

# THE MARIA MONTESSORI SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

**2023-2024**

**Our Mission:**  
**To provide an environment that frees the child  
to develop their full academic, emotional and spiritual potential.**



The Maria Montessori School  
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Parent Information System: [schoolcues.com](http://schoolcues.com) or download the School Cues app

It is necessary, then, to give the child the possibility of developing according to the laws of his nature, so that he can become strong, and having become strong, can do even more than we dared hope for him.  
- Maria Montessori

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## **HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL**

The Maria Montessori School located at Harbor Town, Memphis, Tennessee, is a non-profit, non-denominational, non-discriminatory school which provides a unique scholastic curriculum for children 14 years old and under. The Maria Montessori School's lead teachers are all AMI trained. The AMI was founded in 1929 by Dr. Maria Montessori. The AMI is the recognized international authority on Montessori education. The registered term "AMI Montessori" signifies the highest standards anywhere applied to Montessori and is evidence of a continuing commitment on the part of our school to study, explore and share this method of education as originally established by Dr. Montessori.

Founded in 1986 by Maria Cole with six children, The Maria Montessori School met in one classroom at St. Michael's School on Summer Avenue for four years and gradually increased its enrollment. In the summer of 1991, a wall was removed doubling classroom size for an enrollment that had increased to thirty-five. The summer of 1992 brought more expansion as the Elementary was established in a classroom across the hall and enrollment rose to sixty.

In the fall of 1992, the Harbor Town site was opened adding an additional Primary environment and housing the Elementary program. The Development Fund (established in 1994) allowed the school to complete construction of the second floor of the Harbor Town site to accommodate the needs of an expanding Elementary. Annually, it provides for the continued training of our staff and overall improvement of the school. In the summer of 1995, the St. Michael campus was combined with the Harbor Town location. The fall of 1996 witnessed the completion of our Middle School, which is one of the few in existence in the Mid-South, created to serve the needs of our adolescent students. The spring of 2003 marked the completion of our most recent project, our seven-year dream of the "River Garden and Theater," located on the east bank of the school. The Toddler community, accommodating children 18 months to 2½ years, was established in the fall of 2004.

## **DIRECTRESSES, GUIDES, AND SPECIALISTS**

**Maria Cole** School Founder / Headmistress

### **Toddler environment**

**Rae Hughes** Toddler Caregiver  
Childcare Training, State of Florida  
Nido Montessori Toddler Training, PMI

**Lee Montgomery** Toddler Caregiver  
B.S. Communicative Disorders, Southwest Missouri State University

**Eliana Mabe** Toddler Caregiver  
B.A. Media Studies, Rhodes College  
Sunfish Theatre Curriculum Teacher

### **Primary environment**

**Maria Cole** School Founder / Headmistress  
Primary Directress  
Montessori Institute of Atlanta, AMI (3-6+)  
Educateurs sans Frontières, 1999  
Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (6-9)

**Marilyn Jenkins** Primary Guide  
Montessori Center of Minnesota, AMI (3-6)  
Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (3-6)  
B.A. History, Villanova University

**Anna Kranz** Primary Assistant  
AMI Assistants training, Charlotte, NC  
B.A. Human Development, Christian Brothers University

### **Elementary environment**

**Emily Farris** Elementary Guide Level 2  
The Montessori Center of Minnesota, AMI (6-12)  
Masters of Elementary Education, St. Catherine University  
B.A. Fine Arts, University of Memphis

**Sara Barton** Elementary Assistant  
Early Childhood Lead Teacher Memphis, Jewish Community Center  
Medical Office Training, Concord Career College

## Middle school environment

- Nellie Congdon** Middle School Guide  
B.F.A, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY  
AmeriCorps, Teach for America, 2019
- Jessica Samuel** Middle School Language Arts Guide, Elementary Assistant  
Arizona Dept. of Ed. Certification in Secondary Education (6-9) with  
Endorsements in English, Media specialist K-12, SEI K-12  
Graduate Work in Education Northern Arizona University Flagstaff  
M.A. English, Murfreesboro, TN  
B.A. English, University of Kentucky, Lexington

## Outdoor Environment

- Mimi Trouy** Outdoor Guide  
B.S. Elementary Education, University of Memphis  
Nutrition, Health and Fitness Trainer

## **COMMUNICATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

You can expect communications about important information from MMS either directly from you School Cues account or from your child's guide. Please visit your School Cues portal or download the school cues app to stay up to date on pertinent school wide information.

