

MONTESSORI COMMUNITY
SCHOOL



PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

2010-2012 EDITION

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Montessori Community School

Parent/Student Handbook

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MISSION STATEMENT OF MONTESSORI COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Our purpose is to educate children two to twelve years old through a non-sectarian, Montessori program which nurtures a lifelong enthusiasm for learning, encourages a commitment to the community, and fosters a stewardship of the natural world.

OUR APPROACH

As a member of the American Montessori Society, our approach is to design an environment which is attractive, orderly, and arranged with Montessori materials and developmentally-appropriate activities. Within this prepared environment, the child learns through active engagement with the materials and by making choices. The teacher carefully observes and guides the child in the process of discovery and learning.

Notice of Non-Discriminatory Policy

Montessori Community School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other school-administered programs.

MCS STUDENT LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Montessori Community School values and seeks to nurture in children:

Development of the spirit by promoting:

- * Caring and compassion
- * Honesty and respectfulness
- * Independence, autonomy, and personal responsibility
- * Self-direction, self-discipline, and confidence
- * Ability to cope with changes
- * Curiosity and wonder for life

Academic preparedness by facilitating:

- * Competency in reading, writing, and mathematics
- * Physical development and healthful practices
- * Effective communication skills
- * Joy in learning
- * An understanding of and appreciation for the natural world
- * An appreciation of the commonalities and uniqueness of people and cultures
- * An understanding of cycles and systems, and the interconnectedness of life
- * Imaginative, creative, and critical thinking
- * The process of abstract thought
- * Goal-setting and problem-solving
- * Appreciation of the arts

Social responsibility by encouraging:

- * Care for others and the environment
- * Positive contribution to the community
- * Peaceful resolution of conflict

PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHOOL

The educational philosophy of Maria Montessori, M.D. is the basis for the school's programs. In *The Absorbent Mind*, Dr. Montessori wrote, "The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six. For that is the time when man's intelligence itself, his greatest implement, is being formed. But not only his intelligence; the full totality of his psychic powers. . . at no other age has the child greater need of an intelligent help, and any obstacle that impedes his creative work will lessen the chance he has of achieving perfection."

Dr. Montessori believed that no human being is educated by another person. He must do it himself or it will never be done. A truly educated individual continues learning long after the hours and years he spends in the classroom because he is motivated from within by a natural curiosity and love for knowledge. Dr. Montessori felt, therefore, that the goal of early childhood education should not be to fill the child with facts from a pre-selected course of studies, but rather to cultivate his own natural desire to learn.

In the Montessori classroom, this objective is approached in two ways. First, by allowing each child to experience the excitement of learning by his own choice rather than by being forced. And second, by helping him to perfect all his natural tools for learning so that his ability will be at a maximum in future learning situations.

Another observation of Dr. Montessori, which has been reinforced by modern research, is the importance of the sensitive periods for early learning. These are transitory periods of intense fascination for learning a particular characteristic or skill, such as going up and down steps, putting things in order, counting, or reading. It is easier for the child to acquire a particular skill or characteristic during the corresponding sensitive periods than at any other time in his life. The Montessori classroom takes advantage of this fact by allowing the child freedom to select individual activities which correspond to his own periods of interest.

Montessori education is a unique cycle of learning designed to complement the child's sensitive periods and developmental stages. A child who acquires the basic skills of reading and arithmetic in this natural way has the advantage of beginning his education without drudgery, boredom, or discouragement. With opportunities to pursue his interest, he retains his enthusiasm for learning, which is the key to his becoming a truly educated person.

The Montessori classroom promotes cooperation among children. Each child is encouraged to do his best and to help one another. Dr. Montessori believed that competition in education should be introduced only after the child has gained confidence in the use of the basic skills. "Never let a child risk failure," she wrote, "until he has a reasonable chance of success."

Children mature at different rates and their periods of readiness for academic subjects vary. Because interest is stimulated and the materials are at hand whenever a child is ready, some youngsters in a Montessori class begin to read and calculate at an unusually early age. However, very early learning is not the norm, nor was it ever Dr. Montessori's objective. Her ideal was only that the learning experience should occur naturally and joyfully at the proper moment for each individual child. "It is true we cannot make a genius," Dr. Montessori wrote, "we can only give each individual the chance to fulfill his potential possibilities to become an independent, secure, and balanced human being."

The role of the adult in a Montessori school is to facilitate children's learning by carefully preparing a suitable learning environment and by modeling for children the values of independence, respect, responsibility, and joy in learning. (Source material from *A Parent's Guide to the Montessori Classroom*.)

SCHOOL HISTORY

Montessori Community School was founded as Katrice Montessori School in 1972 on the grounds of the First Christian Church on Liholiho Street in Makiki. Started as a preschool to accommodate the special needs of a child, Patricia Weber, with Down Syndrome, the school grew to include children from around the island with wide-ranging abilities and backgrounds. In 1982 the school name was changed to Montessori Community School to emphasize our vision of an educational experience that involves people and resources in the community as well as the community of children, parents, and teachers. The individual classrooms can be viewed as a model community of growing citizens.

The Elementary program originated with one 6-9 class (grades 1-3) which grew in numbers until the commitment to create a 9-12 class (grades 4-6) was made in 1981. In the fall of 1987, MCS expanded its programs again to meet the increasing demand for quality child care at the toddler ages with our first toddler class, consisting of two-year olds. Our growing programs found a home on our Nehoa Street campus, which opened in the spring of 1988.

In 1988, Montessori Community School was proud to have two of its teachers recognized by the Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children (HAEYC) for their outstanding accomplishments and abilities in their respective fields of teaching. Former MCS teacher Yvette Perreira Lewis was awarded the Excellence in Teaching Award in the Toddler Division. Jerry Mueller received the Excellence in Teaching Award at the Primary (grades 1-3) level.

In 1990 Susan Siebert, who had served as the Executive Director of MCS for 13 years, moved to the mainland. Patsy Tom, then the Assistant Director, took over the leadership role.

In 1993 the informal network of parents was formally organized into the Parent Faculty Association (PFA). MCS will celebrate its 40th anniversary during the 2012-2013 school year. In 1999-2000 it began the process for accreditation with the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS) and was awarded full accreditation in 2001. In 2005-2006, the school began the process for accreditation with the American Montessori Society and re-accreditation with HAIS. MCS is proud to be fully accredited by both HAIS and AMS, and also the first Montessori school on Oahu to be accredited by AMS.

Montessori Community School continues its search for its own permanent campus. The consolidation of our campuses in 1999 to the present site on Nehoa Street was a step towards that goal. As the success and recognition of the staff and programs earn more prominence in the community, the staff of MCS feels closer than ever to that goal.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Montessori Community School is a not-for-profit organization as defined under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and is governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board has a fiduciary responsibility to the school and holds in trust the school's future. It is also the guardian of the school's integrity or reputation within the community.

The Board selects the Head of School and delegates the administration of the school to the Head of School. In collaboration with the Head of School, the Board establishes the school's mission and general policies. The Board manages the school's assets and ensures there are sufficient resources to support the school's programs. Finally, the Board organizes and manages itself to fulfill its duties to the school. Members of the school community may nominate prospective candidates to the Board's Committee on Trustees. The Board elects its own members.

ACCREDITATIONS, MEMBERSHIPS, AND LICENSES

Montessori Community School is fully accredited by the American Montessori Society and the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, a member of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, and a member of the Hawaii Council of Private Schools (HCPS). In addition, the school is licensed by the Hawaii Department of Human Services (Two Year Old, Preschool, and Elementary After School Care programs) and the HCPS (Elementary programs).

AMS Accreditation

Montessori Community School is accredited by the American Montessori Society (AMS). We recognize teaching credentials from AMS and AMI (Association Montessori Internationale) as prerequisites to teach in our school as a Montessori teacher. We are accredited with AMS nationally and work cooperatively with Chaminade University's Montessori Teacher Education Division in training AMS interns.

Recognizing that Montessori is often misrepresented, our AMS accreditation signifies the highest standards in the profession. As an accredited school, we maintain AMS standards and abide by the Code of Ethics adopted by the AMS Board of Directors in October, 1969 and expanded in June, 1975. In Hawaii, we support the AMS teacher training programs at Chaminade University.

“As American Montessori Society members, we do pledge to conduct ourselves professionally and personally in ways that will reflect our respect for each other and for the children we serve. We will do whatever is within our talents and capacity to protect the rights of each child to have the freedom and opportunity to develop his full potential.”

