
The Montessori House



THE MONTESSORI HOUSE
"GIVE YOUR CHILD A GIFT FOR LIFE."

Parent Handbook 2025-2026

(Rev. 1.0)

**426 Knickerbocker Rd.
Tenafly, NJ 07670**

Telephone: 201-816-8343 (call or text)

School e-mail: office@themontessorihouse.com

Website: www.themontessorihouse.com

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to The Montessori House School, a place where children come together for discovery and growth. The Montessori House is guided in all its activities by a profound respect for the person and potential of the individual child. We desire to work in close harmony with parents to optimize all that the child is capable of becoming. We welcome you and your young student to The Montessori House community of life-long learners.

This Parent Handbook is a guide to our school policies and procedures. Please keep it in a handy place for reference during the school year. If you have any questions about the handbook contents or issues not covered in the handbook, please contact me.

We look forward to a rewarding year with you and your child.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maria Morningstar". The signature is written in black ink and has a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Maria Morningstar
Director

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USEFUL INFORMATION

School Phone Number	201-816-8343 (call or text)
School e-mail	office@themontessorihouse.com
School website	www.themontessorihouse.com
My Parent Website User Name	
My Parent Website Password	
Names of Our Teachers	

ADMISSIONS

The Montessori House welcomes students of all races, religions, and genders, and national, ethnic, and language-group origins. We believe our students flourish best as a learning community of children with a wide diversity of backgrounds. Although we use English in the classroom, we encourage the multi-lingual enrichment of all our students.

PROGRAMS

The school has two program levels:

Montessori Pre-primary for ages 2½- 5 years (full-day or half-day)

We offer full-day and half-day options. Children attend five days a week. This is the classic Montessori mixed-age early-learning program, as recognized by the national Montessori associations (American Montessori Society (AMS) and Association Montessori Internationale (AMI). Children progress in stages according to their individual development patterns.

Montessori Pre-primary Full-Day.....8:30 AM – 3:00 PM
Montessori Pre-primary AM.....8:30 AM – 12:00 PM
Five days a week

Montessori Kindergarten/First Grade for ages 5 -7 years

For older children, we offer only a full-day program. The children attend five days a week. The child’s growing capabilities come together and blossom during these important years of self-discovery and learning. Students realize their potential in math, language, science, and cultural studies through continued mental and physical efforts.

Montessori Kindergarten/First Grade Full-Day....8:30 AM - 3:00 PM
Five days a week

Most weeks, students spend 4 days a week in the Classic Montessori classroom exposed to individual works in Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Math and Cultural areas of learning. Students also spend a day in the Montessori Enrichment classroom, exposed to lessons and works in the arts, culture, history, geography, science, chess and strategic thinking, and have the opportunity to develop both social and cognitive competencies through works that involve small groups.

Students in a full-day program have lunch and rest at mid-day.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Cooperation between home and school is a very important part of Montessori learning. Therefore, we encourage your participation in your child's learning process. The children always benefit when our efforts at school are reinforced by yours at home.

VISITING SCHOOL

We encourage parents of enrolled children to visit The Montessori House at any time. Classroom cameras and closed-circuit TV monitors allow viewing of students in the classrooms. When viewing, please be considerate of others waiting to use the cameras. Parents are limited to viewing for 15 minutes per day and parents are not permitted to take pictures of the classrooms, images on the video monitors, or materials in the vestibule.

At no time should parents enter the classroom, unless invited to do so by a teacher.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year (fall and spring). You will be advised in advance about the conference schedule. At the conference, the teacher will share her observations about your child's progress in school, and she may ask about your child's interactions and activities at home.

Conferences last 20 minutes. Please respect the time limit. If a particular situation requires a longer conference, one will be scheduled for you. Please do **not** bring any children (unless an infant) to the conference; it is difficult to speak freely about children when they or their siblings are present. Both parents are encouraged to attend conferences.

SCHOOL MEETINGS FOR PARENTS

Parent meetings covering various topics may be held during the year. These meetings may be by phone or on-line or in-person after school or during the evening and/or weekend hours. The first meeting of the year is the Meet-the-Teachers Night. This meeting covers essential information about the school, and it provides an opportunity for parents to meet the teachers and other parents, and to explore the classrooms.

CONTACTING TEACHERS

The teachers are eager to hear from you regarding your child's interests and/or concerns. You may call or text the school and leave a message for your child's teacher(s) any school day. Our faculty will respond as soon as possible. Please note that teachers cannot take calls or respond during class time, and any conversations you have with them during arrival and dismissal should be very brief. You may contact teachers at their personal addresses or numbers only if they ask you to do so. You may contact the school and the director via e-mail or text at any time.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Parent involvement is a benefit for everyone. The children, in particular, love having their parents participate in school activities, both inside and outside the classroom. When permitted to do so, we'll invite parents to volunteer for individual events or committees with an ongoing assignment.

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

Communication with and among parents is an important part of making school a positive and productive experience for your entire family. The Montessori House will communicate with you both on-line (e-mail, text and website) and otherwise (in person, on paper and via phone).

Please keep your contact information current, including e-mail address, street address and phone numbers. You will also receive log-in credentials to access the Parents sections of our website.

