians will be notified either by phone or through a note/email. Our classroom teachers and after care teachers are all trained in CPR/First Aid and are required to keep their CPR/First Aid certification current.

## Asbestos Inspection & Smoke Free Environment

Montessori Academy is an Asbestos-Free School. The result of the inspection done by the Law Engineering Firm is on file in the Montessori Academy office.

Montessori Academy ensures a smoke-free environment campus wide.

## Tools & Activities

Students may be exposed to the following real tools and activities as part of the Montessori curriculum. There are risks involved with these activities and/or tools.

- Woodwork/Carpentry: Screwing, Sanding, Drilling, Sawing (hand & electric), Nailing, Staining/painting

- Cooking: Use of knives, stove, oven, grater, etc.
- Nature Study: Digging, Cutting/Pruning, Weeding, Low Lying Tree/Rock Climbing, Rope Climbing/Swinging; Encounters with local plant/animal life requiring precaution. Nature hikes as a group.
- Household items: Iron, Needles, Sewing Machines, Hot Glue Gun, Super Glue.

Children receive safety lessons and presentations *before* they can use tools for work. Please note that many of these activities and use of tools require the use of protective eyewear and/or gloves and adult supervision. Children who misuse tools will be prohibited from using them until they receive follow-up lessons and demonstrate responsibility for the use of materials generally.

## Health

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### Sickness Policy

One of the most important ways we can keep our classrooms free of illness is to ensure that the children who attend the program every day are healthy. Children are given a routine visual health check each day upon arrival. Any child who shows symptoms of being ill or infectious will not be admitted to school. Students displaying symptoms during the school day will be sent home from school.

#### ILLNESS/EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL:

Regular attendance is important; however, there is no advantage to sending a sick child to school. Not only does a sick child pose a risk of infection to other children and staff, but a sick child also cannot function effectively in the environment, even when the child is not contagious.

We *will not* keep actively sick children, and it is the parent's responsibility to make alternative arrangements for care in the event of illness. We will call if your child is ill, and your child **MUST BE PICKED UP WITHIN AN HOUR OF THE FIRST CALL TO THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN**. Though extremely rare, it is possible that MA could close a classroom or entire department if there is widespread illness in students and/or teachers.

A physician's report form must be completed before a child may return when:

1. A child has had a diagnosed communicable disease, (Strep throat, pink eye, impetigo, measles, etc.).
2. A child has undergone surgery or has been hospitalized.
3. A child has been seen by a doctor because of illness.

A child **MAY NOT** come to school if any of the following conditions exist:

- **FEVER:** of 100-degrees OR HIGHER (Underarm temperature of 99 or higher):
  - A fever indicates that a body is under stress or is fighting infection. With a fever, the child should be given time to rest, recover, and regain strength even if fever suppressants are effective in reducing the fever.
  - Even if the fever is caused by a non-contagious illness, the child may not attend school. A child may come back to school after 24 hours if they are symptom free (without fever suppressants).
- COVID 19 is still with us and causes serious illness for many people. Even if your child has a mild case, he or she could spread it to other people who could become seriously ill. For the health and safety of all community members, we ask that you follow the CDC guidelines, which can be found here: [CDC COVID GUIDELINES](#).



- Additionally, let your Level Director know as soon as possible if your child has tested positive for COVID 19.
- RASH: If your child develops a rash and the cause is not known, we will ask that the doctor check out the rash and verify in writing that it is not contagious.
  - With a note from the child's doctor, we will administer lotion or salve to treat Poison Ivy, Poison Oak, or bad chigger, flea, or mosquito bites.
- DISCHARGE: From the eyes or ears; inflammation of the eyes
- SORE THROAT or PERSISTENT RATTLING COUGH: Child may return to school with doctor's note.
- STREP THROAT: Children who have been diagnosed with Strep Throat cannot return to school until they have had three doses of their medicine, which is usually 24 hours after they have started their medication.
- FRESH COLD: A constant runny nose with green or yellow mucus.
- PINK EYES: With or without discharge
- VOMITING: A child may come back to school after 24 hours have passed since the last episode without medication.
- DIARRHEA: A child may come back to school after 24 hours has passed since the last episode without medication
- OPEN SORES: From Impetigo; Hand, Foot & Mouth, Cold Sores
- CONTAGIOUS CONDITION: Any Type
- Any health condition that prohibits the child from FULL PARTICIPATION in the program, or which the teacher or school believes to be unhealthy for the child or other exposed children.
- LICE: We strongly encourage all lice to be treated by a trained Lice Professional. If a family decides to utilize at home treatment, the student must have a note stating that they have been inspected by a trained Lice Professional prior to returning after lice has been identified.
  - [www.liceiseasy.com](http://www.liceiseasy.com) is a recommended resource for a trained Lice professional.

***Should a child require constant one on one attention, become ill during the day, or arrive too ill to participate in the activities of the day (in the opinion of the teacher and in consultation with the Director), the parent will be notified to pick up their child. If we are unable to reach the parent(s), we will call the contacts on the Emergency Contact sheet.***

Please notify the Level Director or your child's teachers if your child will be absent for any length of time due to an illness (or for other reasons).

Please also notify the Level Director and/or your child's teachers *when your child contracts a contagious disease*. This way we can notify parents/guardians of classmates with possible exposure to help mitigate further spread.

**\*\*Children who are sent home sick from school may not return the following day. \*\***

## **Medicine Policy**

Prescription medicine, cough syrup and suppressants may be sent to school in the original (unexpired) container, labeled with the child's name. The following steps must also be taken:



- The medicine *must be handed to a teacher.* (Do not send medicine in the lunch box.)
- Medicine must be accompanied by a note of authorization every day and specific instructions as to how to administer, how much to administer and when to administer.
- Tape a reminder on the lid of the child's lunchbox.
- Teachers will return any medicine that is not allowed.
- Fever-reducing medicine may not be given to a child in the morning to "hold down" a fever.
- State guidelines classify diaper cream and Neosporin as medicine. If a child needs either diaper creams or Neosporin, a *note of permission from the parents/guardians* must be submitted to the teacher.

**Medical Conditions** – If a student has a medical condition such as an allergy or asthma:

- Send a detailed explanation to the office with multiple copies (with your signature) - include symptoms and warning signs and appropriate measures to be taken should an emergency occur.
- Please make sure to add your emergency phone numbers to the note and keep the numbers current.
- For severe allergies, please have your pediatrician email the Emergency Action Plan to Cathi Prather at [cprather@montessoriacad.org](mailto:cprather@montessoriacad.org)

## **Attendance & Absence Policy**

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We desire for each child to receive the full benefit of a Montessori education, including social cohesion, progression through the Montessori curriculum, and opportunity to develop and strengthen positive self-concept. Consistent attendance is vital to these goals.

We ask that you demonstrate your commitment to your child's continued education at Montessori Academy by displaying understanding for the importance of daily attendance with punctual arrival. Even a few minutes each day accumulates quickly!

Absences **must be reported** to the school by parents/guardians. Please email your classroom teachers in the event of an absence. For Kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, any unreported absence is considered unexcused. By state law we are required to report students (Kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade) with five or more unexcused absences.

- Excused absences include illnesses, deaths, and family emergencies.
- Other absences will be determined as "excused" on a case-by-case basis (e.g., vacation or other trips) by the Level Director and/or Head of School.
- If your family must be out of town for more than three days, please inform the Level Director and teachers at least one week in advance.
- Any missed assignments and incomplete work must be made up before the next report card can be issued and need to be completed in a timely manner. The "timely manner" will be determined by the classroom teachers on a case-by-case basis.

## **General Arrival & Dismissal Procedures**

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Please refrain from cell phone use when dropping off and picking up your child, and while on the campus driveway. Please follow all instructions given by the school staff directing traffic.

- Always drive slowly when on campus.
- Park in the parking area if you must leave your car.
- Do not leave your car unattended in the drop-off/pick-up lane.

- Please observe the directional arrows when driving around the circle.
- Never leave your car with the engine still running! Drive safely and please buckle up.
- Never back up! (One-way traffic only)

#### Drop Off/Pick Up:

Toddler: Turn right into the circular drive by the Woodlee Memorial Gymnasium (one-way traffic only). *Do not back up!* Please watch for traffic as you re-enter the main drive.

Primary/LE: Pass the gym circular drive and continue straight into main circular drive – a one-way street.

UE - HS: Turn into the driveway adjacent to the Fine Arts Building – a one-way street.

## Specific Arrival Procedures

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### Toddler Arrival

Toddler Arrival is 7:45-8:15 a.m. Toddler students need routine and *must be in the classroom by 8:15 a.m.*

- You may walk (not carry) your child to:
  - Toddler 1 or 2 classroom backdoors via the back playground
  - Toddler 3 at the Toddler building breezeway entrance
  - Toddler 5 via front playground
- Say goodbye at the door and allow your child to enter the classroom independently. Encourage and help your child learn to carry their lunchbox/belongings.
- Please do not enter any of the classrooms *unless it is an emergency*.

