



MONTESSORI HOUSE

For Children

Parent Handbook

2022-2023

www.mhfcschools.com

Phone 281-239-3400

“Cultivating the Greatest Potential within every Person.”

Non-Discrimination Policy

MHFC/MHES is an equal opportunity organization and will not allow discrimination based upon age, ethnicity, ancestry, gender, national origin, disability, race, size, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, or any other status prohibited by applicable law.

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PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

The handbook is provided to answer many commonly asked questions. It can be a valuable reference during the year and means to avoid confusion and misunderstanding when questions arise.

The School reserves the right to interpret this Handbook, including the rules and regulations governing the academic and non-academic programs. The School reserves the right to modify and/or the content of this Handbook at any time during the year. If any written modification and/or amendment is made to this Handbook, a copy of such change or amendment will be distributed to parents.

ABOUT US

Mission Statement

Grounded in Montessori principles and philosophy, our mission is to cultivate the greatest potential within every person.

History

Montessori House for Children (MHFC)

MHFC was founded in 2006, as a successor organization to Lakeview Montessori School in SugarLand, TX, originally founded in 1997. MHFC is a private, non-sectarian school with an international clientele from over 34 countries. MHFC educates students aged Toddler through Early Childhood, ~18 months through 6 years.

Montessori House Elementary School (MHES) opened in August 2016, to provide MHFC students and families a continuation in Montessori.

Prior to opening the Elementary School, the Montessori House Education Fund (MEFI) was founded in 2012, as a 501c(3) nonprofit corporation. MEFI has two components:

1. MEFI General Fund
MEFI Contributions (donations and benefits) support Educational Services. All contributions, donations, and funds received by the MEFI “general fund” are tax-deductible as allowed by IRS guidelines. Educational Services are those that fall under the mission and goals of Montessori:
 - Tuition Assistance
 - Community Outreach
 - Professional Development

2. Montessori House Elementary School (MHES)
Elementary tuition supports the operations of the Elementary School (faculty salaries, educational materials, classroom furnishings, and operating expenses).

Governance

Montessori House for Children (MHFC) is governed by a founding Board of Directors, who established the core mission and values of the School and continues to maintain alignment with the core mission.

Philosophy

Montessori Education is guided by the work and writings of Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952). At its core, the philosophy is simple, to *follow the child*, which assumes that every child is a unique individual who is naturally driven to grow, develop and learn. The educational goals include instilling in children a love of learning, inner motivation, the ability to make appropriate choices, and respect for oneself, others, and the environment.

Partnership

The School works in partnership with parents to support and foster whole child development. Parents, guide, child, and school form a union based on mutual respect and support which, in turn, enhances everyone’s understanding, knowledge, and insight and offers a cohesive learning environment.

Hours of Operation

7:00 am – 6:00 pm, Mon – Fri

Affiliations and Memberships

American Montessori Society (AMS)

The School is affiliated with the American Montessori Society. We are on Level 6 of the American Montessori Society's Pathway of Continuous School Improvement, which requires all Lead Guides to hold Montessori credentials (recognized by AMS) in the level(s) they are teaching. <https://amshq.org/Educators/Montessori-Schools/Pathway-of-Continuous-School-Improvement>

Eco-School

The School is affiliated with Eco-Schools USA, at the “silver level”. Eco-Schools USA works to extend learning beyond the classroom and develop responsible environmental attitudes and commitments, both at home and in the wider community.

National Wildlife Federation

The School is designated a Certified Wildlife Habitat in our play spaces, which provide water, food, and shelter to the area wildlife.

Katy Prairie Conservancy

The School supports the environment efforts with our own ‘Pocket Prairie’, which benefits the ecosystem by having authentic Texas Native plants in our yards and environments.

ADMINISTRATION & FACULTY

Admin

Managing Founders	Bob & Pam Nelson
Head of School	Barbara Nelson
Director of School Operations	Blanca Smith
Finance Manager	Yaneth Poo
Director of Admissions	Jessica Diaz
Director of Community Outreach	Norma Angulo
Montessori Curriculum Director	Rujuta Arya
Food Service Manager	Ryan Caridad
Business & Strategic Planner	Margie El-Moussa

Faculty

The Toddler and EC Lead Guides are trained in Montessori pedagogy under the auspices of the American Montessori Society (AMS) or Association Montessori International (AMI). EC Lead Guides hold bachelor’s/master’s degrees in addition to Montessori credentials.

Professional Development

Faculty obtains a minimum of 24 hours of professional development each year, which may include attendance at

national or local conferences, university courses, or in-service work sponsored by the school.

Faculty In-Service

Faculty in-service days are marked on the School calendar. These days are used for several purposes, including professional development, faculty meetings, and classroom preparation.

Faculty Assignments

Faculty includes lead guides, assistant guides, support staff, and substitute guides. Changes in faculty for the upcoming school year are formally announced once contracts are signed, in April. Any changes made after the School year begins are communicated to parents via email.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Academic Day 8:30 am – 2:30 pm

Full-Day 7:00 am – 6:00 pm (Includes before/after school care)

Academic Year

The academic school year is from mid-August to May.

Summer Sessions

Summer sessions begin the first full week in June and end the week before teacher in-service, per the academic calendar. Registration for summer sessions is separate from the academic term.

Spanish Program

Montessori education is our school's primary focus, complemented by a variety of spoken languages from around the world, with Spanish being our predominant second language. What this means for students of Montessori House for Children.

Toddler Community

Our toddler community is rich with vocabulary, primarily English and Spanish. Toddler-aged children are in a period of development that thrives upon the acquisition of language. During this unique period of development, children effortlessly acquire vocabulary and comprehend the meaning of words, from any spoken language! Guides speak interchangeably, between English and their native language (primarily Spanish).

Early Childhood Community:

Children of our Early Childhood community are exposed to many different languages. The Montessori curriculum is presented in English, by the lead guide, and assistant guides communicate with children in both English and their native language, which could consist of Spanish, Hindi, Arabic, Russian, etc. (depending on classroom placement). Additionally, Spanish class begins at the Early Childhood level, during their community group time. Spanish class is taught by a native Spanish speaker and offers an introduction to vocabulary, songs, and literature.

Afterschool Extra-Curricular Programs (EC)

A wide variety of high-quality, extra-curricular programs are offered through independent providers. Programs are offered at the end of the academic day, beginning at 2:30 pm. Information about these programs' activities is available during parent orientation, through Transparent Classroom, and at the MHFC front office. Enrollment and payment of chosen programs are handled directly through the providers.

ADMISSIONS

Admission Decisions

Admission decisions are made through a careful process that takes the individual child and the composition of the class into consideration. Priority is given to siblings of current students.

Admission Policy

The Toddler Community serves children from ~16 months to ~3 years. A readiness checklist will be shared upon request to help parents prepare their child for a smooth transition.

The Early Childhood Community serves children from ~3 to 6 years. Entering children must be independent in their toileting:

- Wearing cloth underwear, day, and night.
- Able to undress/dress independently.
- Able to go to the restroom independently, without frequent reminders.
- Able to clean self after toileting; wet wipes are provided as needed and guides will assist in an emergency.

Financial Policy

MHFC engages its staff, purchases supplies, and equipment, and plans its operational budget on the basis that students are enrolled for a full academic year.