COMMUNICATING OTHERWISE

Meetings

Parent Conferences are discussed above. If your child's circumstances require additional meetings, please call to request an appointment. Recognize that, in order to keep great teachers teaching in the classroom, our teachers have very limited availability for meetings.

Please know that our Director will make herself available outside school hours to meet in person or to contact you by phone, and she'll make sure the right people are available to you.

The Whiteboard and Table

On many school days, you'll see our *Whiteboard* and *Table* at the school entrance. We use the *Whiteboard* for reminders, amusement, and celebration. It's quick and easy to check.

Check the *Table* for lost & found items. Also, we'll sometimes have your student's project work available to take home at the *Table*.

The Phone (201-816-8343) – Call or Text this number

You can almost always reach someone in person in our office between 8 AM and Noon. You may call or text our number; we monitor voice and text messages from 8 AM to 4 PM (and often after hours too). If you want the school to have information in the next 24 hours (e.g., your child is ill), please call or text, do not e-mail the information. Note, we only accept After Care appointments by phone (leave a voice or text message); do not e-mail After Care requests.

If you need a response by the next school day, text or phone. Likewise, we'll phone or text you when there's a short time frame involved (e.g., your child is ill and needs to be picked up).

If no one answers the phone during school hours and you have a true emergency, you may call Trinity Lutheran Church at 201-568-8821. Like "911", please call this number only in the case of any emergency that requires immediate action.

Finally, in situations that may close the school (for example, snow emergency or power failure), phone the office 24/7 to hear our school voice-mail announcement; this announcement, together with website and e-mail bulletins, will keep you up to date.

Handouts and Mailings

You will receive a hard copy of any forms we want completed and returned (for example, medical forms or your school year enrollment agreement). In most cases you can also access generic forms electronically. Otherwise, we distribute most handouts and announcements via e-mail or on the website. Occasionally we have handouts at the *Table* during arrival and dismissal, but items you must receive are also sent by other means.

COMMUNICATING ON-LINE

Much of our on-line communication is via e-mail or text, as well as through the [News](#) section and [Calendar](#) sections of our [website](#).

Text (201-816-8343)

For quick, immediate messages and update, we'll text parents. A number of staff have access to texts, so this is the least confidential channel of communication with the school.

E-mail (office@themontessorihouse.com)

Much of our communication with parents is via e-mail. Often e-mails include hyperlinks to more extensive documents (usually Adobe Acrobat PDF format).

You may e-mail the school with questions or requests; we'll be sure to respond by the next school day. Please direct your e-mail correspondence to office@themontessorihouse.com. (Note, please phone or text for After Care, to report an absence or sickness, or to change pick-up arrangements.) Likewise, we e-mail parents on matters requiring their attention only when we do not need an immediate response.

If you have a confidential matter, you may address it to our Director's e-mail: maria@themontessorihouse.com. (This e-mail is for the Director's eyes only and should be used with discretion.) If it's urgent and confidential, please call our Director.

Website (www.themontessorihouse.com)

You'll find much useful information on our website, including the means to reach out to other Montessori House parents.

News

Here you'll find items of interest to Montessori House families: reports on special events (including pictures), links to articles, reminders, etc.

You'll also find time-critical, urgent information in *News*, most importantly information on weather-related closings (e.g., "snow days"). Note, for emergency closings, you can listen to our voice-mail announcement or check the website.

Calendar

You can consult our entire school-year schedule in *Calendar*. Throughout the year, as additional events are scheduled, we update *Calendar*.

Parents (password-protected area)

The *Parents* section of our website is available only to the families and staff of The Montessori House – including alumni families. It provides a safe way to share (especially photos and videos) and a vehicle for Montessori House parents to get in touch with one another.

In *Parent Contacts* you'll find an on-line, searchable directory of families with children currently enrolled at The Montessori House (plus recent Montessori House alumni). You control the information you want to share with other families.

PREPARING FOR SCHOOL

PHASING-IN

Montessori House schooling begins with a "phasing-in" process that lasts approximately one week, with the first few days for students new to school only. We begin by introducing children to their school in small groups and for initially shortened class periods. As the children become comfortable with school and each other, the size of the groups and the class periods increase. This gradual process leads to greater success for everyone in making the adjustment to school.

You will be informed regarding your child's individual "phasing-in" schedule.

SCHOOL CLOTHING

Children need to attend school in the simplest, most practical, and most easily replaceable clothes as possible. School is a "work" place. Fabrics that allow the most freedom of movement are best. Sneakers or soft rubber-soled shoes are necessary for safety in climbing, running, and jumping.

Children take great pride in being able to dress themselves. One simple step is to provide your child with clothing that he can easily manage, such as elastic-waist pants and large buttonholes.

As we get outside as often as possible, please have your child wear appropriate clothing every day.

Please write your child's name in all his/her clothes.

WINTER CLOTHING

Your student should arrive at school each day WEARING all his/her winter clothing:

- Waterproof Snow Boots
- Waterproof Mittens (not gloves)
- Snow Pants (with elastic waistband and cuffs)
- Snow Jacket
- Hat and (optional) Neck Warmer (not a scarf)
- We DO NOT recommend one-piece snow suits, or overalls with buttons/snaps/hooks.