The front doors will be closed and locked at 8:15 a.m., at which time parents/guardians will need to walk their child to the Administrative Office, sign in and then walk your child to the back door of the classroom. Teachers are already working with children at this time and are not available to talk.

### Primary Arrival

Primary Arrival is 7:45-8:15 a.m. Primary students need routine and *must be in the classroom by 8:15 a.m.*

- You may drive up and let a teacher or administrator walk your child to the classroom or park *in a parking space* (not at the curb) and walk your child to the classroom door.
- For your child's safety we ask that the **car seat** be on the right side of the car.
- To promote independence and healthy patterns of separation, parents/guardians may not enter the classrooms in the morning.
- Children should carry their own lunchboxes and belongings to build independence.
- Please do not enter any of the classrooms *unless it is an emergency*.

Keep goodbyes short and positive. This empowers your child and demonstrates your confidence in them. You may call the office for reassurance. If your child experiences anxiety, work with their teachers to create a plan.

The Primary classroom doors will be closed and locked at 8:15 a.m., at which time parents/guardians will need to walk their child to the Administrative Office, sign in and then walk your child to the back door of the classroom. Teachers are already working with children at this time and are not available to talk.

### Lower EL – High School Arrival

Lower EL through High School arrival is between 7:30 am and 8:00 am. All elementary and above students must be in their classrooms by 8:00 am.

- Please make sure your child is dropped off **no later than 7:55 a.m.** to be able to be in their classroom by 8:00 a.m.
- **For Lower EL – Middle School:** Drop your child off at the curb and watch them walk into the building.
- **For High School:** High School students may also be dropped off at the curb by Buildings A & B and independently walk back to the high school building or may be dropped off by the high school building.
  - Student drivers need to park in the lower parking lot by the FAB (Building A)
- Please do not enter any of the classrooms *unless it is an emergency*.

### Additional Arrival Notes

- **Children are not accepted after 9:00 a.m. without prior approval of the Level Director** (e.g., for a medical appointment or an excused emergency situation.) Please bring in notes to verify any medical appointment.
- Missing work time or playtime disrupts your child from having a productive day.
- Rest time (Toddler/Primary levels) is extremely difficult for teachers if a child has slept late.
- *Montessori Academy is a school and not a daycare.*
- If your child forgets something important (e.g., lunchbox), please drop it off in the office.
- Please *leave all breakfast food* in the car.
- **There are certain instances** (severe weather including heat and cold, fire drill, lock down situation) when teachers may not be outside during arrival.
  - If this is the case during arrival, please walk your child to the classroom.

### Tardiness Policy

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It is the expectation held by MA that all members of the school community *arrive on time* at school.

We expect all children to be in their classrooms by the stated start times (as opposed to being in the parking lot or walking to the door of the school).

**All Toddler and Primary students** should be in their classrooms and ready to begin the day at 8:15 am. Any student who is not in place at 8:15 am will be marked tardy.

**All Lower EL through High School level students** are expected to be in their classrooms and ready to begin the school day (with lunch boxes, backpacks/bags, books, and coats put into place) by 8:00 a.m. Any student not in place at 8:00 a.m. will be marked tardy.

Lower Elementary through High School students who arrive after 8:00 a.m. need to stop by the office to get a "tardy pass" to be allowed to enter the class. After three tardies, time will be made up at the teacher's discretion.

Repeated tardiness is detrimental to your child and disrupts the work of other children, guides, and our administrative staff.

If we determine that chronic tardiness is an issue, we will take the following steps:

- After 3 unexcused tardies, your child's teachers will speak with you about the effect of tardiness on your child and offer suggestions to help with your morning routine.
- If tardiness continues, you will be contacted by the Level Director, who will offer more ideas and assistance with how to adjust your morning routine.

- If these steps do not resolve the issue, you will have to come in and speak with the Head of School and Level Director about whether MA is the right fit for your family.

## Specific Dismissal Procedures

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**Authorized Individuals:** Students will be released only to parents/guardians and authorized individuals (per the Enrollment Contract). Tennessee state car seat laws state that children may only be released to a person with proper seat restraints for the child's age and size and who present themselves capable of operating a vehicle. Employees of Montessori Academy are *not permitted* to buckle children into their car seat. It is solely the responsibility of the adult picking up students to buckle them. In the event of an emergency and a parent cannot be reached to pick up their child from school, the school will contact the authorized people on the Enrollment Contract.

### We require your written permission for your child (email is also acceptable):

- To be picked up at any irregular time other than normal dismissal time
- To be picked up by anyone other than parents/guardians or the usual carpool

### Half Day Program (Toddler & Primary)

Students registered for our half day program will bring lunch and eat with their friends.

Parents/guardians come to the classroom front door and wait for a teacher to bring your child to you.

- Dismissal for Toddler Students: 11:45 a.m.–12:00 p.m. (must be picked up by 12:00 p.m.)
  - Toddlers 1& 2 will dismiss from their back porch door
  - Toddler 3 will dismiss from the breezeway door
  - Toddler 5 will dismiss from their playground area
- Dismissal for Primary Students 12:00–12:10 p.m.
- There are **no tickets** or drop ins to extend the day past 12:00 p.m. for Half Day Program students.

### Full Day Program

- Dismissal for **Toddler & Primary** Students: **2:45–3:00 p.m.**
  - Please arrive as close to 2:45 pm as possible to help with efficiency.
    - Toddlers 1& 2 will dismiss from their back porch door
    - Toddler 3 will dismiss from the breezeway door
    - Toddler 5 will dismiss from their playground area
  - Pick up Toddler students before older siblings (siblings are not walked over).
- Dismissal for **Primary** students is at the curb in front of Rooms 1 – 5.
  - Place car seats by the right rear door so children enter the car from the curb.

*The driver of the vehicle is responsible for ensuring that the child is properly buckled into an age-appropriate car seat.*

- Dismissal for **Lower Elementary through High School** Students: **3:00–3:15 p.m.**
  - LE pickup is in a car line in front of the LE classrooms.
  - UE & MS pick up is in a car line in front of the Admin. Building Pavilion
  - HS pickup is behind the FABA (Building A)

When every driver assumes the responsibility of efficient pick-up, the dismissal time will be a pleasant closure for the school day.

**PLEASE NOTE:** If during dismissal there is severe weather such as a tornado warning, a fire drill, or a lock down situation, please first check your child's classroom.

- If students are not there, go to the front desk in the admin building (Building B).
- In the event of a lockdown – all doors will be locked, and entry will not be possible until the lockdown is over.

**Early Dismissal Days** (Please check school calendar for dates)

- The Toddler & Primary Early Dismissal Window is 11:00–11:15 a.m.
- The Lower Elementary and Older Dismissal Window is 11:15–11:30 a.m.

**Early Pick-Up for Appointments/Irregular Pick-Ups**

We discourage irregular pick-ups as they are a disruption to the school day. When making appointments, please make every effort to choose times that are least disruptive to the classroom schedule.

- **If** you need to pick up your child during the school day for a medical appointment or any other reason, please notify the teachers ahead of time.
- When you arrive at school, please report to the office.
- We will call for your child to be sent to the office.
- Please sign your child out on the clipboard while you wait in the office.

### **After School Care (ASC)**

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During ASC, your child will have outdoor and/or indoor activities and time to socialize with their friends. Unlike the school day hours, most aftercare staff are not trained Montessorians, but have the love of childcare, adhere to our Montessori principles and school philosophy just the same. If your aftercare child is enrolled in a school provided club, they will be dismissed back to that aftercare class once their club time is complete.

MA does not provide ASC for MS/HS students.

For specific questions regarding After Care, please email [aftercare@montessoriacad.org](mailto:aftercare@montessoriacad.org).

### **Dismissal Procedures for ASC**

When you arrive to pick up your child, you will be greeted by an Aftercare staff member and asked to sign them out.

Children will only be released to their legal guardians and people on their approved pick-up list. Parents/guardians and caregivers will be asked to show a photo ID when it is their first time picking up and/or if the Aftercare staff member is unfamiliar with the person. Please note that photo IDs may be requested more in the beginning of the year as Aftercare staff becomes familiar with parents/guardians and caregivers.

Students must be signed out of After School Care on the classroom clipboard. Your child will only be released to people on the authorized pick-up list. You may update your pick-up/emergency contact list by emailing [cprather@montessoriacad.org](mailto:cprather@montessoriacad.org) or by calling 615-833-3610.