For direct contact with staff please use the following emails:

- **School:** [mms1986@bellsouth.net](mailto:mms1986@bellsouth.net) or 901-527-3444
- **Toddler:** [msrae@mariamontessorischool.org](mailto:msrae@mariamontessorischool.org)
- **Primary:** [msmarilyn@mariamontessorischool.org](mailto:msmarilyn@mariamontessorischool.org)
- **Elementary (Emily):** [msemily@mariamontessorischool.org](mailto:msemily@mariamontessorischool.org)
- **Middle School (Nellie):** [msnellie@mariamontessorischool.org](mailto:msnellie@mariamontessorischool.org)
- **Middle School Library (Jessica):** [msjessica@mariamontessorischool.org](mailto:msjessica@mariamontessorischool.org)
- **Website:** [www.mariamontessorischool.org](http://www.mariamontessorischool.org)
- **Parent Information System:** [schoolcues.com](http://schoolcues.com) or download the School Cues app

## GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### HEALTH AND SAFETY AT MMS

We have a strong obligation to maintain a safe and healthful environment for all children, staff and visitors. We rely on parents to be our partners in this effort. We cannot care for children who are ill and require those who are contagious to stay home. **Parents must have a contingency plan for care in the event illness prevents a child from attending school or having to leave school early.** Please familiarize yourself with the following guidelines and direct any questions to your child's teacher.

If your child becomes ill during the day, we will notify you immediately. If, in our opinion, your child is unable to participate, you will be asked to pick up your child as soon as you are able. If your child is absent or has been sent home due to illness, we may require a doctor's note in order for the child to return. Please return the doctor's note to your child's teacher.

The following are reasons why we would ask your child not to attend school:

- If your child has a fever (100.4°F) or shows other signs of illness. Your child must be fever free without the aid of medication for at least **24 hours** prior to attending or returning to school.
- If your child has serious diarrhea brought on by any reason (medication, teething, etc.) They can return after **24 hours** without incident.
- If your child vomits. They can return after **24 hours** without incident.
- If your child has cold symptoms (including yellow/green nasal discharge), a persistent cough, or symptoms of another illness causing discomfort preventing participation in school.
- If your child is taking medication causing drowsiness, irritability, etc. which prevents participation in school.
- If your child has an undiagnosed skin rash, your child may not attend until you have received a diagnosis and a doctor's note indicating that the condition is not contagious.
- If your child has a contagious condition. A doctor's note is required stating that the child has undergone full treatment and is no longer contagious.
- If your child has RSV, they may return after symptoms resolve and they must be fever-free without medication for at least **24 hours** before returning to school.
- If your child has conjunctivitis (pink-eye), the child must be on medication for at least **24 hours** before returning to school. Children may not return to school if there is active discharge from the eye.
- If your child has strep throat, they must be on antibiotics for at least **24 hours** before returning to school.

Please continue to remind your child(ren), as we do, to practice good hygiene habits including washing hands before eating, after using the restroom and after blowing your nose.

### **Do not bring sick children to school.**

**“People who have symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal infections, such as cough, fever, sore throat, vomiting, or diarrhea, should stay home.** Testing is recommended for people with symptoms of COVID-19 as soon as possible after symptoms begin. If a person with COVID-19 symptoms tests negative for COVID-19, they should consider getting tested for other respiratory illnesses that could be spread to others, such as flu. If tested using an antigen test, negative tests should be repeated following FDA recommendations”

- From *Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools and Early Care and Education Programs to Support Safe In-Person Learning* Updated May 11, 2023

Notify the office immediately in the event of a serious contagious illness or disease.

## **MEDICATION AND EMERGENCIES**

If your child is on medication, a dosage schedule must be arranged such that the child is NOT REQUIRED TO TAKE IT AT SCHOOL. If such a schedule cannot be arranged, a parent or caregiver must come to the school to give the medication.

In the event of an accident, or onset of illness, the school will call to notify you, make your child as comfortable as possible and can administer basic first aid, if necessary. We CANNOT give your child any medication, whether it comes to school with them or not. If your child needs medicine (i.e., cough drops, pain reliever, fever reducer, allergy pills, etc.) a parent or caregiver must administer it. It is the responsibility of the parent and is IMPERATIVE that the emergency contact information be kept up-to-date.

## **COVID POLICIES**

### **MASKING**

Masks will be optional for students and staff on campus. All students are expected to keep two well-fitting/high quality masks at school ready for use when needed. There may be times or instances when masks are required such as: going-outs, visits to the library, when an exposure has occurred in the room, etc.

Any student who has any symptoms even if testing negative should mask indoors on campus until symptoms resolve or it can be verified as non-contagious. Your child's teacher may ask them to mask if they start developing symptoms at school.

The school will monitor community risk levels and new variants in order to determine if a period of universal masking is required to prevent disruption in the school.

### **TYPES OF MASKS**

Masks should be well-fitting and stay on the nose even when speaking. You may have to test individual fit at home. KN95 or better are preferred. One layer cloth masks, gators, and bandanas are unacceptable.

