

Montessori School of Florence

Parent/Student Handbook



Table of Contents

Mission Statement	3
The Purpose of Montessori Education	3
Our Goal	3
Admission	3
Programs	4
Before School and After School Care Program.....	5
Arrival/Dismissal Procedures	6
Tuition.....	7
Ride Home Tips and Homework Expectations	8
Attendance.....	9
Student Tracking for Children in Pre-Primary and Primary Programs	10
Adjustment Period for the Young child	10
Emergencies.....	10
Clothing	11
Personal Belongings	12
Snacks and Lunch	12
Parent/Teacher Communications.....	13
Observations.....	13
Conferences	13
Health Records	13
Montessori Teachers	16
Board of Directors.....	16
Parent Volunteers	16
Field Trips.....	17
Liability Coverage for Transportation of Students.....	17
Emergency Closing.....	17
Birthday Celebrations at School.....	18
Confidentiality of Records	18
Acceptable Use.....	19
Permission to Administer Medications	19

Mission Statement

The mission of the Montessori School of Florence is to “. . . make available to the children and families of Florence, South Carolina and its surrounding area, both pre-school and elementary education of the highest quality, consistent with the methods and principles of Montessori education.” The school is a private, non-denominational, non-profit corporation operated by the Board of Directors. The Montessori School of Florence accepts students without regard to race, gender, religion, or national origin.

The Purpose of Montessori Education

The Montessori method of teaching young children is based on the methods and philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator (1870-1953). Dr. Montessori's work extended over many years and over three continents. It includes specially designed materials, which were refined through observation of children. She has written numerous books, which are available at our school and through bookstores and libraries.

A Montessori school provides a secure, orderly, stimulating environment based on the basic concepts discovered by Dr. Maria Montessori. It is more than just a method of learning, it is a way of life. A Montessori school begins with love and respect for the child.

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 the 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, the child is allowed to experience the excitement of learning by her own choice rather than by being forced. Second, the teacher helps the child to perfect all his natural tools for learning so that his ability will be at a maximum in future situations. The Montessori materials have this dual long-range purpose in addition to their immediate purpose of giving specific information to the child.¹

¹ Wolf, Aline C., A Parents' Guide to the Montessori Classroom. Altoona, PA. Parent Child Press, 1980.

Our Goal

The Montessori School of Florence provides for the positive development of the child academically, physically, psychologically, and socially. Montessori education is considered one of the most effective programs in producing long-term school success. The Montessori methods give the child a concrete foundation for the understanding of concepts and abstractions and a refinement of his/her senses.

Admission

Enrollment to the Montessori School of Florence may begin at the age of two. All children are accepted on a six-week trial basis. Students and parents are interviewed by a teacher and/or the director. An Admissions Committee makes the final decision.

Programs

Students will be advanced to the next grade level when physically, socially, and academically ready to advance.

Pre-Primary Program:

Monday – Friday 8:15 A.M. – 11:30 A.M. (for ½ day students)

Monday – Friday 7:30 A.M. – 3:30 P.M. (for students enrolled in full -day program)

Monday – Friday 7:30 A.M. – 5:30 P.M. (for students enrolled in full –day + ASC program)

The **Pre-Primary** classroom is for children 2 years of age by September 1 through age 3. Toilet training is not required. See contract for dismissal times associated with extended hours for Pre-Primary students.

If your child remains at school more than 15 minutes after dismissal time, you will be charged a late fee. The fee will be \$10 for each late increment of 10-minutes. Please see arrival/dismissal procedures.

Primary Program: Must be fully potty trained to attend

Primary Half Day: Monday – Friday 8:15AM – 11:30AM

Primary Full Day: Monday – Thursday 8:15AM – 3:00PM, Friday 8:15AM – 11:30AM

Primary 5K Full Day: Monday – Thursday 8:15AM – 3:00PM, Friday 8:15AM – 11:30AM

The Extended Day/Kindergarten program is for students who are five-years old by September 1st and are both physically and academically ready to extend their academic day. The teacher must recommend each child for the program. It is important that the child be ready to stay the extra hours.

The curriculum for the primary level is a three year program for children ages three to six by September 1st. Any child not three-years-old entering the program may need to remain an additional year in the program. Older students entering the Primary Level will be evaluated for the Elementary Level as they become age eligible.