*Per our Safety Protocol, we cannot allow parents/guardians and caregivers to congregate on school grounds during pick up. In compliance with TDOE and our ratios, when your child is signed out, we are no longer liable for their care. This also includes siblings from other levels. We have amazing local parks and encourage playdates for more socializing opportunities.*

#### ASC Hours of Operation & Locations:

- Toddler: 2:45 pm – 4:30 pm
  - Outdoor Location: Back Toddler Playground
  - Indoor Location: Toddler 3
- Primary: 2:45 pm – 5:30 pm
  - Outdoor Location: Primary Playground
  - Indoor Location: Administration Lounge
- Elementary: 3:00 pm– 5:30 pm
  - Outdoor Location: Lower Elementary Playground
  - Indoor Location: Gymnasium & Activity Room (beside gym)

Habitual lateness (as determined by the aftercare coordinators) to pick up your child will result in the suspension of After School Care privileges. If you are concerned about being late picking up your child, please contact the front office by calling 615-833-3610 or email [aftercare@montessoriacad.org](mailto:aftercare@montessoriacad.org) so that the Aftercare staff can be informed and can reassure your child about your imminent arrival.

#### Room Placement

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Next level placement is determined by teachers and administrators based upon several factors, including space availability. Any specific questions regarding room placement may be sent to the Level Director.

- Parental requests will be considered but final determination is made by the administration.
- Fall room placement is made in late spring/early summer.
- For students transitioning mid-year (Toddler), decisions are made as the student approaches the transitioning date.

**Please note:** Transition Meetings are *required* for parents/guardians of students moving to a new program level.

#### Student Support Protocol & Student Support Teams

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Montessori Academy's Support Protocol is designed to help teachers and parents/guardians navigate the process of determining the best method of guidance for a child who is needing extra support. MA works in partnership with parents/guardians to love and support the development of the whole child and to make decisions based on what is best for the child.

Montessori Academy may request parents/guardians to sign a consent to form a student support team. The Support Team may include but is not limited to former, current, or future Classroom Teachers, the Level Director, the Head of School, and the Student Support Manager. Therapists, evaluators, or other personnel may be added to the team at the caregiver(s) discretion. Parents/guardians understand that if they deny consent, it may be determined MA is not able to best serve the needs of the child.

Information that is provided to a member of the Support Team may be freely shared amongst members to better serve the student.

This information shall not be shared with members outside of the Support Team unless designated by the caregiver(s), including and not limited to other schools. The information gathered is confidential among the staff and does not go on a child's permanent record.

**Before the formation of the Support Team and before a student referral the following steps occur:**

1. Teachers have identified an area of concern
2. Teachers observe the child and then implement classroom-based strategies and accommodations.
3. Teachers make more observations to see if the accommodations are helpful in achieving greater success for the child in relationship to the area of concern.
4. If the teachers find that the strategies are not helping, they will then collaborate with the Level Director for further observation and additional ideas for classroom interventions.
5. If, after more intervention/classroom-based strategies are not helping the child consistently to find success the parents/guardians are notified, and the teachers and Level Director begin the student referral and support process and form an "official" Student Support Team.

**Once the above steps are completed, there are several possible routes for the next steps (depending on the individual needs of the child).** These will be communicated/recommended to parents/guardians.

- Screening for speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and/or physical therapy
- A full psychological evaluation (which is often needed to identify any roadblocks that are in the child's path)
  - MA partners with Project Play Therapies (PPT) to provide an on-campus OT and Speech Therapist
  - PPT also offers therapies both at their clinics
- Screening for academic needs (e.g., reading screening to identify possible literacy needs)
  - MA has a reading specialist who provides reading tutoring for those identified as needing extra support for reading. The financial responsibility lies with the parent, but the tutoring occurs during the school day to help alleviate the need for families to find time outside of school hours for tutoring services.
  - Although we are fortunate to have a reading specialist on campus, she is unable to meet all needs and does not cover all academic areas. MA may recommend outside tutoring in other academic areas.

**If an evaluation, screening and/or therapy are recommended, these are the responsibility of the family.**

- The parents/guardians are responsible for following through with the school's recommendations within a designated timeframe.
- A full psychological evaluation is also the financial responsibility of the family.
- Some insurance companies will pay for services provided by a therapist.
- There are also other organizations the family can choose, including contacting the local school district who will provide free support for school-age children.
  - [KidCentral TN - KidCentralTN.com](http://KidCentralTN.com) is an excellent place to look for more information on programs available for children of all ages in TN

**Post screenings and evaluations,** the Level Director and teachers determine a plan to accommodate the child by implementing suggestions from the therapist.



- If the screenings indicate the need for extra academic support, outside tutoring may be recommended.
- Teachers will continue observations and gather data.
- After a mutually agreed upon period of time of implementation of the strategies (typically between 2 and 8 weeks) the teachers, Level Director and other support team members communicate with the parents/guardians regarding if there is a consistent and significant shift in the child's success in the classroom environment.
- The Level Director and teachers will then determine if continuing with the accommodations, or if adaptations or further training for teachers will be beneficial for the child, or if an exit plan, based on what is best for the child and the level of support they may need is what is best.
- This determination is then shared with the parents/guardians.
- Parents/guardians understand that even if all recommendations are followed, it may be determined MA is not able to best serve the needs of the child.

**MA recognizes that early intervention is the best practice** to help a child who needs extra support. The earlier a child can receive support, therapies and interventions, the faster the strategies take hold.

## Discipline Procedures

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Classroom ground rules are created by each classroom community as part of a conversation about freedoms and responsibilities. Students feel ownership when they have a say in rules, sometimes referred to as a classroom constitution.

### Here are some examples:

- We speak kindly to others.
- We walk softly and slowly.
- We talk quietly.
- We do our own work.
- We put our work away carefully.
- We ask for a presentation of new work.
- We may do any work which has been presented.
- We respect the personal space of others.

Many strategies are used in the classroom to help community members succeed in learning in a peaceful climate. These strategies include positive discipline, redirection, encouragement, lessons in grace and courtesy, conflict resolution, removal of a child from an unsafe situation, and helping children regain social emotional regulation.

### Disciplinary Policies – (Toddler & Primary)

In Toddler it is developmentally appropriate to see behaviors such as hitting, pushing, and biting. Primary children are learning more self-regulation skills but may still exhibit some age-appropriate behaviors such as occasional pushing or hitting. Toddler and Primary teachers work with the children on learning to identify and manage strong emotions and practice peaceful conflict resolution.

However, the school takes these behaviors seriously. Teachers will address these behaviors with the child immediately. An incident report (completed in Transparent Classroom) will be sent home and filed with the program director by the end of the day.



If repeated behavior issues arise in the classroom, the teachers will consult with the Level Director and begin the Student Support Protocols.

There may be times when the student support protocols and/or the severity of the behavior reveal that another environment will better meet a child's needs and the caregivers will be asked to withdraw the student. This will be determined by the Level Director and/or Head of School in conjunction with the classroom teachers. This is a 'no fault' policy and the enrollment contract will be released without penalty.

### **Disciplinary Policies (LE-HS)**

Students learn best when they feel physically and emotionally safe.

Inappropriate behaviors (e.g., disruption, physical or verbal aggression, bullying, etc.) are usually the result of an unmet need or a lagging skill. The classroom teachers work with the students to bring attention to behavior and work toward meeting unmet needs or a lagging skill.

If inappropriate behavior continues after a student/teacher conference, the teachers will consult with the Level Director and begin or adapt Student Support Protocols for the student.

There may be times when the student support protocols and/or the severity of the behavior reveal that another environment will better meet a child's needs and the caregivers will be asked to withdraw the student. This will be determined by the Level Director and/or Head of School in conjunction with the classroom teachers. This is a 'no fault' policy and the enrollment contract will be released without penalty.

### **MA's Anti-Bullying Policy**

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At Montessori Academy we are committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. School is a place where students learn the norms and mores of social interactions. As part of the socialization process, all students experiment with a range of behaviors as they learn about social power. However, students sometimes push the limits of this range and engage in behaviors we would consider bullying, as defined below.

Bullying and other forms of peer mistreatment, including prejudicial and discriminatory abuse, are detrimental to the school environment, as well as student learning, achievement, and well-being. Peer mistreatment interferes with the mission of the school to educate students and disrupts the operations of the school. Bullying and other forms of peer mistreatment affect not only students who are targets, but also those who participate in and witness such behavior. These behaviors must be addressed to ensure student safety and an inclusive learning environment.

Montessori Academy does not condone and will take action in response to conduct that interferes with students' opportunity to learn, our educational mission, and/or the operation of the school.

Roles in Bullying Behavior – There are often more than two students involved where bullying behavior is being exhibited. The roles of other children may be passive, but often enable the cycle of behavior to continue.

1. Bully – The student or students directly involved in the negative, repetitive behavior toward the victim.
2. Victim – The student or students who are the target of the repetitive, negative behavior by the bully/ies.
3. Bystanders – Students who witness the behavior. Those students may be followers, supporters (passive or active), onlookers or defenders. These students play a key role in creating a safe environment.