Tuition is non-refundable, including absences, early withdrawal, illness, vacations, inclement weather, school holidays, or other circumstances outside of the School's control, including closure due to a pandemic or natural disaster. A 10% tuition sibling discount is offered (on the lower tuition/s). Admission, re-enrollment, and material/activity fees are non-refundable.

The annual tuition is divided into a 10-month payment schedule, due August 1 through May 1. Tuition is paid through Tuition Express (automatic ACH withdrawal (without fees) or with a credit card(3.5% processing fee).

Parents may access tuition/yearly statements for taxes or FSA by logging in to www.myprocare.com Accounts are automatically set up at the time of enrollment and parent needs only to set a password for access 24/7.

Late/Declined Payment

The School reserves the right to suspend attendance or withdraw a child if tuition is not paid within ten (10) calendar days of the due date. A bank service fee of \$25 is charged for declined payments.

Tuition Deposit/Withdraw Policy

Families who have not re-enrolled for the next school year are assumed to be withdrawing at the end of the school year and the deposit will be automatically applied to the last tuition payment in May. Deposits are not applied to mid-year withdraws, unless for re-location greater than 30 miles from the School. The Enrollment Contract is for a full academic school year, Aug. -May.

Screening

The state requires children aged 4 by September 1st to receive vision/hearing screening. The School schedules this screening at the beginning of each school year or, parents may obtain screening on their own and provide the School with results.

Student Records

Student records must be complete prior to the child's first day and prior to the toddler home/school visits. Student records are kept in the admission office and include complete registration forms, progress reports, and conference notes. Student records remain the property of the School. Student records are confidential and can only be released with written parental permission.

Change in Family Records/ Information

Contact information for parents must be kept current; notify the School immediately of changes in your contact information (email, phone number, address). Call the School or email admissions@mhfcschool.com

Parent Orientations

Parent orientation consists of:

- MHFC School Orientation (Required for parents new to MHFC)
- Classroom Orientation (EC)
- Home/School Visit (Toddler)
- Montessori Journey (All Levels)

Classroom Placement, Transitions & Moving-up

School Considerations

Classroom placement is determined by matching the skills and needs of the individual with the skills and needs of the learning community. The guide is one part of the learning community. Other factors include age, gender, and the personalities within each community.

Parent Requests

The School is responsible for providing qualified and talented guides in every classroom and works very hard to ensure that each child is placed in an environment where their needs will be met. Classroom placements are based on these criteria and not on parent requests for a particular guide or classroom.

Classroom Transfers

Because the composition of a learning community is selected very carefully, it is unusual for children to be transferred from one class to another. However, when there appears to be a beneficial reason for a change of classroom, you will be notified and included in the evaluative process.

New Student Transition

There is a transition period of about 6 weeks. New students normally assimilate into a Montessori environment with ease and joy. The Lead Guide communicates with parents during the six-week transition to let them know how their child is adjusting.

New Student Transition (Toddler Community)

During the home visit, the schedule for your child’s transition will be discussed and a plan agreed to. Ideally, the schedule is as follows:

Day 1	8:30 – 9:30	
Day 2	8:30 – 10:30	
Day 3	8:30 – 12:00	(after lunch)
Day 4	8:30 – 2:30	(after nap)
Day 5	Normal Schedule	

Moving Up

Most commonly, move-ups occur in August, at the start of the academic term, with the exception of toddlers, who may move to EC mid-year, when developmentally ready. Move-ups during School Holidays/Breaks and Summer Sessions are uncommon, due to merging classrooms and differences in regular lead/assistant guides.

Move from Toddler to Early Childhood (EC)

When it is determined that your child is ready to move up, the following process is followed:

- Parents are invited to observe the EC classroom.
- The child's new guide will schedule a parent meeting.
- The child visits the EC classroom for an introduction to their new environment.
- The final move-up is celebrated by formally moving the child's belongings from one room to another. Also, the child's records and information will be transferred to the new guide.

Move from Early Childhood into Elementary (MHES)

The minimum age for entry into Elementary is 6 years by September 1st. In determining a child's readiness for moving up, the faculty first considers social and emotional maturity; self-direction, independence, and the ability to work well with others. When it is determined that your child is ready to move up, the following process is followed:

- Parents are invited to observe the LEL classroom
- The child visits the LEL classroom.
- The acceptance decision is finalized.

Release of Records

Parents agree, as a condition of continued enrollment, to consent to the release of any of the student's health-related information, including information relating to testing, and medical and mental health records, to employees or agents of the school, as determined by the Head of School or his or her designee, to meet the medical or safety needs of the student and the community or the legal responsibilities of the School.

Re-enrollment

A pattern of disruptive, destructive, and/or disrespectful behaviors, excessive absenteeism, late arrival, or the parents' failure to meet financial obligations can jeopardize a student's continued enrollment.

COMMUNICATION

Communication from School to Parents

Transparent Classroom: Through invitation, Transparent Classroom is available to staff and parents, available online at www.transparentclassroom.com and the mobile app (limited features using the mobile app). Transparent Classroom provides the following:

- School/classroom events calendar
- School/classroom announcements
- Classroom directory
- Photos
- Bi-annual Progress Reports
- Parent Resources (handbooks, menus, medical forms, etc.)

Parent Handbook: The Handbook contains all policies and procedures of the school. The handbook is emailed to enrolled families upon acceptance and updated each August (or as needed per amendments). The handbook can also be referenced at any time through your Transparent Classroom account.

Social Media

- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/MontessoriHouseforChildren>
- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/montessori_house/
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/montessori-house-for-children-elementary-school/>

Communication Between Parents & School

Lead Guides are available Mon – Fri, during their designated 'office hours.' For information about your child or questions about the classroom, parents are to contact their child's lead guide through email. Guides are to respond within 24 hrs.; however, if the matter is urgent, please contact the school by phone.

Whom to Ask for Information:

We value open and consistent communication regarding your child.

For matters related to....	Contact:
School mission and goals, professional development, academic counseling, school policies, procedures, and safety.	Head of School Barbara Nelson barb@mhfcschool.com
Child's progress, classroom activities, and classroom procedures	Classroom Lead Guide Guide's name@mhfcschool.com
Enrollment, re-enrollment, withdrawal, and student records/transfer of records.	Admissions Director Jessica Diaz admissions@mhfcschool.com
Tuition & Finance	Finance Manager Yaneth Poo yaneth@mhfcschool.com
Tuition monthly/yearly statements and changes in your family information (phone number, address, etc.)	ProCare Account www.myprocare.com Available 24/7
Food catering questions and school menu	Food Service Coordinator Ryan Caridad ryan@mhfcschool.com
PAV, classroom observations, public relations	Director of Community Outreach Norma Angulo norma@mhfcschool.com
Afterschool/summer camp programs, school facilities, policies, procedures, and safety.	Director of School Operations Blanca Smith blanca@mhfcschool.com
Classroom calendar, photos, directory, school forms, and parent resources	Transparent Classroom www.transparentclassroom.com or Mobile app
Montessori curriculum, learning environments, and faculty development	Montessori Curriculum Director Rujuta Arya rujuta@mhfcschool.com

School Closings & Other Emergencies

Parents will be notified of school closings and urgent information via Transparent Classroom.