PROGRAMS

EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Two Year Old and Preschool/Kindergarten

It is important for parents to understand that the Montessori programs provide a unique cycle of learning. Both the Two Year Old and Preschool/Kindergarten classrooms are carefully equipped with a broad array of materials which help the child to discover knowledge and develop his independence. The five general areas of the classroom are Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Mathematics, and Cultural Studies. Children are allowed to choose activities based on their interest and ability. A child who acquires the basic skills of reading and arithmetic in this natural way has the advantage of beginning his education without drudgery, boredom, or discouragement. By pursuing his individual interest in a Montessori classroom, he gains an early enthusiasm for learning, which is the key to becoming an educated person. While independence is the main focus, children are also part of the community and through their daily interactions with others they learn what is required to be part of a group.

The success of the child in school is dependent upon a number of factors, including the child himself. The relationship between the parent, school, and child is of prime importance. Parents are the child's primary role models and our faculty and staff provide support to the family. Confusion for the child is minimized when the school and family work together.

In *The Absorbent Mind*, Maria Montessori wrote, "The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six. For that is the time when man's intelligence itself, his greatest implement, is being formed. But not only his intelligence, the full totality

of his psychic powers. . . at no other age has the child greater need of an intelligent help, and any obstacle that impedes his creative work will lessen the chance he has of achieving perfection.”

Dr. Montessori believed that competition in education should be introduced only after the child has gained confidence in the use of basic skills. “Never let a child risk failure,” she wrote, “until he has a reasonable chance of success.” Since each child works individually with the materials, he relies only on his own previous work and his progress is not compared to the achievements of other youngsters.

It is a well-established fact that young children mature at very different rates and their periods of readiness for academic subjects vary a great deal. Because interest is stimulated and the materials are at hand whenever a child is ready, some youngsters in a Montessori class begin to read and calculate at an unusually early age. However, very early learning is not the norm, nor was it ever Dr.

Montessori’s objective. Her ideal was only that the learning experience should occur naturally and joyfully at the proper moment for each individual child. “It is true we cannot make a genius,” Dr. Montessori once wrote. “We can only give each individual the chance to fulfill his potential possibilities to become an independent, secure, and balanced human being.”

TWO YEAR OLD PROGRAM

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- * Provide activities and opportunities which foster the development of order, concentration, coordination, and independence (“OCCI”).
- * Provide children with a safe environment for physical movement, exploration, and discovery while encouraging curiosity.
- * Promote healthy social development.
- * Assist children in acquiring language.
- * Promote the child’s trust and sense of order by providing an orderly and predictable environment as well as caregivers that understand and cherish young children.

THE SEPARATION PROCESS

The Separation Process is an important element in the family’s successful transition from home or sitter to the group care environment. We recognize that both child and parents need time to establish trust in the environment and caregivers. Accordingly, our Separation Process is designed to allow the child to gradually build that trust while in the parent’s presence so that he can receive reassurance as needed. This process also allows the parents to watch their child’s adjustment in the program and to feel reassured that he will be well cared-for in their absence.

During the first week of school, parent and child will attend the program for approximately an hour on the first day, with the time gradually increasing. At this time the child is free to explore the classroom on his own while his parent remains seated in a designated area of the room, within the child’s sight. The parent’s presence serves to reassure the child as he ventures into the environment. As the child begins to feel more comfortable in the classroom and begins to trust the caregivers, he will explore for longer periods of time and turn to the caregivers

with his questions and comments. The next step in the process is to have the parent leave for a short time, returning to take the child home. Mothers and fathers may want to alternate the days to accommodate busy schedules.

Each child will respond differently to the adventure of “going to school,” so the teaching staff is trained to observe and facilitate the process. The average separation time is one week, but it may be longer or shorter, depending on the individual child.

CHECK LIST FOR THE FIRST FULL DAY OF SCHOOL Two Year Old Program

Forms

See the section on **ENROLLMENT** for required paperwork.

Personal Articles

We often change a child’s clothes. Supplies that will be needed include extra underwear or training pants, an extra set of clothing, plastic bags, disposable diapers and wipes, etc. for those who need them. Please **clearly label all personal items** with your child’s name.

Clothing

Children should wear comfortable clothing in which they can safely work and play without fear of getting dirty or messy. Clothing should be easy for the child to remove independently. Overalls, snug elastic waistbands, tights for girls, tight snaps, etc. can be difficult for young children to remove by themselves and can make trips to the bathroom a problem. Children should not wear clothing which contradicts the values of Montessori education. Footwear is required daily for safety, but high heels can present a safety hazard and should not be worn to school.

Please label both slippers, both shoes, jackets, sweaters, and all other personal items.

Snacks and Lunch

Children bring their own lunch or may order lunch (on a monthly basis) from the catering company. Please see the section on **FOOD** for helpful hints. **Be sure the child’s name is labeled visibly on the lunch box or bag, food containers, and thermos bottle.**

A morning snack (juice and crackers) is provided for the children. An afternoon snack is provided for children who remain after 2:30 p.m. It includes a dairy

product such as milk or cheese. Children with identified allergies to dairy products will be offered juice or water as an alternative.

Children are encouraged to feed themselves and to consume as much of their lunch as they wish. Children eat their snacks and lunches seated at a table so as to incorporate grace and courtesy into the activity as well as to safeguard against choking.

Bedding

Children need a blanket, beach towel, or some kind of clean covering to lie upon. Be sure it is labeled and placed in a plastic bag for hygienic purposes. Parents are asked to take it home each Friday for laundering in hot water.

Naps

Children who remain in the program after 12 noon take naps. The length of nap time varies with each child's individual needs. If a child is unable to sleep, he may do quiet activities after a brief rest.

Children may bring a special nap time object, e.g. a stuffed animal or blanket. Please be sure it is labeled.

Toileting

Toilet learning is a collaborative effort involving the child, the teachers, and the parents. Usually when a child remains dry for an hour or two, indicates to an

adult that he is wet or soiled, shows an interest in using the toilet, or is willing to sit on the toilet or to use training pants, the child is ready for toilet learning. Once toileting has begun, it is expected that the process will be supported at home as well as in school. Close communication between parents and teachers is encouraged.

Children who are going through toilet learning for the first time, as well as others not completely trained, should bring a sufficient amount of training pants and plastic bags. Training pants should be loose enough for the child to be able to manage by himself.

All children are diapered or toileted before and after their naps as well as throughout the day.

NOTE: State health regulations restrict the staff from rinsing or washing soiled underpants. The regulations were enacted to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. It is essential that the soiled clothing be taken home daily for laundering. Also, only disposable diapers are used in our school.

Accidents

Teachers supervise the children closely and work to safeguard the environment. Even so, it is normal for children to have accidents. Toddler-aged children are in the process of developing their gross motor coordination and are often unsteady. In addition, toddlers are impulsive and are just beginning to learn to use words as a substitute for biting or hitting when angry.

When a child is injured, first aid is administered by the staff and an Accident Report form, which describes the injury and treatment, is completed by a teacher and sent home. A copy of the Accident Report is kept on file in the office. The staff treats minor injuries, such as cuts and scrapes, by cleansing with soap and water and applying a bandage. In case of a serious accident, the parents will be notified and the teachers will refer to the child's Emergency Card for instructions. It is, therefore, essential that the Emergency Card contain accurate and current information. The majority of our staff members have successfully completed certified First Aid and Child CPR courses.

Please refer to the **HEALTH & SAFETY** section on **Accidents** for school policies regarding serious injuries.

CHECK LIST FOR EVERY DAY Two Year Old Program

1. **Prompt arrival.** Arrive at school on time! For the Two Year Old program, we encourage families to arrive no later than 8:30 a.m., and to establish a regular schedule. Predictable routines help children feel secure and can aid in their adjustment.
2. **Acknowledgment of arrivals.** When dropping off your child, make certain that the adult in attendance is informed of his arrival.
3. **Dismissal & pick-up authorization.** Check out with the supervising teacher at pick-up time and be sure to sign out on the attendance sheet with the time of pick-up and your initials. Children will be released only to their legal parent/guardians or those so authorized by the parents or legal guardians.
4. **Dismissal time routines.** Please pick up your child promptly at dismissal time. The very young child gains security through being picked up at the same time every day.

