

Latest version updated 1/15/2018

\*3&4 Year Old Primary Students are subject to all policies put forth by Moore Montessori Community School. A MMCS Handbook will be distributed to these parents as soon as possible. All sections marked with an \* are subject to MMCS policy changes.



the  
garden  
MONTESSORI & ARTS LEARNING CENTER

## **Family Handbook**

*The final page of this handbook MUST be signed by all legal parents and guardians in order to be considered for enrollment at The Garden.*

Please also initial each page to indicate you have read it.

### ***Philosophy***

The Montessori Method of education was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, Italy's first female physician. She opened her first "school" (Casa dei Bambini) in 1907. Today, Montessori schools flourish all over the world. Fundamental to all of Dr. Montessori's ideas is a deep respect for a child's ability to learn. She recognized that children go through certain phases during which they learn more easily than at any other time in their lives. This innate potential to learn is dependent upon a loving environment that encourages the active pursuit of knowledge.

Dr. Montessori's developmentally-appropriate approach to learning is designed to fit each child instead of making each child fit into a preset program. She believed that learning should take place in multi-aged classrooms where children who are at various stages of development can learn from and with each other. This learning should take place in a noncompetitive atmosphere in order for each child to develop at his/her own speed.

Dr. Montessori observed that the best way for young children to learn is by active, hands-on experiences. She developed the idea of the prepared environment, where the classroom contains a wide variety of cognitive materials that foster learning in numerous areas. The purpose of the materials is not just to impart knowledge to children, but rather to provide them with stimuli that capture their attention and initiate a process of concentration.

### ***Mission Statement***

The Garden follows the Montessori educational principles of providing child-directed, individualized, hands-on learning within a prepared environment. The school seeks to educate the social, physical, intellectual, and emotional needs of each child through developmentally appropriate materials and activities; to generate a sense of community among children, teachers, and families; to promote a culture of peace and unity not just within our own school, but within the world.

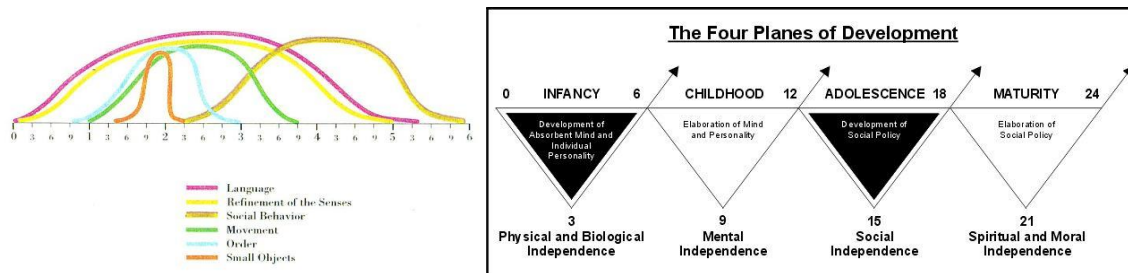
### ***School Objectives***

- To provide a prepared environment in which the stated purpose can be achieved, in keeping with Montessori principles.

- To provide an instructional program that follows a curriculum based on Montessori concepts and materials.
- To support early childhood development for children ages 15 months through 4 years.
- To follow the child's interest in learning and to use a completely child-led approach to education with regards to both academic and life skills.
- To provide support and education for the whole family.
- To enrich children's and families lives through the arts and nature-based experiences.

## *An Introduction to the Classrooms*

The Montessori classroom is a beautifully prepared, enriched environment, with child-sized furnishings and materials within reach of even the smallest student. The diversity of ages among the students necessitates a broad range of activities, and allows each child, regardless of age, the opportunity to find work suitable for his or her stage of development. All children can develop at their own pace, and find work suitable for his or her stage of development (according to their own capacities) in a non-competitive and supportive atmosphere. Montessori classrooms and curriculum are prepared based on identified Sensitive Periods (see chart below) and the four planes of development.



The work in the early childhood classrooms falls into four main categories:

**1. Practical Life:** Of prime importance, this area includes activities such as sweeping, scrubbing, polishing, and other everyday tasks the child has observed in his or her own home environment. These activities allow the child to order his or her physical environment to perfection, and in turn, to order his or her own mind. They are also familiar, and serve as a link between home and school. Most children in their first 4 years will concentrate almost entirely on these activities as well as exploring the senses as they gain the confidence and comfort in the most basic and necessary life skills before approaching academic challenges. It is important that parents understand that we do not push academic challenges on any child who does not show an obvious interest, desire and readiness. Academic challenges include learning letters, numbers, shapes, colors, etc. We believe that it is most important to focus on Practical Life skills such as self-care, care of the environment, food preparation, grace and courtesy, etc. and let the children gently and naturally find their way to learning more complex concepts by way of games and hands-on activities using specifically designed materials rather than using worksheets or memorization techniques.

**2. Sensorial:** Special materials in this area are designed to help the child isolate and classify the perceptions of sound, texture, color, shape and size. Children in the Toddler Community will begin with more familiar materials such as puzzles and interesting objects that engage the senses and will be introduced to these more specific materials as they reach their sensitive periods for Montessori-specific materials, which is usually closer to age 3.