Local Licensing Office

(713) 940-3009

1110 Ave. G (271-6) Rosenberg, TX. 77471

The HOS has available a copy of the minimum standards for your review. The School's most recent Licensing inspection report is posted on the corkboard in the middle room and can also be found at: www.dfps.state.tx.us/

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PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Volunteers are essential to enriching the community life of the School. Knowing that the greatest obstacle for parents is time, we have structured many events and meetings to coincide with the childcare or involve the whole family.

Parent Involvement Opportunities

Volunteer opportunities are available through the Parent Association of Volunteers (PAV) and throughout the School community.

Parent Association of Volunteers (PAV) is made up of parents, guardians, and administrators who function as the backbone of our volunteer force and help our School to fulfill its mission. The primary goals of the PAV are Community Building, Community Support, and supporting the MEFI non-profit, Annual Campaign. Involvement opportunities include:

- Join the PAV and participate in School events
- Attend PAV Meetings (1st Tuesday of each month)
- Attend Parent Coffee (2nd Thursday of each month)
- Classroom Support
- Volunteer to be a Room Parent

SCHOOL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Getting To and From School

Arrival

7:00 – 8:00 Full-Day Students Arrival: Parents walk child/ren to the MHFC Main Office
8:15 – 8:30 Academic-Day Student Arrival: Parents use the Drive-Through Lane

Dismissal

2:20 – 2:30 Academic-Day dismissal: Parents use the Drive-Through Lane
2:30 - 6:00 Full-day dismissal: Parents park and come to your child’s after-school classroom door. Wait at the door to give your child time to restore their work and gather items to take home.

Early Release (Academic Day Program):

11:30 Toddler Dismissal
12:00 EC Dismissal

Student Mid-Day Pick-Up

Students must be signed out/in by a parent/guardian if they need to be picked up during the school day.

Late Pick-Up

If you are running late for pick up at your designated program time, please notify the School immediately. If the school is unable to contact parents beyond school closing time, the ‘emergency contact’ person listed in your child’s records will be contacted and asked to pick up (this will avoid a call to Child Protective Services and/or local law enforcement).

Requests for extension or program changes (planned): If you need early drop-off or late pick-up, please call or email admissions@mhfcschool.com at least one day prior so that the School can confirm space is available.

Late Pick-Up Fees

There is a 5-minute grace period. After 5-minutes, the late fee is as follows:

- \$25 for the first 5 – 30 minutes
- \$50 beyond 30 minutes.

* With proper notification, the fees may be waived for circumstances that are beyond your control.

Procedures for Change in Pick-up Routine or Release of Students

Your child will be allowed to leave the School only with parents or persons designated on the enrollment form. In an emergency, or if there are temporary dismissal arrangements, the parent must notify the school, giving the name, date, and identifying information about the person picking up the child. This person must give proper identification, such as a valid driver's license. A copy of their license is kept in your child's file.

Dismissal/Arrival Safety

- Pedestrian traffic, from the parking lot, is prohibited during designated drive-through times.
- Stay in your car while using the drive-through lane.
- In drive-through, students are to exit/enter on the (school) side of the car
- Hand-held cell phone use is prohibited.
- The posted speed limit is 5 mph on the driveway, parking lot, and carpool lane.
- All students younger than 8 years old, unless taller than 4'9" are required to be in the appropriate child safety seat system when they ride in a passenger vehicle. The safety seat system must be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions. Staff will not allow a child into a vehicle that does not appear to meet these requirements.
- You are responsible for your child's safety entering and exiting the School.
- Students may not play or gather in the parking area or outside of school buildings. Please proceed safely to the car.

Confidentiality

It is our duty to protect the confidentiality of our students, parents, and staff. Release of records, sharing of information, or discussion of current or former members of our community is against School policy. All who belong to the School are expected to follow this policy.

Social Media

To maintain the professional relationship between parent and guide, staff members are not permitted to "friend" current families within the School.

Photo, Video & Work Samples Release

MHFC may use pictures of your child and/or samples of their classroom work for marketing and operational uses, including but not limited to newsletters, classroom displays and materials, advertising, brochures, websites, social media, yearbooks, and newspaper or magazine articles.

By enrolling your child in the School, you give consent for your child to be photographed and/ or filmed and waive any right to approve the finished product or accompanying copy.

Nutrition, Snacks & Lunch

The school is a low-sugar and nut-free facility. Foods from fast food restaurants are not allowed. This policy is to be followed for breakfasts, snacks, and lunch. If food brought to school is high in sugar, it will be sent home with your child. If foods contain nuts, they will be discarded. The School serves water and milk. Drinks from home must be low in sugar, water, or milk. Juice drinks are not allowed. Breakfast, snack, and lunch menus are posted in the school and accessible through Transparent Classroom.

Snack:

The School provides a healthy morning snack for all students and an afternoon snack for children enrolled in the full-day program. nutritious snacks

Catered Lunch:

Catered lunches are offered through an outside provider, arranged directly between parent and caterer. Information on how to order is provided to parents at the time of acceptance, at the beginning of each school year, and through Transparent Classroom.

Lunch from Home:

Lunch from home must meet nutritional guidelines; low sugar, no nuts, no juice drinks, and include protein, grain, and fruit/vegetable. Also, please include a napkin and cutlery as needed.

Classrooms are not equipped with microwave ovens. Store warm foods in a thermal container and perishable food/drinks will need ice packs.

Produce Baskets

Parents are welcome to participate in the fresh produce basket (voluntary/rotational schedule) to contribute fresh fruits and vegetables for food prep activities. Family involvement will help to enrich our children's appreciation for good nutrition.

Transportation

Employees are not permitted to transport enrolled students. The only exception is for employees who have children enrolled in the School.

Observation/Open Door Policy

Parent observations are highly encouraged and scheduled during the School year, (October –April). During this time, parents sit in the classroom to gain a better perspective of their child's work and the Montessori community as a whole. Please contact the front office to schedule an in-class observation.

Parents are free to visit the School at any time during school hours to observe their child and program activities. Unscheduled visits are done from outside the classroom, observing through the window.

Note: Parent observations, from inside the classroom, may be difficult on younger children, (if they are not old enough to understand the nature of their parents' visit or if they display anxiety when separating from parents). In these instances, parents will be asked to observe from the window, outside of the classroom.

Tutoring/Childcare/Attending Students' Parties

Faculty and staff are not to be approached for tutoring or in-home childcare. This policy honors the professional lines between family and guide and avoids appearances of favoritism.

Faculty and staff may not attend birthday parties for students currently enrolled unless it is to accompany their own child.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are recognized in a unique way, depending on your child's classroom. Please discuss plans with your child's guide in advance.

Birthday party invitations are not to be handed out by staff. Invitations may be sent through Transparent Classroom/parent messaging. Balloons, decorations, goodie bags, paid entertainment and high sugar foods/juices are not allowed.

Toddler Communities may bring a healthy fruit or vegetable snack to share with their class. Parents may also bring/donate a book to the class, in honor of their child's birthday.

Early Childhood Communities celebrate birthdays through the “Celebration of Life”. The birthday child holds the globe and walks around a “sun” as a story of his/her life is read. This is a lovely and natural way to symbolically experience the passing of years. Please talk to your child’s lead guide in advance to schedule the ceremony and participate if you can join.

Water Play

Students enjoy many aspects of water, from classroom work involving water to sprinkler play. For the safety of your child, water activities are limited to these uses and will not include wading pools on school premises.

Dress Code

The purpose of the dress code is to create an atmosphere where maximum learning can occur. Any style of dress or grooming that draws undue attention, is dangerous, causes disruption at school, or detracts from the learning process is not allowed.