### **TESTING**

If your child has symptoms, the school may require rapid testing before entering the classroom for a period of days. All students must have consent to test forms completed in school cues. You will be contacted before any unscheduled test is given at school and notified with results.

### **SYMPTOMS OR ILLNESS**

#### **Symptoms that Develop at School - Students**

If COVID symptoms begin while at school, the child will be asked to mask and given a rapid test to determine if they must be sent home. If negative and fever free, but feeling unwell; the parent and teacher may decide about the child staying.

If positive or with a fever, they will move out of the classroom, avoid close distance with others, and mask. Staff will ensure the safety and supervision of the child until they leave. They must be picked up in a timely manner.

A child who leaves school while ill with COVID-like symptoms can return to school if they are fever-free for 24 hours without medicine AND will be administered antigen tests for 3 days upon return.

## **Symptoms that Develop at School - Staff**

Staff exhibiting new or worsening symptoms of possible COVID at school should wear a mask, leave the classroom, and obtain a COVID-19 test. They can return to school if they are fever-free for 24 hours without medicine AND will be administered antigen tests for 3 days upon return.

## **EXPOSURE IN THE HOUSEHOLD**

Because the risk of transmission in the home is one of the higher risk settings, students of family members who are positive may be required to quarantine. Upon notification of a case in the household, your child can be eligible to avoid quarantine if: they are symptom free, can mask throughout the day, and test to enter daily for a period of 10 days. If one member is positive in the home and then your child also develops symptoms, they are assumed to be an additional positive case.

**Parents and family members who have tested positive for COVID should NOT enter school buildings or attend school events for a period of 10 days or until they test negative.**

Parents who have tested positive and must pick up or drop off their child must remain in the vehicle and mask for a period of 10 days or until they test negative.

## **POSITIVE COVID CASE & ISOLATION**

If your child or a staff member tests positive for COVID, they will be required to isolate from school for *at least five days* from the date of the first positive test until they test negative on the antigen test. Antigen tests are the closest proxy to determining contagiousness. Since symptoms can begin several days before a test becomes positive, we will use the test date to begin the count of isolation. Your child's absences due to isolation will be marked excused.

After five days, IF symptoms are resolving and they are fever-free without medication; your child can return to school on Day 6 if they can mask and with confirmation of a negative rapid test. School may confirm with a test before entering the classroom. Faint lines on antigen tests are considered positive. After two consecutive negative tests 24 hours apart, your child will not be required to mask at school.

## **COVID-19 COMMUNICATION**

Maria Montessori School will communicate with families if a staff member or student has tested positive or has confirmation of another contagious disease. Families can use this information to decide if preventative masking for a period of time is right for their child and watch for symptoms. Families will also notify the school when there is a positive in their household.

If COVID-19 is confirmed in a child or staff member in a classroom community, the following actions will be taken by school administration:

- Notify staff and parents/caregivers that a member of the classroom community has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- Notify the school community that a child or staff member in the school (not their community) has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- Complete disinfecting procedures.

## **VENTILATION & INDOOR AIR**

Environments will continue to open/crack doors and windows to create air exchange in the rooms when weather permits. Fans and air purifiers will be used to direct fresh air indoors and to exhaust classroom air.



## **ABSENCES AND TARDINESS**

For all students, please remember that it is important for children to be prompt; otherwise, they do not benefit from a complete 3-hour morning cycle of work. All students are considered tardy after 8:35 a.m. and if picked up before 3:00.

If your child arrives late, they must have a note with a reasonable explanation to be considered excused. If your child does not have a note, they will be considered unexcused.

Habitual tardiness will be reviewed by each guide. Three unexcused late arrivals will be considered as one absence.

Please remember to call the school office before 8:45 a.m. if your child is unable to attend school.

### Compulsory Attendance Laws State of Tennessee

49-6-3001. (c) (1) Every parent, guardian or other legal custodian residing within this state having control or charge of any child or children between six (6) years of age and seventeen (17) years of age, both inclusive, shall cause such child or children to attend public or non-public school, and in event of failure to do so, shall be subject to the penalties hereinafter provided. The LEA in which a transfer student seeks to enroll may require disclosure and copies of the student's records in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232g et seq.), including, but not limited to, disciplinary records from educational agencies where the student was previously enrolled.

49-6-3009. Penalty for violations. (a) Any parent, guardian, or other person who has control of a child, or children, and who shall violate provisions of this part is guilty of a Class C misdemeanor. (b) Each day's unlawful absence constitutes a separate offense.

40-35-11. Authorized terms of imprisonment and fines for felonies and misdemeanors. (e) The authorized terms of imprisonment and fines for misdemeanors are: (3) Class C misdemeanor, not greater than thirty (30) days or a fine not to exceed fifty dollars (\$50.00), or both, unless otherwise provided by statute.

