



## PARENT HANDBOOK

**The first two pages of this handbook are critical and the most frequently referenced policies. Please pay special attention to our health, use of medication, clothing and toileting practices, as we will enforce them with all families. Prior to your child's start date all families are required, as per our Washington State Child Care License, to sign off on all policies and procedures.**

### HEALTH POLICY/PROCEDURE FOR EXCLUDING CHILDREN FROM CARE

Children with ANY of the following symptoms will not be permitted to remain in care:

1. Fever of at least 100 ° F
2. Cough
3. Nasal Congestion or Nasal Discharge (stuffy or runny nose)
4. Vomiting: within the past 24-hours
5. Diarrhea: or watery stools within a 24-hour period, or any bloody stool
6. Rash: all children with a skin rash will be required to have a physician's diagnosis
7. Eye discharge, redness or conjunctivitis (pink eye) will be required to have a physician's diagnosis
8. Not feeling well and/or not able to keep up with regular program activities
9. Open or oozing sores, unless properly covered and 24-hours have passed since starting antibiotic treatment, if treatment is necessary
10. Lice or scabies: Children may return to childcare after treatment and /or no nits present.
11. Positive for COVID-19: Contact the school for your family's isolation/quarantine.

Children with ANY of the above symptoms/conditions will be separated from the group and temporarily cared for in the teachers' room. Parent(s)/guardian(s) or emergency contact will be emailed and asked to pick up the child. Once the symptoms resolve completely they will be able to return to care after being symptom free for **24 hours or one full school day** (without the use of OTC medication). Children relapse or contract a new disease when they have not had enough time to heal. They are not like adults. They cannot function successfully in care while still fighting off symptoms. Children must be able to participate fully in activities and the above symptoms typically prohibit them from doing so. While we regret any inconvenience this may cause, we will enforce this policy to protect all the children in our care and our staff. If your child is found by a doctor to have a serious, contagious illness, please contact the school ASAP so that we may take precautions and notify other parents.

## **MEDICATION**

No prescription medication will be administered to your child unless it is brought to school in an original prescription bottle with the instructions printed on the bottle. We have a form for parents to fill out indicating dosage, duration and whether refrigeration is necessary. Medicines should be taken home daily. Over the counter medication and prescription medicine must be in its original bottle. Containers must have the child's first and last name and clear instructions for use. We will administer the following medications, with prior written parent authorization, only at the dose, duration, and method of administration specified on the manufacturer's label of the age or weight of the child. We strongly discourage regular use of OTC medications while in care. **Alert the school when your child is taking an OTC medication such as laxatives, decongestants, allergy medications etc.**

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

If a child becomes ill and needs to be sent home or requires immediate medical attention due to an accident, the following steps will be taken unless specified otherwise by the parent:

1. General first aid (Band-Aids, ice, isolation)
2. Email parent(s) or another responsible adult listed on enrollment form
3. Call the child's physician if unable to contact family
4. Symptomatic children will rest quietly until picked up

The school reserves the right in the event of extreme illness or accident to call 911 if we cannot immediately locate the parents. If emergency treatment is required, the child will be transported to the hospital indicated on the enrollment form.

## **CLOTHING and SHOES**

### Clothing

Children should be dressed simply and comfortably in plain, cotton play clothes. Please remember that your child should be able to remove clothing for bathroom purposes. Tight elastics, overalls and jumpsuits are not preschool friendly. We ask that children **do not** come to school in "DRESS UP" clothing. This includes but is not limited to party dresses, shirts/dresses/skirts with sequins, glitter, lace/tulle attached or character clothing of any kind. This also includes outerwear, coats, mittens and hats with princesses, superheroes, cartoon characters or animal ears/tails. We ask that children keep all accessories at home. This includes earrings, necklaces, bracelets, sunglasses, watches, headbands, rings, etc. Please help support Montessori Garden in limiting distraction and minimizing consumerism. We attempt to create a safe, non-judgmental space for your children. The school supplies protection to be worn during art and water activities in order to protect clothing. Since we walk to green space almost every day, dress your children warmly in the cold weather.