The following is not permitted:

- Clothing, shoes, backpacks with characters related to movies, television, or video games
- Shoes that light up, blink, or make sounds
- Shoes that pose a potential danger for self or others (heels, flip-flops, cowboy boots)

Every Friday is School T-Shirt Day, a day to wear your green School T-Shirt! Each child receives one shirt at the time of enrollment. Additional school t-shirts are available for purchase, please see the MHFC front office.

Children should be dressed appropriately for weather, activities, and comfort - painting, gardening, water work and food preparation take place every day.

Leather shoes and ‘tennis shoes’ are most practical for our playground surface.

Possessions

Students should not bring valuables to the School; the School will not be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged valuables.

What to Bring to School

- Reusable Water Bottle
- During classroom orientation, parents will be provided with any additional materials needed.

What Not to Bring to School

- Backpacks
- Toys, stuffed animals, and electronic devices
- Sippy cups, bottles, pacifiers
- Blankets, and pillows
- Accessories that cause a distraction
- Valuables

Laundry

Laundry of all bed linens and toddler training pants is done on-site, daily (clothing), weekly (bed linens), or more often as needed. The children greatly enjoy folding their clean laundry; this gives them a sense of belonging and responsibility to their community.

Rest Period

The School provides sleeping mats, linens, and a blanket. Every child has different sleep needs. Children are

required to have a rest period but are not forced to sleep.

Family Supportive (Breastfeeding)

Our school strives to support healthy family life. In that effort, if you are nursing an infant and need a quiet place to do so, please let our front office staff know and we will happily accommodate you and your child.

Cultural & Community Events

Cultural/Community events involving parents are integral to the life of the School. Many of these celebrations revolve around the activities of individual classes, while others bring the larger community together. Whether small and informal or organized for the whole school, celebrations and rituals highlight and affirm the values of our school.

Study of Living Things

Students study, observe and care for an assortment of plants, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, fish, and mammals. Classroom pets are part of the classroom, providing opportunities for practical life (care of living things), and life science (observing living things). Classroom pets may include birds, fish, rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, etc. Students follow proper handwashing procedures after handling animals. Students do not handle chickens, ducks, and reptiles, such as snakes, turtles, lizards, iguanas, and amphibians, such as frogs and toads as part of the 'classroom environment'.

Gang-Free Zone

Texas House Bill 2086 requires all schools and childcare centers to notify parents/guardians that gang-related criminal activity or anyone engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of a childcare center is in violation of the law and is subject to increased penalty under state law.

Smoking

Smoking and use of electronic cigarettes are not permitted on school property or at school-related functions.

SAFETY & SECURITY

Building Security

MHFC is a closed campus - doors are always locked. Video cameras are located at the main entrance, main lobby, and back service door.

Visitors

All Visitors and volunteers must check-in at the front office. Office admin will confirm identity, and the reason for the visit, make a copy of their photo ID and provide a visitor badge. Family members (other than parents) who wish to visit must have parental permission and should be arranged in advance.

Outdoor/Playground

Outdoor play and interaction with nature is an integral part of our day. Outdoor play may only be skipped with a doctor's note. The outdoor environment includes gardens, wildlife, and age-appropriate activities. The following rules are enforced:

- All students must stay with their class.
- Guides will supervise students on the playground at all times.
- In case of an accident, one guide will remain with the class while the second guide will bring the child inside for first aid. In the event that there is only one guide, the guide will call for help using the walkie-talkie. At no time will the class be on the playground without appropriate supervision.
- Guides inspect the playground daily and report any unsafe conditions to the administration immediately.

Policy on Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting

State law and licensing requirements state that childcare personnel is required to report immediately to the police or Child Protective Services (CPS) if they suspect child abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Employees are required to undergo annual training on laws regarding childcare professionals and the duty to report suspected child abuse & neglect. This training also includes warning signs of abuse & neglect and how to report them to Child Protective Services. (CPS)

If you are the parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect, please call the Child Abuse Hotline for assistance and intervention. Child Abuse Hotline (800) 252-5400 or visit www.dfps.state.tx.us

Child Safety from Sexual Offenders and Predators

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), sexual perpetrators are commonly people the parents/guardians or children know, and these people may be in a position of trust or responsibility to a child and family.

Because of our concern for student safety, all employees, and those parents who regularly volunteer for School activities with unsupervised access to our students, are screened through the School's criminal background process. Although the School performs such screenings, the School cannot attest to the background of the various parents whom their child may associate with away from School.

To keep their children safer, parents should talk openly to their children about safety issues. Parents should know their children's friends and be clear with their children about the places and homes that their children visit. Children should be taught that they have the right to say no to any unwelcome, uncomfortable, or confusing touching or actions by others and to get out of those situations as quickly as possible.

ATTENDANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES

Parents are expected to have their children to school on time. Frequent absences and late arrival seriously affect academic progress and disrupt the learning environment.

Late Arrival

Please notify your child's guide of planned late arrival in advance, by 8:30 am.

Late Arrival Procedure

- Parents are to check in their child at the Main Office to complete the late arrival slip (indicating the reason for late arrival).
- With the late arrival slip, a front office admin will escort your child to their class and a classroom guide will greet him/her at the door.

If late arrival becomes habitual (more than 3 times/semester), the following procedures are followed:

- The lead guide will notify the Head of School.
- The Head of School will schedule a conference with parents to reach a solution.
- If timely arrival does not result, the School has the right to end the student's enrollment and recommend educational options that are better aligned with the family's schedule.

Absences

Please make every effort to ensure your child's consistent attendance. In this regard, the school specifically requests that you schedule family vacations and trips to coincide with school holidays and summer.

Please notify your child's guide of your child's absences and the reason for their absence by 8:30 am

Mid-day Pick Up & Return Policy

Should a student need to leave mid-day for a doctor's or therapeutic appointment, students will be allowed re-entry, with a 'return to school' note from the medical provider. Students are not permitted to come and go for reasons unrelated to health or therapeutic services. This policy applies during the academic term and summer sessions.

DISCIPLINE & PROCEDURES

The educational philosophy of the School is that real, effective discipline is one that comes from within a person. Developing this inner discipline is one of the objectives of Montessori Education. The clear organization of the physical environment, the structure, consistency, and predictability of daily school life; the indirect manner of teaching interpersonal skills, and the reliance on peer modeling and coaching contribute to the child's development of inner discipline and emotional regulation. Acknowledging respectful behavior, appreciating helpful behavior, and modeling empathy help to limit negative behaviors.

Children are encouraged to express their feelings and opinions in a non-judgmental atmosphere, and adults use active listening and empathic understanding to help interpret a situation with those involved. The guide sets the tone for bringing the child into harmony by avoiding harsh words, bribes, and generalizations. As children feel accepted for who they are and what they feel, they develop positive self-esteem. The happier children are with themselves, the more likely they are to reach out and interact cooperatively with others.

Conduct

Guidelines for conduct are followed to ensure children feel safe and secure at School. Guidelines also provide the necessary structure for a child's freedom to learn and explore. Within a safe, secure, and harmonious environment, children best learn.

It is our experience that when expectations are clear, consistently reinforced, and modeled by peers and adults, the necessity of external discipline is diminished. However, when such external discipline is deemed necessary, the following guidelines are observed.