**3. Language:** Montessori observed that young children have a sensitive period during which learning names are of interest and relatively easy. Thus, basic nomenclature from geography, history, botany, ecology, astronomy, history, zoology and cultural studies is presented as children begin to show interest. Grammatical concepts are also gradually introduced to children around age 4. Once a child enters the Children's House and they begin to show readiness), s/he builds from learning sounds to

writing words then from writing words to reading words then from reading words to reading sentences. Again, all learning is child-led and we strongly believe in following the child's cues and using our observations and general knowledge of sensitive periods for learning and age-appropriate activities to present certain materials and encourage academic challenges. We believe that children learn these skills in their own time when they are not pressured or forced into doing so based on their age or classroom placement. When they begin to show a genuine interest, we support and encourage this interest through the prepared environment along with guided instruction when needed.

**4.Mathematics:** The young child, in his or her need for order, seeks out mathematical concepts as a means of development. Montessori math materials present abstract math operations in a concrete manner, a presentation that children this age can understand. The sensorial materials also provide the children with a sensorial base for future abstractions when they reach Lower Elementary. Toddlers are introduced to numbers in concrete ways using familiar materials as they begin to show readiness and interest. Children are later introduced to specific Montessori materials as they display readiness, usually around age 3. Those in the Children's House learn through guided support, and self-directed exploration as well as observation of and guidance from older peers in a mixed-age environment.

**5. Cultural:** Many other areas are covered under the umbrella of the Montessori culture curriculum. Culture work is based on the children's interests, the changing seasons, the present world and other influences on the classroom and is developed as an emergent curriculum to meet the needs of the children in front of us at that moment. Culture work will change from classroom to classroom and from year to year based on the group enrolled. These areas may include (but are not limited to) art, yoga, botany, zoology, music, Spanish or other languages, nature study and geography.

## *Parent Role\**

The strongest foundation that can be provided for the education of the children is the support and concern of parents. Parents of toddlers are highly encouraged to provide a gradual transition process as they begin their experience at The Garden. Toddler teachers will arrange home visits, toddlers and parents can visit the classrooms together prior to the start of school and children can attend with a parent or without for their transition day the first week of school. Parents are also invited to volunteer within the classrooms by the use of a parent volunteer sign-up sheet provided in the parent portal portion of the website. Parents are also responsible for providing pre-designated healthy snacks for the class using our rotating schedule (sent out monthly) and submitting the fees listed below according to enrollment terms. It is vital that parents are informed and supportive of school philosophy and practice prior to enrollment.

## *Fees and Payment Policy*

**\*Fees and payment policies are subject to change for future years, tuition and fees will be finalized and announced by January 15th of each year. The Garden will provide sufficient notice of any changes occurring after your official registration has been submitted and allowances will be made for withdrawals based on these changes.\***

**\*\*All Families enrolling at The Garden are required to commit to a full academic school year by way of the Tuition Agreement or payment in full for the school year. All payments are required to be made through our online tuition management system at [www.TADS.com](http://www.TADS.com) Multiple payment types and options are available through this system. A 10% deposit plus all registration & supply fees are due at time of enrollment in order to reserve your child's spot.\*\*** Please note: Financing through TADS is subject to all TADS processing fees and are the parent's responsibility

Application Fee: \$75.00

*(must be paid in order to apply for enrollment by way of the waiting list, fee not required if there is no waiting list. Fee not required for summer camp only applications.)*

***Please do not submit an application to The Garden if your child will be 5 by August 31<sup>st</sup> 2018. Children ages 5 & up will need to apply through a lottery process for a spot at Moore Montessori Community School in January 2018, our partnering Kindergarten and Lower Elementary Charter School opening in August 2018. A lottery for entry into MMCS will be held in March 2018 if enrollment exceeds capacity. Enrollment for MMCS can be submitted January 15<sup>th</sup>-March 15<sup>th</sup> 2018.***

see below for additional fees and tuition for The Garden enrollment (ages 18m-4 yrs)

Supply Fees (in lieu of providing school supplies, due at enrollment): \$75.00

Annual Registration fee: \$250 (due at time of enrollment)

Summer Camp Registration fee (All Ages): \$50.00

\*Camp registration fees do not apply to children already enrolled at The Garden for the 2017-18 school year\*

TADS Processing Fees (as set by TADS)

### **2018-19 School Year Tuition Rates**

**Tuition for all programs is payable in full or in 10 or 12 monthly installments (or less). Monthly payment plans are offered as a convenience for families, but all families enrolling using the monthly payment plan must submit a Tuition Agreement stating their commitment to full payment of the yearly tuition amount. A 10% tuition deposit is required along with fees at time of enrollment.**

\*Children's House (3-4 yrs) 5 Half Days: \$4800.00

\*Toddler Community 2 Half Days (Mon & Fri): \$2000.00

\*Toddler Community 3 Half Days (Tues through Thurs): \$3000.00

\*Toddler Community 5 Half Days (Mon through Fri): \$4800.00

***A sibling discount of 5% will be applied to the 2<sup>nd</sup> child's tuition for families enrolling multiple children. Discount is applicable for school year & summer enrollment.***

### **2018 Summer Camp Fees**

**Please note that monthly & weekly enrollment will only be offered if camps do not fill with full summer enrollments. Monthly enrollment will be offered beginning April 1<sup>st</sup>. Weekly enrollments will be offered beginning May 1<sup>st</sup> if openings remain.**