## Shoes

Send your child in the same pair of warm, closed-toed shoes, hats or hoods during cold weather months. Having one pair “assigned” for school reinforces consistency. Please do not send your child in rain boots as it is difficult for children to navigate city sidewalks. When buying new shoes check to see if your child can put them on and take them off alone. Children remove their shoes while inside the school. We will provide a pair of slippers for all children to wear while inside. **Our primary goal is to empower children to become independent in all aspects of their daily activities and clothing/shoe choices are a huge part of this goal.**

## ANIMAL POLICY

Amy has a pet dog: Rufus, a lab mix, born 8/2011. Megan has a pet dog: Alexie, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, born 3/2017. Amy Jeffries and Megan Menis, as the pet owners, are responsible for walks, water, food, and discipline. Both animals have access to a water dish in the office but are fed at their residence. They are bathed and brushed by a professional groomer or are bathed at home. They have access to the school and blacktop. They have walks in order to relieve themselves. They have attended obedience training and are given flea treatments and immunized in accordance to the vets' recommendations. Vaccination records are kept on the premises. We will create a plan with families in the event a child has an allergy to pets.

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Please refer to the Daily Schedule for transition times so that you may plan your appointments accordingly. It is important for the continuity of our daily routine. It is disruptive to the children and the staff when children arrive late or leave outside of the predictable transition windows. State law mandates that all children must be signed in and out every day by an adult, 18 years old or older. Use the Q-Manager app to transfer care from home to school. No child will be released to anyone if unknown to the staff unless there is written information from the parents. Children being picked up by someone unknown to the staff will be asked for photo identification. We encourage families to establish a daily ritual for drop off / pick up.

## BEFORE OR AFTER-HOURS FEES

The fee for picking your child up after your regularly scheduled hours is \$25 + \$1.00 per minute. You will receive a PayPal invoice from the school. If you have an emergency, please call us to see about having the fee waived. Montessori Garden is not able to accommodate care for children prior to our hours of operation.

## BIRTHDAY CIRCLE

We have a ceremony celebrating each child's birthday. You will be notified of your child's celebration date in advance. Please do not send invitations or “Thank You” notes to school if you are having children for a private party away from school. At the beginning of the school year you will receive a "School Roster" which will include addresses, emails and phone numbers of everyone in the school should you wish to contact

other parents for any reason.

### **CHILDREN'S BELONGINGS**

Children will keep their personal belongings in a cubby located in the vestibule. Toys, treasures, small personal objects should remain at home. Your child's cubby is for: coat, shoes, seasonal hat and work to go home.

### **CHILD ABUSE POLICY**

As a state licensed agency, all of the staff is mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. In any instance when the staff has reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect or child exploitation we are required by law to report it to Child Protective Services of local law enforcement. All employees sign a statement acknowledging their obligation to report suspected child abuse.

- Staff who have suspicions concerning the welfare of a child must document the behavior and/or information, which is of concern to them. The written data will be kept in the child's private file folder for future reference.
- If at any time a specific incident is recounted by a child or seen by a teacher, that staff member is obligated to report that information to Child Protective Services immediately.
- Corporal punishment that is defined as use of physical force in a disciplinary action will result in immediate dismissal. This includes, but is not limited to spanking, slapping, biting, pulling of hair or humiliation.
- Staff who have been accused of sexual abuse will be prohibited from employment until a full and complete investigation by Child Protective Services has taken place. If cleared, no record will be held in the employee's file. Negative findings will result in immediate dismissal.
- A child who is discovered in sexual play with other children is interrupted and discouraged from the activity. A verbal report will be made to all families involved. Staff will make a determination if the activity indicates knowledge or experience outside the scope of normal preschool interest.

### **COMMUNICATION TO FAMILIES**

Montessori Garden sends photos of your child regularly. Montessori Garden will always bring questions or concerns about behavior or your child's development to your attention. Email is the school's primary mode of communication to parents so please set up alerts and provide the school with the email account that you will have access to during business hours.