Defining Bullying – Classic bullying behavior occurs when one person is exposed, repeatedly, and over time, to the negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, with a noted power differential. The target of the behavior is chosen, specifically due to the real or perceived power imbalance in the relationship rather than due to ordinary social conflict.

*Bullying behavior is misbehavior, and can be manifested in many forms, both passively and overtly.*

Defining Cyber-Bullying:

Cyberbullying can be defined as, “The use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. It is an aggressive, intentional act carried out repeatedly over time, often against a victim who cannot easily defend him/herself. ”

Defining retaliation: Retaliation means an act or gesture against a student for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. “Retaliation” also includes knowingly falsely reporting an act of bullying.

Examples of passive bullying behavior are: telling lies, severely exaggerating in order to make someone feel badly about something (also a form of retaliation), spreading false rumors, covert threatening, etc.

Examples of overt bullying behavior are: hitting, saying hurtful things, deliberately excluding, teasing, etc. Also, derogatory name calling, insults, racist jokes or discriminatory language towards those who are of a different religion, race, gender identity, has a disability or is of a different sexual orientation.

Bullying can also involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone, or actions that fall short of direct participation, where someone encourages others to bully.

Examples of cyberbullying are:

1. Posting slurs or rumors or displaying any defamatory, inaccurate, disparaging, violent, abusive, profane, or sexually oriented material about a student on a website, an app, in social media, or any other electronic platform;
2. Posting misleading or fake photographs or digital video footage of a student on websites or creating fake websites or social networking profiles in the guise of posing as the targeted student;
3. Impersonating or representing another student through the use of that other student’s electronic device or account to send e-mail, text messages, instant messages (IM), phone calls, or other messages on a social media website;
4. Sending e-mail, text messages, IM, or leaving voice mail messages that are mean or threatening, or so numerous as to bombard the target’s e-mail account, IM account, or cell phone; and

5. Using a camera phone or digital video camera to take and/or send embarrassing photos or "sexting" photographs of other students.

Obviously, Montessori Academy cannot control the bullying behavior of students through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school related location, activity, function, or program, or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by Montessori Academy.

If the out-of-school bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of school, parents/guardians of all parties will be contacted, and the school will determine the appropriate natural consequences. This applies if a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred.

Specific steps, requiring direct intervention, will be used to effectively address the power differential when true bullying behavior occurs. These steps are different than steps used to address normal misbehavior or social conflicts.

Bullying Prevention: "There is a type of fish, known as the Puffer fish, that frightens off enemies by puffing itself up to a greater size. A bully is like a threatened puffer fish that is all puffed up and full of air. The best tool at the bully's disposal is the willingness of other people to be victims. When a bully meets weakness he thrives. When a bully encounters dignity and assertiveness he deflates into nothingness." ~ Jane Nelsen, Ph.D.

It is important to note that while these passive and overt behaviors are also very common, and developmentally appropriate, misbehaviors that elementary and older children exhibit as they learn to navigate social dynamics. The identifying component in the bully/victim relationship is rooted in the power imbalance.

It is also important to narrow the definition of bullying (including cyber bullying) because of the power differential component involved in the behavior.

If too broad a definition for bullying is used, then there is a danger of over or under reacting to true bullying behavior and overreacting to normal misbehavior. Under-reacting can create an environment of permissiveness, and overreacting can create an environment of repression; both of which lead to increased misbehavior and social conflict.

Note: Most bullying literature suggests strongly not labeling a child as a bully or a victim. Instead, refer to the behaviors as bullying or victim behavior.

Montessori Academy's Anti-Bullying Policy: Our belief is that this policy will help to reduce the opportunity and instances of bullying behavior, and helps students develop life-long assertiveness skills:

1. Establish a whole school culture of respect for oneself and others
2. Modeling of respectful, kind and firm behavior by adults

3. Involve students in creation of classroom culture and ground rules so that students have ownership over the social/emotional environment
4. Involve students in resolution of problems
5. Taking time for training – communications skills, resilience/assertiveness skills, expected behavior, problem solving skills, identifying and responding to bullying behavior
6. Bystander training with students
7. Individualized support for victim behavior
8. Individualized support for bully behavior
9. Ensuring that the prohibition on bullying retaliation, and the attendant consequences apply to any student, school employee, contractor, visitor, or volunteer who engages in conduct that constitutes as bullying or retaliation
10. Yearly provision and updating as necessary of this policy to staff, volunteers and Montessori Academy families

#### Montessori Academy's Plan for when Bullying Behavior Occurs

1. Increased supervision by adults
2. Meeting with parents/guardians of both children, outlining classroom plan and support needed from home.
3. Separation of students (direct or indirect)
4. Individualized support plan for child exhibiting victim behavior that includes, but is not limited to:
  - a. accessing immediate adult support
  - b. development of communication and assertiveness skills
  - c. establishment of buddy system
  - d. adult support in conflict resolution
  - e. class meetings
5. Individualized support plan for child exhibiting bullying behavior
  - a. (re)-establishment of clear expectations for behavior and logical consequences
  - b. development of plan between parents/guardians and MA teachers and staff
  - c. development of communication skills in resolving conflict and receiving peer messages
  - d. development of needed social skills for making connections
  - e. support and redirection to positive power and social responsibility
  - f. class meetings
  - g. reflective activities such as requiring the student to write an essay about the students' misbehavior
  - h. Mediation, but only when there is mutual conflict between peers
  - i. Possible referral of perpetrator or other involved persons to counseling or other appropriate services
  - j. School suspension if deemed necessary and if other interventions do not seem to be helpful in changing behavior
  - k. School expulsion if behavior does not improve to a satisfactory level as determined by the Head of School of Montessori Academy.

#### Sources:

1. <http://www.education.com/reference/article/definitions-characteristics-bullying/>
2. [http://www.pbis.org/pbis\\_resource\\_detail\\_page.aspx?PBIS\\_ResourceID=785](http://www.pbis.org/pbis_resource_detail_page.aspx?PBIS_ResourceID=785)
3. <http://www.stopbullying.gov/respond/support-kids-involved/index.html>
4. <http://www.positivediscipline.org/resources/Documents/PDSbrchr-8-06.pdf>

| CONFLICT  | RUDE   | MEAN   | BULLYING  |
|---|--|--|---|
| Occasional  | Occasional   | Once or Twice                                | Is REPEATED   |
| Not planned; in the heat of the moment                | Spontaneous: unintentional                           | Intentional                                  | Is planned and done on purpose                                    |
| All parties are upset                                 | Can cause hurt feelings; upset                       | Can hurt others deeply                       | The target of the bullying is upset                               |
| All parties want to work things out                   | Based in thoughtlessness, poor manners or narcissism | Based in anger; impulsive cruelty            | The bully is trying to gain control over the target               |
| All parties will accept responsibility                | Rude person accepts responsibility                   | Behavior often regretted;                    | The bully blames the target                                       |
| An effort is made by all parties to solve the problem |  |  | The target wants to stop the bully's behavior; the bully does not |
| Can be resolved through mediation                     | Social skill building could be of benefit            | Needs to be addressed/ should NOT be ignored | CANNOT be resolved through mediation                              |

Source: Jennifer Astles, DASA Newsletter, January 2014, TST BOCES

### Harmful Behavior (all levels)

The following action will be taken in the case of harmful behavior, which includes but is not limited to assault, fighting, throwing objects, pushing, screaming, harassment, fleeing the environment, verbal abuse, or severely disruptive behavior that continues over a period of time.

The child will be removed from the classroom and taken to the office.

- An Incident Report will be made for all disruptive or destructive behaviors. Incident reports and written documentation will be given to the parent/guardians, classroom teachers, and Level Directors.
- Parents/guardians may be notified and asked to pick up their child from school or event (at the discretion of the teachers in collaboration with their Level Director).
- A mandatory conference will be held with the parents/guardians.
- Depending on the severity of the behavior, a student support team may be formed (see Student Support Protocols)
- The parents/guardians are responsible for following through with the school's recommendations within a designated timeframe.

If the inappropriate behavior does not improve and/or the student support protocols have been utilized without success, or the parent/guardian has not worked to fulfill the school's recommendations, the parent/guardian may be asked to withdraw the child and to find a place in which the child's needs will be better met. This is a "no fault" policy and there will be release from the enrollment contract without penalty.

### Avenues of Communication

Regular communication helps build strong partnerships between home and school. Communication from your child's teachers and Level Director will vary depending on the level, including but not limited to the following:

- All school and classroom specific digital newsletters
- Classroom or child specific information and/or photos shared on Transparent Classroom (For Toddler – UE)

- Weekly take-home folders (sent home on Fridays for Primary - UE)
- **Two Scheduled Conference Days** – in October and February. There is no school these days.
- Conferences with the teachers as needed by parents/guardians/caregivers or teacher(s).