For all children 5 and up, the attendance policy is as follows:

Parents should contact the school (phone or email) of absences and no later than the day they return with a reasonable excuse for the absentee, to be considered as having an excused absence.

Our unexcused absentee policy is as follows:

#### **After 4 unexcused absences...**

Parents will be called for a conference.

#### **After 10 unexcused absences...**

In home suspension until further notice

Notification will be sent to Juvenile Court if no appropriate response from the parent or guardian is received within three days.

The MMS staff will meet to consider the continuation of your child's enrollment.

#### **After 15 unexcused absences...**

Second In home suspension until further notice

Notification will be sent to Juvenile Court.

Elementary and Middle School students may be required to attend an alternative program.

**FREQUENT TARDINESS/ABSENTEES AFFECT YOUR CHILD’S EDUCATION AND PROMOTION. Absences due to illness, isolation, or quarantine will be marked EXCUSED.**

## **ENVIRONMENT AND CURRICULUM**

### **Toddler community**

Beginning at 18 months, children join the toddler community where basic motor coordination, independence and language development are fostered and individual personality is respected. Rather than a classroom, it is a nurturing social community where very young children experience their first contact with other young children and learn to participate in a cooperative group.

### **Primary**

The Montessori Primary is a specially prepared environment, geared to the size, pace and interest of children three to six years of age. The children are a community of workers who act on their own initiatives, meeting needs through individual, spontaneous activities.

The work focuses on these areas:

- **practical life** - care of self and the environment;
- **sensorial** - development of the discriminatory powers of all the senses
- **language arts** - phonetic program of individual sounds in language, creative “writing” with the moveable alphabet
- **geometry and mathematics** - concrete materials for basic concepts and computations
- **geography and science** - manipulative materials for organizing the biological and physical world
- **fine arts** - activities for coordination of movement, music and song

**The Primary day begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 11:30 a.m. for children who are under the age of five.**

### **Primary extended day**

Children are invited by the directress to join in the Extended Day when they have the academic readiness and maturity for the longer school setting. Children in Extended Day are engaged in more advanced work and may be engaged for several days on one project.

**The Extended Day begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 3:15 p.m.**

### **Primary all day (a.k.a. Nappers)**

Children ages 3 & 4 who are not enrolled in the Primary Extended Day can stay until the 3:15 dismissal. During this time, they will have lunch with their classmates, take a short rest and return to the classroom for dismissal at 3:15. (**Enrollment is limited.** For additional information, please contact Maria Cole.)

**The Nappers’ Day begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 3:15 p.m.**

## Elementary

The Elementary program is for children age six through age twelve. Each child moves at his own pace as he explores his place in the world through language and communication, geography, science, history, mathematics and geometry, the natural environment, and conflict resolution. The Elementary adult guide seeks to enable the child to be a learner who becomes independent of the adult and embarks on a lifelong quest for knowledge and understanding of our world. Elementary aged children typically can be characterized by their curious minds, their ability to abstract and imagine, their moral and social orientation and their energy for research and exploration. Elementary children work in small, mixed-age groups on a variety of projects which spark the imagination, engage the intellect, and develop their reasoning abilities.

Some characteristics of the Montessori Elementary program are:

- All learning is built on the foundations established in the Primary level.
- Elementary classrooms have two uninterrupted work cycles a day.
- Learning opportunities are presented to the child using both Great Lessons and Key Lessons.
- Children work collaboratively, cooperatively, and in mixed age groups.
- The classroom is designed to nurture imagination, wonder, and reason.
- The children's work is open-ended, individualized, and uniquely creative.
- Children are agents in their own education.
- The teacher guides the children to explore their own interest while meeting age-appropriate state standards of education.
- The children are empowered to seek knowledge beyond the classroom.
- The entire elementary experience is founded on the principles of freedom and responsibility.

***The Elementary day begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 3:15 p.m.***

## The Middle School

The period of adolescence has been compared by Dr. Maria Montessori to the first plane of development. She identified both as periods of great transformation, physically and mentally. Task commitment and concentration continue to be of great importance to the Montessori Adolescent. Her psychic development is to articulate a personal vision. The adolescent's motto is "Help me to think for myself." This requires time for solitude and personal reflection, as well as a time for dialogue with her teacher(s) and within a circle of peers.