Please do not send any clothing in bags. Note, in winter, you may leave one pair of "indoor" shoes at school. These will not travel home each day but remain with us until our spring break. "Indoor" shoes must be able to be worn outside, in the event of emergency evacuation (e.g., fire drill).

EXTRA CLOTHING

The school keeps its own extra sets of clothing on hand for use by any of the children. Do not send in any extra clothes for your child. In the event of an "accident", we will send your child home in the extra clothes we have, along with the soiled clothes s/he wore to school. Please clean and return the school's clothes.

TOILET TRAINING

Most children over the age of 3 come to school toilet trained with good hygiene, able to do the following without adult assistance: undress, use the toilet, exhibit proper hygiene (able to wipe themselves), dress, and wash their hands. Younger students (age 2-1/2 to 3) are typically well along in their training. Of course, we understand that accidents do happen, particularly at the beginning of the school year when the child is adjusting to school. In the case of an accident, a teacher will deal with it quietly and sympathetically, helping the child clean himself and change into clean clothes.

The school does have the equipment and procedures for diaper changes. At the start of school, your teachers will discuss what we require from you regarding diaper changes and toilet training. Also, if your child is not completely toilet trained, please send him/her in easily removed clothing (elastic waist, no belts, no buckles, no zippers, etc.) and provide us with a set of *diapers* (or open/close Pull-Ups but **NOT** regular Pull-ups) and wipes.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL

CURRICULUM

The Montessori House School provides a program of learning that progresses systematically as the child develops. All our students thrive in our mixed-age classrooms. All Montessori House school-day programs offer a carefully designed environment for intellectual, social, and physical growth, incorporating the Montessori methods of learning and using the Montessori-based materials.

CLASS ASSIGNMENT

Class assignments are made by the school. We try to accommodate parents' requests in determining which class is appropriate for each child, but the decision is ultimately left to the school director. This decision is based on many factors including age, physical growth, maturity, sex, and compatibility with the group of children already assigned to a particular class. Children may be transferred from one class to another during the year. Of course, transfers are made in consultation with a child's teachers.

SCHOOL DAY

Throughout the class session, the teachers give individual and small-group lessons, assist children as needed, and make observations. In addition, the children may gather briefly during the day as a group. During this time, the teacher may give a lesson, initiate conversation, play games, dance, or sing songs, among other activities. The teaching teams meet daily to discuss their observations of the children and plan for the next day. This careful observation and planning focuses on each child's need for individual attention and development. The child's wish to work alone is protected while small-group activities are assisted so they are productive. The child's need for nature, unstructured play, and group-directed play is recognized with time outdoors most days.

BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

Montessori education is noted for its warm and respectful school environment. Children adapt quickly to classroom customs requiring them to act responsibly toward themselves and others in a manner appropriate to their age. They learn to share an appreciation for each other's work. The classroom is a special place that the children grow to treasure as their own. No child is permitted to willfully harass or harm another child. Violation of this code is one of the rare situations in a Montessori classroom calling for immediate teacher intervention.

The discipline policy at The Montessori House is based on the Montessori philosophy of profound respect for children and their work of self-development in a peaceful environment. The teachers solicit the students' cooperation in setting a standard of respect for each other's worth, the value of the learning environment, and the materials used by all. When respect is not being shown, the teacher tries to lead the child to more appropriate behavior by using the techniques of role-modeling and positive reinforcement.

If the child continues to resist, he may be asked to separate briefly from the group until he or she is ready to cooperate. The child may spend this time holding on to the teacher's hand. If a child is consistently abusive, the child's parents will be called to a conference to determine a more permanent solution. The ultimate sanction for consistent misbehavior is expulsion from school.

IN THE CLASSROOM

SNACK

The Montessori House provides a daily snack for all of the children. The snacks may include fruit, vegetables, cheese, oatmeal, and yogurt, among others. Nuts and sugary foods are not served. In each classroom, two children at a time may eat snack together. Children may choose to eat snack or get a drink of water any time during class. Children may not bring in their own snacks. The cost of snack is included in tuition.

LUNCH FOR STUDENTS

The children in the full-day program and half-day afternoon programs generally have rest time and eat lunch after 12:00 p.m.

- Please do **NOT** send the following: anything made or processed with nuts (peanuts, ground nuts, or tree nuts).
- Lunch may be sent in a disposable bag or container, or in a reusable container/lunch box. You may send a small, reusable drinking cup which we'll return each day. In general, we'll send appropriate lunch items (lunch box, cup, receptacles) home each day. Sometimes this may include uneaten food.
- Do not send drinks (and no drinkable yogurt). We provide water in the classrooms and on the playground.
- If you send dessert, please send fresh fruit, and no sugary items (including no fruit roll-ups).
- We do heat students' lunches, but during September please do not send lunches requiring heating.
- We do not refrigerate lunch. You may pack lunch with a regular or disposable ice pack -- e.g., ice cubes in a sealed sandwich bag.

Thanks for your cooperation in this regard.