### When Concerns Arise

Your child is most successful when all of us work in partnership. When questions or concerns arise, please follow these steps:

#### Questions/concerns about your child:

- Your child's classroom teachers are the first and best source of information about your child. Email them first with questions or to set up a time for a phone call or meeting.
- If the issue is not resolved, contact your Level Director for additional support.
- The Level Director will help determine the next steps, including whether or not to involve the Head of School.

#### Please Note:

- Teachers are working with children during the day and have limited time for email, phone calls, and meetings. Please do not expect an immediate response.
- Any situation that requires a timelier response should be taken to the Level Director.
- Arrival, dismissal, and school events are not ideal times to bring up questions and concerns. Set up a time when everyone can give the matter their full attention.
- Avoid the impulse to go "straight to the top" with concerns. The Level Director or Head of School will direct you back to step one, talk to your classroom teachers first.

When emotions are high, give yourself time to respond rather than react. You are not your best self when you're sending an angry email at midnight based on partial information from your child. We all need to be calm and respectful during difficult conversations, remembering that we share the same goal of doing what's best for the children.

#### Questions/concerns about school policies:

- Contact your Level Director or the Head of School.

#### Questions/concerns about financial matters:

- Contact Anna Sitter.

### Office Hours

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Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday when the school is open.  
Phone Number: 615-833-3610

### Classroom Observations

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For the Primary level and up, we strongly encourage parents and guardians to invest time in the **fall** (after your child has been enrolled for 6 weeks) and the **spring** of each school year to observe your child's classroom. To set up an observation:

- Contact your child's teachers to schedule a date/time for the observation.
- Please remember that this is *not* a time for a parent/caregiver-teacher conference.

- After the visit, you may schedule a follow-up conference with the teacher to discuss your observations.
- Check-in at the office before your scheduled observation time. The office staff will give you a form to aid in your observation of the classroom and a "Visitor's Badge" to wear.
- Your child's teachers will have an "Observation Chair". Please do not sit with your child during this time. You need to be free to watch the entire classroom.
- **For Toddler classrooms**, we do not schedule observations for parents/guardians because the younger children have a difficult time when a parent/guardian is in their classroom. If you have specific questions about what a toddler's day might look like, reach out to the teachers or to the Level Director and they will be happy to answer your questions.

## **Time Management/Homework Policy**

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Montessori Academy values balance for our students. Choosing not to assign regular homework encourages students to spend time pursuing their outside interests, bonding with friends and family, practicing practical life skills, and resting. Occasionally, homework may be assigned in support of a research project or special circumstance. The Montessori work cycle provides ample time for students to finish their work during the school day. Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle, and High School students are still learning and practicing the skill of time management. For these students, unfinished work will be sent home for completion as deemed necessary by the teachers.

## **Field Trips (Kindergarten & Older)**

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### Field Trip Guidelines

- Younger siblings are not permitted on field trips.
- NO CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF 12 WILL BE PERMITTED TO RIDE IN A SEAT EQUIPPED WITH AN AIR BAG.
- **All students must bring the appropriate car/booster seat that meets state regulations.**
- Car assignments are arranged by the teachers, are filed in the office, and must be adhered to until students return to school, except in case of an emergency.
- Field trips are cancelled if not enough drivers are available.
- No student may participate if a signed permission slip has not been completed.

Tennessee's passenger child restraint law is covered in Tennessee Code Annotated 55-9-602. Children age four (4) through age eight (8) and measuring less than four feet nine inches (4'9") in height, must be secured in a belt-positioning booster seat system, meeting federal motor vehicle safety standards in the rear seat, if available, or according to the child safety restraint system or vehicle manufacturer's instructions. (Note: If the child is not between age four (4) and age eight (8) but is less than four feet nine inches (4'9") in height, he/she must still use a seat belt system meeting federal motor vehicle safety standards.)

Children age nine (9) through age twelve (12), or any child aged twelve (12), measuring four feet nine inches (4'9") or more in height, must be secured in a seat belt system. It is recommended that any such child be placed in the rear seat, if available. (Note: If the child is not between age nine (9) and age twelve (12) but is four feet nine inches (4'9") or more in height, he/she must still use a seat belt system meeting federal motor vehicle safety standards.)

## Chaperones/Field Trip Driver Responsibilities

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- To follow best practices as advised by the TDOE and as a part of our Safety & Security protocols, we require all volunteer drivers who are driving any child other than their own to be fingerprinted and pass a background check.
  - The cost of the fingerprinting/background check is approximately \$37 and is to be paid by the parent/guardian volunteer driver.
  - To start the process, fill out the forms here: [TBI Fingerprint Forms](#)
- Supervising and safeguarding the students in your care is your primary responsibility.
- Arrive at school at least 15-20 minutes in advance of our scheduled departure time to allow time to get organized and get the children safely into their designated cars.
- Drivers may not show movies or give children any electronic devices in the car.
- Chaperones **may not** leave their group and always must eat with their children.
- Do not use your cell phones during the trip unless it is related to the field trip.
- **Do not stop for food or drinks** because it is unfair to children in other cars.
- Escort your children back to their classroom and stay with them until the teacher arrives.

## Former Student Visits

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Former students are welcome to visit Montessori Academy after school and by appointment. Visits can be scheduled through the Level Director, department chair or with the Head of School. Visitors must check in at the office. Visits are not permitted during the school day except on rare occasions and only with approval from the Head of School.

## Inclement Weather or Unforeseen Circumstances Closings

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We recommend having an inclement weather/unforeseen circumstance day plan prepared ahead of time which includes people who can take care of your child(ren) in the event you need to work as well as a list of people who can pick up your child(ren) early in the event we need to close early. See this article here: [Back Up Childcare Tips](#) for tips on how to plan in case of unexpected closure.

If we need to close due to inclement weather, severe weather threats or due to unforeseen circumstances, we do our best to avoid unnecessary closings by waiting until early morning to make the decision and announcement.

The safety of your family is most important, so please make your own judgment about bringing your student late, picking him/her up early or just staying home on those troublesome days. If the weather worsens as the day progresses and we must close early, we will announce the closing time via email/text.

Please remember that our faculty and staff commute from all over Nashville and surrounding areas. Even if roads seem clear at your house, that doesn't mean roads are safe for everyone else. We must make the call to close based on the safety of all of our families and our staff.

### **Announcements of school closure will be made via the following methods:**

- Text Message to Parents/guardians via *FACTS SIS Parent Alert* Email from Montessori Academy
- Email

**Please do not call the office. If you need to pick up your child, please do so.**



**Please Note:** Annual tuition is one amount that may be paid in equal installments. These installments do not reflect the number of days in school that particular month, thus refunds/deductions will not be given due to unforeseen circumstances that lead to school closure, including, but not limited to inclement weather, facilities issues (e.g., flooding, power outages), or illness (including potential classroom/school closure for widespread illness.)

## Videotaping School Programs/Events

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We encourage you to take pictures and videos of *your own children* as a record of their growth and accomplishments through their years at Montessori Academy. We are extremely careful about publicizing pictures or information about families, which is why we use a formal photo release form. We ask that you bear this in mind when videotaping performances. You may post pictures of *your own children* on the internet (YouTube, Facebook, social media websites, etc.) at your discretion. However, please do not post pictures of children from other families to any of these websites without the parent's permission.

# Classroom Guidelines

## Lunch and Snack

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### Lunch

A Montessori Academy issued lunch box is required for daily use for Toddler and Primary Students. It is given to each new student when the initial registration fee is paid. (Broken lunchboxes should be replaced promptly for continuous ease of use by the child.) New lunchboxes are available in the office for \$30

Lower Elementary and older may use the Montessori Academy lunchbox (at a cost of \$30/each) OR an alternate lunchbox of the families' choosing. Lunchboxes may not have characters and may not be flashy/distracting.

We encourage the use of labeled containers instead of plastic baggies. Containers should be easy for students to open by themselves.

Refrigerators are not available for the storage of lunch items/drinks. Lunches may be kept cool by putting a frozen cool pack in the thermal lunch box. Write your child's allergies on the top of the lunch box with a permanent marker. Please send any necessary utensils.

Each child is allowed a minimum of 30 minutes to eat lunch each day. Children will bring home, in the lunchbox, uneaten items so parents/guardians are able to adjust lunch proportions appropriately.

Please send two cloth napkins or adult washcloths and a sealable water bottle daily. A small bottle of milk (unflavored) may be sent.

We encourage parents/guardians to send lunches that reflect good nutrition by using the food groups in preparing lunches. A nutritious snack or lunch means one which provides nutritional value in addition to calories. We ask for your support as we establish and maintain healthy habits. Keep in mind that lunch should include protein as well as be nutritional in terms of vitamins and minerals.

**You may not send the following items to school for either snack or lunch:** Jell-O, pudding, anything with chocolate chips, cupcakes, frosted cookies, sugar-coated cereals, candy, chewing gum, chips, and similar high-calorie low-nutrition foods.