When picking up your child, we ask that you leave with your child promptly. When children remain with their parents on the playground after their dismissal time, it creates a confusing situation for the teachers who are supervising the playground or classroom and makes it difficult for After-School Care teachers to close the program at 5:30 p.m.

5. **Secure gates.** When you enter or exit the playground, be absolutely certain that the gate is secured! We don't want any children to slip into the parking lot. Only adults should open and close gate latches.
6. **Drive with caution.** Please drive slowly (5 mph or less) and carefully through our parking lot, keeping the drive-through lane unobstructed, and entering and exiting only through designated points.
7. **Parking lot safety.** When parking, turn off the engine, lock all doors, and remove the keys from the ignition. Safety is our priority. Always accompany your child to or from the car to the gate. Do not leave children (e.g. younger siblings) unattended in the car.

8. **Personal articles.** Make sure your child does not bring gum, candy, money, toys, or a purse onto the school grounds. We have many interesting materials and constructive activities in school. If your child feels he has a book, tape, or something of interest to share, discuss this with the teacher before bringing it into the classroom. Children at the ages represented in the Two Year Old Program are not developmentally ready for sharing their possessions with others.
9. **Discussing concerns with teachers.** When you have a concern regarding your child, please schedule a mutually convenient time to meet with the teacher. It is important that such discussions be held at a time when everyone's full attention is possible. Lengthy conversations at morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times distract teachers from their primary responsibility of supervising the children.
10. **Lost and Found.** Check the "Lost and Found" regularly for missing items.
11. **Check mail folders.** Check your child's mail folder daily for communications from the office or teacher, accident reports, child's work, or other information.

PRESCHOOL/KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Montessori curriculum provides the child with concrete experiences and information about his world. The child is allowed to progress through the curriculum at his own pace and interest level. The 3-6 program addresses the whole child -- his intellectual, social and emotional, and physical development. Activities are provided which foster the development of order, concentration, coordination, and independence (“OCCI”).

The program strives to foster and facilitate the development of patterns of behavior that will serve as the foundation for future learning. These include:

- * **Intrinsic motivation:** The child is working and learning through his/her own choices and direction.
- * **Independence in work:** Each child enjoys “working” and selects one task and another tirelessly and independently.
- * **Completed work cycles:** Whatever activity is initiated by the child is carried out to its natural end, signified by the return of the material to its proper space.
- * **Respect:** The child respects the work of others and does not interrupt or attempt to make it his own. Materials are returned in a manner showing respect for the environment as well as for the child who will use it next. The child is kind to himself and to others and works cooperatively with the group.
- * **Responsibility:** The child takes responsibility for her behavior with the materials. If she spills, for example, she will independently remedy the problem. The child also takes responsibility for her words and actions towards herself and others. For example, she knows that it is her choice to be kind or hurtful and each choice brings certain consequences.

PHASE-IN PROGRAM

Many Montessori schools have succeeded in making the first days of school more comfortable by employing the Phase-In Program. This procedure staggers the first day of school for different groups of students over a period of several days.

On the first day of school, for example, the oldest returning children will be alone with the teachers. They will receive personal attention and reminders of how the Montessori program works. On the second day, another group of the oldest new students will join the first and receive similar personal attention and direction. The days will progress with the daily addition of groups of new students. By the time the youngest children enter the program, the others will be comfortably adjusted and will be setting examples for the young ones who will also be receiving individual attention from the staff.

The Phase-In begins with the first day of the academic school year. Families will be notified of the specific starting date in July and the classroom assignment in August. For some working parents it may be inconvenient to follow the phase-in plan, but making child-care arrangements will certainly be to the child’s benefit. Our intention is to make the transition to school as pleasant and smooth as possible.

CHECK LIST FOR THE FIRST FULL DAY OF SCHOOL Preschool/Kindergarten Programs

Forms

See the section on **ENROLLMENT** for required paperwork.

Preparation for School

These suggestions are offered to help you in preparing your child for his first day at school. When a child begins the Montessori experience, it is a big step in his young life, and he needs the interest of his family. It is best to talk about the beginning of school only a day or two before the actual date. Explain the situation briefly and calmly. Talking about specific activities could lead to disappointments, so speak in general terms.

On his first day, when you arrive at the classroom entrance, give him a friendly good-bye and leave your child in the care of the teacher. The teachers will comfort a disappointed or tearful student. It works best for the child if the parents do not linger. It is not unusual for parents whose child is coming to school for the first time to also be feeling anxiety. We encourage you to share your feelings and concerns with the teachers.

Do not be discouraged if your child does not relate many specifics about his school experience. Usually the child has been working with many different activities throughout the day and specific recall can be difficult. Another thing to keep in mind is that we are concerned with process rather than product so that much of what a child has accomplished is being internalized and will prepare them for the elementary years. You will notice that he may bring home very few papers and other “product” evidence of his school work. Please be patient as your child gradually reveals his newly acquired skills and knowledge.

Personal Articles

Children in the 3-6 programs should bring an extra set of labeled clothing to school in a sealable plastic bag. In the case of an accident, the soiled clothes will be sent home that day and the child will wear their set of extra clothes. Parents are requested to take soiled clothing home that day. Please return the next day

with another set of clothing in a clean plastic bag.

NOTE: State health regulations restrict the staff from rinsing or washing soiled underpants. The regulations were enacted to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. It is therefore essential that soiled clothing be taken home that day for laundering.

Clothing

Children should wear comfortable clothing in which they can safely work and play without fear of getting dirty or messy. Clothing should be easy for the child to remove independently. Overalls, snug elastic waistbands, tights for girls, tight snaps, etc. can be difficult for young children to remove by themselves and can make trips to the bathroom a problem. Children should not wear clothing which contradicts the values of Montessori education. Footwear is required daily for safety, but high heels can present a safety hazard and should not be worn to school.

Please label both slippers, both shoes, jackets, sweaters, and all other personal items.

Snacks and Lunch

Children bring their own lunch or may order lunch (on a monthly basis) from the catering company. Please see the section on **FOOD** for helpful hints. **Be sure the child’s name is labeled visibly on the lunch box or bag, food containers, and thermos bottle.** Due to the number of children in the programs, refrigeration and reheating is not available for lunch.

Soda, gum, and candy are not permitted in school and should not be included in lunches or snacks.

Sharing of food from lunches and snacks is not permitted for sanitary reasons, and because some children have allergies to certain foods.

A morning snack (juice and crackers) is provided for children. An afternoon snack is provided for children who remain after 2:30 p.m. It includes a dairy product such as milk or cheese. Children with identified allergies to dairy products will be offered juice or water as an alternative.

Bedding

All children will have a rest time after lunch. They should bring a blanket or beach towel, or some kind of clean covering to lie upon. Be sure it is labeled and placed in a plastic bag for hygienic purposes. Parents are asked to take it home each Friday for laundering in hot water.

Naps

Following lunch, the children have a rest period. Generally, the youngest children have a formal nap time. Another group, who no longer need naps, rest for a short time and then have an afternoon activity period. The kindergarten children rest and then begin their afternoon enrichment program.

After School Care

After School Care is available until 5:30 p.m. on a regular or occasional basis and is charged accordingly. Different activities and a snack are provided for the children who remain later in the day.

NOTE: School closes at 5:30 p.m. Should any child be picked up after 5:30 p.m., a late fee will be assessed, due upon presentation of statement by the teacher. The late fee is to encourage families to pick up their children on time. Repeated late pick-up or failure to pay late charges may result in the termination of services to your family.

CHECK LIST FOR EVERY DAY Preschool/Kindergarten Programs

1. **Prompt arrival.** Arrive at school on time! The 3-6 preschool programs begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. each day. Children who come late miss being greeted by the teachers and the opening lesson at 8:30 a.m. Predictable routines help children feel secure and can aid in their adjustment. The concentration of their classmates is interrupted when someone arrives late.
2. **Acknowledgment of arrivals.** When dropping off your child, make certain that the adult in attendance is informed of his arrival.
3. **Dismissal & pick-up authorization.** Check out with the supervising teacher at pick-up time and be sure to sign out on the attendance sheet with the time of pick-up and your initials. Children will be released only to their legal parents/guardians or those so authorized by the parents or legal guardians.
4. **Dismissal time routines.** Please pick up your child promptly at dismissal time. The very young child gains security through being picked up at the same time every day.