Elementary Program

Lower Elementary: Monday – Friday; 8:15AM – 3:00PM

The Lower Elementary classroom is for students six through nine years of age by September 1st.

Upper Elementary: Monday – Friday; 8:15AM – 3:00PM

The Upper Elementary classroom is for students nine through 12 years of age by September 1st.

All programs are designed to allow children to work at their own pace with Montessori materials. The curriculum is sequenced according to the child's needs and abilities. A comprehensive curriculum includes language arts, math, science, geography, health, art, music, foreign language, and physical education.

Before School and After School Care Program

Before School Care: Monday-Friday: 7:30-8:15 for Primary and Elementary students

After School Care: Monday-Friday: 3-5:30 for Primary and Elementary students

Limited, pre-authorized availability: Monday-Friday: 11:45-3 for Primary students

Our sensitive and supportive staff, in a setting complementary to the Montessori environment, provides childcare beyond the academic day. Our Before/After School Care (B/ASC) programs provide a nurturing environment with sensitivity to the needs and interests of children spending longer hours away from the home. **(Childcare follows the academic calendar)**

1. Any child enrolled in the primary or elementary program is eligible to attend B/ASC. Each family **MUST** sign-up through the school office.
2. In all classroom environments, Montessori rationale is used, even though the Montessori didactic materials may not be present. Other age appropriate activities are presented and available.
3. Any parent arriving after 5:30 PM to pick up his child will be charged a late pick-up fee of \$10.00 for each 10-minute period or any part thereof.
4. Parents are responsible for their child's daily lunch (home- packed or ordered through School house Fare). Please do not send carbonated or sugary drinks or candy to school. Primary (3K, 4K, 5K) staff will not be able to microwave any portion of your child's lunch. If warm food is desired, please preheat and send in a small thermos.
5. An after-lunch rest period will occur for all primary children with the exception of 5K. The rest period will last for 30 minutes. After the rest period, the child may re-engage in the classroom environment with the classroom assistant. If the child is asleep after 30 minutes, he or she will be allowed to sleep for 1 hour or longer per parent request. Each child is assigned a school supplied mat and will need a parent provided small (crib-sized) blanket or sheet labeled with his or her name. Please, no pillows or stuffed animals. Linens will be sent home periodically for laundering.
6. Classroom guidelines and Montessori principles continue in B/ASC. The discipline policy defined in the handbook will be followed. Any child, who cannot maintain appropriate self control, will have a parent contacted. Continued issues will result in a loss of B/ASC privileges.
7. Before-School Care: Parent/Guardian must walk child into BSC Classroom and sign child in.
8. After-School Care: Parent/Guardian must sign child out of after school care.

BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL CARE FEES

Rates below apply to Primary, Extended Day and Elementary students
(Pre-Primary Extended Edu-Care is included in Pre-Primary Program selection.)

BSC	7:30-8:15	\$3.00
*ASC	11:45-3:00	\$15.00
ASC	3:00-5:30	\$10.00

B/ASC billing is based on a per diem rate and is billed within 7 days of month's end. Payments are due by the 10th of each month. Children with overdue accounts will not be permitted participate in the B/ASC program until account is current.

*All ASC drop-ins and especially 11:45-3:00 ASC require a minimum of 24 hour notice and are not guaranteed.

Updated 07/18

Arrival/Dismissal Procedures

For safety reasons, when child is leaving or entering your vehicle, place vehicle in parking gear.

Arrival

Any student arriving before 8:15 must be accompanied into the building by a parent/guardian and signed into Before School Care in room 109 with the exception of Pre-Primary students who are signed into room 113.

Arrival time is between 8:15 A.M. and 8:45 A.M. A staff member will meet your child at the front entrance.

- When your child is being helped from your vehicle, **put your vehicle in park.**
- Please wait your turn in the line. Do not pass cars that are loading.
- Please do not park and walk up to the loading area to drop off your child. It is dangerous for children to be walking among the cars.

If you arrive after 8:45 A.M., please park your car in a designated ten-minute parking space and walk your child to the office. A staff member will accompany the child to class. You will need to sign the late arrival form located in the front office. Students will not be admitted to school after 9:00 A.M. without doctor's excuse or prior approval.

Students who habitually arrive late miss integral morning instruction as well as create a disruption to the rest of the class.

Three (3) tardies will equal one absence. (student is tardy after 8:45 A.M.)

Three (3) early dismissals will equal one absence. (student leaving school before 2:30 P.M.)