\*Children's House 5 Day (FULL SUMMER ENROLLMENT Mon-Fri 8:30-12:30): \$1,400.00

>>\*Children's House 5 Day Monthly Rate: \$500.00; Weekly Rate: \$125.00

\*Toddler 3 Day (FULL SUMMER ENROLLMENT Tues-Thurs 9-12:00): \$800.00

>>\*Toddler 3 Day Monthly Rate: \$300.00/mo; Weekly Rate: \$90.00

\*Toddler 5 Day (FULL SUMMER ENROLLMENT Mon-Fri 9-12:00): \$1,300.00

>>\*Toddler 5 Day Monthly Rate: \$450.00/mo; Weekly Rate: \$115.00

\*Toddler 2 Day (FULL SUMMER ENROLLMENT Mon & Fri 9-12:00): \$600.00

>>\*Toddler 2 Day Monthly Rate: \$200/mo; Weekly Rate: \$60.00

***PLEASE NOTE 5 DAY ENROLLMENT WILL TAKE PRIORITY OVER 3 DAY ENROLLMENT. 2 DAY ENROLLMENT FOR SUMMER MAY BE OFFERED ONCE WE HAVE ATTEMPTED TO FILL ALL 5 AND 3 DAY SPOTS.***

**Full summer camp fees are due May 1, 2018. Summer tuition must be paid in full in advance Monthly payments will not be offered for summer camps. No exceptions can be made.**

The salaries, supplies and administrative expenses of The Garden are supported entirely by fees. Tuition payments are due the first of each month according to your tuition agreement and payment plan, irrespective of the actual number of days and hours the child attends. The child's spot will not be reserved until all enrollment forms, fees and any other requested information is complete and submitted. Any deadlines set forth regarding submitting these fees and forms are firm and no exceptions will be made. The parent/ guardian/custodian will be responsible for payment of registration fee, deposit and monthly tuition payments in order to reserve the enrollment spot. A grace period is no longer offered, all payments must be submitted by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month in order to avoid the 15% late fee. If payment is not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, students will be discharged for non-payment.

## *Eligibility & Student Placement*

Students eligible for the Toddler Community are:

1. Confidently walking
2. Between the ages of (approximately) 18 months and 3 years of age.

Students eligible for the Children's House are:

1. Using the toilet independently
2. Between the ages of 3 years and 5 years of age by the first day of school.

(please note that the Kindergarteners are placed in the mixed-age "Primary" classroom, or Children's House, but attend for full days and are enrolled through Moore Montessori Charter School, our partnering school. 3 & 4 year olds enrolled through The Garden are grouped in classrooms with with Kindergarteners at MMCS)

## *Non-discrimination policy*

The Garden encourages children of all backgrounds to attend. The school does not discriminate based on gender, race, color, creed, national origin, ethnic background or ability.

### *Openings*

Openings are determined by a student/teacher ratio dependent upon age as well as classroom size and balance of ages in the classroom. Enrollment is determined by the following priorities:

- Students currently enrolled have priority for successive enrollment.
- Siblings of students have second priority for enrollment.
- Children with a submitted application and paid application fee (on the waiting list) have third priority and will be admitted according to the date of application with the following factors taken into consideration:
  - Age
  - Previous Montessori Experience *\*it is the parent's responsibility to note previous Montessori experience on the application\**
- When openings occur during the school year, enrollment for those positions is determined by the following priorities:
  - Students currently enrolled in the school who wish to change their attendance hours have priority
  - Children with submitted applications but were denied admittance and placed on a waiting list have second priority for enrollment.
- Initial placement of all children for preferred attendance hours is dependent on date of application and factors listed above.

Exceptions to the above policies may be made by administration in order to provide beneficial classroom dynamics in regard to gender and age.

*Due to the structure of the program and limited availability in each classroom, seats for successive years are not guaranteed for any child, regardless of age. Any open seats for upcoming years will be offered first to enrolled children and will be enrolled based on time of submission of application and fees. As soon as seats are full, parents will be notified and will remain on a wait list until more seats become available.*

## *Enrollment Forms \**

Parents must have all enrollment forms completed before the child's spot is considered reserved.

**Enrollment forms MUST be submitted by the assigned deadline to maintain the child's spot.**

The Garden has a substantial waiting list and it is not possible for the administration to hold spots for those who have not submitted ALL paperwork in time. Enrollment forms include the following:

- 2018-19 Application Form
- Tuition Agreement/Payment Plan (if applicable)
- Parent Handbook Agreement & Signature Page
- Release Form: Picture/Video
- Record of Immunizations
- Additional Medical Forms – A medical report signed by a doctor is required for all children. Children with specific illnesses or allergies must submit additional forms provided by The Garden. It is the parent's responsibility to let the director know about a child's allergy prior to the deadline and within enough time to get an allergy form signed by the child's allergist. Missing forms of any kind at the time of the stated deadline, including allergy and additional medical forms, may result in the removal of the child's name from the roster.
- Alternate Pick Up Authorization – This list consists of names and contact information for relatives and friends of the family that can pick up a child in place of his or her parents. A child cannot be released to anyone who is not listed on this form (this includes during a time of emergency). It is the parents' responsibility to notify staff when their child will be picked up by someone on the Alternative Pick Up form, to update names, relationships and phone number of persons authorized to pick their child up from the center. Parents should notify the school if there is a court order which prohibits a person from contact with the child.
- Emergency Medical Authorization – This form gives The Garden permission to act on your behalf in an emergency medical situation and allows us to give EMTs permission to transport your child to a hospital should they need to be transported. EMTs MUST view this form before they will transport a child, so it is VERY important that this form is filled out correctly and submitted in time.
- Toddler Policies Addendum Signature Page (toddler community only)
- Family Questionnaire
- Medication permission forms, food allergy emergency care form, seizure action plan or asthma action plan (Only as required for children with specific medical conditions)

## *Withdrawal from the Program*

Parents wishing to withdraw their child must provide a statement in writing at least 30 days prior to the discontinuation of this service. Parents are responsible for all fees for the remainder of the school year as noted in the tuition agreement. Tuition and fees are non-refundable and non-transferable regardless of time of withdrawal. The Garden does retain the right to report outstanding fees to credit reporting agencies. Exemptions will be made for families providing military orders for relocation mid-year.

## *Hours of Operation 2018-2019 School Year*

*hours are subject to change until February 2018*

Toddler Community (18 mo – 3 yrs)

8:30am-12:30pm

at MMCS

Children's House (3-4yrs)

Monday through Friday 8:00am-12:00pm

Please note, drop-off and pick-up windows are 15 minutes at the beginning and end of each day.

## *Parents' Rights and Responsibilities \**

Parents have the right:

- To know that their child is cared for in a safe, supportive environment;
- To confer with the Teacher(s), Directors regarding concerns related to their child or the program;
- To be told about serious behavior concerns on the part of their child, and to visit with the Teacher (s), Directors in order to bring about improvement in the situation;
- To be regularly informed by the Teacher or Director about school activities.
- To have access to their child at any time (all parents must sign-in on the Visitor's Log for safety purposes)
- To privacy in regard to their child, themselves or their families and any issues concerning the above-mentioned items.

Parents have the responsibility:

- To pay fees on time (including, but not limited to the supply fee, registration fees, tuition fees)
- To provide a class snack approximately once per month using the rotating schedule and the provided snack list.
- To keep their child's records up-to-date as explained in the Enrollment Forms section;
- To drop-off and pick-up their child on time as explained in Hours of Operation  
PLEASE NOTE: WE ARE NOT LICENSED FOR FULL-TIME CHILD CARE AND IT IS ILLEGAL FOR CHILDREN TO REMAIN IN OUR CARE FOR MORE THAN 4 HOURS PER DAY. PARENTS SHOULD ARRIVE ON TIME TO ENSURE THEIR CHILD IS PICKED UP WITHIN 4 HOURS OF ARRIVING. A VERBAL WARNING WILL BE GIVEN THE FIRST TIME A PARENT IS LATE PICKING UP THEIR CHILD. AFTER THAT, PARENTS WILL BE CHARGED A FEE (AS EXPLAINED BELOW) FOR LATE PICKUP.
- To follow health policies as explained in Health and Policy section;
- To let the administrators and teachers know if their child will not be attending on a regularly scheduled day;
- To take note of any communications from the Teacher(s)/ Directors regarding their child's behavior, and to cooperate in any efforts to bring about improvement in the situation;
- To attend parent meetings scheduled by the school
- To attend parent/teacher conferences as listed on the yearly calendar
- To schedule meetings with the Directors if any concerns arise during the school year and to maintain open communication with the Directors about any concerns or issues pertaining to the child and their school performance.
- To maintain privacy in regard to other children in this setting.
- To maintain a positive, mature attitude and to exhibit grace and courtesy within our school community.
- To discuss any concerns or issues with staff and administration immediately and directly, in a mature and open manner.
- To share with the school any custody agreements in cases of joint custody and to abide by the rules of this custody agreement regarding pickup/drop-off of the child as well as time spent at school observing or volunteering. The Garden staff will not be involved in any mediation between parents and is not responsible for ensuring communication between parents. The Garden staff will not participate in any custody hearings unless required by law/subpoena. Parents are responsible for any and all legal fees, expenses and time spent (based on an hourly rate determined by salary) by any and all Garden staff that is required in order to participate in or assist with any and all custody-related issues. In some cases, the Garden may require a separate agreement specific to school that is signed by both parents stating when each has permission to be on site with the child and when each is allowed to pick the child up.

- To refrain from the following behaviors which may contribute to a toxic school community:  
- Gossip (by word of mouth, social media or phone/text etc.) regarding staff, children, parents, volunteers or any other member of the school community. This includes discussion of other children's behavior in the school or outside of school, opinions of other community parents, concerns with staff members or administration, concerns regarding school policies/practices/philosophies, arguments between parents or any other negative discussion of the school community or its members).
- To remove oneself and one's family from the community when s/he no longer sees it as a good fit.
- To educate themselves on age-appropriate behaviors for their children and their children's peers in order to understand classroom and group dynamics in a group care setting.
- To refrain from hiring any employed member of The Garden for personal services, including babysitting, housesitting, pet-sitting or any other service not mentioned here.
- To enroll online in our tuition management system through [www.TADS.com](http://www.TADS.com) and to submit all payments on time through this system.