TOYS AND OTHER ITEMS FROM HOME

Children may not bring toys, dolls, stuffed animals, cards, or other such items to school. Unfortunately, these cause distractions – or worse, tears – in the classroom, particularly when they get broken or lost. This is an important rule for everyone and requires parental firmness. The Montessori House is not responsible for personal items brought to school.

OBJECTS FROM SCHOOL

Please return to the school anything your child may inadvertently bring home that you don't recognize as his or hers. It could be an innocuous looking thing, but it might be a piece of school equipment, something to count, compare, stack, sort, or match. It could be a missing piece of Montessori work materials, which are difficult to replace. If so, the remaining set may be unusable until the particular piece is returned.

BIRTHDAYS

Your child's birthday is an important time; a special day to remind your child that he is a unique and valued person. You will be given "My Birthday Book," which is a simple project for you and your child to do together. You will place a few pictures of your child into this book and bring it to school to share with the class. You keep this book for all your years at The Montessori House and add a page each year. When it is near your child's birthday, please call the office in advance and schedule a date and time to visit the school and celebrate with your child. On that day, in addition to sharing "My Birthday Book," you are invited to bring a favorite book from home and read it to the class as part of the celebration. The children will celebrate with a snack provided by the school. Please do not bring in any birthday food, treats or party favors.

HALLOWEEN

In our haste to introduce our children to all the exciting holiday celebrations, we may overlook the occasional side effects some of them have. Halloween, with its emphasis on horror, monsters, or superheroes, falls in this category. Very young children can be unduly scared by the goings-on of this time. It is a day more appropriately celebrated at age seven and later. Therefore, we do not allow the children to wear Halloween costumes to school. Instead, we keep the atmosphere at the school as undisturbed as possible, and we appreciate your cooperation in helping us do so.

FIELD TRIPS

The Montessori House invites educational programs to present at the school occasionally. In addition, the Kinder/First children make a few off-campus field trips each year.

THE LIBRARY

The school has a large library of children's books for use at the school.

USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES AFTER HOURS

Only children in a school-sponsored program (e.g., After Care or after-school classes such as Art, Fitness, or Chess) may use school facilities after school hours. Once children are dismissed from school (at the end of the school day or from an after-school program), they may not enter the school building (including the bathrooms) or the playground.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

You or a guardian will accompany your child to school and pick him up afterward. Any other arrangements must be formalized in writing. The school must have a picture of any person who will be picking up your child.

A staff member greets each child upon arrival and releases the child to the appropriate person at dismissal. It is an integral part of the Montessori House's "quality life" practice that the arrival and departure greetings and good-byes are individual, personal, and polite.

ARRIVAL

The school doors open at 8:30 AM for the full-day programs and the morning sessions. **Children should arrive promptly for class.** Children who arrive late may feel uncomfortable walking into a classroom full of children; also, it is difficult for staff to leave lessons to admit a late-arriving child.

When you arrive at school, please park in a designated Montessori House parking spot, walk your child to the outside doors at the entrance of the school building, and remain outside until a staff member arrives for greeting. If you arrive after the greeting teacher has gone, ring the doorbell to announce yourself. You may be asked to either wait outside until a staff member arrives to admit and escort your child to the classroom, or you may be asked to come in and walk your child to the upstairs door, where a teacher will greet you and your child. **Please note this may take from 5 to 15 minutes, until the staff member is free.** Please do not stop or park your car in the roadway portion of the driveway, no matter how brief your stop. All cars must be parked with the motor off. **Anytime your child is out of the car, you must hold his hand.** Please drive slowly and with care at all times while in the parking lot.

Please sign your child into school on the sign-in sheet at the front door, write your arrival time. If you use Before Care, indicate the time. If you arrive after the door has closed, indicate the time.

- **Car-line arrival:** During the winter and on severe weather days, parents or guardians wait in a car line (enter on Riveredge Rd., then facing Knickerbocker Road) until the children are admitted. We fly a checkered green flag to let parents know they should form a car line. The first car stops near the double doors of the church living room, across from the playground. When your car reaches the head of the line, a teacher will help your child exit the car. You should **not** get out of your car at all during car line. Once the teacher has closed your car doors, move your car slowly forward and exit on Knickerbocker Rd.

DISMISSAL

There are two types of dismissal: dismissal from the playground, and car-line dismissal. The type of dismissal depends on the weather.

- **Dismissal from the playground:** Generally speaking, the children will be dismissed to parents or guardians directly from the playground. Teachers will line the children up on the playground and dismiss them to parents or guardians waiting outside the gate.
- **Car-line dismissal:** During the winter and on severe weather days, parents or guardians wait in a car line (facing Knickerbocker Road) until the children are dismissed to them. We fly a checkered green flag to let parents know they should form a car line. The first car stops near the double doors of the church living room. When your car reaches the head of the line, a teacher escorts your child by hand to your car. You should **not** get out of your car at all during car line. Once the teacher has placed your child safely inside the car with all the doors closed, move your car slowly forward as far as possible. At this point, you may stop and secure seat belts.
- **Individual dismissal.** You may come at any time to pick up your child. If your child dismisses at 3 p.m., we ask that you come before 2:40 p.m. for an individual dismissal. After that time, we are dismissing all the children and are unable to dismiss your child before 3:00 p.m.