Dismissal

- At the appropriate dismissal time for your child, please enter the car pool line.
- While your child is being helped into your vehicle, **put your vehicle in park.**
- Please be sure your child is seat-belted before driving off campus.
- Please wait your turn in the line. Do not pass cars that are loading.
- Please do not park and walk up to the loading area to get your child. It is dangerous for children to be walking among the cars.
- If your child is not ready to leave and you are asked to wait, please park in one of the designated spaces.

One of the many benefits of a small school is that we will quickly know you by face and name. Parents may be asked for ID by a staff member to whom they are unfamiliar. Please do not take offense.

A child may only leave school with parents or a designated driver unless the school is notified in writing of other arrangements. Anyone other than guardians authorized to pick a child up from school must present ID.

Again, this is for the safety of our children.

Please include in your note:

- Your child's first and last name and date(s) of pick-up
- The name and relationship of person picking up your child and their phone number
- If your child is going home with another student's family, include this information as well

If your child is not picked-up within 15 minutes of dismissal time (11:30AM or 3:00PM), your child will be taken to the After School Program, and you will be billed accordingly.

Please avoid picking up your child during their scheduled school hours unless absolutely necessary. If this is necessary, send a note or call with the time you will be arriving. When arriving for your child, report to the office and a staff member will bring your child to the office. Please give us as much notice as possible so we can plan for productive time in the classroom and a smooth transition.

Tuition

Montessori School of Florence is an independent, tuition funded school. We are registered with the State of SC as a non-profit, charitable organization. Tuition and fee statements are emailed monthly.

Please remit tuition payments in cash, check or money order. Tuition payments made after the 10th of the month will be assessed a \$25 late fee on the 11th of the month. An additional late fee may be charged on delinquent accounts. If the account remains delinquent on the 29th of the month, the child will not be admitted until the account is paid in full. Student records will not be transferred until the account is current.

Annual Tuition Payment: Due June 1 prior to start of academic year. If payment not received by June 1, tuition plan will automatically revert to monthly plan.

Semi-Annual Tuition Payments: Due June 1 prior to start of academic year and December 1 (mid-year). If payment not received by June 1 and December 1, tuition plan will automatically revert to monthly plan.

Monthly Tuition Payments: Ten monthly payments, August through May, due by 10th of each month.

The Before/After School Program and any additional charges will be billed at the end of each month and included on monthly statement.

Ride Home Tips and Homework Expectations

The transition from school to home will be enhanced if you end phone calls before welcoming your child back into your care. A smile and an "I am glad you are with me!" make for a nice transition. Questions about the specifics of his or her day and can make your child feel that his or day was somehow inadequate.

More open ended questions such as, "I had an interesting day today. Would you like to share something about your day?" can be a communication opener. But do not be alarmed if the answer is no.

Avoid the pitfall, "Did you have fun today?" We expect your child's day to be engaging, interesting and enjoyable, but fun brings to mind picnics, parties and games. This will set him or her up for disappointment.

Our younger children seldom bring home papers, as they work with concrete materials which are process, not product, oriented. Asking, "Do you have any work to bring home?" may put doubts as to the success of his or her day.

We welcome an opportunity to suggest activities for home follow-through in your child's particular area of current interest.

Continuing Montessori principles and activities at home will give you a good idea of his/her capacities and achievements as demonstrated in class at any given time. Do not be discouraged if your child offers little or no description of his/her school day.

Children in the Elementary program will not have traditional homework assignments as they work to master their skills in the classroom.

Remember your children have worked hard all day and need a time to unwind and relax.

Topics that are springboards for individual research may be offered for home discussion. These discussion topics are designed to encourage your child to ask questions and look for answers.

Attendance

Every effort should be made to be at school every day because absences disrupt the sense of order of the child and individual lessons are missed. Absences are classified by the school as excused or unexcused. Anytime a student is absent from school, a note explaining the reason for the absence must accompany the child upon his or her return to school. The note must include the day(s) absent, the reason, and the parent or a guardian signature. The note may be dropped off in the front office.

Extended Day and Elementary Students' Guidelines

Excused Absences: The school grants permission for absences such as illness, family emergencies, doctor's visits, and/or school-sponsored activities.