School policy requires parents to address any concerns openly and directly with school administrators. The Garden maintains a positive environment that reflects our practices of grace and courtesy. If parents are unable to communicate their concerns or needs with administration and the relationship is not working for either or both sides, and it is found to affect the classroom dynamics or school community function, families will be asked to leave the school without notice required or tuition refund. Parents who do not adhere to this policy or who choose to leave on their own choice, regardless of reason or claim, will be responsible for paying all remaining tuition fees regardless of removal.

## *Children's Rights and Responsibilities*

Children have the right:

- To have a safe, supportive, and consistent environment;
- To use all the program equipment, materials, and facilities on an equal basis;
- To have respectful treatment;
- To have discipline that is fair and non-punitive;
- To receive nurturing care from staff members who are actively involved with them
- To a challenging and age-appropriate education

Children have the responsibility:

- To be accountable for their actions;
- To respect the school rules that guide them while at school;
- To remain with the group and staff at all times;
- To care for materials and equipment properly.

## *Lunch \**

Toddler students are required to pack a healthy, nut-free and egg-free lunch and a full water bottle each day. Snack will be available to the children throughout the morning (through our parent snack rotation schedule). Parents should not send a separate snack to school with their children. Children should eat breakfast prior to attending school. Primary students at MMCS will not eat lunch during school hours.

SUMMER: Children should pack a small snack and lunch each day, in separate, labeled containers. All children should also bring a water bottle to camp each day, which can be refilled as needed.



## *Snacks \**

Parents will be responsible for providing snack for the class during the school year using the rotating schedule provided by the school. Please drop off snacks on the morning before your scheduled day. Snack schedules are listed on the monthly parent calendar which will be distributed by the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month prior. Please provide only assigned snacks. This will help ensure that all children can enjoy the snack without concern for allergies and will also ensure that children will be able to participate in the preparation of snack. Birthday snacks are not permitted due to allergen concerns. If you would like to bring something in for your child's birthday, we recommend some type of non-food favor (i.e. stickers, etc) please contact the child's Teacher if you would like to participate in a school celebration for your child's birthday. Primary students will be included in a whole school rotation schedule with MMCS which will be outlined separately in their handbook.

We do have children with allergies enrolled, so **Please** be sure to check all labels for any ingredients containing any type of nuts or eggs as these are unsafe in our environment unless otherwise noted in the snack rotation.

Food brought to the school will be stored in the refrigerator, if necessary, and opened boxes will be placed in a plastic protective container.

## *School Bags \**

Every child should bring a "school bag," with them each day. This should be a conveniently-sized bag large enough for an 8x10 folder, show and tell items, a change of clothes, diapers, sunscreen, etc. but small enough to fit on the provided storage hooks. We have limited space to accommodate all of our children's bags, so it is important that your child's bag not be larger than the space allotted (an individual storage hook). If needed, we will provide bags that your child can access on his/her own to accommodate this independence.

## *Child's Personal Property*

Although the school attempts to help children stay organized, the school cannot be responsible for lost personal property. Items found at school after hours will be collected and stored in a lost & found box located at the lending bookshelf (near the restrooms). Please check the lost & found box regularly for missing items. Children should not bring money, toys, food, or other items unnecessary for school activities to school for any reason. If a personal item is brought to school, it will remain in the child's bag and asked to be returned home. If a child takes any school equipment home, it should be returned promptly.

## *School Attire \**

Children should wear washable, comfortable play clothes. The staff recommends that an extra set of clothing be kept at school in case clothes become soiled, wet or muddy. **All items should be marked with the child's name.**

MMCS is exploring the option of uniforms for all students, this will be outlined separately in MMCS handbook.

Outdoor activities are planned daily, but outdoor play will not be allowed in storms or extreme temperatures. Every child should be properly dressed for the weather. In the winter, this includes snow pants, a hat that covers the ears, mittens and boots. Children should wear "indoor shoes" or slippers/socks with rubber soles, leaving outdoor shoes on the shoe rack upon arriving. This will help us to keep the premises clean and, since children spend a lot of time working on the floor on their mats, this will protect their fingers and help keep floors clean for workspace. Staff/child ratios do not permit the school to keep one or two children inside during outdoor activities, so proper outdoor attire is mandatory as well, including rain boots if needed for wet or rainy days.

## *Rest Time*

All children's need for rest will be respected; however, we do not provide a cot or blanket or dedicated time for children to sleep. If you think your child may have trouble adjusting to a new schedule, please feel free to pack a blanket or comfort item in his/her bag and we will make your child comfortable in case s/he gets sleepy and needs to rest in the padded quiet area until you arrive. You may also arrange to pick your child up early as s/he adjusts to the schedule.

## *Celebrations, Birthdays, and Holidays \**

Planned special occasions may include: Halloween, Thanksgiving, December Holidays, and students' birthdays. The school is sensitive to the multicultural nature of our community and therefore includes cultural diversity in celebrations whenever possible. Parents are encouraged to share their family's traditions with the children at school. Please let us know if you would like to volunteer to speak to the children about your family's cultural celebrations or traditions.