Behaviors that are contrary to our CODE OF CONDUCT will be addressed immediately and appropriately:

- Disruptive behavior that deprives others of learning.
- Intimidation, verbal abuse, physical threats, and hurtful acts (such as hitting, punching, kicking, or biting).
- Destruction of school property
- Inappropriate, derogatory remarks or gestures

In such instances, the following guidelines are followed:

- Behavioral differences and trends will be recorded by classroom guides in an objective manner and used as a basis for discussion and resolution.
- Positive discipline techniques are applied

Positive Discipline

Positive guidance techniques facilitate the development of interpersonal skills, awareness, and respect for oneself and others. Students learn from both adults and students by following these basic principles:

- Model and encourage appropriate behaviors and actions
- Use positive redirection
- Set clear limits
- Offer alternatives
- Allow for natural or reasonable consequences to take place that are understood and logical to the child, ex: Cleaning up after a spill.

- Temporary removal from the activity or situation to provide time and space to calm emotions.
- Talk with the child who needs help, to build understanding. Facilitate problem-solving and exploring ideas for alternative behavior choices.
- Teach the child that emotions are real and valid, and how to deal with them in constructive ways.
- Recognize and encourage concentrated and appropriate efforts.

*While a parent is on school grounds, the above-mentioned guidelines must be followed.

Self-Regulation & Conflict Resolution

Every classroom has a peaceful area, offering a quiet and private space with materials to help the child become calm. Children are encouraged to solve disagreements using appropriate communication techniques, including the 'Peace Rose', which focuses on "I" messages:

"I feel...(feeling) ~ when you...(behavior) ~ because...(effect) ~ I want...(desired behavior)." Example: "I feel angry when you walk on my rug because it messes up my work. I want you to walk around the rug."

If it is the case that the behavior of a student does not improve and/or continually disrupts the well-being of others, the following disciplinary steps are followed:

Discipline Report:

- 1) Written notice of the incident. This document is to be signed by the parent and returned to the School the following day.
- 2) A second disciplinary report requires a conference with the guide and parent/s for their support and cooperation, and together a plan will be formulated to best serve the needs of the child and community.
- 3) A third disciplinary report requires a conference with the Head of School. At this meeting, parents may seek professional guidance, and the child may be placed on a temporary attendance suspension.
- 4) A fourth disciplinary report may result in a school-initiated withdrawal.

Temporary Attendance Suspension:

The School reserves the right to ask a parent to collect their child from School as an appropriate action if the child is displaying harmful or disruptive behavior. Return to school requires a behavior improvement plan, established between the school/parents and possibly with the guidance of an outside professional.

School Initiated Withdraw:

The School reserves the right to terminate the attendance of any student or family whose presence is considered by the School to be detrimental to the best interest of the School and/or children.

The School follows the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services Minimum Standards for Licensed Child Care Centers for guidance on discipline issues.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Progress Reports

The school provides a qualitative evaluation of a child's performance that takes into consideration the whole child, including strengths, limitations, and social, physical, and creative achievements. Progress reports are sent to the parents prior to parent conferences.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Lead Guides hold two parent conferences per school year.

Student Success

Each child is recognized for their individual strengths and learning diversity. If a child shows signs of learning difficulty, it is the Guide's responsibility to bring objective observations to parents and the Head of School and/or Curriculum Director.

The School follows a 3-tiered program for identifying effective learning strategies:

Step 1: Observation and Documentation (4-6-weeks of school)

- Who is having trouble moving toward normalization?
- What obstacles are in the way of optimal development?
- What modification can be made to remove obstacles?
- How will we monitor progress?

Step 2: Consultation & Assessment (4-6 weeks)

- Referral to clinical experts for assessment. An assessment serves as a discovery, to inform the school and parents of interventions that may be necessary to support optimal learning.
 - What does assessment tell us about the child?
 - What type of special support could help?
 - How will we monitor progress?

Step 3: Intervention (4-6 weeks)

- One on One support with a professional (Social Worker, Speech, Occupational, ABA Therapist, etc.)
- Possible referral to a school that specializes in meeting the needs of the student.

Student Services

The school understands and supports the individual learner. We understand that there may be circumstances in which a parent may request that the School provide an adjustment or accommodation for a student's medical needs, physical or mental disabilities, or learning differences. As the range of requests has grown over the years, the School believes that it is appropriate at this time to outline the School's policy and general guidelines for addressing such requests.

General Policy: In general, it is our School's policy to provide accommodations or adjustments for a student's minor needs in circumstances in which the administration determines, in its sole discretion, that doing so is within the reasonable ability of the School and/or its staff and will not result in a significant disruption to the guides' ability to instruct other students, will not require a threat of harm to the safety of other students or employees, will not require a fundamental change to our educational environment or mission, and will not impose responsibilities on School employees for which they are not trained.

We also ask parents to realize that, given the size of our school and our available resources, we may not be able to provide all requested accommodations. To the extent we agree to provide accommodations, the School requires a willingness to collaborate, with transparency, between parents, the student, and outside professionals (as necessary).

Health & Wellness

Accidents

Should your child be injured while at School, you will be advised. Our first and immediate concern will be to care for your child. Depending upon the severity of the injury, you will be contacted and consulted about the procedures you want to be followed (doctor or hospital, etc.). All staff members have been trained and certified in both First Aid and CPR.

All significant incidents, accidents, injuries, and illnesses will be documented on an “Incident/Illness Report” and the parents will receive a copy to be signed; one copy will remain at school and the bottom copy will go home with the parent.

Allergies & Diet Restrictions

All medically diagnosed food allergies and dietary restrictions must be listed in the child’s enrollment form. Students who have severe, life-threatening allergies must also have an ‘allergy plan’ and ‘food consent form’ on file at the school and updated annually.

Students who have life-threatening food allergies will not be given food from the School, the food catering company, or other outside sources. This includes special occasions, breakfast, snacks, and lunch. Parents must provide all foods, unless parents complete a ‘food waiver form’, authorizing the School to serve approved foods.

Immunizations

Each student enrolled or admitted must meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the TX. Dept. of State Health Services, the Department of State Health Services and in accordance with the schools’ immunization policy.

A student may be exempted from one or more vaccinations for medical reasons. The parent or guardian must provide the school with a certificate signed by a physician (M.D. or D.O.), registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States, which states that, in the physician's opinion, the immunization required would be injurious to the student's health and well-being or to any of the student's family or household members. Unless a lifelong condition is specified, that certificate is valid for one year from the date signed by the physician and must be renewed every year for the exclusion to remain in effect. Obtained from <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/exemption-faq.aspx#7>

Per school policy, the school accepts students who have medical reasons for immunization exemption and may decline students with delayed/exemption ‘for reason of conscience’ (based on the community’s current health conditions).

Student Illness and Communicable Diseases

The COVID Handbook contains Policies and Protocols pertaining to the pandemic. The handbook is updated as needed, and available in Transparent Classroom. When a revision is made, parents are notified via email.