Students taking an extended family trip must journal and make up work as requested by the teacher. **Any student having more than 10 unexcused absences may jeopardize their progress to the next grade level.**

Unexcused Absences: If the absence is not valid it will be unexcused. Extended absences due to family vacations will be unexcused if the appropriate guidelines are not satisfied. Any student having more than 10 unexcused absences **may** jeopardize their progress to the next grade level.

All Students

Illness: If your child has contracted a contagious illness, please keep your child at home and call the school. Certain situations may demand that other parents need to be alerted. Children returning to school after having a communicable disease must have a physician's written statement giving permission to return.

If your child is found to have head lice, he or she will be sent home for treatment and will not be allowed to return to school until all nits and live lice have been removed.

If a teacher suspects that a child is ill, a parent will be called to come for the child. In order to keep the spread of illness in check, please keep your child home if he or she is displaying any of the following symptoms:

1. An above normal temperature in the last 24 hours.
2. A cold or illness with sore throat, cough, runny nose, or earache.
3. A rash or discharge from nose and eyes.
4. Vomiting or diarrhea within 24 hours of desired return to school
5. Any type of contagious illness.
6. Not well enough to go outside. No child may be left unattended in a building.
7. Dropping off a "sick" child while you go purchase medicine is not allowed.

If your child has an allergy or other condition which causes a runny nose or cough, please inform the faculty so that it will not be confused with a contagious disease.

If your child has been diagnosed with a contagious disease, a phone call to the office would be appreciated so that we may be alerted to any symptoms in other students.

Student Tracking for Children in Pre-Primary and Primary Programs

For the safety of the children in our Pre-Primary and Primary programs, daily tracking sheets are used to indicate arrival and dismissal as well as movement within the building to specials, lunch and to the outdoor areas. Children are accompanied by a staff member in all of these settings.

Adjustment Period for the Young child

The first few weeks of school for the Primary child may be somewhat tearful and your child may have misgivings about going to school. This is a natural response to the change of a new school situation. Because the child will already have met the teacher and visited the classroom with the security of the parent's presence at the meet your teacher/ registration day visit, we ask that you smile assuredly, say good-bye, and allow the staff to assist your child from the vehicle. Prolonged good-byes usually increase, rather than alleviate, a child's anxiety. If you wish to observe your child, please pull back through the carline, park and come in. Rest assured, your child will quickly become accustomed to the morning ritual.

During this orientation period your child will gradually be introduced to the classroom environment. The children learn where the bathroom is located, where to hang coats, general classroom procedures and ground rules. The children also make many new acquaintances among children and teachers. It is possible that during these first few weeks of school adjustment, your child may seem unusually tired or irritable, or may temporarily regress in certain areas. This is normal behavior.

Emergencies

On the Emergency Medical Form and Consent, you must list the names of two local individuals who will be able to come for your child if you are unavailable during the day and your child is sick.

Sick (fever, vomiting, and diarrhea) children may not remain at school. Complaints of headache, mild tummy discomfort will be treated with Tums or Tylenol with parent authorization. Resting on mat, ice packs, warm packs and TLC will be used as needed for the mildly ill child. Parent will be notified of all interventions.

Minor accidents, which occur during class, will receive the prompt and careful attention of teachers.

In the event of a serious accident, we will immediately notify the parent or contact person, and make arrangements for the child to be taken to the doctor or to get emergency medical treatment.

Parents must inform the school of any change of telephone numbers or other emergency information.

Clothing

Please label any garments worn to school that may be misplaced, especially coats, jackets, sweaters, gloves, and winter hats. We will put unidentified clothing in the school's lost and found. All unclaimed items will be donated to charity at the end of each month.

Pre-Primary, Primary and Extended Day: Please dress your child in comfortable clothes, appropriate for the weather, which will allow the child to go to the bathroom independently. The children will be working with material, such as paint and glue, which may stain clothing. Rubber soled shoes are preferred; flip-flops, Crocs, clogs (shoes that slip off easily) are not appropriate for safe outdoor play. A type of tennis shoe is recommended.

Weather permitting, (temperatures above 32 degrees and not raining) we will play outside each day. On cool mornings, a light jacket or sweater should be sent or worn. Your child may not get cold running to or from the car; however, he/she may be cold during our outside playtime in the early hours at drop-off. In cold weather, please send gloves or mittens attached to the coat or jacket, and a hat for hoodless garments.