When picking up your child, we ask that you leave with your child promptly. When children remain with their parents on the playground after their dismissal time, it creates a confusing situation for the teachers who are supervising the playground or classroom and makes it difficult for After-School Care teachers to close the program at 5:30 p.m.
5. **Secure gates.** When you enter or exit the playground, be absolutely certain that the gate is secured! We don't want any children to slip into the parking lot. Only adults should open and close gate latches.
6. **Drive with caution.** Please drive slowly (5 mph or less) and carefully through our parking lot, keeping the drive-through lane unobstructed, and entering and exiting only through designated points.
7. **Parking lot safety.** When parking, turn off the engine, lock all doors, and remove the keys from the ignition. Safety is our priority. Always accompany your child to or from the car to the gate. Do not leave children (e.g. younger siblings) unattended in the car.

8. **Personal articles.** Make sure your child does not bring gum, candy, money, toys, or a purse onto the school grounds. We have many interesting materials and constructive activities in school. If your child feels he has a book, tape, or something of interest to share, discuss this with the teacher before bringing it into the classroom.

9. **Discussing concerns with teachers.** When you have a concern regarding your child, please schedule a mutually convenient time to meet with the teacher. It is important that such discussions be held at a time when everyone's full attention is possible. Lengthy conversations at morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times distract teachers from their primary responsibility of supervising the children.

10. **Lost and Found.** Check the "Lost and Found" regularly for missing items.

11. **Check mail folders.** Check your child's mail folder daily for communications from the office or teacher, accident reports, child's work, or other information.

12. **Occasional care.** Children who are not picked up by 2:40 p.m. are automatically enrolled in the After School program for the day and occasional child care rates will be assessed.

ELEMENTARY PROGRAMS

6-9 and 9-12 Classes

Montessori elementary classrooms continue the mixed-age groupings as seen in the Early Education Programs. Students in grades 1, 2, and 3 form the 6-9 class while grades 4, 5, and 6 form the 9-12 class. The goal of the Montessori elementary teachers over the span of the six years is to assist the student in learning as much as possible about the cultures, inventions, and knowledge developed and acquired by human beings since man first appeared on earth as well as prehistory and current issues facing man. The scope of information integrated in the curriculum units includes math, geometry, language arts, history, geography, cultural studies, botany, zoology, geology, physics, anatomy, health and nutrition, and environmental studies, as well as music, art, and physical education.

In contrast to the preschool child, the elementary student is a more deliberate learner. Building on the wealth of information internalized during the preschool years, the elementary student is eager to relate new facts with prior information. The ongoing process of mastering the "3 Rs," i.e. reading, writing, and arithmetic, enables the student to discover the why, how, and wherefore about his world.

Students take an active responsibility for their learning by organizing their work, choosing research projects and essay themes, creating their own vocabulary lists, engaging in peer teaching, and being accountable for the completion of assignments. They learn strategies to seek out answers and problem-solve creatively. In an open classroom, the students develop initiative, self-direction, and self-discipline.

Within the classroom, the students and teachers form a social unit. They share a responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment and atmosphere in which each person can thrive intellectually, emotionally, and physically. Students make choices and are accountable for the consequences of their decisions. As students develop inner controls over their behavior they also engage in conflict resolution and creative problem-solving with their peers. We encourage students to consider the viewpoints of others, to accommodate, to assert, to negotiate, and to work together toward common goals. Essentially, they learn what it means to be a member of a pluralistic and democratic society.

GOALS OF THE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

We are committed to the Montessori approach to learning. Our goals are for each child to learn:

*** To study independently in a program of individualized instruction . . .**

Individualized instruction does not mean one-on-one instruction. Some lessons occur in small groups. Each child receives individual attention from the teacher from the on-going evaluations of his work. The child gains guidance and direction in this personal time with the teacher. The teacher determines what needs to be done in more depth or what additional work should follow.

*** To work cooperatively with others in a multi-age setting that develops a community spirit . . .**

Children are free to work in groups of their own choosing for special projects or to accomplish their regular daily work. They practice problem-solving methods within their small groups. They become effective community members.

*** To think abstractly and to use his imagination through a variety of approaches and open-ended exploration . . .**

The imagination develops intensely in the elementary child. "To strike the imagination" is to get the child's interest. It leads to work, which leads to imagining, which leads to abstract thinking.

*** To master concepts through work with three-dimensional materials which put abstract ideas into concrete form . . .**

The Montessori materials assist the child in reaching abstraction. Spatial time lines, pictorial zoology, fractional insets, and botany charts are a few of the many materials designed to move the child toward abstract thinking. They are a means to an end.

*** To apply the "basics" in order to answer the why, the how, and the wherefore within his world. . .**

The "3 Rs" serve as tools enabling the child to move forward and pursue a wider curriculum. Math and language skills progress on an on-going basis, with the child practicing math problems and language arts lessons as expected. The student continues to use his basic skills through other studies in Montessori's cultural curriculum. Math is used to determine the distance between two cities on a map or to weigh

specimens collected for studies in geology. Language arts skills come together as a child researches and reports on how the earth was formed, or how people live in another country, or which plants belong to the heliconia family. Children see how music (rhythm, notation, etc.) relates to mathematics. They develop an understanding of cycles and systems and the interconnectedness of life.

*** To be self-disciplined and self-directed . . .**

The Montessori program aids the children in developing the ability to master their own thoughts and actions . . . in gaining control over one's own being. The emphasis is on inner discipline. The children learn to take responsibility for their behavior. They make choices. They learn to work responsibly and independently. They learn how to set goals.

*** To solve problems creatively . . .**

The world is experiencing an accelerated rate of change. The education of the future must prepare students to cope with changes and to find solutions through means other than traditional educational methods and advice from experts. Imaginative, creative, critical thinkers contribute to the community at large.

Montessori children learn to approach many sources for their answers. They research different points of view. They look toward the community for possible solutions. They learn to adapt to change, and recognize their potential for shaping their own lives.

"Education should no longer be mostly imparting knowledge, but must take a new path, seeking the release of human potentialities. The teacher . . . works in the service of the complete human being, able to exercise in freedom a self-disciplined will and judgment, unperverted by prejudice and undistorted by fear."

-- Dr. Maria Montessori

ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM

I. Language Arts (6-9)

Reading: Phonemic awareness; phonics; sight words; word attack; comprehension; vocabulary; fluency; poetry
Writing: Mechanics; process of writing; exposure to different types of writing
Grammar: Parts of speech; parts of a sentence
Spelling Handwriting
Dictionary skills Literature

Language Arts (9-12)

Writing: Writing techniques and structure; basic editing; exposure to different genres of writing; mechanics
Grammar: Advanced parts of speech; advanced parts of a sentence
Oral Communication: Public speaking; personal expression
Reading: Comprehension; vocabulary
Spelling Drama
Handwriting Literature
Latin and Greek word roots

II. Mathematics (6-9)

Whole number operations
Life skills: Telling time; knowledge of money; measurement; estimation
Memorization of facts Recognition and writing of symbols
Recognition of quantity Plane Geometry
Place Value Word Problems
Fractions Passage to decanomial

Mathematics (9-12)

Whole number operations Pre-algebra
Fractions Plane geometry; surface area and volume
Decimals Word problems; group problem-solving
Passage to decanomial Memorization of facts
Signed numbers Powers of numbers
Ratio & proportion Graphing
Square roots; cube roots Squaring and cubing sequences
Life skills: Measurement; knowledge of money

III. Cultural Curriculum (6-9)

History: Study of the universe; timeline of life
Concept of time: Clocks; calendars; personal timeline
Earth science
Science: Experiments supporting various themes (e.g. DNA and genetics, etc.); physical science
Geography: Physical; political; biomes
Peace education

III. Cultural Curriculum (6-9) (continued)

Five kingdoms of life
Zoology: External parts; vital functions; classification of invertebrates and vertebrates
Botany: External parts; vital functions; classification
Fundamental needs of people
Cultural Curriculum (9-12)
History: Ancient civilizations; early humans; U.S. history
Science: Human body; zoology; botany; physical science; chemistry; simple machines
Geography: Physical geography; political geography
Study of systems and relationships with scientific principles
Fundamental needs of people
Peace education

IV. Personal Development

Goal-setting. Problem-solving.
Time management. Cooperative learning.
Personal responsibility. Peaceful conflict resolution.
Care of the natural world and the environment; responsibility to the community; multi-cultural awareness and appreciation.