FRONT DOOR AND VESTIBULE RULES

During Arrival and Dismissal, parents must wait **outside** until a **staff member** opens the door. Due to fire and safety regulations, parents and children are not permitted to enter the building early and should never loiter in the vestibule waiting for the arrival/dismissal process to commence. Please wait outside the door. In the case of inclement weather, you should remain in your car until a **teacher** opens the school door to commence Arrival or Dismissal.

To comply with school security procedures, **parents should never open the door to allow others, including other parents, to enter the building.** All visitors, including parents, must announce themselves to school staff either in person or via the closed-circuit TV.

BEFORE CARE AND AFTER CARE

The Montessori House offers families child care outside normal school hours on days classes are in session. Parents may drop children off for Before Care after 7:30 a.m. and before 8:20 a.m. After the end of the school day, between the hours of 3 PM and 6 PM, After Care provides a safe, supervised, familiar environment for the care of Montessori House children.

Before Care is available to all students, and After Care is available for students scheduled to dismiss at 3 PM. The cost of Before/After Care is not included in school tuition. Families are billed separately based on usage.

PICK-UP BY SOMEONE ELSE

No child is allowed to leave the school with anyone other than his or her parents or guardian except by previously written authorization. The school must have on file pictures of parents, regular caregivers, authorized guardians, and anyone authorized to pick up your child. Please provide these photos prior to the beginning of the school term.

If you form a carpool with other parents, please inform the school staff about it in writing. Include a list of drivers. Likewise, if your child will be picked up by someone not previously scheduled, **you must let the school know about the new arrangement before dismissal.** We prefer this authorization in writing (text or email); but once we are familiar with you and your child, we will take authorization over the phone, provided the person picking up is already on file with the school (e.g., another parent). If the person to pick up your child is unfamiliar to the teachers, some form of confirming **authorization and identification** will be required before the child is released. If the person picking up is unfamiliar to the child, we will make a confirming phone call to the parent before releasing.

Whoever picks up your child **must** put the child in a proper car seat.

VEHICLE TRAFFIC RULES AND SAFETY

During arrival and dismissal **all** Montessori House traffic must enter the school driveways and parking lots from Riveredge Rd. and exit onto Knickerbocker Rd. The driveway is **ONE WAY** for our school traffic. Whenever there is a car-line dismissal, enter from Riveredge Rd. and join the waiting line of cars. **The police insist that the line of cars not back up onto Riveredge Rd.** If the vehicle line for dismissal stretches around the corner of the building near the playground, please begin a second line from that corner and back. These two lines are to merge at that juncture one by one into the single line waiting along the sidewalk. Dismissal and departure proceed as previously described. If you ever need to make a turn anywhere on the property, make the turn carefully in a wide-open area of the lot. **No U-turns** are to be made on the Knickerbocker Rd. side of the parking lot. This is a general traffic rule that applies anytime.

HEALTH

IMMUNIZATION

The New Jersey Board of Health requires that all children attending school be inoculated against specific illnesses (the list may change but generally includes polio, measles, German measles, mumps, diphtheria, Hib, hepatitis B, tetanus, varicella, pertussis, and influenza). They must also receive a tuberculin test within one year prior to admission. **No child will be admitted to class unless proof of immunization is presented to the school signed by the child's physician. You must provide the school your child's immunization records prior to your child starting school.**

MEDICATIONS

No teacher or staff member is permitted to dispense medication to a child. The single exception is if a child's health would be severely threatened without the medication, such as extreme allergic reaction to certain substances. In this case we will administer the child's epi-pen as warranted. In order to have your child's epi-pen at school, you must notify the school prior to the start of the school year, complete a set of forms that include a written authorization from the parent or guardian giving permission to administer the epi-pen, provide a signed authorization from your child's physician, and provide the school with the two epi-pens in the original packaging with the prescription, directions for administration, and list of possible side effects directly attached to the packaging.

ACCIDENTS

Our top concern at school is to provide a safe and supervised place for your child to learn. We are vigilant to avoid the remotest hazards to safety. If your child is injured at school, a member of the staff will notify you by a text message with a brief description of the injury and your child's condition. If an injury requires more than simple first-aid treatment, the parent or legal guardian will be contacted immediately (by text and by phone call) to choose the best course of action to follow. Should an injury require emergency attention, the Tenafly Police or Emergency Squad will be called into service first. If necessary, the child will be taken to the Englewood Hospital emergency room, accompanied by a staff member, unless we have specific instructions from you to go to another hospital in the area. Should an injury requiring more than minimal attention occur while the child is in school, you will be given a written report.

HAPPENINGS AT HOME

Please inform the Director about any events or changes at home that may be upsetting to your child. Life experiences that can impact a child's emotions and behavior include: the arrival of new brothers or sisters, traveling parents, sickness or death of relatives. Unresolved conflicts reverberate at home and school. We can help your child deal with these events if we are made aware of them. All private home information is kept confidential.