The major characteristics or "ages" of early adolescence are these:

- **social** - camaraderie, fellowship, companionship and teammates. Peer relationships are crucial, the peer group is their first priority. They need to identify.
- **critical thinking** - The adolescent mind turns from elementary thoughts of the universe toward themselves and their group. They need to know how they feel and what they want. They need to draw conclusions, listen and synthesize. They need adults to listen to their reasoning. They need to be empowered to seek solutions and to discuss their conclusions.
- **boundless energy** - The adolescent life's vital force has a special intensity. It can burn out of control but if channeled, it can move mountains. The adolescent has an astonishing capacity to work and an unquenched thirst for adventure and self-discovery.
- **sexual maturation** - The adolescent feels profoundly challenged to understand what is expected of them as an adult.
- **humanistic** - The adolescent confronts and deals with human nature in a way unique way, confronting powerful dilemmas, mysterious forces and contradictions of life.

The major "needs" of the Montessori adolescent are these:

They need to work.

They need to be empowered.

They need to build community.

They need to be challenged.

They need the earth (land).

They need to develop a personal vision.

The curriculum of the Maria Montessori Middle School is the result of a three-year research and development project which involved site visits to three major Montessori middle or high schools in San Antonio, Texas, Chicago, Illinois, and Portland, Oregon. An exhaustive national and local study of the major content curriculums (in terms of performance standards and lifelong learning objectives) was conducted. It is the belief of the Maria Montessori staff that the Middle School curriculum meets or surpasses those of local private and public schools while embracing the Montessori methodology.

***The Middle School Day begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 3:15 p.m.***

### **The Outdoor Environment**

One of the central tenants of the Montessori philosophy is the connection with the natural world of the outdoors. The children have the daily opportunity to experience the outdoors with structure and purpose. They learn how to use their hands in everyday endeavors with hands on experiences with the earth.

The outdoor guide(s) strive to extend classroom lessons and student interests to the outdoors. Respect for the environment and for each other is enhanced by group activities that require care for tools and materials, cooperation with peers and completion of tasks.

### **Elements of the Outdoor Classroom:**

- **School Landscaping and Gardening** - All children have the opportunity to work their own garden and participate in beautification projects and grounds maintenance.
- **Community Beautification** - MMS students will go off-site to assist in creating gardens for neighborhood schools, hospitals, and neighborhood organizations.
- **Nature Walks** - Children may participate in discovering this local environment, group observation of our slope, pond, wetlands and Mississippi River environment.
- **Environmental Awareness and Sensitivity** - Children become aware of larger environmental concerns and stewardship practices.
- **River Garden and Theater** - Children will experience the natural outdoor extension of their work for all cultural areas of the classroom.

### **The MMS Library**

The library at MMS exists to extend and enhance the curriculum in each environment. In the Toddler and Primary environments, our librarian works with the guides to select books and other materials for use in the classroom. Elementary and Middle School students are allowed to come once a day to the library for research and pleasure reading. The process of checking out and returning books on time can take students a while to learn on their own, and our library rules and procedures exist to instill responsibility. For children who continually lose track of books, it is recommended that they keep their books at school.

The librarian's role is to help students to further research and explore the subjects they have become interested in during their time in the classroom. The goal is to equip them with research and critical thinking skills in selecting and interpreting print and online materials. Parents may check out books and other materials from the school library and the parent/professional library. Materials may be checked out for one month and renewed if desired. There is a selection of books about Montessori education, child development and parenting techniques available.

**Primary students:** Parents may check out books and other materials from the library for themselves or their children for as long as one month.

**Toddler students:** Two books may be checked out at a time. After students have practiced returning books, parents will have the opportunity to opt for their child to check out 5-10 storybooks for the week if they prefer.

**Elementary Yr 1-3 students:** Five items may be checked out at a time. All materials are due on Wednesday, and students always have a minimum of one week with the items. A book can be renewed if no one is waiting to check it out.

**Elementary Yr 4-6 and Middle School students:** Five items may be checked out at a time. All materials are due on Wednesday, and students always have a minimum of one week with the items. A book can be renewed if no one else is waiting to check it out.

## **CLOTHING**

All clothing should allow for freedom of movement in the classroom and outdoors. Children frequently work on the floor, in the garden, and around the school grounds. They should be able to participate in these activities comfortably.

To prevent injury, students should wear appropriate shoes for physical education, recess, and work in experiment areas. No flip-flops are allowed at school, and sandals must stay on the heel while running.

Students may not wear clothing with slogans, logos, or advertisements that refer to inappropriate content (smoking, alcohol), portray violent words or images, and/or contain sarcastic, vulgar, or insulting language.

Hairstyles, jewelry, and clothing should not distract the child or classmates from the learning process. Teachers will ask that any distracting items not return to school, and the parents will be notified. No hats or hoods are to be worn in the building. They may be worn outdoors.