## *Parent Orientation/ Education/Conferences \**

Before school begins for the fall term, parents of enrolled students are required to attend a school tour, observation and meeting with the administration. Parents and children will also be required to attend the Open House/Parent Orientation. Child care is provided for Parent Orientation. Students beginning mid-year will also be required to spend time in the classrooms with the potential teachers before enrollment. During the year, one parent/teacher conference will be scheduled per semester. Parent Education meetings are regularly scheduled on Saturday mornings and parents are strongly encouraged to attend.

We have a lending library with reading materials to help parents familiarize themselves with the Montessori Method and we will attempt to have regular parent education meetings throughout the year (attendance is strongly encouraged and child care is provided).

## *Visitors and Observations*

Parents and community members are welcome to observe at the school. A scheduled visit would be appreciated to limit disruption to the classrooms, but parents have unlimited and immediate access to their children. As noted earlier, for emergency preparedness reasons, all visitors to the building (including parents) must sign the visitor sign-in sheet prior to entering the building each day. For liability and supervisory reasons, it is not possible for children who visit the program to take part in activities (including non-enrolled siblings). A liability release is required for all children visiting the program. Observations guidelines are available from the child's teacher. We require non-parent volunteers/observers for our program to obtain a full criminal background check prior to their visit.

## *Channels of Communication \**

Throughout the year, if a parent has any questions about their child's progress or any concerns or questions, they can contact the teacher in person or by email. Teachers may distribute their personal phone numbers at their discretion, but the school does not provide teachers' personal phone numbers. Parents can contact the school directly to be connected to teachers as needed.

Written and electronic messages from school will be sent periodically to keep parents informed of school happenings and student progress. A monthly newsletter for each class will list important upcoming events to assist parents in keeping current with activities. Parents should check their email regularly, and should sign up for the Remind App (see Parent Portal for the code to sign in), which will be used in the event of an emergency to contact all parents simultaneously.

\*Please note daily operations-related issues for Primary students should be communicated through MMCS staff and administration. Clerical and billing-related issues should be communicated with The Garden administration.

Newsletters, monthly snack calendars and all relevant school information will be posted to our Parent Portal which can be found on our website. [www.thegardenmontessori.org/parentportal](http://www.thegardenmontessori.org/parentportal)

Parents can request a parent/teacher conference at anytime during the school year and we will do our best to accommodate this request within a reasonable time period.

## *Health and Safety Policy*

If a child has a known medical condition (asthma, diabetes, seizure disorder, etc.), it is the parents' responsibility to inform the Director of the steps to be taken if a problem occurs during school hours using the Allergy Action Plan form. Parents should make sure that any necessary medication is available, the Medication Permission Form for its use has been completed, and demonstrate to staff how to use the medication (if needed). If a child has any one of the following conditions, the parent will be notified to pick up the child immediately:

- Contagious disease
- Fever over 100 degrees
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Accident requiring medical attention
- A rash, until diagnosed and determined to be non-contagious
- Draining sores or burns

**If your child is sent home from school due to an illness, he/she may not return to school the following day.**

In case of accident or illness, parents of the child will be called immediately. Teachers will administer minor first aid, i.e., cleansing, bandages, ice packs, etc. The child will be moved to a quiet spot until the parent/guardian arrives. Incident reports will be sent home in duplicate explaining what happened and what treatment was administered. Parents should sign one copy and return it to the school while keeping the second for their records. In serious cases, the child will be taken to one of the local hospitals by emergency vehicle for treatment and the parents will be called as soon as possible. If the child's parents cannot be reached, the individuals designated by the parents as emergency contacts will be called. When necessary, announcement of an outbreak of a communicable disease or head lice will be posted on the parent portal, through the Remind App or by email.

\*Toddler Parents please see Toddler Policies and Addendum\*

## *Distribution of Medications*

We request that children be given medicine or have topical creams (including sunscreen) applied prior to attending school. Emergency medicines will be stored per doctor's instructions and given only in an emergency and according to the Medical Authorization Form. If a child must be given any medication (including over-the-counter medicine), the parents must complete the Medication Permission Form. This procedure must be followed every day that the child is to receive medication. Teachers are not permitted by law to administer any medication unless this form is complete and up to date. Parents should hand the medication directly to a staff person so it can be stored appropriately out of reach of children. Parents should ask the teacher for a Medical Permission form, fill it out, give the form and the medication to the teacher, and indicate if the medication needs to be refrigerated. Medication should be in its original or duplicate container, or a container accompanied by the doctor's directions. If medication is to be kept at the school for treatment of a chronic condition, no more than a one-month supply should remain at the school at any time. Medicine brought to the school must be kept in a container in the classroom emergency bag. Staff members must complete their portion of the form,

and initialize it where necessary. One staff person will be authorized to dispense medication. Sunscreens must be stored separately from oral medicine and any food or food service items. Any unused medicine must be disposed of properly or returned directly to the parents. Children may never bring in the medication themselves.

## *Parent Emergency Medical Consent*

The school necessitates all required forms to be kept current. Parents must provide new information to the school regarding changes in information, such as, emergency contacts' names, new employers, new phone numbers, changes in members of the Authorized Pick-Up Form, etc.