When to keep a child home:

The School is not licensed to provide get-well care or to isolate children, for extended periods of time, who cannot participate in school activities. If one or more of the following exists, your child may not attend school:

- If your child is required to have more than one breathing treatment/ medicine treatment per day.
- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in all activities including outdoor play.
- The illness results in a greater need for care than guides can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other students in school.
- The child has one or more of the following (unless a medical evaluation by a health-care professional indicates that you can include the child in the school’s activities):
 - o A forehead, ear, or armpit temperature reading above 100 degrees.
 - o Symptoms or signs of severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, two or more incidents of diarrhea/vomiting within a 24-hr. period, a rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill.
 - o Lice (live or nits)
 - o Symptoms of Pink Eye (red, itchy eye(s) with discharge)
 - o Green/yellow runny nose
 - o A health-care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does

- not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.
- In extraordinary circumstances, such as a Pandemic, parents will be notified of additional safeguards and restrictions for a safe return to school in the COVID Handbook.

Symptoms of Illness while at School

Should your child show signs/symptoms of illness during the day, you will be notified immediately. You must arrange to have him/her picked up as soon as possible. Your child will await your arrival in a safe area away from other children.

If it is difficult for you to get to the School within a reasonable time (30-45 minutes), you must designate another person to pick up your child.

Children sent home due to illness/symptoms of illness must be symptom-free and without the need for fever-reducing medicine for 24 hrs. before returning to school. You will be provided an "Incident/Illness Report" letting you know what symptoms your child experienced at school. This note will explain the 24-hour rule for returning to school. The only exception is with a note from your child's physician,

A complete list of communicable diseases, which would exclude a child (or employee) from attending school and protocols for return to school, can be found at: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov>
If your child has been diagnosed with a communicable illness, notify the School immediately, so other parents can be alerted to watch for symptoms.

Head Lice

Parents/guardians should consult their physician, pharmacist, or [Lice Care Solutions](#) for advice on the proper use of an approved medicated shampoo for the head lice. Students must be excluded from school until the scalp is free of lice and nits.

Medication

The School administers prescription medications only. Medications are to come in their original container with the prescription date, doctor's name, and child's name. These are checked in at the front desk. A Medical Authorization Form must be filled out (forms are located in Transparent Classroom).

- Any exception must be accompanied by written permission from your child's physician, indicating dosage instructions, and a doctor's note indicating the dosage for the child.
- Prescriptions and breathing treatments are given once daily after lunch.
- Medications, such as diaper rash cream, etc., will be handled on a case basis.

Sunscreen & Insect Repellants: When needed, please apply before coming to school. Parents who wish for sunscreen or insect repellent to be re-applied are to provide the School with sunscreen and insect repellent, labeled with the child's first/last name.

Travel Alert Status

As you travel DOMESTICALLY OR INTERNATIONALLY, please be aware of health and safety precautions that could prevent the spread of infectious disease. COVID protocols and CDC recommendations are listed in the COVID Handbook. To find out more about Travel Advisories and health visit the World Health Organization's website at www.who.int or the Center for Disease Control at www.cdc.com.gov.

MONTESSORI PROGRAM & CURRICULUM

Developmental Distinctions

From birth to around six years of age, children have an absorbent mind. This means that they learn effortlessly, soaking

in huge amounts of information as easily as a sponge soaks up water. Maria Montessori explains that during this stage, children are 'constructing their individuality.' She further breaks this stage into two sub-stages: the unconscious and conscious stage.

Children under the age of three absorb information without conscious effort. He (or she) is developing their basic faculties through mimicry. Children in this phase will mimic just about everything they see.

"Impressions do not merely enter a child's mind; they form it" ~ Maria Montessori

Then, from three to around six years old, children pass into a more conscious stage of development. They still have sponge-like minds that absorb information easily, but now they will consciously seek certain experiences. Children in this phase are expanding their newly developed faculties and abilities. They will demonstrate an innate (often intense) desire to make choices for themselves and to accomplish tasks independently. Maria Montessori referred to this as the 'help me do it myself' stage.

The Montessori Work Period

Per our accrediting agency, the American Montessori Society, the School upholds the standard of providing an uninterrupted work time. AMS Standard 3.9 states: *Schools are to allocate and protect large blocks of uninterrupted instructional time to support student learning. Optimal learning takes place during two- to three-hour blocks of time. Schools should make every effort to schedule enrichment programs and transition times to accommodate these blocks.*

Missing Materials

Any small object you may find in your child's lunchbox, pockets, or folders regardless of how insignificant it may seem should be returned as it may be significant to the classroom.

It is quite normal for children to pocket things, especially tiny or unusual items, so please stress only the need to return it and not mention the child's act of removing it.

If your child goes through a period of pocketing, please help us during that time by carefully checking each day. Let your child help you check and seal the objects in an envelope and write "for the School" on it. This may also be a sign of love for their school or a need for security (not theft at this young age).

TODDLER COMMUNITY (T)

The toddler community provides the child with an atmosphere of freedom and respect, where the child's blossoming independence is encouraged. Children are given the freedom to make choices and to explore interests. While learning to care for oneself, the community, and their environment, the child will develop and practice skills that serve as the foundation and preparation for life.

The Guide's role in the community is to follow and observe the child; discovering their needs and interests as they are revealed. The Guide also offers assistance in a way that *helps the child to help himself*. It is our goal for every child to leave the toddler community with a foundation of confidence, strength, and independence upon which they will construct their future self.

Toilet Learning

Children actively participate in the toileting process. The child is encouraged to remove their own clothing and diaper and is offered the use of the toilet at every diaper change. This is the beginning stage of self-toileting. Toilet learning occurs at each child's individual pace. A meeting between the parents and the guide will be scheduled to discuss the switch to cloth-training pants, once the child exhibits these signs of readiness:

- Continued success while sitting on the toilet.

- The diaper stays dry for longer periods of time.

Once your child is wearing cloth-training pants, parents are asked to do the same at home. Putting a child back into a diaper impedes the progress that the child wishes to make.

Privacy and Body Awareness

Our practices are an extension of these Montessori and developmental views:

- Bodies are beautiful and natural. Children are given proper language for their body parts and have an active role in process of undressing, dressing, and toileting.
- Learning to dress/undress and use the toilet includes being without clothes.
- It is respectful to a toddler to help them be clean after toileting and playing in the sand and/or mud. Summertime outdoor play may be followed by an outdoor shower, as needed before returning to the classroom for dressing.
- The toddler classrooms are *their own world*, which is intentionally designed to suit the child (rather than the adult). When at school, adults who must enter should do so with respect and understanding that they are in another's place – a child's space.

Clothing

Label all clothing. The school is not responsible for unlabeled clothing. Upon arrival, children change from their home clothes to their school clothes, which consist of t-shirt and cotton underpants (or diapers). Before going home for the day, they change back into their 'home clothes'. Children who have mastered independent toileting may not have a need/desire to change in/out of school/home clothes. When choosing clothing for your child, please consider the following, as it should:

- Allow for freedom of movement and be comfortable.
- Be easy to put on and remove, easy zippers to manipulate, sleeves without tight elastic, only one layer of clothing, pants easy to unbutton, and large neck openings on shirts.
- Shoes should have rubber soles and easy fasteners (Velcro) or slip-on. Your child's foot should fit into the shoe with minimal effort.
- Please do not send "onesies" (shirt and underwear in a single unit)
- Three changes of clothes should be always kept at school.