ILLNESS

Children who are not well should remain at home until all observable signs of infection or illness have vanished. Please be vigilant about keeping children home if they have any of these symptoms:

- Blood in urine
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Lethargy
- Fever
- Profuse nasal discharge (runny nose)
- Severe pain or discomfort
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Severe coughing
- Acute diarrhea
- Yellow eyes or jaundice skin
- Episodes of acute vomiting
- Infected untreated skin patches
- Red eyes with discharge
- Skin rashes with fever or behavior changes
- Stiff neck
- Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding

With parent cooperation, we can substantially reduce overall days lost to sickness. **Please call or text the office if your child will be absent.**

Once your child is symptom-free or has a physician's note stating that he no longer poses a health risk, he may return to school. Any child who comes to school with one or more of the symptoms noted above, or who in our best judgment exhibits signs of being sick, will be excluded from the classroom. A parent or the guardian will be called to take him home. Children who are sent home from school with symptoms of infection must remain at home at least through the following day.

Children who have fever may only return to school if **fever free for 24 hours without the administration of fever-reducing medicine** (e.g., ibuprofen, acetaminophen or aspirin).

It is school policy that a child well enough to attend school should be well enough to go outside each day. If for any reason the child is too ill for outside play, the child should not be brought to school. If a child contracts any of the following diseases, please report it to the school immediately. The child may **not** return to school for the period noted below. **If no time period is specified, a doctor's note stating that the child does not pose a health risk is required.**

RESPIRATORY

If child has this:	he may return:	If child has this:	he may return:
Chicken Pox	when the vesicles are dry.	Mumps	after a minimum of 6 days.
German Measles	3 days from onset of rash.	Tuberculosis	with a doctor's note.
Hemophilus Influenza	with a doctor's note.	Strep Throat	Only after treatment with antibiotics, and then 24 hours after being fever free.
Measles	5 days from onset of rash.	Whooping Cough	with a doctor's note.
Meningococcus	with a doctor's note.		

GASTRO-INTESTINAL

Giardia Lamblia
Salmonella
Campylobacter

Hepatitis A
Shigella
Escherichia coli

CONTACT

Impetigo
Scabies

Shingles

If your child is exposed to any excludable disease at school, you will be notified in writing.

THE SCHOOL YEAR

THE SCHOOL CALENDAR

The Montessori House provides you a school calendar, which tracks holidays and important school events over the term. Please keep the calendar and this handbook as a ready reference throughout the school year. The children begin each school year with a phasing-in process. Parents are informed prior to starting school about this gradual initiation into school and their child's individual starting date. The teachers occasionally require special workdays free of classes so they can adjust and renew the Montessori environment, attend seminars, and hold parent conferences.

WEATHER EMERGENCIES

In the event of severe weather, bad road conditions, or other circumstances, it may be necessary to cancel classes for the day. In such weather emergencies a decision to close the school will be made before 7:00 AM. The school will most likely be closed whenever the Tenafly public schools are closed, but not always. On the days we **do** close, you can find closing information on the school website (www.themontessorihouse.com), and on the school voice-mail (201-816-8343). We will also try to send an e-mail to your address of record and update NJ Channel 12 School Closings.

There are extra days included in the calendar, which are added so that emergency rescheduling will not reduce the total number of school days in the year below that of comparable area schools. If these days are not required, the school may at its option end the school year early.

ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

The school provides open channels of communication with all parents. Please do not hesitate to communicate your concerns and comments to us by phone, text, letter, e-mail, or in person.

Each year we move more of our communication with parents on-line via our website (www.themontessorihouse.com) and through e-mail or texts. Generally, we will communicate important information through the NEWS section of the website, through an e-mail blast to parents (or a subset of parents), via the information board at the school entrance, and through written communication distributed at school or mailed to the home. If we require a response, you will always receive either an e-mail or a paper communication. If a response is optional or not needed, we will tend to rely on the website NEWS section to keep you informed.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

PAYMENT

For specific tuition information, see your Agreement. Full tuition is due regardless of absences.

Teachers **may not** accept payments. You may make tuition payments by check/money order, in cash, or electronically using Zelle (send to maria@themontessorihouse.com). All cash payments must be handed in-person to the administrative staff. Payments by check may be mailed in or left in the school's mailbox at any time.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

The Enrollment Agreement stipulates that the parents are undertaking a full-year's tuition obligation, regardless of early withdrawal. Should circumstances require a child's withdrawal from school, parents must submit prior written notice stating the reasons for the withdrawal. The full tuition balance remains due.

POLICY ON DISCIPLINE

The Montessori House policy on discipline is based on a deeply respectful understanding of each child. We understand that children pass through the stages of impulsiveness and impulse inhibition at their own rate. The early days of the school experience called “Phasing-In” are devoted to observing the child and giving specific demonstrations of what is expected in school. It is the teacher’s responsibility to match the child’s developmental ability and experience with clear teaching of what to do to be safe and successful at school.

The teacher also has the responsibility of providing reminders and encouragement until the needed behavior becomes a habit. In other words, no child is ever wrong unless someone has taught him/her how to act appropriately.