## *Hand washing*

Hand washing is the most critical element in reducing the spread of germs. Hands should always be washed upon arrival at the school, whenever contact is made with bodily discharges, immediately before and after eating, upon returning inside from outdoor play, after using the restroom, and upon leaving the school.

## *Universal Precautions/Exposures to blood or other body fluids*

Gloves shall be worn by Staff when diapering, when in contact with blood or other body fluids is possible and when cleaning contaminated surfaces. Spills of urine, feces, vomit or blood shall be cleaned from the surfaces first with soap and water and then disinfected with a solution of household bleach and water. Any contaminated material shall be disposed of in a double layer plastic bag with a secure tie.

## *Tornado Plan \**

Tornado escape plans will be posted at each exit door. Class attendance record, emergency information book, cell phone and first aid kit will be taken to the interior hallway/bathroom. All children will be accounted for using the class attendance records so it is imperative that your child is appropriately signed in and out each day. Staff cell phones will be used in the notification of parents and emergency vehicles. Children will get down on the floor and cover their heads. Tornado drills will be practiced to prepare children. Teachers will lead the children to the safe place with the class attendance records, emergency records, and first aid kit. Another teacher will be responsible to get the cell phones and help any immobile child.

## *Emergency Plan for Intruder \**

Action will be taken if a person enters the center that is not authorized to pick up a child and/or appears to be intoxicated. Staff should not attempt to physically restrain the individual. Staff cannot refuse access to a legal parent or guardian but every attempt will be made to discourage the person from leaving with the child. Proper authorities will be immediately notified if the child is taken under these circumstances. Description of the vehicle, license number, and description of the state of the individual will be reported to the authorities.

## *Emergency Plan for Abducted or Lost Child*

If a child is abducted or missing, the center will notify the parents and authorities immediately. Description of any suspicious persons or vehicles will be reported to the police.

## *Power Failure Plan*

In the case of a power failure, children will remain at the center until parents are notified.

## *Bomb Threat Plan \**

In the case of a bomb threat, children will be escorted to Elliot's on Linden and proper authorities will be notified immediately. Parents will be notified as to where to pick up their child once authorities provide permission for this to occur. Emergency information, child's forms and records, and cell phones will be taken.

## *First Aid Kits \**

A First Aid Kit will be maintained and kept in a location not accessible to the children within the program space and will be carried outdoors whenever children and staff leave the building for any reason. First Aid Kits will be taken on any field trips.

## *Fire Plan \**

Fire escape plans will be posted at each exit door. Class attendance record, emergency information book, cell phone and first aid kit will be taken outside to the playground. All children will be accounted for using the class attendance records for that day. Staff cell phones will be used in the notification of parents and emergency vehicles. Children will be taken to the playground until parents can pick them up. Fire drills will be practiced to prepare children. One teacher will activate the fire alarm. Another teacher will lead the children to the playground with the class attendance record, emergency records, first aid kit and cell phone.

## *Handicap Accessibility*

The school is handicap accessible and has a handicapped accessible bathroom. Any further accommodations will be handled on individual basis.

## *Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse*

All employees are required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse. Employees are required to make an oral and a written report. See the Director (s) for more information regarding the procedure and the information required to be included in such a report. Per the Code, any Mandatory Reporter, who makes a report of child abuse or participates in an investigation of child abuse in good faith, has immunity from any criminal or civil liability.

## *Staff Development \**

- All staff will obtain and maintain current First Aid certification, and a CPR certificate (Adult, Child, and Infant).
- All staff will go through initial orientation to the School's policies and staff requirements. Included in this training will be instruction regarding the School's emergency procedures and policies on universal precautions and infectious disease control. Beyond the initial orientation, staff will undergo ongoing training on these policies.
- Lead toddler classroom teachers will be required to have previous child care experience, a minimum of an Associate's Degree in a related field and will possess or be working towards the North Carolina Early Childhood Credentials I & II AND a minimum of Montessori Beginnings trainings for teachers working with children ages 0-3 years through CGMS.
- Lead children's house classroom teachers will be hired by the Board of Directors at Moore Montessori Community School and will be required to have a Bachelor's Degree; AMI or AMS diploma for 3-6 years; NC teaching license or enrollment in lateral entry program.
- Assistant/Associate Teachers and toddler teachers will be required to have previous child care experience and will undergo specific Professional Development related to Montessori for 0-3 age group.

All toddler teaching staff members must complete a classroom observation, orientation and training at The Garden; will complete a minimum of 12 continuing education hours per school year; and a list of Montessori-specific required reading materials.

## *Arrival and Dismissals \**

Our program is not licensed to operate more than 4 hours per day, therefore it is illegal for us to keep children longer than the allotted time per day. Sign in and sign out sheets are provided to ensure children do not stay longer than 4 hours each day. Late arrivals are disruptive to both class and the child.

Children should arrive during the allotted drop-off window and parents should pick-up their child(ren) during the allotted staggered pick-up window. Please arrange other pickup for your child if you cannot make it on time. A verbal warning will be given if a parent is late, and after that, late pickups will be charged a fee of \$10.00 per 10 minute time period to discourage this practice. Parents who are consistently late (3 or more times) picking up their child from school will forfeit their child's spot.

It is the toddler parents' responsibility to escort their child to the building/ sign them in with the teacher at the beginning of the day and pick them up/sign them out in the same fashion at the end of the day.