Additional Items to Bring to School

For your child's first day of school, please provide the following supplies:

- 3 cotton t-shirts (one size larger than the child normally wears), clearly labeled and in a gallon-sized zip-lock bag.
- 1 dozen (Full-Day) or ½ dozen (Academic-Day) Gerber cloth-training pants sized 2T, per semester, or as needed. (These are kept and laundered at school)
- 1 package of disposable diapers as needed.
- 3-4 pictures of your child and his family (pets and grandparents too)
- Reusable water bottle, labeled with child's first/last name.
- Insect repellent (DEET-free) and sun block (labeled with first/last name)

Typical Daily Schedule

7:00 - 8:00 am	Full-Day program early care arrivals (breakfast available)
8:15 - 8:30 am	Academic-Day arrivals
8:30 - 11:30 am	Morning work period (includes group time, snack & outdoor exploration)
11:30 am	Lunch
12:00 - 2:30 pm	Rest period
2:30 pm	Academic-Day Dismissal

2:45 - 3:00 pm Full-day children arise, toileting
3:00 - 6:00pm Afternoon work period (group time, snack & outdoor exploration)

Curriculum by Area

Entrance Area

The area just inside the classroom door is the symbolic point of separation for the parent and the child. The child exchanges kisses with mom or dad and is assured that he will be picked up later. The child is greeted by his guide and proceeds to the cubby area to change into school-day clothes.

Bathroom

This area is different in that there is not a changing area but instead a bathroom with one or two toilets. Communal underpants are stored here. A child-sized sink is just outside the room with a supply of soap and single-use clothes for drying hands.

Work Area

This area is divided into several sections and includes the language area, practical life materials, manipulative, and expressive materials.

Dining Area

Social exploration takes place here and children eat family-style at a communal dining table. Guides eat with the children modeling grace and courtesy. Children serve others as well as themselves.

Sleeping Area

Sleeping mats are stored and brought out at nap time. Linens and blankets are provided by the School and are laundered weekly or as needed.

Outdoor Area

The toddler environment opens directly onto a private and secure butterfly garden with herbs, bird feeders, and play equipment. The early impressions of natural beauty, observations of living things, the joy of being outdoors, and being able to easily view it from within the classroom – all give a contact with nature that no image in a book or description can ever duplicate. In time, as the toddler starts to see beyond self and their own needs, they will want to participate in the care of what they have come to love. From appreciation comes the desire to work with plants, gardens, and care for wildlife.

EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY (EC)

Our Early Childhood community is a three to four-year program comprised of children aged ~3 through 6 years of age. The mixed-age grouping is intentionally designed to give children the unique opportunity to succeed in a miniature community, where mutual respect, mentoring, leadership, and self-reliance can flourish.

Completing the cycle (through age six) is most important in achieving the greatest development of the child. The “Leadership Year” within the Early Childhood Classroom (age 5 as of Sept. 1) is a monumental year and an extremely rewarding and joyous experience for the child. It not only serves as the year of culmination for all previous lessons, but it also allows the child to transfer his knowledge from the absorbent mind (concrete) to the rational mind (abstract). It also provides an opportunity for the child to embrace his new position of leadership and mentorship. Knowing how important his or her role is in their community builds self-esteem and confidence, the primary ingredients of future success.

Clothing

Please label all clothing. The school is not responsible for unlabeled clothing. The School has extra clothing should

your child need a clean change of clothes. It is not necessary to send extra clothes; however, the school is happy to accept clothes that you are no longer in need of to add to our school's supply.

Additional Items to Bring to School:

- Items of interest for "show & tell" every Friday (toys are not permitted)
- Reusable Water Bottle (labeled with first/last name)
- Framed family picture to display in the classroom

Your Child's Work

Much of the work completed in the classroom cannot be sent home because their work involves using concrete materials, which remain on the shelves. This is especially true for younger children who are not yet practicing 'writing' work. Observation opportunities, including 'watch me work' nights, are conducted through the School year, giving parents a chance to see their child at 'work', within a wide variety of subject areas.

Older children who are working on extensions to the classroom materials will take work home that has been completed. 'Friday Folders' are used to send work home. Please help your children become responsible for returning their folder to school the following Monday.

Becoming an "Afternoon Worker"

The afternoon work period (12:30 – 2:30 pm) is open to students who exhibit readiness for a longer workday.

Prerequisites include:

- The ability for longer periods of concentration and focus
- The ability for independent, self-initiated work
- Age-appropriate behavior and maturity

These attributes usually develop in a child around the age of 4 ~ 5 yrs. When the guide sees developmental readiness in your child, he/she will extend an invitation to the child to attend the afternoon work period. Children who are "in-between" will be given the opportunity to engage in a quiet activity after a brief resting period.

Reading Folder

Children showing an interest in reading books will be sent home with a book. Please *encourage* your child to share the book with you but be careful to not *discourage* your child by forcing them to read it. Emergent readers will be sent home with a book. New books are sent upon return of the previous book.

Show & Tell

Show and Tell is every Friday. Your child is always encouraged to bring an item of interest that will enhance our learning. Toys are not permitted.

Homework

All children leaving school for the day are given time to both relax and be responsible for the activities surrounding home life (what Montessori educators refer to as 'homework').

Classroom Environment

Early Childhood guides prepare the classrooms to support a child's natural curiosity; encourage creativity and aid in cooperative learning. Children learn individually and in small groups. The child is free to choose work that has been introduced to him/her from the different areas of the classroom. Each classroom consists of the following areas:

Typical Daily Schedule

7:00 - 8:00 am	Full-Day program early care arrivals (breakfast available)
8:15 - 8:30 am	Morning Arrivals
8:30 - 11:45 am	Uninterrupted work period (snack and outdoor work/exploration)
11:45 am	Lunch

12:30- 2:30 pm	Rest period for those who nap
12:30- 2:15 pm	Lunch clean-up and uninterrupted work period for afternoon workers
2:30 pm	Academic-Day Dismissal
2:30 pm	Afterschool Extra-Curricular Programs Begin
2:30- 6:00 pm	After-school care (Includes snack & outdoor exploration)

Curriculum by Area

Outdoor Environment

Our work continues in the outdoor classroom, where children enjoy gardening, exploring nature, observing, and interacting with wildlife.

Practical Life

Exercises such as washing dishes, polishing objects, setting the table, watering plants, and sewing are designed to develop self-reliance and respect for the environment. These exercises build and refine the child's sense of order, concentration, coordination, and independence, which prepares the child for all other areas of the classroom. It is the foundation from which all other areas construct.

Sensorial

Activities in this area cultivate the senses and help the child become a keen observer. The sensorial materials develop visual, tactile, auditory, and olfactory discrimination of differences. Another important aspect of this material is the preparation for more advanced skills in concepts of language, geometry, and science.

Language

The Montessori language curriculum includes all the elements of language: auditory, oral, mechanical, interpretive, and grammar. There is a great variety of materials in this area. The most classic of which include the sandpaper letters and moveable alphabet. Language development is embedded in the entire classroom (rather than an isolated subject) with plenty of opportunity for language in all areas of study.

Math

Math materials are esthetically appealing, precise, and simple. This is one of the most desired areas of the classroom. Montessori's math materials offer a concrete representation of quantity and simple operations, which helps the child understand abstract concepts, which is essential for future success with more advanced math operations.

Physical and Life Science

Children learn about the world through observation, experimentation, and care of our environment. Young children love nature and are truly intrigued by its mysteries. The school offers an abundance of hands-on opportunities for children to understand and appreciate science. Activities range from the study of animals, botany, rocks and minerals, simple science experiments, and the outdoors – gardening and wildlife.