## **ELECTRONICS**

There is no use of personal electronics (iPhone, iPod, electronic books, etc.) during the school day for children in Toddler, Primary, Elementary, and Middle School environments.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

There are several special days and celebrations throughout the school year. In October, we celebrate REAL PEOPLE, past and present at **Historical Halloween**. Throughout the month, stories about these people are read and shared. Historical Halloween is usually celebrated the last Friday in October. In December, our community has the opportunity to celebrate our cultural diversity during our **Winter Festival** prior to winter break. The **Regatta and Duck Race** is our annual spring celebration and fundraiser. The Memphis community and beyond is invited to enjoy this day of family fun. **Lesson Open House** provides an opportunity for significant others to share the Montessori experience by examining the children's work. The **School Picnic** is traditionally held on the last day of school. Its location will be announced. Please watch your Newsletter for details on these events.

All other events will be announced throughout the year.

## LUNCH

All children (Toddler, Primary, Elementary, and Middle School) will bring packed lunches AND a beverage daily. Lunches should be healthy, nutritious, and balanced. Soft drinks and candy are not permitted. (Candy may be permitted at school celebrations.)

Please refrain from packing your child's lunches with "magic" foods (including Lunchables with dye packs) or any overly-dyed foods (i.e., Colored potato chips and condiments). Not only are these foods extremely messy and permanently stain clothes, carpets and tabletops, but they prove to be extremely distracting for the children during lunch time.

### **\*\* SPECIAL ALERT \*\*\***

Peanut/nut product restrictions

Any and all products containing peanuts or nuts of any kind (including peanut butter and oils) cannot be brought for classroom birthday snacks, lunches or any school functions.

Children with peanut/nut allergies cannot consume them, but equally important, they cannot be around them at all. All products packaged commercially are labeled to indicate when they are prepared with nut products. Please be sure to check labels and pay close attention to this request. Share this information with anyone who may prepare a school lunch for your child. Thank you.

## BIRTHDAYS

It is a tradition for the children to present the school with a gift in celebration of their birthday. Parents may consult with the directress, guide, specialist, or administrator for other needed items.

**Toddler children** enjoy having a community birthday snack.

**Primary children** enjoy celebrating at school with a delightful song and "walk around the sun." Parents are asked to send pictures for each age of the child. These are part of the ceremony.

**Elementary students** make a Time-Line of their lives which is shared with their classmates. **Parents may send a special snack to school.** Please let the directresses, guide or administrator know in advance if you plan to send a snack, and keep in mind that a nutritious, low sugar snack is most appropriate. **(NO CAKES - NO PEANUT/NUT PRODUCTS)**

**Middle School Students** enjoy baking their own cake and celebrating with their peers.

**If you are planning a party for your child, please DO NOT hand out your invitations at school.** If your child is attending a party after school, please do not send gifts to school with your child. These situations can be upsetting for those who are not invited. It is more appropriate to mail/email invitations and make arrangements to give gifts, away from the school setting.

## **GOING OUT / ODYSSEY TRIPS**

The curriculum and program for the Elementary and Middle School children includes many experiences away from the school setting. All children must have signed permission forms on file to participate in such events. Social Service regulations regarding adult/child ratio are strictly followed.

Throughout the year, the Middle School students will participate in extended trips as a group. It is very crucial that all students be allowed to participate as an active, contributing citizen to the group.

## **TEST POLICY**

Standardized tests are administered and scored at MMS beginning with the 3rd year in Elementary. Test scores will be kept in the student's permanent file in the school office. Parents may request a viewing of the results from their child's teacher.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

In order to insure the most productive day for each child and his/her directress, guide or specialist it is imperative that arrival and dismissal times are closely adhered to. Arrival for all children begins at 8:15. Morning Primary children will dismiss at 11:30 a.m. Toddler, Extended Day Primary, All Day Primary, Elementary, and Middle School students dismiss at 3:15 p.m.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Children will only be received into their own environments at 8:15 and after. No child can be dropped off before this time to wait in the office or elsewhere on campus.

To ensure the safety of each child, we will not release any child to someone other than a parent or a designated driver listed on the authorization card. If the occasion should arise that someone else needs to pick up the child, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the school, **IN WRITING**, in advance. We will ask for a photo ID from the person before releasing your child to them. Miss Cordelia's or the retail areas of Harbor Town are not permissible drop off or pick up sites.

All children will enter and dismiss from their own classrooms. Carpool procedures will be explained during each classroom orientation meeting.

The main campus gate will be closed at 8:45 each morning. If you arrive late, please park off-campus and walk your child(ren) to their classroom.