Please review drop-off and pick-up procedures information and follow instructions regarding locations of pick-up and drop-off. Parents must sign the sign-out sheet prior to leaving campus.

The school is not officially responsible for any child until parent/teacher contact is made and sign in sheet is filled out.

A child may be checked upon arrival for any communicable diseases, e.g. conjunctivitis or fever.

## *Late Policy \**

We will follow a three-step policy for chronic late pickup.

Step 1. Verbal warning

Step 2. Written note with amount due of \$10 per 10 minutes to be given to the teacher on staff.

Step 3. Withdrawal of child from the program

## *Absences \**

If your child will not be attending the school because of a scheduled appointment, vacation, or other planned absence, please notify the Directors in advance. If your child is sent home from school, he/she may not return the following day. One of the following conditions is sufficient cause for the child to be kept at home:

- A contagious disease, not including a cold;
- A fever of 100 degrees or higher within the past 24 hours;
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting within the past 24 hours;
- Rash, until cause is diagnosed and determined non-contagious
- Draining sores or burns

## *Scheduled and Unscheduled School Closings \**

Scheduled No-School Days:

The Garden will be closed on scheduled no-school days (see calendar posted on the Parent Portal). The school generally follows the same schedule as that for the Moore County Public Schools (for holidays only, not teacher workdays or other school-related events).

There will be no school on days when the Moore County Public Schools are canceled due to bad weather. When Moore County Public Schools are delayed due to bad weather, school hours will be determined on a case-by-case basis. While we understand that school closings can be an inconvenience for parents, please understand that we must consider our staff's safety and ability to get to school, in addition to the safety of all of our students. Some of our staff may also have children enrolled in MCS, leaving them without childcare for days when school is closed.

Refunds or prorated tuition are not provided for missed days due to inclement weather, or scheduled holidays or school cancellations.

## *Unscheduled Early Dismissal Days \**

The school will close at the same time as the Moore County Public Schools when there is early dismissal due to bad weather.

School closings and delays will follow those of the Moore County Public Schools. If a child has already arrived at school on these days, parents are expected to pick him/her up as soon as possible. To determine if the Moore County Public Schools are closed or delayed, check the news or internet or call them for direct inquiries. There may or may not be a separate announcement for The Garden.

## *Discipline and Discharge Policy \**

The Garden has a positive approach using redirection, direct communication, and conflict resolution. The full policy is outlined separately in our Discipline Policy. The peace rose ceremony is demonstrated and facilitated for the children in the Children's House at the beginning of the school year to empower them to develop skills to resolve their own differences. Children are entitled to a pleasant and harmonious environment at the Garden. We intend to work with all children regarding behavior concerns and will attempt to work with parents to provide a consistent approach to discipline.

\*If a child exhibits behavior that is continually disruptive and/or harmful to the other children and their progress, and we feel that we have made every effort to improve the situation and have been unsuccessful, the child may be removed from the program. Parents are required to cooperate in the development of a Behavior Action Plan and to carry out the Plan to completion. If parents are uncooperative or do not participate in this process, the child is subject to withdrawal from the program.\*

A child can also be removed from the program at any time if we feel that s/he is not abiding by our policies, parents are uncooperative with any policies, if there is general discord among parents and staff members, parents are continually unresponsive to staff concerns or, a child is no longer benefitting from the program for any reason.

## *Field Trips \**

Field trips may be scheduled occasionally during the school. Each trip is planned with young children in mind and every precaution is made to ensure each child's safety. Whenever a field trip is planned, parents are notified and all parents are requested to assist in transporting and chaperoning the children. Carpools will be assigned based on parent chaperones and volunteers. Waiver for field trips must be signed or a child will not be permitted to participate and a parent must be able to pick them up.

## *Non-Center Activity Policy \**

Parents will be notified if there will be routine non-center activities, for example library or recreation center activities or field trips.

## *Center Pets \**

The Garden is the proud owner of one dwarf bunny named Fifi and several aquarium fish. We also have a visiting mouse friend, "Mousey," from time to time. Parents will be notified and allergies will be taken into consideration prior to obtaining any new pets.

***Please sign the attached form and return it with your enrollment forms to verify that you have read and agree to all terms, policies, practices and other items listed here.***

\*PLEASE SEE MOORE MONTESSORI COMMUNITY SCHOOL'S HANDBOOK FOR FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING 3-5 YEAR OLD ENROLLMENT AND TODDLER ADDENDUM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING TODDLER ENROLLMENT.



Please note that this Handbook is a living document and policies are subject to change. Parents will be notified of any changes made and asked to sign stating that they have read and agree to any changes. Should you have any questions, requests for additions or edits of this document prior to signing, please contact us.



I, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_  
parent(s) of my (our) child, \_\_\_\_\_, have read this  
program guide thoroughly and do hereby agree to abide by all policies and  
procedures, terms and agreements listed here. I understand fully the  
philosophies, practices, costs, procedures and any other information  
provided to me here in the program guide as well as on all required  
enrollment forms. By signing below, I agree to the above statement.

X

\_\_\_\_\_  
parent/Guardian signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

X

\_\_\_\_\_  
parent/Guardian signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date