If a teacher, after giving clear, positive directions and frequent encouragement, decides, in her professional judgment, that the child is stubbornly and unduly resisting, she will speak with him/her individually. She may, while making eye contact, and perhaps holding the child’s shoulders or hands, speak firmly, telling the child exactly what he/she may do. For example, to a child running in an inappropriate place, the teacher may say, “You may walk in the hallway.” Or she might give the child a guided choice such as, “Do you want to walk alone down the hall or do you want to hold my hand?” For the same reason, a teacher may elect to keep a child from participating in the classroom activities for a while, asking him/her to hold her hand or to wait on a chair. She might tell the child, “If you choose not to go by the rules then you are choosing not to be part of the group.” With these methods, she is striving to teach the child that the choices he/she makes have consequences.

Children are not allowed to be verbally or physically abusive toward another child or a teacher.

Should a child behave in a way that is a danger to himself or another child, the parents will be informed promptly and asked to work with the teacher on a plan to ensure compliance. If in the most unlikely event the negative behavior continued, the child would be asked to leave the school.

It is important that the school and parents have similar expectations of the child. The teachers are always happy to discuss with the parent the stage of social behavior their child is going through.

Eventually, by these direct methods and even more so by the indirect methods in the Montessori classroom, the child becomes self-disciplined. *This is The Montessori House’s ultimate goal for each child.*

Our staff is instructed to follow these principles and guidelines regarding discipline:

- (a) The methods of guidance and discipline used shall: 1. Be positive; 2. Be consistent with the age and developmental needs of the children; and 3. Lead to the child's ability to develop and maintain self-control.
- (b) Staff members shall not discipline children for failing to eat or sleep or for soiling themselves.
- (c) Staff shall not withhold active play time as a means of discipline unless the child's actions or behavior present a danger to themselves or others.

POLICY ON EXPULSION

There may be reasons we have to expel a child from our program either on a short-term or permanent basis. We will work with the child's family to avoid application of this policy. The following are reasons we may expel or suspend a child from The Montessori House:

Immediate causes for expulsion:

- Child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or to him/herself
- Parent/guardian threatens physical/intimidating actions toward staff or enrolled children
- Parent/guardian exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children

Parental (or guardian) actions for child's expulsion:

- Failure to make complete, timely payments per the Enrollment Agreement or invoices
- Failure to complete required forms, including the child's immunization records
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child
- Verbal abuse to staff
- Offensive or detrimental on-line communications

Child's actions for expulsion:

- Excessive biting
- Uncontrollable tantrums and angry outbursts
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children
- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time

Schedule of expulsion:

- If remedial actions for the above have not worked, we will advise the child's parent/guardian verbally and in writing about the behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is generally meant to be a period of time so that the parent/guardian may work on the behavior or come to an agreement with the School.
- The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period and the expected behavioral changes required for the child or parent to return to School.
- The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date to allow sufficient time to seek alternate child care (up to 2 weeks, depending on risk to other children's welfare or safety). Failure to comply may result in permanent expulsion from the School.

A child will not be expelled exclusively because a child's parent(s):

- Complains to the Office of Licensing regarding alleged licensing violations
- Reports abuse or neglect occurring at School
- Questions the School regarding policies and procedures

Some of the proactive actions that may be taken in order to prevent expulsion include:

- Staff will use positive methods and language while disciplining children
- Staff will redirect child from negative behavior and give verbal warnings, as needed
- Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules
- Child will be given time to regain control
- Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality
- Parent/guardian will be notified verbally
- Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the behaviors that may warrant expulsion
- Director, staff, and parent/guardian will discuss how to promote positive behaviors
- Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation on premises
- Recommendation of evaluation by local school district child study team

POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

This social media policy applies to parents and members of staff at The Montessori House School (School). This policy includes (but is not limited to) the following technologies:

- Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat)
- Blogs
- Discussion forums
- Media Sharing services (e.g., You Tube)
- Micro-blogging (e.g., Twitter)
- Electronic Forms of communication such as email, text or other messaging applications

As part of our duty to safeguard the children and all members of our community, we must maintain the privacy and security of our families and our staff. We therefore require that:

- No photographs taken within the School setting or at School events and outings with the children are to be posted for public viewing, except those of your own child. Parents are advised that they do not have a right to photograph or upload photos of anyone else's child. This excludes pictures taken by staff for which we have a signed release.
- No public discussions are to be held or comments made on social media sites regarding School children or School staff that could be construed to have an adverse impact on the School reputation or that would offend any staff member or any School parent.

With regard to Social Media, all School parents and staff should follow these guidelines:

- School staff are advised to manage their personal security settings to ensure that their information is only available to people they choose to share information with.
- In the event that a School staff member or School family names the organization or workplace in any social media they do so in a way that is not detrimental to the School or to members of the School community – notably staff and families of children who currently enrolled at the School, or who were enrolled in the past.
- Staff should maintain confidentiality and not discuss any issues relating to work.
- Staff should not share items they do not want children, parents or colleagues to view.
- School staff or School parents should report concerns or breaches to the School Director.

Any School staff or School parent found to be posting remarks or comments that: a) breach confidentiality, b) bring The Montessori House School into disrepute, c) are deemed to be of a detrimental nature to the School or any staff members, or d) post or publish photographs of the facility, children or staff without express written permission, may face disciplinary action in line with the applicable procedure for expulsion (parents) or dismissal (staff).