V. Physical Education

Development and maintenance of physical fitness and good sportsmanship. Awareness and management of the body. Acquisition of useful physical skills, safety skills, and personal fitness habits.
Enjoyment of wholesome recreation.
6-9 Program: Non-competitive skill-building games, leading to participation in sports.
9-12 Program: Skills incorporated into non-competitive organized games and physical fitness.

VI. Health

General hygiene, nutrition, physical maintenance.

VII. Music

Performing/reading music; creating music; listening to, describing, and valuing music.

VIII. Art

6-9 Program: Appreciation of the arts; imaginative, creative, and critical thinking; an understanding and appreciation for the natural world.
9-12 Program: Exposure to a variety of media and mediums through an open lab, experimentation set-up.

IX. Campouts

Development and implementation of practical life skills, independence, personal responsibilities, and an appreciation for the natural world.

CHECK LIST FOR THE FIRST FULL DAY OF SCHOOL Elementary Programs

1. **Forms.** See the section on **ENROLLMENT** for required paperwork.
2. **School supplies.** A list for each elementary classroom is distributed in the August mail-out. Children pool their supplies, which are shared by everyone in the class over the course of the year.

CHECK LIST FOR EVERY DAY Elementary Programs

1. **Prompt arrival/tardiness.** Elementary programs begin promptly at **8:00 a.m.** each day. Children who arrive after 8:00 a.m. must report directly to the classroom or office with their parent or accompanying adult to obtain a tardy slip. The student will give the signed tardy slip to the classroom teacher.
2. **Morning supervision.** Supervision for children is not provided prior to 7:30 a.m. If you should arrive before 7:30 a.m., parents (or accompanying adults) should stay with their child for safety until the arrival of the teacher on duty.
3. **Acknowledgment of arrivals and dismissals.** When dropping off or picking up your child, make certain that the supervising staff member is informed of his arrival or departure. Children will be released only to their legal parent/guardians or those so authorized by the parents or legal guardians.
4. **Dismissal time.** When picking up your child, we ask that you leave with your child promptly. When children remain with their parents on the playground after their dismissal time, it creates a confusing situation for the teachers who are supervising the playground or classroom and makes it difficult for After-School Care teachers to close the program at 5:30 p.m. Elementary children dismissed at the 2:30 pick-up time must acknowledge their departure by shaking a teacher's hand before leaving for the day.

Elementary students who will be walking or taking the bus home must give the teachers a written note with the parent or legal guardian's signature authorizing the student to leave campus on their own at dismissal time.

5. **Lunch.** Children bring their own lunch or may order lunch (on a monthly basis) from the catering company. Refrigeration is not available. Sodas, candy, and gum should not be included in lunches. See the section on **FOOD** for helpful hints.
6. **Snack.** Snacks are optional, but there is time provided during the school day for children to have a small snack if they bring one. MCS strongly encourages healthful snacks.
7. **Closed shoes.** Closed shoes are required daily for safety, during recess and p.e.
8. **Backpack or book bag.** Please label your child's backpack or book bag, as the styles are often very similar.
9. **Personal articles.** Articles that can distract children from the business of learning should not be brought to school. Cell phones should be turned off during the school day. Check with the teacher prior to bringing in an item if you are unsure.
10. **Grooming.** Children should come to school in neat clothing and hair of a natural color so as not to call attention to themselves and distract themselves or others. Personal grooming should not call attention to the student or distract the student or others. Students should not wear clothing or other items of apparel or adornment which contradict the values of Montessori education.
11. **Drive with caution.** Please drive slowly (5 mph or less) and carefully through our parking lot, keeping the drive-through lane unobstructed, and entering and exiting only through designated points.
12. **Parking lot safety.** When parking, turn off the engine, lock all doors, and remove the keys from the ignition. Safety is our priority. Always accompany your child to or from the car to the gate. Do not leave children (e.g. younger siblings) unattended in the car.
13. **Secure gates.** When you enter or exit the playground, be absolutely certain that the gate is secured! We don't want any children to slip into the parking lot. Only adults should open and close gate latches.
14. **Checking mail folders.** Elementary students are responsible for checking their mail folders daily for homework, student's work, communication from the office or teacher, accident reports, or other information, and taking these items home to their parents.
15. **Discussing concerns with teachers.** When parents have a concern they would like to discuss at length, please arrange a mutually convenient time with the teacher. Lengthy conversations at morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times distract teachers from their primary responsibility of supervising the children.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Children are dismissed at 2:30 p.m. and must be picked up by 2:40 p.m. or enrolled in the After School Care program. Students may not remain on campus unsupervised after the 2:30 p.m. dismissal time.

If you need occasional After School Care, you may make that arrangement by notifying your child's teacher in the morning with written authorization, or calling the office before 2:00 p.m. You will be billed for the extra hours at the end of the month.

NOTE: School closes at 5:30 p.m. Should any child be picked up after 5:30 p.m., a late fee will be assessed, due upon presentation of statement by the teacher. The late fee is to encourage families to pick up their children on time. Repeated late pick-up or failure to pay late charges may result in the termination of services to your family.

SCHOOL POLICIES

ADMISSIONS

Application Procedure

Application to Montessori Community School (MCS) requires submission of a completed application form for the appropriate age level, along with an application fee. Applicants to the kindergarten and elementary programs are expected to provide report cards, teacher reference reports, and any other requested information. Upon receipt of the application fee and all requested information, MCS responds to the applicants within 30 days.

Admission Criteria

Our goal is to enroll students who will benefit from a Montessori education. Age is only one factor for admission to each program level. Developmental readiness is also considered, and all applicants are considered in terms of space availability and classroom dynamics. In general, applicants to the Early Education Programs are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. However, the school strives to balance the classes in terms of gender and age.

Montessori Community School is licensed by the State of Hawaii to enroll children 2 years of age and under 7 years of age for a maximum enrollment of 126. MCS is also licensed to enroll a maximum of 80 children, ages 5 years, 6 months old and under 13 years of age in our elementary after-school program.

Two Year Olds: Children must be at least 24 months old at the time they begin school. Children in diapers are eligible to enroll in the two-year-old program.

Preschool: Preschool children must be able to use the bathroom independently. Children enrolling in September must be three years of age by December 31 of that year to be considered for the preschool 3-6 program. For enrollment any other time, the child must be fully three years of age to qualify for entrance to the preschool 3-6 program.

Kindergarten: To be considered for admission to the kindergarten program in September, children must be five years old by December 31 of that year. Kindergarten applicants are considered in terms of the following information:

1. Most recent and previous year's report card or progress report, if applicable;
2. Teacher Reference Report, completed by current teacher, if applicable;

3. An observation of the applicant at his or her current school by an MCS representative, as necessary;
4. Attendance in the MCS summer session, as necessary.

MCS reserves the right to require additional documentation. All required documents must be submitted to the MCS Admissions Office and a parent interview completed before an admission decision can be made.

Elementary: To begin first grade in September, students must be 6 years old by December 31 of that year. Elementary applicants are considered in terms of the following information:

1. Most recent and previous year's report card or progress report;
2. Most recent standardized test scores, if applicable;
3. Teacher Reference Report, completed by current teacher;
4. Parent interview;
5. Student interview or a visit to MCS, as necessary;
6. An observation of the applicant at his or her current school by an MCS representative, as necessary;
7. Attendance in the MCS summer session, as necessary.

MCS reserves the right to require additional documentation. All required documents must be submitted to the MCS Admissions Office and a parent interview completed before an admission decision can be made.

Special consideration is given to applicants with siblings currently enrolled in MCS, to students with prior Montessori experience, and to staff children.

The school and parents are viewed as partners in the educational care of children, with shared values and educational goals. Prospective parents are invited to schedule an observation in the classroom by calling the school office. Parents who are unfamiliar with Montessori education are strongly encouraged to observe and meet with an admissions representative.

In order to facilitate the admission process for parents, please notify the office if you have any special needs, e.g. hearing impairment.

Admission of Handicapped Children

Montessori Community School abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act and other related state and federal laws. A child with disabilities will be considered for admission, unless accommodation would result in an undue burden.

ENROLLMENT

Upon acceptance into the school, a tuition deposit or tuition payment is due. Payment is necessary to hold the space for the student. Information regarding our financial policies is enclosed with the acceptance letter and is available through the Business Office.