During Carpool:

- **DO NOT EXIT FROM YOUR VEHICLE AND LEAVE IT RUNNING IN THE PARKING LOT.**
- Do not park in the MMS parking spaces.
- **DO NOT BACK UP OR TRY TO PASS OTHERS.**

Please remember to be prompt when picking up your child. Emergencies arise from time to time that prevent children from being picked up promptly. If an emergency occurs, please call the school office to make us aware of the problem. Warnings will be issued in the event of a late pickup and if a parent's tardiness becomes habitual, a fine of \$1.00 per minute late will be charged. After 3:35 pm you must pick up your child in school office.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

In the event of inclement weather or other emergency situations, MMS will announce on Channel 5/WMC TV and a notification will be sent to all families via School Cues.

In case the A. C. Willis Street Bridge is impassable, please use the following directions as an alternative route to get to school:

- Turn right from A. C. Willis Street on to Second Street
- Turn left onto N. Mud Island Road from Second Street.
- Turn left onto Island Drive into the Harbor Town Community.

MMS has a disaster plan/manual located in the school office available for review.

## **TUITION AND FEES**

MMS offers three ways for families to pay yearly tuition:

- (1) **Annually** - tuition paid in full on or before June 1st, including textbook and other fees.
- (2) **Semi-annually** - annual rate + a 5% finance charge - payable in two equal payments due on or before July 1st and January 1st
- (3) **Monthly** - annual rate + 10% finance charge - payable in 10 equal payments due on the 1st of every month beginning in August

**TUITION PAYMENTS ARE DUE ON THE FIRST OF THE MONTH AND ARE CONSIDERED LATE AFTER THE FIFTH OF THE MONTH.**

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### **PLEASE NOTE:**

**Monthly tuition payments received after the fifth of the month will be assessed \$50.00 for the first and second late payments. This fee increases to \$100.00 for the third and subsequent late payments. Late annual and semi-annual payments are also subject to the same late fees.**

**Checks returned from the bank carry a \$50.00 returned check fee.**

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

### **Parent education**

The school has several **Parent Education Meetings** during the school year. These meetings are designed to help the parent understand the concepts and philosophy of the Montessori method. If the parent does not comprehend the Montessori method, communication between the school and the parent, and the child and the parent, will be hampered. Therefore, each parent is *encourage* to attend these meetings. Refer to your academic calendar for specific times and dates. Meetings last approximately 1 hour each. **Each family receives 5 volunteer credit hours per meeting attended.**



## **Parent conferences**

Conferences are scheduled twice a year to discuss the development of the child. These conferences are conducted by one or more of the teachers and involve samples of the child's work and discussion of the curriculum appropriate for your child. **(Parents or teachers may also call for a conference as the need arises.)**

## **Observations**

Parents who come to the school to “**observe**” are given guidelines for observation, and are asked to be seated during the observation. The purpose of observation is to view the environment, the children's interaction with the materials, other children and the teachers. Observation is an excellent way to learn more about the Montessori method. Observation times must be scheduled with the school office. Observations are scheduled after Fall Parent/Teacher Conferences. This allows for a period of adjustment for new children.

Toddler parents: Please remember that due to the age of your child it is very difficult and not always possible to complete an observation in their classroom. It is always encouraged to observe the Primary classroom in anticipation of your child moving into that environment.

## **Classroom participation**

Parents who have a talent, career, or hobby that would be interesting or informative to the children are encouraged to make arrangements with the appropriate Directress or Guide to establish a time to share this information with the children. This could include any cultural celebrations, information or guests which could enhance the children's multicultural experiences. As our enrollment increases in size and cultural diversity, it is essential to the development of the children that they benefit from the uniqueness of our very special, immediate community.

## **Parent volunteer requirements**

The Maria Montessori School is an incorporated non-profit school. Participation of the parents is imperative to the success of the school and its efforts to maintain an affordable tuition. Most importantly, parent participation at the school promotes a sense of community. Active participation is an ideal way to get to know other families, assist in your child's development, and promote the school.

Each family is responsible for forty (40) hours of volunteer work each year, or payment of \$500.00 due at the time of acceptance/re-enrollment. Twenty hours of service must be completed by each family by **January 12th**, or that family will be assessed \$250.00. The remaining twenty hours of service must be completed no later than **May 10th**.

Opportunities for work will be published in advance so that parents can fulfill their volunteer hours as conveniently as possible. Volunteer hours may be earned by any member of your family, or by friends who wish to help on your behalf.

As you participate in the program your hours can be emailed to the office at [mms1986@bellsouth.net](mailto:mms1986@bellsouth.net).

## **APPROPRIATE USE OF MATERIALS AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

### **Philosophy**

The premise of the Montessori philosophy of education is that all children carry within themselves the person they will become. In order to develop physical, intellectual and spiritual potential to the fullest, the child must have freedom; a freedom to be achieved through order and self-discipline. Self-discipline is fostered in many ways. The classroom environment is organized in an orderly, logical manner. Children choose work which they are capable of doing and are free to use it for as long as they wish without interference from others. This approach alleviates many problems of discipline which might be present in another kind of environment. In

addition, the mixed age group allows the younger children to emulate the older children's more mature behavior.