Only Upper Elementary & Older students may bring food to school that needs to be warmed in the microwave. You are welcome to send items that need to stay warm in a thermos that fits in the lunchbox.

Students may not order food from off-campus.

**HS only** - there may be times when the High School students receive permission to go off campus for lunch. There may also be times when High School students receive permission to order lunch.

### Toddler/Primary Snack

Your classroom will communicate the logistics of morning snacks – students might bring an individual snack from home or there may be a snack rotation provided by parents/guardians. Please send an extra snack in the Montessori Academy snack bag if your child stays for After School Care.

### Elementary-HS Snack

Students bring individual healthy snacks in their lunchboxes each day to be eaten during the morning. The teachers will advise you concerning their room's policy. Please send an extra snack if your child stays for After School Care.

## Dress Code

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Montessori Academy believes in allowing students to feel confident in expressing their individuality in an accepting environment. However, safety is of utmost importance as well as dressing for the "job at hand."

Although we do not require uniforms, we always encourage wearing MA attire to show our love for this community. Please be on the lookout for our "Spirit Store" via our website, which is coming soon!

### **Our hope is that the dress code:**

- Allows children to focus on finding their passions, building their skills, making friends, participating in the community, thinking deeply, generating ideas, and expressing themselves through their work instead of worrying about what they are wearing or who is wearing what.
- Prepares the child (especially in older grades) for in-school academic work and social and community collaborations.
- Provides developmentally appropriate choice. We want children to have choices without feeling overwhelmed or needing to spend too much time making a simple decision.
- Encourages children to work and play comfortably without adjusting their clothing. On a typical day, children will be working at tables and on the floor, cooking, gardening, running, jumping, climbing—the list goes on!
- Gives families flexibility to purchase items at the stores of their choice, so they can stay within their own budgets.

We also believe that children take great pride in dressing themselves. **Please help your child learn to dress him/herself** at home so he/she can do it at school as well. Beginning in Primary, students should dress themselves daily.

Toddler and Primary children should be dressed to work, play, and rest comfortably. They will encounter food, dirt/mud, chalk, paint, markers, etc. on any given day, so please choose clothes that you don't mind getting dirty and/or well-worn!

Students should also dress in clothing that does not bring undue attention to them or distract the classroom.

Clothing worn to school, as well as the change of clothes, are to follow these guidelines:

- **All Clothing (and accessories, including back packs/bags, etc.)** depicting characters from TV, movies, games, etc. may not be worn.
  - Montessori classrooms focus on connecting children to the real world, and character clothing can be a distraction for your child and your child's classmates.
  - Clothing that advertises substances that are illegal for teens (drugs, alcohol, drug products) language or writing that is otherwise inappropriate or offensive (sex, profanity, racial or ethnic slurs, gang related attire, etc.) may not be worn or otherwise displayed. This also applies to any personal belongings (bags, notebooks, etc.).
  - Children who wear these will be asked to change into the change of clothes they have in the classroom or will be asked to be picked up from school if a change of clothes is unavailable.
- **Shirts/Sweatshirts/Sweaters/Outerwear**
  - Shirts must cover the waistline.
  - Oversized clothing such as trench coats and large outerwear must be removed and stowed away upon entering the school building.
- **Pants/Shorts/Skirts:** Shorts and skirts should not be so short as to be confused with undergarments. Skirts/shorts should cover at least 4 inches above the knee for elementary through high school students. They should allow students to sit in chairs and on the floors/ground and still remain fully un-exposed. Shorts or leggings should be worn underneath skirts.
  - Please note: leggings/yoga pants are *not* considered pants for purposes of MA's dress code and are to be worn *only* with dresses and skirts.
  - Yoga/biking shorts are also not allowed unless underneath a skirt or dress.
  - Pajama bottoms are also not considered pants and are only allowed on special occasion days.
  - **Toddler and Primary students** should wear pants that are easy for them to manage on their own in the restroom (e.g., elastic waist pants).
- **Dresses:** Shorts or leggings should be worn underneath and should be at least 4 inches above the knee for Elementary through High School students.
- **Shoes:** All shoes should be comfortable, close-toed and provide safety when the child runs, climbs and plays on the playground.
  - "Light-up shoes," "squeaky shoes," cleats, and shoes with wheels may *not* be worn, as they are a distraction and can pose a safety hazard.
  - *Please do not send **Toddler and Primary** children in any kind of boots because they are very uncomfortable for children as they work on the floor and sit in a group.*
  - For **Lower Elementary through High School**, any footwear should take into consideration the need to be able to move around easily and to sit comfortably on the floor.
  - **Middle and high school students** may wear sandals and leather flip-flops with a hard bottom (for safety reasons). All shoes should have less than a 3" heel for safety purposes.

- For all students in **Kindergarten through High School**, children should wear athletic shoes on days they have PE.
- **Rain & Winter Gear:**
  - **Rain gear** must be brought on rainy days to allow for outdoor play. (Some classes, e.g., Primary and Toddler classrooms, require rain gear to remain at school for the duration of the school year.)
  - Winter clothing that provides warmth during outside time should be worn on cold days.
  - Hats, hoods on hoodies, and scarves may be worn outside in appropriate weather.
- **Jewelry:** In general, we recommend children not wearing jewelry for safety reasons.
  - Toddler and Primary children should not wear jewelry to school. (Children with pierced ears may wear small earrings.)
  - Analog watches may be worn by older children who are learning to tell time.
  - **Smart watches of any kind are not allowed** as they are a distraction to the learning environment.
  - LE – HS students: Jewelry should be minimal and not pose a safety risk for when they are active outside or during PE!
  - Sunglasses and hats may be worn outside only and in appropriate weather.

### **Additional Dress Code Notes**

- Special events, such as performances and field trips, may warrant clothing outside of the dress code. The sponsor for the special event will dictate appropriate dress for the occasion.
- Teachers and administrators reserve the right to request a student to remove any outerwear/accessories or to change clothing if such outerwear/accessories or clothing is deemed to be distracting to others or to the classroom environment.

### **Rest Policy – Primary Students**

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At Montessori Academy, we believe strongly in the importance of sleep and rest for children. Adequate sleep is essential for children’s physical and emotional health, and a lack of sleep has a strong negative impact on both behavior and learning. We encourage all families to make sure that your children are getting the 10-13 hours of sleep recommended for the Primary age group by the American Academy of Pediatrics, and we help by providing a daily rest time for all Primary children.

For Primary children under Kindergarten age, rest time is approximately one and a half hours. Kindergarten children usually attend special classes or work in the classrooms with their teachers in the afternoons but have an occasional rest time of approximately 30 minutes.

During rest time, all children are expected to lie on a mat and rest quietly. Children are not required to sleep (though most do), but we do require that all children be able to rest without disrupting other children. Even if children do not sleep, this rest time gives them a chance to relax and recharge after a busy morning of work and play.

If your child is unable to rest without disrupting the other children, you may have to shift to the half day schedule.

## Independence in the Restroom – Primary Students

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Primary students are expected to have independent toileting skills: following their body's signals to go to the restroom on their own (not just when directed by caregivers), managing their clothing, and wiping independently. Of course, this is a process for the younger children, but they should be attempting the full process independently before beginning Primary.

We understand that children may have accidents as they transition into Primary, and Primary teachers will work with those children to help them be successful. If frequent accidents continue after those early weeks, we will need to ask for your assistance. Primary teachers have up to 24 children in their care with a broad curriculum of materials to present, and they cannot give up that instructional time with other children to work continually on toilet training. We are required to maintain teacher: student ratios set forth by the Tennessee Department of Education, and handling repeated accidents puts us out of ratio as one teacher helps with accidents and the other has 23 children in her care.

If frequent accidents continue after the early transitional weeks of the school year, your child's teachers and/or the Level Director will contact you to implement a plan, which may involve keeping your child home for a few days to focus on independent toileting practices without the distractions of the classroom. If frequent accidents continue after that time, we may decide that a different environment will better meet your child's needs. This is a 'no fault' policy and the enrollment contract will be released without penalty.

## Enrichment Classes

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### Physical Education (Kindergarten & Older)

Gym Shoes (All K – HS Level): Students must have appropriate shoes to wear on PE days.

All K – HS Level Students are invited to participate in PE classes unless written permission for non-participation has been received. The doctor or parent should send a note and state the reason and length of time that the student will be unable to participate.

PE offerings for HS are determined based individual student credit needs at the high school level.

**Medical Conditions** – If a student has a medical problem such as an allergy or asthma, please send a detailed explanation to the office with multiple copies (with your signature) for your child's classroom enrichment teachers with symptoms and warning signs and appropriate measures to be taken should in the event of an emergency. Please make sure to add your emergency phone numbers to the note and please keep the numbers current.