Requirements for All New Students

New students entering MCS must supply the following prior to the first day of school:

1. Pupil's Health Card (Form 14). See section on Health Requirements for more information.
2. A completed Emergency Card (provided by MCS).
3. A certified copy of the student's birth certificate.
4. A signed Financial Agreement form, provided by MCS.
5. Student's Certificate of Release for elementary students transferring from another local elementary school, and any prior school records.

Requirements for All Continuing Students

Continuing MCS students must supply the following prior to the first day of school:

1. Updated health information on the Pupil's Health Card (Form 14), as required by the State Department of Health. See section on Health Requirements for more information.
2. A new Emergency Card, completed annually (provided by MCS).
3. A signed Financial Agreement form, completed annually (provided by MCS).

Health Requirements for the First Day of School

A completed health form (Form 14) for each child entering school must be on file in the office before the first day of school. The Form 14 can be obtained from your physician. Included in this form is the following information:

1. A negative tuberculin (t.b.) skin test (Mantoux) or chest x-ray for all new MCS students, to have been completed within one year prior to Hawaii school entry. The PPD Mantoux skin test (or chest x-ray) will provide acceptable t.b. clearance, but a tine test is not acceptable. The skin test or chest x-ray must be performed by a U.S. licensed practitioner (MD, DO, APRN, or PA).

No exemptions are allowed.

2. A physical examination within one year prior to date of school entry (or a doctor's appointment slip for provisional entrance).
3. The complete series of required immunizations. Immunizations must be updated following the Department of Health's immunization schedule.

Emergency Card Requirement for All Students

In addition to the completed Form 14, each child must have a completed Emergency Card on file in the office prior to the start of school, or turned in to the teacher on the first day of school, in order to be admitted to the classroom. All students returning to MCS are required to complete a new Emergency Card prior to the start of each school year. **If the teacher does not have the Emergency Card on the first day of school, parents will be required to fill one out at the time of drop-off in order for their child to attend school that day.**

Continued Enrollment

All current MCS students are expected to confirm their continued enrollment at MCS annually by:

- * Submitting a signed Reservation and Tuition Agreement form;
- * Paying all required fees;
- * Completing all required forms;
- * Meeting all deadlines.

Failure to submit the signed Reservation and Tuition Agreement form in a timely manner may jeopardize the student's opportunity to continue in the school. Re-enrollment contracts are distributed to MCS students in January prior to applications becoming available to the public.

Students graduating from one program to another, i.e. Two Year Old to Preschool, Preschool to Kindergarten, or Kindergarten to Elementary are accepted based on the recommendation of their teacher. Parents are apprised of their children's progress through regularly-scheduled parent-teacher conferences. Parents' failure to respond to conference requests may jeopardize the continued enrollment of their child.

At MCS we believe that children succeed when the values espoused by the school are shared by the child's family. It is the school's expectation that parents/guardians will attend conferences with their child's teachers and work together to provide the optimum conditions for their child's educational benefit.

In those rare occasions when the professional staff believes a child's best interests are not served by continuing in the school, MCS reserves the right to terminate enrollment. When such a situation arises, the school works closely with families in resolving the situation.

All continuing students must update their immunizations annually as required by the State of Hawaii's Department of Health.

Parents are also expected to meet their financial obligations to the school prior to re-enrollment.

Legal Arrangements

In situations where a child does not live with both parents in a shared household, unless there is agreement between the parents about who has access to the child and/or information about the child, MCS will require a Family Court order. The Court Order will be kept in the child's file in the school office so that the school can honor the arrangements.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Children are expected to be kind and respectful to themselves, to others, and to the physical environment. Children are also expected to take responsibility for their actions and to cooperate with their teachers and school personnel.

Unsatisfactory Conduct

When a child engages in dangerous or very disruptive behavior, the teacher may decide to remove the child from the classroom and have the child remain in the school office or other designated area. If the behavior continues, a child may be suspended from school and the period of suspension may vary from one to several days. The objective of suspension is to impress upon the child the serious nature of his/her actions.

When the behavior is persistent and endangers the safety of the child or others, the child may be dismissed from the school. A "probationary" period may be warranted before a dismissal occurs.

Parents will be informed of their child's removal from the classroom and suspension from school. It is expected that parents will work cooperatively with the school to help change the child's behavior. In the event that the school and family do not share the same priorities or values, it is in the best interest of everyone concerned that the child no longer remain in the school.

Knowing the ages of the children we work with, our response to inappropriate behavior takes into consideration the developmental stage of the child. However, the school reserves the right to dismiss a child if, in our professional opinion, a reasonable level of safety cannot be maintained.

THE ROLE OF ADULTS

Parent Involvement

There are many opportunities for parent involvement in the school. Parents find a number of benefits by participating in their child's school, such as social networking with other parents and staff, learning more about what their child does while at school, and gaining a greater understanding of the Montessori philosophy. The Parent-Faculty Association (PFA) provides direct support to the individual classrooms and teachers, to the parents of the school, and to the Development Office in the organization and management of the fundraising activities of the school. Membership in the PFA is voluntary, and the annual fee covers the entire family. Opportunities for parent participation are publicized through the various communication outlets of the school.

Parent Conduct

In the Montessori philosophy, the adult is considered a role model to children, therefore, we need the cooperation of adults to follow the school's policies and procedures and to behave in a manner consistent with Montessori values. When conflicts occur, effort will be made to resolve differences. However, if the differences are irreconcilable, the school may terminate services to the child and the family.

Smoking, Alcohol, Illicit Drugs, or Illicit Substances

Smoking, drinking or possessing alcohol, or the use or possession of illicit drugs or other illicit substances are prohibited on the school campus and at any school event where children are present.

Campus Safety

Licensed drivers who do not drive with caution on campus may be prohibited from driving onto the campus. Our primary concern is the safety of our children and other adults.

Resolving Disagreements

When disagreements occur, it is expected that all adults involved will discuss matters in a reasonable manner. Abusive and/or threatening language or behavior is unacceptable and may result in the offending adult being barred from campus and/or the appropriate authorities contacted.

Abuse Reporting Law

The school is mandated by State law to report any suspected situations of child abuse. When the school has reason to believe there is evidence of abuse or neglect, or has reason to believe that abuse or neglect will occur in the reasonably foreseeable future, the matter must be reported to the State Child Welfare Services and to the Honolulu Police Department.

ABSENCES

When absence is necessary, parents are asked to inform the school by calling the office or notifying the teacher. Every effort should be made to schedule medical appointments and other commitments outside of school time.

Parents are expected to schedule family vacations during school breaks. Since extended absences can seriously disrupt instruction and the learning process, parents should consult the child's teacher as to any detrimental effects an extended absence may have on the child's progress.

A doctor's note may be required for students who return after an absence due to contagious illness.

TARDINESS

The school opens at 7:30 a.m. For their safety, unsupervised children are not permitted on campus prior to 7:30 a.m. **Elementary students** start school promptly at **8:00 a.m.** Children in the **Preschool/Kindergarten** program begin classes at **8:30 a.m.** **Two Year Old** children should arrive no later than **8:30 a.m.**

If a child is unavoidably delayed and arrives after the class is in session, parents are expected to escort their children into class quietly so as not to disturb the ongoing class activity, and to inform a teacher of the child's arrival.

Elementary children who arrive after 8:00 a.m. must report directly to the classroom or office with their parent or accompanying adult to obtain a tardy slip. The student will give the signed tardy slip to the classroom teacher.

Repeated tardiness jeopardizes a child's ability to do well in school. When children arrive late, they miss important information given by the teacher at the beginning of the day and miss the group time that is important in helping them feel part of the group.

END OF SCHOOL DAY

Children are released only to their legal parent(s) or guardian(s). Permission for others to pick up a child can be given by the legal parent/guardians through written authorization on the Emergency Card. In the event that someone other

than those listed on the Emergency Card will be picking up a child, the legal parent/guardian should give written authorization or call the office with authorization. The office reserves the right to confirm phoned-in authorization by returning the parent's call. **NOTE:** Even if you are having another Montessori Community School student's parent or staff member pick up your child, we must have official word from you to that effect.

Dismissal time varies for the different programs. Dismissal times in the Early Education programs are 12:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., with the after-school program ending at 5:30 p.m.

Elementary students are dismissed at 2:30 p.m., with the after-school program ending at 5:30 p.m. Students may not remain on campus unsupervised after the 2:30 p.m. dismissal time.