All Pre-Primary, Primary and Extended Day students must have a complete change of clothes labeled with his or her name. Children staying for the After School Program must have a second complete change of clothes to be kept in the After School Program room. When we send soiled clothing home, please send a replacement the next day in a bag labeled with your child's name.

Lower Elementary: Please dress your child in comfortable clothes, appropriate for the weather, which will allow the child to go to the bathroom independently. It is recommended that if your daughter wears a skirt that shorts be worn underneath. The children will be working with material, such as paint and glue, which may stain clothing. Rubber soled shoes are preferred. If the temperature is above 32 degrees and it is not raining, we will go outside for recess. Please be sure your child wears a coat to school on these days. Athletic shoes need to be worn on the day the class has physical education.

Upper Elementary: Please dress your child in comfortable clothes appropriate for the weather. On days when the children have art, they will be working with material, such as paint and glue, which may stain clothing. Athletic shoes must be worn on days physical education is scheduled. If the temperature is above 32 degrees and it is not raining, we will go outside for recess. Please be sure your child wears a coat to school on these days.

Please allow your child to wear shorts that are long enough that their underwear does not show when sitting (the shorts should have about a two-inch inseam or be as long as the finger tips on the side of the leg). The "Soffee" style shorts are not appropriate. Shorts with words on the back are not appropriate. Skirts and shorts should be fingertip length. Shorts should be worn under skirts to allow for sitting cross-legged and for playing. All tops must have straps that are at least one-inch wide or covered by a jacket. The jacket must be worn all day. Shirts with pictures or words must be appropriate for a school.

Personal Belongings

We ask that toys and similar “play” items, lip balm, jewelry, vitamins, cough drops, and medicines be left at home. If your child has items of special interest that he or she wishes to share with the class, please send a note to the teacher requesting permission to send the item.

If your child should come home with an unfamiliar object, please return it to the school, as it may be an important part of the school equipment.

Snacks

Please be sure that your child has a balanced breakfast before school each day.

For students 2k-3rd grade, we offer a snack that will include such foods as crackers, pretzels, cereal, fruit and/or vegetables. **Please be sure that teachers are aware of any allergies your child may have.** Parents may provide an alternative snack for a child with a restricted diet. Upper Elementary students are encouraged to pack a nutritious snack for morning consumption.

Lunch

All students staying until 3:00pm or later need to bring a lunch box with a nutritious lunch. Soda, caffeinated beverages, and candy are not permitted. Lunch boxes should be labeled clearly with your child’s name.

Please plan accordingly and send the lunch with your child when he or she arrives each morning. **Bringing a lunch after your child’s school day begins is often disruptive and causes anxiety.** Fast food is not to be brought to the school as a lunch substitute. Sharing food brought from home for lunch is not allowed.

Water is provided daily in the classroom and at lunch.

2K-5K students do not have access to a microwave, please pack a lunch that does not require heating. If your child prefers a hot lunch, use a thermos.

Parent/Teacher Communications

We encourage parents to discuss with the teacher any aspect of your child's development at any time. When you wish to talk to your child's teacher, please call the school or send a written note.

If it is imperative that you talk with the teacher that day, please park and come into the school because **only the briefest comments are possible during arrival and dismissal**, and some information should not be discussed in the child's presence.

The teachers are eager to know of both happy changes and/or upsetting occurrences in the child's or family's life. Parents should not hesitate to send a written note about upsetting matters such as a sleepless night, stress in the home or at school, or any other information providing insight into your child's behavior. Any incident occurring in school which has upset your child should be reported in the same manner. It is gratifying for the staff to hear what you particularly appreciate and value in your observation of school surroundings and your own child's growth in relation to the school.

Observations

The Montessori School of Florence encourages parents to observe their child at work throughout the year. All classrooms are equipped with observation windows to allow for observation without distracting the children. We encourage observations and you are welcome any time.

Especially early in the year, the observation rooms are frequently in use. Please call the school office to schedule your observation time in order to avoid interrupting another scheduled visit. Scheduled appointments will take priority over walk-ins

For in-classroom observation we prefer prior notification and scheduling with the lead teacher to avoid disruption to the classroom dynamic.

When you come to observe your child in the Montessori classroom, you will see joy in learning as children work purposefully at their own pace with the Montessori materials. You will be aware of the respect the children have for one another and for the material. You will notice the beautiful, child sized, environment that has been designed to be developmentally appropriate, and multi-sensorial so that each child can experience success and develop at his or her own pace.