### **COMMUNICATION TO STAFF**

Email is checked frequently throughout the day. Please email the school with changes to arrival/dismissal, vacations, planned absences, appointments etc. We ask families to schedule appointments around our Daily Schedule and the planned transition times that are provided.

### **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The most important aspect of discipline is preventing misbehavior through a safe physical setting and a stimulating program. Discipline is administered in such a way as to help each child learn to govern his own actions. We try to help children learn self-discipline and understand why we require certain types of behavior using clear simple statements about what is needed to show respect for others. We suggest alternatives and talk about the feelings which sometimes predicate misdeeds. Positive reinforcement is used to encourage appropriate behavior. Children are taught to use words with each other concerning the conflicts they have. A child who has difficulty controlling his actions is asked to play in another area. Teachers help children see the cause of the problem and think of alternate solutions. Children are not hit or spanked by the staff and we request that you observe this when you are here.

### **ENROLLMENT INFORMATION**

All information concerning your child must be kept up to date in order to comply with state law. Any changes in schedule, work or home phone, address, carpooling or pick up permission must be submitted in writing.

### **EXPULSION**

Montessori Garden is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment for all children. Expulsion will only be considered as a last resort, after all reasonable attempt to address challenging behavior and support of the child and their family have been exhausted.

### **FUNCTIONAL CONSTIPATION**

Alert the school immediately if your child begins or is currently taking medications that assist with bowel movements. This includes but is not limited to Senna, Miralax or any supplements. MG needs to be informed so that parents and school can create a mutually agreed upon toileting plan.

### **HOLIDAYS**

An annual calendar will be provided at the beginning of each new academic year.

### **HEALTH HISTORY, PHYSICAL EXAMINATION, IMMUNIZATIONS**

Current health history is required for each child at the time of admission. This must include a physical examination within six months of the date of enrollment including allergy or specific health issues. Prior to admission each child shall have an immunization record appropriate to his age brought up to date for all required vaccines. All children enrolled must be fully immunized **including COVID-19**. Throughout your child's career at MONTESSORI GARDEN it is required that he/she has a physical examination every twelve months. It is your responsibility to provide updated information regarding immunizations. Check the state website for information.

### **INSURANCE**

We have purchased a School-Time Only Plan, which covers accidents that occur while participating in supervised school activities. The maximum benefit is \$1,000,000<sup>00</sup>; it also covers travel-time during a field trip.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER MODIFICATIONS**

During instances of inclement weather, we may stay inside for playtime. These instances may include rain, extreme cold/warm temps, smoke or snow.

### **LICENSING PAPERWORK IS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW WAC 170-295-7040**

Licensing visitation paperwork is available for review by parents. This includes the current childcare center checklist, facility licensing agreement, monitoring checklist, and the facility-licensing agreement. Parents have access to all center areas used by the children.

### **LUNCH and SNACK**

All children will be offered a well-balanced lunch / snack. All children will be served from the menu that is sent out to all families. Written arrangements must be made in advance if a child needs special dietary accommodations, i.e. vegetarian meals, or special food allergies/sensitivities. Children will be offered water following their meal. We use reusable plates, silverware and table settings. We have a REDUCE, REUSE & RECYCLE mission as part of environmental education. We compost and recycle and use "Green" cleaning products.

### **MISSING CLASSROOM ITEMS**

Children's pockets will sometimes yield tiny beads, miniature dollhouse pieces, seemingly insignificant items--like a tiny cube--all of which are essential to some piece of classroom material. If you find such items, please, see that they are returned to the school.

### **NAP/REST**

We have an all school daily rest period. All children will rest using bedding supplied by MG.

### **NEWSLETTERS/CALENDARS**

You will receive newsletters and updates via email throughout the year. Please read them as they are our primary method of communicating with the entire group. There is a calendar with dates for the entire year provided to each family.

### **NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY**

MONTESSORI GARDEN welcomes families of any race, color, sexual orientation, national and ethnic origin to all programs and activities available in the school. We do not discriminate in any educational or admission policy.

### **PARKING and LOADING ZONES**

Parents may park in any available street spot or in designated Loading Zones. We request that parent's hold their child's hand at all times while walking to/from the school. Please follow posted signage.