Any comment deemed to be inappropriate is to be reported to the Director, and any action taken will be at the Director's discretion.

General guidelines for using social media:

- Personal security settings should be managed to ensure that information is only available to people you choose to share information with.
- Remember that no information sent over the web is totally secure and as such if you do not wish the information to be made public refrain from sending it through social media.
- Maintain professionalism, honesty and respect.
- Apply a "good judgment" test for every social media post you make.

The Montessori House maintains a Facebook page and a Twitter account for marketing and communication purposes. For further information regarding The Montessori House School website and electronic communications and communications with parents in general, please refer to the Handbook section titled Communicating with Parents.

POLICY ON RELEASE OF CHILDREN

A child may be released only to the child's parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) to take the child from the school and to assume responsibility for the child in an emergency if the parent(s) cannot be reached.

If a particular non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access, to the child by a court order, the school must receive documentation to this effect, so that we may maintain a copy on file, and comply with the terms of the court order.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) to take the child from the school fails to pick up a child at the time of the school closes (generally 6 p.m., the end of After Care), we will continue to supervise and care for your child. We will also do the following:

- Our staff will contact you, the parents, by phone call or text the parents.
- If we cannot reach parents, we will phone or text your emergency contacts.
- If we have not heard from parents or emergency contacts, and made arrangements for pick up by one hour after closing our staff may contact NJ DCF State Central Registry Hotline (1-877 NJ ABUSE/1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child's parent(s) is able to pick up the child.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) appear to be physically or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of our staff, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual, then:

- We will not release your child to an impaired individual, but send your child to After Care.
- Our staff will attempt to contact (unimpaired) parents or your emergency contacts, to make suitable alternative safe arrangements for pick-up.
- If our staff is unable to make suitable alternative arrangements, we will call the NJ DCF State Central Registry Hotline (1-877 NJ ABUSE/1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS: REQUIRED DISCLOSURE

As required by the NJ Dept. of Children and Families -- Office of Licensing

Under provisions of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 3A:52), every licensed child care center in New Jersey must provide to parents of enrolled children written information on parent visitation rights, State licensing requirements, child abuse/neglect reporting requirements and other child care matters. The center must comply with this requirement by reproducing and distributing to parents this written statement, prepared by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families. In keeping with this requirement, the center must secure every parent's signature attesting to his/her receipt of the information.

* * * * *

Our center is required by the State Child Care Center Licensing law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing (OOL), Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our center. Look for it when you're in the center. To be licensed, our center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/lifesafety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health, food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and record keeping requirements; and others.

Our center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and make it available to interested parents for review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents may secure a copy of the Manual of Requirements by sending a check or money order for \$5 made payable to the "Treasurer, State of New Jersey", and mailing it to: NJ DCF, Office of Licensing, Publication Fees, PO Box 657, Trenton, NJ 08646-0657.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and program of the center or the meaning, application or alleged violations of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our center may be in violation of licensing requirements, you are entitled to report them to the Office of Licensing toll free at 1 (877) 667-9845. Of course, we would appreciate your bringing these concerns to our attention too.

Our center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parents or people authorized by parents to be responsible for the child. Please discuss with us your plans for your child's departure from the center.

Our center must have a policy about administering medicine and health care procedures and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy.

Our center must have a policy concerning the expulsion of children from enrollment at the center. Please review this policy so we can work together to keep your child in our center.

Parents are entitled to review the center's copy of the OOL's Inspection/Violation Reports on the center, which are issued after every State licensing inspection of our center. If there is

a licensing complaint investigation, you are also entitled to review the OOL's Complaint Investigation Summary Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review, or you can view them on-line at https://data.nj.gov/childcare_explorer.

Our center must cooperate with all DCF inspections/investigations. DCF staff may interview both staff members and children.

Our center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and make a copy of it available to parents upon request. We encourage you to review it and to discuss with us any questions you may have about it.

Our center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the OOL for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the center's space.

Our center must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to assist the center in complying with licensing requirements; and to participate in and observe the activities of the center. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the center should discuss their interest with the center director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

Parents of enrolled children may visit our center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the director or any staff member. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents. Our center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away from the center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each such trip.

Our center is required to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L.1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336(42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Anyone who believes the center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for information about filing an LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY users may dial 711 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Our center is required to periodically review the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) unsafe children's products list, ensure that items on the list are not at the center, and make the list accessible to staff and/or parents with the CPSC website at <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls>. Internet access may be available at your local library. For more information call the CPSC at (800) 638-2772.

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by any adult, whether working at the center or not, is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the State Central Registry Hotline, toll free at 1 (877) NJ ABUSE (877) 652-2873. Such reports may be made anonymously. Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: DCF, Office of Communications and Legislation at (609) 292-0422 or go to <http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/>.

COVID-19 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

There are no special requirements at arrival or dismissal regarding Covid-19. We do not require masks or vaccination for students and staff.

If your child contracts Covid-19 or is a close contact, we'll discuss with you the timeline to return to school based on the current guidance from NJ Department of Health.

As always, if your child has a fever or is ill, please do not come to school until you have consulted your physician or your child has no fever (24 hours without medication) and no symptoms of illness.