All children are given lessons in the appropriate use of school materials and in courteous behavior in the Montessori Environment. The child begins to see School as a community where all are learning to live in harmony. If an individual child's behavior is such that the welfare of the community is jeopardized, that child will experience the consequences of his/her behavior.

## **DEFINING MISBEHAVIOR AND CONSEQUENCES**

**Minor misbehavior** is defined as behavior or general classroom disruption that interferes with the orderly educational process in the classroom or other areas such as silliness, minor hitting, taking others' work, copying, fussing, etc. When such behavior is demonstrated by the child, they will be given gentle direction by the directress or guide towards work which will engage his/her interest. In the case of repeated misbehavior, the parent may be contacted by phone or in person. The directress or guide will document the misbehaviors as they occur for possible further disciplinary action. The consequences of the demonstration of minor misbehavior could include any one or a combination of the following: verbal redirection, assignment to a temporary seat, having to repair minor damage to the material or environment, and, isolation.

**Serious misbehavior** is defined as behavior that results in property destruction, willful defiance, or intentionally hurting others, for example: refusal to do work, out-of-control hitting and kicking, temper tantrums, throwing objects, defacing materials, damaging private property, willful hurting of others, and use of inappropriate language. When such behaviors occur the directress, guide, specialist, or administrator will immediately intervene and inform the parents either in person or in writing that same day. The events will be documented and the school administrator informed. In the event of serious property damage or vandalism, the parents will be held responsible for the repair or replacement of the damaged materials. In situations of hurtful behavior and the use of inappropriate language a conference will be scheduled with the administrator, directress or guide, and the parents. Depending on the situation the child may/may not be invited to participate in this conference.

The consequences of the demonstration of serious behavior could result in confinement to an assigned place within/or outside of the classroom or in the student being sent home until an administrative conference can be held with the parent and the directress, guide or specialist. **If a satisfactory solution cannot be reached, the parents may be asked to withdraw the child from the school.**

## **MMS STATEMENT ON MUTUAL RESPECT, CIVILITY AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

The stated mission of MMS is to provide an environment that frees the child to develop their full academic, emotional, and spiritual potential. Included in this mission is to provide a safe, welcoming, and nurturing environment. MMS values the diversity of an international community, the pure principles of Montessori and the opportunity to develop the child and the whole person. Consistent with the mission and values of MMS, the school has a no-tolerance policy for language, attitudes, and behaviors that are uncivilized, disrespectful, or devalue human dignity and serve to interfere with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, performance, or physical or psychological well-being.

**What can you do as a parent or a student?**

**Teach tolerance.**

**Be an example of tolerance.**

**Speak out.**

## **MONTESSORI READING LIST**

### **Books by Dr. Maria Montessori**

The Absorbent Mind

The Discovery of The Child

The Secret of Childhood

From Childhood to Adolescence

The Montessori Method

The Child in the Church

### **Other books about The Montessori Method**

Education for Human Development - Mario Montessori, Jr.

Montessori, A Modern Approach - Paula P. Lillard

Montessori and Your Child - Terry Malloy

Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work - E.M. Standing

Parent's Guide to the Montessori Classroom - Aline C. Wolf

Montessori Approach to Discipline - Lena Gitter

Essential Montessori - Elizabeth Hainstock

Look At the Child - Aline D. Wolf

A Montessori Album - Margot Waltuch

## MARIA MONTESSORI QUOTES

To give a child liberty is not to abandon him to himself.

It is necessary, then, to give the child the possibility of developing according to the laws of his nature, so that he can become strong, and, having become strong, can do even more than we dared hope for him.

Our goal is not so much the imparting of knowledge as the unveiling and developing of spiritual energy.

The child is much more spiritually elevated than usually supposed. He often suffers, not from too much work, but from work that is unworthy of him.

The first essential for the child's development is concentration.  
The child who concentrates is immensely happy.

The training of the teacher who is to help life is something far more than the learning of ideas. It includes the training of character; it is a preparation of the spirit.

And so, we discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being.

Whoever touches the life of the child touches the most sensitive point of a whole which has roots in the most distant past and climbs toward the infinite future.

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

The elementary child has reached a new level of development. Before he was interested in things: working with his hands, learning their names. Now he is interested mainly in the how and why ... the problem of cause and effect.

The land is where our roots are.  
The children must be taught to feel and live in harmony with the Earth.

The first duty of an education is to stir up life, but leave it free to develop.

It is necessary for the teacher to guide the child without letting him feel her presence too much, so that she may always be ready to supply the desired help, but may never be the obstacle between the child and his experience.