### World Languages

Primary students are exposed to different foreign languages in class through their cultural studies. Kindergarten and Lower Elementary students attend a world language course one time per week. Upper Elementary and Middle School students attend Spanish twice per week. High School world language class is determined on credit needs of students. For the 2023-2024 School year Spanish I for credit will be offered at the High School level.

## Art

All students K and older attend art classes each week. Two art shows each year showcase the fabulous work of all students. This thorough curriculum is presented in a three-year cycle and explores visual art from every historic period and art forms from around the world.

## Music

Students at Montessori Academy experience music at every level. Our Toddler and Primary students have music time each day in their classrooms taught by their teachers. The Kindergarteners have a special music class once per week. The Lower Elementary students have general music with singing and have the option to study violin using the Suzuki method, with a certified Suzuki teacher. In Upper Elementary, Middle and High School students have general music and a choice of further studies in choral music, strings, or band.

For more information regarding the LE Suzuki Violin program, please click on the link below.

### [Lower Elementary Suzuki Violin Program](#)

## Outdoor Education

The Outdoor Education Program offers students exposure to 23 acres of natural landscapes at MA. These include a cedar glade, forest, wildflower fields, limestone formations, vegetable and flower gardens, a bluebird trail, and more. They will participate in extended sensory experiences, wildlife observations, nature walks, journaling, gardening, unstructured play, and will have opportunities to beautify the outdoor environment. Students will learn to connect with nature, care for the earth, and build relationships with each other and their environment.

Primary students will go on small group nature walks once a week in the morning, Kindergarten students have Outdoor Ed. once a week in the afternoons, and Elementary students have O. Ed. once a month through lunch time. A schedule will be sent out at the beginning of each semester.

Please send your child with weather appropriate clothing and shoes, sunscreen, bug spray, (and lunch for Elementary students), on their O. Ed. day. We will be outdoors in all kinds of weather unless it is hazardous.

## Incident Reports

The classroom dynamic in an enrichment class is structured differently than a typical Montessori classroom environment. Because of this and to have a standard discipline procedure for these classes, the following occurs if there is disruptive behavior in the classroom:

An incident report is filled out. A copy is provided to the classroom teachers and Level Director. The form will go home with the student and will need to be signed by the parent/guardian before the child can return to the enrichment class.

## **Extra-Curricular Activities & After School Clubs**

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A variety of Extra-Curricular Activities are offered for additional fees. A listing is included on the Montessori Academy website. Unless otherwise indicated by reduction of fees for certain months, club teachers generally make up the lessons at their convenience, rather than reduce the monthly fee.

## To sign up for Extra-Curricular Activities & After School Clubs

1. Complete the enrollment form(s) via online registration – these can be found at [www.montessoriacad.org](http://www.montessoriacad.org) : Academics > Extra Curricular Activities
2. Submit payment to the Administrative Office. Checks should be payable to the teacher. Payment options vary by instructor.
3. Additional extracurricular activities may be added throughout the year.
4. To drop an activity, a written/electronic notice must be given to the instructor.

## Birthday Celebrations

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Montessori schools throughout the nation observe a child's birthday with a "Celebration of Life" ceremony. Your classroom teachers will communicate the specifics for how birthdays are celebrated in each classroom.

**Party Invitations** may be brought to school to be placed in the child's Friday folder ONLY IF all children in the class are invited. We are not allowed to distribute email addresses, but Toddler – UE parents/guardians can access their class directories with parent provided contact information in Transparent Classroom.

## Electronic Device & Cell Phone Recommendations

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Considering the ample research about child and adolescent brain development, MA recommends the following guidelines related to children using personal and other devices:

1. The earliest a child should have access to a smart phone or other personal device is in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and preferably not until at least 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
2. If you feel your child needs a phone, we recommend a phone such as the GABB phone which allows for communication without untethered access to internet-based apps (e.g., social media apps). For more information re: GABB phones, visit the link here: [GABB Phone](#)
3. We recommend thoroughly discussing any expectations and considering having a signed agreement before allowing a child to have his/her own smart phone or other personal device.
4. Although homework is rare, a student should not have their device with them while completing any assignments or projects at home.
5. Sustained concentration and attention are essential for students to complete quality work. While students (and adults) believe they (and we) can multitask, research shows otherwise. Having a phone/i-pad, etc. present reduces the quality of the work and increases the time required to finish it.
6. As a community devoted to a developmentally appropriate environment, we *strongly* discourage social media use by students and if parents/guardians allow for the use of social media, parents/guardians should consistently monitor their child's digital life. Continued discussions with your child about social media and other digital presence are important, especially regarding their "digital footprint" and what others will find their name attached to now and in the future, Numerous studies are showing how detrimental social apps are to a developing brain. Social media and/or unregulated internet use can be extremely harmful to a developing brain and to the mental health of children and adolescents.
7. No digital devices should be kept in a child's room at night. We recommend having a digital storage area in another part of the home to prevent children from staying up late at night on their devices and not getting the rest needed to have continued success during the school day.

8. We recommend no screen time should take place 30 minutes prior to bedtime to help prevent disruption of sleep.
9. Parents/guardians should have continued conversations about how much time they are spending on their devices each day. While moderate use can help students stay connected to their peers and other family members, excessive device use is correlated with increased feelings of loneliness, anxiety, depression and isolation, especially for teenagers.
10. When inappropriate content is sent among students outside of the school day, parents/guardians should communicate directly with one another to address the issues in a collaborative way. If the content or messages are causing disruption at school, we are happy to meet with parents/guardians after parents/guardians have communicated with each other.

## **Cell Phone & Smart Watch Policy**

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At Montessori Academy, we focus on the whole child, and we take into consideration the child's mental, physical, and emotional health, as well as their stage of development. We also believe the constant distraction of cell phones and other devices and their alerts inhibits the ability to focus, which is crucial for academic success. Children are discouraged from bringing electronic devices (smart phone/watches) on campus. If a student has a phone or smart watch, they must keep their cell phones (or smart watches) powered-off and stored either in their lockers, backpacks or in another location determined by the classroom teachers from the time school begins (7:30 am) until dismissal (3:00 pm).

We also ask adults, while on campus, to limit their use of devices (including phones) to urgent matters.

Studies have also shown that students do not benefit from the use of personal cell phones, and there is no reason a student needs to use a personal cell phone during school hours.

If a student needs to contact a parent/guardian s/he may do so by using a school phone. Additionally, if a parent/guardian needs to get a message to a student, you may do so by calling the front office and we will ensure your child receives the message.

### **If student chooses to violate MAs cell phone/smart watch policy, the following will occur:**

- **First violation:** The student is reminded and redirected to power off the cell phone/smart watch and store it appropriately.
- **Second violation:** The cell phone/smart watch will be kept at the front desk in the admin building and the student can retrieve it at the end of the day.
- **Third violation:** The cell phone/smart watch will be kept at the front desk in the admin building and a parent/guardian will have to retrieve it from administration.
- **Fourth violation:** A parent conference is scheduled and possible loss of the ability to have a cell phone/smart watch while on campus.

Should a student repeatedly disregard our cell phone policy, it could result in the decision to un-enroll the student at the discretion of the Level Director or Head of School.

## **Acceptable Use of Technology Agreement for Students**

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On occasion, and for older students, Montessori Academy provides access to other forms of technology to enhance their education. The purpose of this policy is to assure students recognize the limitations the school imposes on their use of these resources.



**Students may:**

- Use computers to practice basic keyboarding skills
- Use the internet to research class projects and complete assignments
- Use the computer to share knowledge by creating student presentations
- Learn to create a student blog or website

Montessori Academy may also offer students access to Google Classroom/Google Apps. at the Middle and High School level. Google Classroom/Google Apps makes it easy for students to collaborate and turn in assignments to teachers online. It also allows students to work on documents from home, the public library, or any other computer with an Internet connection.

- To qualify for use of Montessori Academy's network, equipment and Google Classroom/Apps, each student and family must be willing to abide by the rules of acceptable use.

**The student:**

- understands that school-owned technology devices are shared community equipment.
- will be respectful and responsible for the use of any and all equipment.
- agrees with the following: All computers/devices having Internet access must be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical and legal manner.

**Additionally, when using Montessori Academy's technological devices, network or Google Apps, the student understands and agrees to:**

- Limit the use of school computers, personal computers, the Internet and Google app to schoolwork and appropriate learning activities.
- Not download, stream, or otherwise view media on the Internet unless it is assigned by a teacher.
- Unless otherwise instructed, use computers inside and at a table.
- Leave all school computer settings as found. Do not load software or make adjustments to computers.
- School laptop computers should be returned to the appropriate spot and plugged in after use.
- Food or drink may not be consumed at the same table as a technological device.
- Use good manners and appropriate language.
- Keep personal passwords private.
- Not share personal information about oneself or anyone else on the Internet. This includes name, address, phone numbers, personal photos, etc.
- Never post pictures on the Internet without permission of my parent(s) and teachers.
- Show respect for all hardware and software that the student uses.
- Be financially responsible for replacing/repairing any device a student has broken with a deliberate act or through negligible use.