### **PESTICIDE PLAN**

We are dedicated to using NO chemicals for the control of pests at MONTESSORI GARDEN. We aim to provide the healthiest environment possible for our children. In order to control pests, we prevent infestation by:

- taking out trash daily
- cleaning trash cans regularly
- trash cans or dumpsters are kept covered and away from the building
- keeping grounds clear of food and rubbish
- storing food in sealed plastic or metal containers
- cleaning and sanitizing all dishes utensils and surfaces used for eating or food preparation after meals and at the end of the day
- moisture control by maintaining and plumbing and water drainage systems

Should at any time it become necessary to administer any toxic substance inside or out of the building we will notify each family and staff member at least forty-eight (48) hours before the pesticide application by sending a letter home and posting a note near the sign-in sheet.

### **RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES**

MONTESSORI GARDEN does not subscribe to any religious affiliation nor do we see faith-based training to be part of our curriculum. At various times of years, we discuss cultural and national holidays that the children in the school might celebrate. We explain cultural holidays as stories that are important to people in the world and part of the rhythm of the earth and sun.

### **SCHOOL HOURS**

If you arrive prior to our scheduled opening hours please wait for a teacher to greet you and your child. Montessori Garden enrolls children for five days a week only, no part time options are available. We do not accommodate late arrivals/early dismissals. Please schedule all appointments outside of our operating hours.

### **SHARING**

We consider "Sharing" an exercise in using expressive language. We will provide your children a chance to share and listen to others during morning "circle". The school may request for your child to bring in an item related to a current classroom theme to share with the group.

### **SUMMER CAMP**

Montessori Garden has a Summer Camp program that operates during the months of July and August.

## **SUPPLY FEES**

Supply fee will cover the cost of events, specialists, gifts and celebrations. Throughout the year we may have parties, cooking projects, and celebrations. It is during these times that we may call upon families to make donations and/or contributions to provide supplies or hands-on help.

## **TAXES**

In order to take a deduction for childcare on your Federal Income Tax Report you must include the school's Employer Identification Number. We do not provide year-end statements. We provide a signed tuition receipt for your use. **Our Tax ID# is: 27-3701997**

## **TOILETING**

Although it is preferred that all children are able to use the toilet at the time of enrollment, we realize that each child is unique and achieves potty training on an individual basis. We are happy to support parents and children in maintaining dry pants, but your family must be actively practicing toilet training in order for the child to be successful in our environment. In the past we helped families guide their child to using the toilet with positive expectations, calm explanations, and modeling by other children. We know that "accidents" are part of the young life in preschool. Children are encouraged to assist in changing their clothes; teachers are there to make sure clean clothes are available and everything gets cleaned up. Parents and school staff need to create a mutually agreed upon toileting plan.

## **TUITION**

Tuition is determined by using our annual budget. The business has monthly expenses, which occur whether or not an individual child is present. It is not based on the number of class days per month, holidays, absenteeism, global crisis or vacation. It is divided into monthly payments for your convenience. We do not provide vacation discounts during the academic year. **Tuition is due on the first day of the month.** We use an ACH system. Montessori Garden does not provide invoices or year-end statements. You will be provided with a signed receipt master. The obligation to pay tuition may be canceled only by submitting written notice **45-days** in advance to the office. I understand if I do not give **PROPER NOTICE as per your contracted terms** when my child leaves, I forfeit the amount of fees I have on file. We will not offer prorated tuition or deposit refunds. You will be expected to pay tuition unless you formally withdraw from the program. There will be no exceptions.

## **WEATHER RELATED SCHEDULE CHANGES**

In the event of weather-related schedule changes, we coordinate our hours to coincide with the Seattle Public Schools; when they open late, close early or close completely the school hours will follow. In the event of "smoke days" we will consult the EPA website [airnow.gov](http://airnow.gov) and when the air is in or above the "Unhealthy" range we will make a decision accordingly. We also use Dyson fans with HEPA filters designed to monitor our school space. We may limit school hours or close completely if the air inside the school is "Poor or Very Poor".



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