Elementary students who will be walking or taking the bus home must give the teachers a written note with the parent or legal guardian's signature authorizing the student to leave campus on their own at dismissal time.

On occasion, if a parent is unable to come at the specified time, arrangements can be made for "occasional care" for most programs. Please notify your child's teacher in the morning with written authorization, or call the office before 2:00 p.m. so that the child and teachers may be notified in time. The additional hours will be billed to the parents at the end of the month.

Children should be picked up **promptly at the time the after-school program ends and school closes** (5:30 p.m. at all programs). Should any child be picked up after 5:30 p.m., a late fee will be assessed, due upon presentation of statement by the teacher. The late fee is to encourage families to pick up their children on time. Repeated late pick-up or failure to pay late charges may result in the termination of services to your family.

INSURANCE COVERAGE

MCS carries general liability insurance, as required by State of Hawaii regulations.

HEALTH & SAFETY

The health of all children is of prime importance to us. It is known that children in group care settings have an increased risk of infectious illnesses. We will encourage frequent handwashing during the day, which has been shown to limit the risk of the spread of illness in similar settings. Please safeguard your child and others by keeping him home if signs of illness are present. A child must be kept home for the following reasons:

- * A temperature above normal for the child. Children should stay at home if they are unable to keep up with their usual daily activities or will require additional care.
- * For children in diapers, diarrhea which is not contained by the diaper. Children must stay home until the condition improves.
- * Any illness, disease, or condition which requires exclusion as per the Department of Health guidelines.

Children who arrive at school with symptoms of illness will be sent home. If you are unavailable during the day, we will contact the people whose names you have supplied on the emergency card.

Should any child exhibit a rash, discharge from the eyes or ears, vomiting, or any other unusual condition, we will contact the child's parents and recommend they seek the advice of their physician or a medical professional. A doctor's statement verifying diagnosis of the child's condition may be required, at the discretion of the staff.

A child who is not well enough to play outside should not come to school. Parents are asked not to medicate an ill child and then send him or her to school. Ill children should remain at home until their symptoms abate and their conditions improve. We do not have a sufficient number of staff to safely supervise children on the playground and one child in the classroom.

Contagious diseases must be reported to the office immediately. This way we can notify the other families whose children have been exposed so they can be on the alert for symptoms. ***Parents are asked to disclose any information regarding infections and/or communicable diseases which their child has had or been exposed to and are not reflected on the Form 14. This information will be treated in a confidential manner.*** MCS cannot disclose medical information on any child without written permission from that child's parent or guardian.

Upon returning to school following an illness, the school (at the discretion of the staff) may require a doctor's statement verifying that the child is healthy and non-contagious.

Medication

Please speak with your child's teacher or the office if medication needs to be administered during school hours. Parents must complete a medication release form (available from the teacher or office) and include it with the medicine. Medications must be sent in the original, labeled container. **NEVER** send medication with a child to keep in his lunch box, cubby, or back pack. This presents a serious danger to your own child and others. All medication, non-prescription as well as prescription, should be given to the teacher.

Accidents

When a child is injured, first aid is administered by the staff and an Accident Report form, which describes the injury and treatment, is completed by a teacher and sent home. A copy of the Accident Report is kept on file in the office. The staff treats minor injuries, such as cuts and scrapes, by cleansing with soap and water and applying a bandage.

In the event of a serious injury, the staff will contact the parent, or the designated alternate on the Emergency Form. If deemed necessary by the staff, the school will call 911 for assistance and arrange for ambulance transportation. The hospital nearest to MCS is Kapiolani Women and Children's Medical Center. However, the paramedics of the ambulance team will make the decision about the nearest available hospital emergency room to which the child will be transported. The school will contact the parents (or authorized alternate) to inform them of the location of the emergency room at which to meet the ambulance. A school staff member will accompany the child in the ambulance, unless prohibited by the medical professionals.

The majority of our staff members have successfully completed certified First Aid and Child CPR courses.

Head Lice

A common problem among school children is head lice. While the head lice (or "ukus") themselves do not cause illness, they do make children itch and scratch. The scratching can cause breaks in the skin in which infection can start.

Consequently, if a child is discovered to have head lice, the parent(s) will be asked to come get him from school. The child will be removed from the class until he is picked up. Children and all affected family members must be treated with a medically-approved head lice treatment and MCS students may not return to school until 24 hours after the application of the head lice treatment, in accordance with Department of Health guidelines. (Copies of the guidelines are available in the school office.) It is a good idea to check everyone in the family because the lice like to travel.

In addition to the medically-approved head lice treatment, nits must be combed out and removed from the affected child and other family members on a daily basis, until there are no nits present.

The medically-approved treatment must be repeated one week after the initial treatment (or as directed on the package). In one week, there will be a follow-up head check. At that time, any child who had previously been treated should be free from lice and their nits (eggs).

Failure to take appropriate measures may result in the child's suspension from school until the situation is resolved to the school's satisfaction.

Personal Safety

Objects which pose a potential danger to the child or others are prohibited from school. If there is a question about the appropriateness of a specific item a child wishes to bring to school, check with the teacher first. Failure to cooperate with the school will lead to dismissal from the school.

Emergency Plan

It is important that all families are aware of the emergency procedures which Montessori Community School will initiate if an emergency situation arises. Of major importance is parental awareness and cooperation.

In the event of an emergency situation, the Head of School will be in charge. In the absence of the Head of School, a delegated administrator will assume the responsibility. The staff is expected to remain with the children until the situation is sufficiently stable.

Fire - Drills will be held periodically. Children will leave in an orderly fashion under teacher supervision to the basketball court on the Nehoa campus. In the event that our facility is not habitable, signs will be posted as to the location of the evacuation site. Fire escape routes are posted in each classroom.

Tsunami - Montessori Community School is not in a tsunami evacuation zone, so we do not have to evacuate. The following procedures have been adopted in the event of a Tsunami Warning:

- a) If a warning is issued while we are in session, we will remain with the children until they can be safely picked up.
- b) If a warning is issued before our day normally begins, classes will be canceled and the school will be closed.

Hurricane/Tropical Storm - Hurricane or Tropical Storm **Watches** are issued by the National Weather Service 48 hours prior to the arrival of storm effects.

Hurricane or Tropical Storm **Warnings** are issued when one of these storms will affect Oahu in 36 hours or less.

When a **Watch** is issued, we will monitor the storm and make decisions to close if the Watch is upgraded to a Warning. The timing of closure will generally coincide with the end of the normal school day. In the case of evacuation, signs will be posted as to the evacuation sites. In the event of a **Warning**, the school will close.

Earthquake - Should an earthquake of significant magnitude occur on Oahu, our school could be damaged. If it has been determined that our buildings are damaged, we will evacuate to a nearby open area or a safe off-campus site. Signs will be posted as to the location of our evacuation site.

Flooding - Our school is not located in an identified flooding zone. However, if water begins to rise around our facilities, or in the event we are advised to evacuate, we will immediately move the children to the second level of our buildings. If we must evacuate to an off-campus site, signs will be posted as to the location of the evacuation site.

In summary, please be assured that we will take good care of your children during any emergency or disaster. Several suggestions are appropriate:

- a) **A good rule of thumb for closures:** If it is announced over radio or television that all public schools on ‘Oahu are closing, we will also, in all likelihood, be closing. Under no circumstance, however, will we close until all children have been picked up by their parents or authorized designee.
- b) It is essential that you **establish individual and family plans** for tsunami, hurricane, earthquake, and flooding. These plans should identify what preparatory actions should be taken for each hazard. They should include acquainting yourselves with shelter locations and how you will travel to them if evacuation advisories are issued, what you plan to do if the family is separated, what type of survival supplies you will need, etc. Such information can be obtained from the Department of Emergency Management at 723-8960, or from their website: <http://www.honolulu.gov/dem/>. Other sources of information on emergency preparedness plans for your family can be found at <http://www.scd.state.hi.us/> or <http://www.ready.gov/>.

COMMUNICATION

We cannot over-emphasize the importance of open communication between parents and staff. Changes in your child’s life (e.g. house guests, new baby, parent(s) out of town, a move to a new home, separation of parents, a death in the family, etc.) can be very unsettling to him. If we are aware of the situation, we can be more responsive to his needs and understanding of behaviors which may arise at school. We can administer an extra dose of TLC (tender, loving care).