Culture

Culture: The study of Culture and Geography start with the sensorial exploration of directionality, body awareness, weather, and the calendar. From there we begin to study our world, starting with the sandpaper globe, identifying land and water, then beginning to name continents, oceans, and seas. The puzzle maps accentuate mapping skills and exploration of different countries which expands into cultures. Our Cultural studies encompass the traditions, holidays, music, and food from all over the world. Our diverse community of students is always a positive and interesting advantage to Cultural studies.

Art, Music, and Movement

The children are given an opportunity to develop their gross and fine motor skills through creative movement and

art. Music is integral to our day, incorporated into much of our cultural work, and often as a soothing background to our work period. Art encourages the natural desire to create. Our art program emphasizes the *process* rather than the *product*, giving children more freedom to be creative. Music and Art have a known scientific connection to cognitive development, emotional health, and academic achievement.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

The first responsibility of staff in an emergency evacuation or relocation is to MOVE THE CHILDREN TO A DESIGNATED SAFE AREA OR ALTERNATE SHELTER.

TYPES OF EMERGENCY RESPONSES AND PLANS:

EVACUATION

FIRE: Fire Alarm Sounds

Immediate situation rendering inside of building unsafe; safety can be sought outdoors (example: fire).

The caregiver in charge will:

- Take the clipboard with attendance.
- Check restrooms and close doors.
- Line up and count to ensure all children are present.
- Evacuate the building, to the designated safe area (within the school's fence, along Lakemont Bend Ln.)
- Take attendance using face/name recognition.
- Confirm all are present (green sign) if a child is missing (red sign).
- Approval must be received before reentering the building.

Admin (person in charge) will:

- Take the RED emergency bag (located in the main admin office) and your cell phone.
- Evacuate the building, to the designated safe area.
- Ensure everyone is accounted for.

HOSTILE PERSON: "Lower/ Elementary School: Evacuate Now" is announced

Immediate or imminent situation rendering partial areas inside the school unsafe (example: a hostile person inside the building).

Caregivers in charge will announce "1-2-3 Look at Me", and

- The caregiver in charge will take the clipboard with attendance.
- Check restrooms and ensure classroom door is closed and locked.
- Line up and count to ensure all children are present.
- Evacuate the building, to the designated safe area:
 - Lower School: The grass area, to the right of the EC playground/East of the EC playground.
 - Elementary School: The grass area, to directly across the drive-through lane (south of the building)
- Take attendance using face/name recognition.
- Confirm all are present (green sign) if a child is missing (red sign).
- Approval must be received before reentering the building.

Admin (person in charge) will:

- Call 911 and/or press the emergency button located in the main office
- Take the RED emergency bag (located in the main admin office) and your cell phone.
- Evacuate the building, to the designated safe area: The grass area, to the right of the EC playground/East of the EC playground.
- Ensure everyone is accounted for.

LOCK-DOWN or SHELTER IN PLACE

LOCK-DOWN: “Lock-down” is announced

Immediate or imminent situation rendering the area outside of the building unsafe (example: hostile person on the property/outside of the building, or within close vicinity of the school).

Caregivers in charge will announce “1-2-3 Look at Me”, and

- Call students and employees into the buildings and into the designated safe area.
- Take the clipboard with attendance into the safe areas:
 - Toddlers: Kitchen
 - EC/LEL/UEL: Classroom Restrooms
- Turn off the lights, sit on the floor, and remain quiet.
- Take attendance using face/name recognition.
- Confirm all are present (green sign) if a child is missing (red sign).
- Activity bags are in each designated safe area (containing books/activities, a flashlight, and a plan for extended sheltering).
- Approval must be received from the person in charge before leaving the safe area.

Admin (person in charge) will:

- Call 911
- Take the RED emergency bag (located in the main admin office) and your cell phone.
- Move to a designated safe area (kitchen, EC restrooms)
- Ensure everyone is accounted for.

SHELTER IN PLACE: 3-Whistle Blows & “Shelter in Place” is announced

Immediate or imminent situation rendering partial areas of indoor space unsafe and leaving or exiting the school unsafe (example: tornado)

Caregivers in charge will announce “1-2-3 Look at Me”, and

- Call students and employees into the building and into the designated safe area.
- Caregivers in charge will take the clipboard with attendance into the safe areas:
 - Toddlers: Kitchen
 - EC/LEL/UEL: Classroom Restrooms
- Take attendance using face/name recognition.
- Confirm all are present (green sign) if a child is missing (red sign).
- Activity bags are in each designated safe area (containing books/activities, a flashlight, and a plan for extended sheltering).
- Approval must be received from the person in charge before leaving the safe area.

Admin (person in charge) will:

- Take the RED emergency bag (located in the main admin office) and your cell phone.
- Move to a designated safe area (kitchen, EC restrooms)
- Ensure everyone is accounted for.

RELOCATION

RELOCATION: “Relocate” is announced by the person in charge

Relocation of students and staff to an alternate safe place to take shelter (example: flood, fire).

MOVE TO THE SECONDARY BUILDING LOCATION:

Montessori House for Children
20625 Lakemont Bend Lane
Richmond, TX. 77407

Montessori House Elementary School
7233 S. Mason Road
Richmond, TX. 77407

HOW WILL THE SCHOOL COMMUNICATE DURING AN EMERGENCY?

- **FOR FIRE OR EVACUATION:** Admin will call 911. School admin will use cell phones if power is out or if the school has been evacuated outside the building.
- **FOR POLICE OR EMS SERVICES:** Admin will call 911. School admin will use cell phones if power is out or if the school has been evacuated outside the building.
- **FOR HEALTH EMERGENCY:** Admin will call 911
- **ROSENBERG OFFICE OF DFPS:** Admin will call 832-595-3000
- **PARENTS:** When possible, parents will be notified via phone or Transparent Classroom (Text message and School Announcement).

NON-EMERGENCY OR AFTER-HOURS CONTACT NUMBERS:

- SHERIFF'S OFFICE: 281-342-6116
- SCHOOL DIRECTOR: 713-875-3347
- SCHOOL OWNER: 281-468-0160

TDFPS HAS THE OWNERS' NUMBERS ON FILE:

BOB NELSON: (281) 610-6585
PAMELA NELSON: (281) 468-0160
BARBARA NELSON (713) 875-3347

HOW WE CONTINUE TO CARE FOR THE CHILDREN UNTIL EACH CHILD HAS BEEN RELEASED:

Children will be kept safe and engaged until released from evacuation, relocation, or sheltering/lock-down. Activities will include storybooks, songs, and games.

HOW WE WILL REUNIFY THE CHILDREN WITH THEIR PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

As the evacuation, lock-down, shelter-in-place, or relocation is lifted, students will ONLY be released to parents and/or guardians or individuals on the approved pick-up list on file.

Parents will be notified, in writing, of any policy change or change made to the Parent-Student Handbook.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND RECEIPT OF PARENT HANDBOOK

The registration of a student is considered an acceptance on the part of parents or guardians of all rules and regulations of our School.

The rules and regulations contained in this Handbook are not meant to be all comprehensive. Rather, they presuppose the goodwill and judgment of a student in all circumstances in which he/she may find himself/herself.

Parents/guardians are asked to familiarize themselves with the policies and procedures contained in this Parent Handbook.

We have read and understood all statements and provisions outlined in the Parent Handbook.

Parent/s/Guardian/s

Date