Observations will help expand your knowledge of the Montessori philosophy and curriculum. We hope you enjoy your visits.

Conferences

Conferences are scheduled several times during the year and are indicated on the annual school calendar. Individual conference time with your child's teacher is important, and we urge parents to attend on the scheduled date. It is difficult to reschedule missed conferences.

Health Records

South Carolina Immunization forms are required by law for all children attending school. These forms must be received at the school before the start of the school year. These forms may be obtained at the SC Health Department, or at your doctor's office. For Primary students, please bring updated immunization forms if your child receives additional shots or boosters.

Ground Rules and Discipline

The word “rules” often seems negative because it usually includes many “do not’s” and implies authority. However, within the Montessori framework, ground rules have evolved from a more positive base.

Maria Montessori believed that “education centers upon the care of the living being... the total person including the biological and social. Education is a natural process, which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is acquired by experiences in which the child acts on his/her environment.” This is the positive base of the Montessori approach expressing her central attitude and “view of man.”

From this base grow the ground rules, developed to provide a balance of rights and responsibilities. They allow for freedom within limits and promote respect for each other and the materials, within an atmosphere of choice. Ground rules provide the necessary structure to assist a group of people in living harmoniously together. Without them, there would be confusion and disorder. They are a way of saying to the child, “I know you can and I expect you will.” The adult is there only to see that the limits are respected; the limits themselves are not within the adult but within the situation.

Our emphasis is on positive reinforcement. However, if a child is not in control of his/her behavior, he/she will be taken out of the classroom. In the event a child experiences continued difficulty, the parents will be called and the situation discussed. If the behavior warrants, the parent will be called to pick-up the child for the remainder of the day.

Conduct: At the Montessori School of Florence, we operate on the assumption that everyone in the school will treat everyone else in the school with care and dignity. Therefore, three basic behaviors are forbidden.

1. No child or adult will intentionally hurt another child or adult.
2. No child or adult may disturb the work of another.
3. No child or adult may mistreat the property of the school.

These rules of conduct apply to any student, teacher, parent, or visitor in the school.

Ground Rules of the Classroom

Responsibilities of the child: After the first five or six weeks of school, we expect each child to be able to:

- a. Understand the classroom rules of safety and respect
 - walking, rather than running, in the classroom
 - using a quiet voice
 - speaking and acting kindly to others, no hurting by name calling or hitting or kicking
- b. Choose work, follow through, and return material to its original place. This helps develop focus, concentration, and coordination in order to move ahead with more advanced activities and feel a growing sense of inner order and calmness.
- c. Respect the work of others by not interrupting, and by assisting only when invited.
- d. Respect the rights of others to be able to listen and participate in group activities by sitting quietly and taking turns when responding to questions or participating in games.
- e. Cooperate with the teachers by being able to listen and follow simple directions such as, “Come and sit on the line for music time,” or “It’s time to put on our coats for recess,” without ignoring or talking back.

Respect, manners, and cooperation are needed to function well in the group situation of the classroom and later in society.

Role of the adult:

- a. To respect the child
- b. To prepare the environment
- c. To give lessons to children
- d. To act as an appropriate model
- e. To observe the child at work
- f. To reinforce the ground rules
- g. To intervene if the child is disturbing, dangerous, or destructive to him/herself or others
- h. To mediate in problem solving, if needed

Discipline Policy

We adhere to the Montessori method of education and discipline. We use positive and creative methods of discipline that are appropriate to the age and developmental level of the child. We also take into consideration the family situation, as best we understand it.

1. Discipline will only be used in the case of the breaking of an established rule previously outlined for the child.
2. Discipline will be appropriate to the problem.
3. Discipline will be positive and will never be intended to lower the child's self-esteem.
4. Discipline will not involve food or drink.
5. Corporal punishment will not be used.

Procedures for Infractions

These procedures are not necessarily sequential. If the infraction warrants, the director may suspend or expel the child at that time.

1. Removal from an activity
2. Loss of a privilege
3. Student conference with Director
4. Student conference with Director, teacher, and parent
5. Suspension for one day, resulting in an unexcused absence
6. Suspension for three days, resulting in unexcused absences
7. Expulsion from the school

Montessori Teachers

Your child's teacher is a highly trained professional. She has received post bachelor's training in the Montessori Method. Montessori training is extensive and intense.