Sometimes children may voice concerns over something that happened at school, such as a broken friendship, misunderstanding, or altercation. If your child seems unusually bothered by an event, or if you have questions regarding what occurred, please discuss it with your child’s teacher. The teacher will follow up with the situation at school. Parents should not speak directly with the other child or children involved in the incident. Please allow the appropriate school officials to mediate the situation with the children.

“Grapevines” can distort information and create misunderstanding. Seemingly trivial things can build up, so please do not hesitate to talk directly with the teacher or administration if something is troubling you. Likewise, if out-of-the-ordinary circumstances occur at the school, the teacher will communicate this to the parents. We welcome the opportunity to talk with you.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Two Year Old conferences are held prior to the child’s first day of school, in January, and at school year’s end. At the final conference, a written report of the child’s progress is given to the parents. Parents and teachers in the preschool/ kindergarten program meet formally three times during the school year, in October, February, and May. Written reports are given to parents at the mid-year and final conferences.

At the elementary level, progress reports are issued three times a year, at the end of each trimester in November, February, and at the end of the school year. Parents are invited to sign up for conference times which are available during each of these assessment periods.

In addition, each of the elementary classes conducts a required goal-setting conference in September, which includes the parent(s), child, and teacher. These initial meetings have proven to be very helpful in assisting the students in

setting realistic goals for the school year.

Close communication between parents and teachers is strongly encouraged. Additional conferences may be scheduled by parents or teachers as the need arises. Parent's repeated failure to respond to conference requests may jeopardize their child's continued enrollment in school.

The School Office

Messages regarding illness, a change in a child's schedule, appointments with administrators, messages for teachers, changes of family information, etc. are received through the office. When a child is out of school for more than a few days, notify the office of the reason. Please notify us immediately of any changes of address, phone number, and/or transportation arrangements.

The Telephone

So as not to interrupt the children and teachers, please do not call directly to the classrooms or return calls from the school using the caller i.d. number shown on your phone (classroom phone numbers are unlisted). Call the office at (808) 522-0244 and your message will be relayed at an appropriate time in the program schedule. Emergency messages will be delivered immediately.

On rare occasions, the answering machine may be on whenever the office staff is unavailable to answer the telephone. Please do leave a message, as the machine will be checked at frequent intervals for messages.

After the office is closed at 4:00 p.m., the answering machine will be on but is frequently checked for emergency calls to the after-school programs until the close of the school day. Leave a message on the answering machine and your message will be relayed to the after-school programs as necessary. All other messages will be returned the following business day.

Disclosure of Information

The school cannot disclose information pertaining to an individual child or parents/legal guardians of the child to persons other than the school staff unless the parents or guardians of the child provide written permission for the disclosure of information or as required by law. MCS cannot disclose medical information on any child without written permission from that child's parent or guardian.

FOOD

Snacks

Our approach to the snack program attempts to balance the varying nutritional preferences of our school community by taking a moderate position on sugary treats and encouraging fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains.

Rather than purchasing pre-packaged snacks for the class, the intent of the voluntary snack program is to provide opportunities for the children to actively participate in the process of the selecting a snack for their classmates, preparing it with their parents, and sharing the finished product with the other children in the class. Through this activity, the children practice everyday practical life skills and experience the joy of sharing.

When families prepare snacks to be shared among the child's classmates, as during birthday, holiday, or other celebrations, the snacks provided should be healthful. Frosted cakes, frosted cookies, candies, or other highly sugared snacks cannot be served in school. The teachers will request that such items be returned home. We hope you will understand that our intent is to support good eating habits for the children.

Some healthful alternatives for the special snack days, birthdays, and other special occasions are:

- * Fruit: fresh and dried fruit such as apple slices, bananas, orange slices, grapes, cantaloupe, watermelon, strawberries, pineapple, raisins, etc.
- * Vegetables: carrots, celery sticks, cucumber slices, broccoli
- * Muffins or quick breads
- * Trail mix or energy bars
- * Cereal (unfrosted, low sugar)
- * Cheese and crackers
- * Pretzels
- * Bagels, rolls, buns
- * Yogurt

The treat does not need to be elaborate, and the serving size should be small (about 2-1/2 ounces, approximately 1/2 a Dixie cup) so as not to interfere with the children's appetite for lunch. When sending a snack for the class, please check with the teacher first, as children may have specific food allergies. Also, the snack should be ready to serve, so that the teaching staff does not have to cut up whole fruit or serve a quick bread from the pan.

Home Lunches

Soda, gum, and candy are not permitted in school and should not be included in lunches or snacks.

Sharing of food from lunches and snacks is not permitted for sanitary reasons, and because some children have allergies to certain foods.

CELEBRATIONS & SPECIAL DAYS

Birthdays

It is a tradition at MCS to commemorate the child's birthday with the addition of a book to the classroom library. The teachers have a selection of books and tapes which support the curriculum. If the parent and child chooses to donate a book to the classroom library from the teacher's collection, a statement for the cost of the book is presented to the parent after the book is selected. The new addition to the class library is inscribed with the child's name and the occasion being celebrated; elementary children design their own book plate.

SPECIAL SNACKS. A special snack is optional. Please check with your child's teacher as to the appropriateness of the snack prior to the occasion (see the section on FOOD for guidelines and helpful hints). Regardless of whether a birthday book is donated or a special snack provided, the child's birthday is celebrated.

CELEBRATIONS. Each program celebrates the child's birthday in its own special way. The Two Year Olds have a very simple commemoration, usually with parents bringing in a special snack to share with the class. In the 3-6 and 6-9 programs, the "Sun Ceremony" helps children gain a sense of their personal history, growth, and accomplishments by recalling the special events of each year of the child's life. The 9-12 program celebrates the student's birthday by featuring and recognizing the child's unique personality, history, and special accomplishments.

PRIVATE PARTY INVITATIONS. Traditional birthday celebrations should take place outside of school. Invitations to private birthday parties may not be distributed through the school unless every child in the class is invited. It can really hurt children's feelings when some classmates are invited to a party and others are not. If only a few are invited, please mail the invitations directly to the child's home rather than through the school.

The Parent Directory provides a listing of names and addresses of the families in each child's class. The Parent Directories are distributed early in the school year and are to be used for school-related purposes only. Please do not use them for business or other solicitations.

Balloons

Latex balloons present a choking hazard to children and therefore are prohibited from school, along with any other object which poses a potential danger to the child or others.

Field Trips

Field trips for preschool age and older are used to increase the child's awareness of his world. Most field trips are prepared for in class, but some are spontaneous. Permission from the child's parent or legal guardian to attend field trips must be indicated on the Emergency Card.

Children need to wear covered shoes and school t-shirts on field trips. Field trip transportation is provided by hired school buses.

In many cases, parents are invited to accompany the class, but prior discussion with the head teacher is necessary, as there may be limitations regarding the number of accompanying adults allowed. Parents who serve as chaperones are expected to help supervise the group and should be in good health.

The monthly class letter provides information on upcoming field trips, including the destination, date, and time of each scheduled field trip. Please make sure that your child arrives promptly each day. On field trip days, children must arrive at school on time to leave with their class on the hired school bus. Children are expected to depart on field trips with their class. Late arrivals are not permitted to meet the class at the field trip destination and may not join the field trip in progress.

In addition to field trips, the elementary children go on camping trips and neighbor island trips. These activities generate much enthusiasm and offer excellent learning opportunities for our students.

Two Year Olds, 3-6 preschool after-school care, and elementary after-school care programs do not go on field trips.

Fundraisers

Most successful independent schools rely on fundraisers to broaden their base of income as a strategy of controlling tuition increases. With an expanded income base, we can offer better compensation to attract high-quality teachers while moderating tuition costs to our families.

Our goal is to provide families with a variety of opportunities to support the school. Parents can select from the options available those events in which they feel comfortable participating. Events such as the annual Fun Run and Spring Fling promote exercise and family fun and the adults-only Silent and Live Auction develops parent camaraderie.

Participation in school fundraisers by staff, children, and parents is voluntary. Information is distributed to members of our school community and families may choose whether they wish to participate.

Gifts and Goody Bags

Favors and small gifts including, but not limited to, pencils, stickers, or goody bags for birthdays and holidays should be reserved for private celebrations at home. Please do not bring such items to school.

Holidays

There will be class discussion and some degree of celebration of most of the traditional holidays, including Christmas. Parents may consult with the teacher if they have a special cultural occasion that they would like to share with the class.