**The student also understands and agrees that s/he may not:**

- Use computers, I-Pads, tablets, smart phones, school computers, personal computers or other technological devices to access personal e-mail, play games, or to do other personal projects.
- Search, view, edit, or retrieve materials that are not related to educational purposes.
- Access, view, or alter any school records, documents, and files.

- Change settings on computers, I-Pads, tablets, and other technological devices; load software; or make other adjustments.
- Upload, download, or create computer viruses.
- Send or display offensive messages or pictures.
- Use obscene language.
- Harass, insult, or attack others.
- Damage computers, computer systems, or computer networks, and any other technological devices.
- Attempt to harm or destroy another user's documents, data, and files.
- Violate copyright laws.
- Use the passwords of other users or create new passwords on shared technological devices.
- Use the network for solicitation and commercial purposes.
- Share student or staff home addresses, phone numbers, or other private information.
- Engage in any activity that violates a school policy or local, state or federal law.
- No personal message which contains language or content that the author would not be willing to share with the MA community publicly should be sent or received through the MA network or on school grounds.

**If student chooses to violate MAs Technology Acceptable Use policy, the following will occur:**

- **First violation:** The student is reminded and redirected to appropriately use technology.
- **Second violation:** Loss of computer or technological privileges for the day
- **Third violation:** Loss of computer or technology privileges for a week
- **Fourth violation:** Loss of computer or technology privileges for two weeks and a parent conference is scheduled and possible loss of technology use for the long term.

Due to the nature of Upper Elementary, Middle and High school utilizing computers and technology for learning, failure to comply with the above may result in disciplinary measures by the school, including but not limited to suspension, dismissal and/or the involvement of law enforcement. As an enrolled student at MA, MA reserves the right to inspect and confiscate any device or application.

Internet access is designed for educational purposes and Montessori Academy will continue to take available precautions to eliminate controversial material. However, it is impossible for Montessori Academy to restrict access to all controversial materials and Montessori Academy may not be held responsible for the student's improper use of the network or Internet.

Parents have full responsibility for supervision if and when their child's use is not in a school setting.

## High School Specific Information

### Student Drivers

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Montessori Academy High School students may drive to school and park their cars on campus and park in designated areas if they have a valid Tennessee driver's license. Due care must always be taken on campus while observing a **15 MPH speed limit**. Drivers must always be alert to the presence of younger children. Students may not leave campus without permission and must sign-out if attending courses or work-study off campus. This is a privilege that is dependent upon responsible practice and not a guarantee.

To park on campus, students must register their car at the front office, which includes a picture of their license and a parking form and must display an MA window sticker on the back window of the car. The form is to provide a record of vehicles on campus for safety purposes.

Montessori Academy reserves the right to revoke driving and parking privileges if safety rules are violated.

## Leaving Campus

### High School Students may leave campus only with permission and for the following reasons:

- On (community college) campus dual-enrollment course. If participating online, the student needs to remain on campus.
- For an approved internship.
- With permission for lunch (offered occasionally), but the student must return on time or lose the privilege.
- Doctor appointment (with note) or other appointment.
- A student does not have permission to leave because "they are done with their work." In the Montessori environment, we believe there is always more to learn and grow from and long-term projects, community service and other activities are always available if a student has finished his/her work for the day.
- No student can leave without written permission from parent/guardian.
- If a student leaves campus during school hours, s/he must sign out at the front desk before leaving.

## Graduation Requirements

| SUBJECT                           | GRADE    | CREDIT | CLASS/DESCRIPTION   |
|-----------------------------------|----------|--------|---|
| English                           | 9        | 1.0    | English 1   |
|                                   | 10       | 1.0    | English 2   |
|                                   | 11       | 1.0    | English 3 or English 1010 and 1020 Dual Enrollment options                            |
|                                   | 12       | 1.0    | English 4 included in Capstone Project; English 1020 and 1020 Dual Enrollment options |
| Math                              | 9        | 1.0    | Integrated Math 1   |
|                                   | 10       | 1.0    | Integrated Math 2   |
|                                   | 11       | 1.0    | Integrated Math 3   |
|                                   | 12       | 1.0    | Integrated Math 4 or Dual Enrollment  |
| Social Studies                    | 9        | 1.0    | U.S. History  |
|                                   | 10       | 1.0    | World History and Geography   |
|                                   | 11       | 1.0    | Government (.5) & Economics (.5)  |
| Science<br>(with lab instruction) | 9        | 1.0    | Biology 1   |
|                                   | 10       | 1.0    | Chemistry 1   |
|                                   | 11       | 1.0    | Anatomy and Physiology or Physics   |
| World Language                    | 9        | 1.0    | Spanish 1 (State requires two credits in same language)                               |
|                                   | 10       | 1.0    | Spanish 2   |
| Fine Art                          | varies   | 1.0    | Art, Band, Strings, Chorus, others  |
| Wellness                          | varies   | 1.0    | Lifetime Wellness alone or included in Anatomy and Physiology                         |
| PE                                | varies   | .5     | PE or 72 documented hours of outside sport or physical activity                       |
| Personal Finance                  | 11 or 12 | .5     |   |

|           |      |     |   |
|-----------|------|-----|---|
| Electives | 9-12 | 3.0 | Art, Band, Strings, Chorus, Language, Computer, Business, Psychology, Philosophy, Sociology, additional PE, Medical Therapeutics, Medical Health Science, Independent Study, others |
| Capstone  | 12   | 1.0 | Senior Capstone project   |

- Course of study is flexible and adaptable to student's interests, within the state required credits.
- Independent studies, various other guided classes, and internships are examples of other pathways of study.
- Teachers will collaborate with each student to individualize their high school curriculum.
- 40 hours of community service expected each year. To be completed on and/or off campus.
- ACT is required (no minimum score), typically taken in spring of junior year.
- Microeconomy participation *strongly* encouraged.
- Clinical Medical Assistant certification (CCMA) offered online.

## A.1 Acknowledgement of Policy Book – ALL Students

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### 2023-2024 Acknowledgment of Montessori Academy's Policies & Procedures & Child Abuse Information

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**Toddler & Primary Parents/Guardians (specific to Department of Education):** Daily Attendance - I acknowledge that upon arrival each day, my child is signed into the program by Montessori Academy staff personnel. Depending on the chosen dismissal schedule, my child will be signed out of the program by MA Personnel or by an authorized pick-up person.

**Primary Parents/Guardians:** The Tennessee Department of Education requires us to include a Personal Safety Curriculum for Primary students. We have *Second Step Child Protection Unit*, and this curriculum is available for review at your request by contacting the Primary Director.

I understand that Montessori Academy is required to present information concerning child abuse to parents/guardians each school year. Our teachers and staff are required by the Department of Education to report any suspected child abuse directly to the Department of Children's Services. A complete copy of the DOE rules (including those concerning child abuse) is available in the Administrative Office.

Please visit: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/whatiscan.pdf> for the Child Welfare Information Gateway Publication on Child Abuse.

Additional Resources:

- [Mandated Child Abuse Reporting Training](#)
- [CDC Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention](#)

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**All Parent Response:** *I have read and do understand all the policies and procedures contained in the Community Guide and I will abide by them.*

I also have received access to the aforementioned documents regarding Mandated Child Abuse Reporting Training and the CDC Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention (links above) as well as a Summary of Child Care Approval requirements listed here:  
[\(MA website\)](#)

Parent or Guardian Signature:

Date:

1. Student's Name:

Room Number:

2. Student's Name:

Room Number:

3. Student's Name:

Room Number:

4. Student's Name:

Room Number:

Each school year our Kindergarten – High School students go on several off-site field trips. These activities are chaperoned by classroom teachers, and parent volunteers are requested to assist with driving students and chaperoning. Please complete the information below, giving your child (ren) permission to participate in the field trips for the 2023-2024 school year.

*Please Note:* The details of specific Field Trips (date/location/description of activities, etc.) will be communicated in advance of each event. Questions may be directed to the classroom teachers.

## **Please return this completed form by Monday, August 31, 2023.**

1. My child, \_\_\_\_\_,  
has my permission to participate in the planned field trips for the 2023-2024  
school year. I also give Montessori Academy permission to obtain medical treatment  
for my child in the event of an emergency.
2. My child, \_\_\_\_\_,  
has my permission to participate in the planned field trips for the 2023-2024  
school year. I also give Montessori Academy permission to obtain medical treatment  
for my child in the event of an emergency.
3. My child, \_\_\_\_\_,  
has my permission to participate in the planned field trips for the 2023-2024  
school year. I also give Montessori Academy permission to obtain medical treatment  
for my child in the event of an emergency.

**Name of Parent/Guardian:**

**Signature of Parent/Guardian:**

**Date:**