

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 EXCLUSION FROM CARE

Children with ANY 2 of the following symptoms will not be permitted to remain in care:

- Fever of at least 100 ° F
- Cough
- Nasal Congestion or Nasal Discharge (stuffy or runny nose)
- Vomiting: within the past 24-hours
- Diarrhea: or watery stools within a 24-hour period, or any bloody stool
- Rash: all children with a skin rash will be required to have a physician's diagnosis
- Eye discharge, redness or conjunctivitis (pink eye) will be required to have a physician's diagnosis
- Not feeling well and/or not able to keep up with regular program activities
- Open or oozing sores, unless covered and 24-hours have passed since starting antibiotic treatment, if needed
- Lice or scabies: Children may return to childcare after treatment and /or no nits present
- 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 picked up or requires immediate medical attention due to an accident, the following steps will be taken unless specified otherwise by the parent:

- General first aid (Band-Aids, ice, isolation)
- Email parent(s) or another adult listed on enrollment form
- Call the child's physician if unable to contact family
- 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 locate the parents. If emergency treatment is required, the child will be transported to the hospital indicated on the enrollment form.

WHAT TO WEAR

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 messy activities.

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.

ARRIVAL & 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 HOURS CARE/AFTER HOURS \$ FEE

Montessori Garden is not able to accommodate care for children prior to our hours of operation. 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.

BIRTHDAY CIRCLE

We have a ceremony celebrating each child's birthday as close as we can to their DOB. 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 time of enrollment, you will receive a "School Roster" which will include, emails and phone numbers of all families.

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 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 decide if the activity indicates knowledge or experience outside the scope of normal preschool interest.

COMMUNICATION TO FAMILIES

We share photos of the children via a shared online photo album that only currently enrolled families have access to. We will always bring questions or concerns about your child to your attention. Email is our primary mode of communication. We ask that you set up "alerts", so you receive messages promptly 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 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.

FOOD MENUS

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.

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/CLOSURES

An annual calendar will be provided at the time of enrollment.

HEALTH, PHYSICALS, 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 \$1,000,000⁰⁰; it also covers travel-time during a field trip.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

We may modify recess due to rain, extreme cold/warm temps, smoke or snow.

LICENSING PAPERWORK AVAILABLE TO 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.

NAP/REST

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

NEWSLETTERS

You will receive newsletters and updates via email throughout the year. Please read them as they are our primary method of communication. We encourage you to set up alerts when you receive an email from Montessori Garden.

NON-DISCRIMINATION 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 always hold their child's hand while walking to/from the school.

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. To control pests, we prevent infestation by:

- taking out trash and cleaning trash cans regularly
- storing food in sealed containers
- cleaning and sanitizing all dishes utensils and surfaces used for eating or food preparation after meals

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 an email.

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.

SUPPLY FEE

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

TAXES

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 can 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 independent toileting, but your family must be actively practicing toilet training for the child to be successful in our environment. We know that "accidents" are part of 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 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. 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. 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 Security Deposit 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

We follow Seattle Public Schools, so we open late, close early or completely when they do. In the event of "smoke days" we will consult the EPA website airnow.gov and when the air is in or above the "Unhealthy" range we will decide accordingly. We also use Dyson fans with HEPA filters to monitor indoors. We may limit school hours or close completely if the air inside the school is "Poor or Very Poor".