Tim Seldin, Director of the Montessori Foundation in Alexandria, Virginia, wrote about the Montessori teacher. In his article he stated, "Montessori teachers do more than present curriculum. The secret of any great teacher is helping learners get to the point that their minds and hearts are open and they are ready to learn, where the motivation is not focused on getting good grades but, instead, involves a basic love of learning."

"Dr. Montessori believed that teachers should focus on the child as a person, not on the daily lesson plan. Montessori nurtures and inspires the human potential, leading children to ask questions, think for themselves, explore, investigate, and discover. Our ultimate objective is to help them to learn how to learn independently, retaining the curiosity, creativity, and intelligence with which they were born. Montessori teachers don't simply present lessons; they are facilitators, mentors, coaches, and guides."

"Montessori teachers closely monitor their student's progress, keeping the level of challenge high. Because they normally work with each child for two or three years, teachers get to know their student's strengths and weaknesses, interests and anxieties extremely well. Montessori teachers often use the children's interests to enrich the curriculum and provide alternate avenues for accomplishment and success."

It is important to remember that your child's teacher uses methods that are nontraditional in nature. Parents schooled in a traditional classroom setting may have no frame of reference for the Montessori method and at times may feel some discomfort with nontraditional methods. It is important to recognize that in the Montessori environment, your child's teacher is the expert and is utilizing methods that have helped successfully educate children for over one hundred years. Although we appreciate input from parents about their children, your child's teacher is responsible for maintaining a prepared Montessori environment and for presenting material and information in a Montessori way.

Board of Directors

The Montessori School of Florence is operated by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is an elected, volunteer board whose members serve three year terms. The board is governed by a set of by-laws.

Parent Volunteers

The teachers and assistants are able to handle everyday work in the class and outside assistance is not generally necessary. On occasion, parents will be asked to assist with a task when helping with special projects. Montessori believed that the adult should not be the obstacle between the child and his/her learning. Visiting adults may perceive that children are not getting the help they require and provide too much assistance. Often, the best learning comes from making mistakes then recognizing and correcting the error. If adult intervention occurs at the wrong time, important learning may not occur.

Field Trips

A limited number of out-of-class field trips are taken throughout the year. In class field trips are also scheduled to help the children know and understand more about their neighborhood and community. If you can participate or know of anyone who could (dentist, doctor, fireman, potter, needlecraft expert, gardener, musician, actor, historian, someone from a foreign country, or anyone with a hobby to share), please contact the teacher.

At times we will request that parents help drive our children on field trips. Before volunteering to drive or be a chaperone on a field trip, please know that we ask parents to be responsible for their assigned groups. Please do not bring other children in the family who are not members of the class going on the trip. The parent chaperone will need to focus their undivided attention on their assigned group and not be distracted by other family members. This is a great responsibility and we appreciate your cooperation. Although, we do expect the parent chaperones to carefully supervise and monitor their small group of children, appropriate Montessori staff member to child ratios will be maintained per DSS guidelines based on age. Parents attending field trips will be required to present a current drivers license and proof of insurance the day prior to the field trip.

For the safety of the children, qualified caregiver(s) will ride in each vehicle.

Signed field trip permission slips are required for each child prior to departure.

Liability Coverage for Transportation of Students

It is important that all parents transporting students be aware of the liability coverage.

In an automobile insurance liability claim, the insurance of the vehicle would apply first and be primary. If the accident involves the transportation of the students for the school, the liability protection of the school would be excess over the liability insurance of the vehicle.

There is no automobile medical payments coverage provided by the school. If a student is riding in a private vehicle, the only coverage provided by the school is excess liability over the coverage provided by the owner of that particular vehicle.

If a student is injured on our property or at another location during a school sponsored activity, the child's health coverage would be filed first and the medical payments of the school would be excess. The excess medical payment coverage would cover any out-of-pocket expenses you may incur such as deductible or co-insurance payment.

Emergency Closing

In the event of an emergency school closing due to factors such as bad weather, you will be notified by the email you provided upon Registration.

If we need to close the school during the school day, you will be advised to come for your child.

Birthday Celebrations at School

We celebrate birthdays at school by using a globe and a candle to symbolize the rotation of the Earth around the sun each year. Your child will walk around the “sun” for each year of his or her life. This impressionistic lesson reinforces a child’s existence in the past, the present, and the future.

Before your child’s birthday celebration please provide the teacher with a short description of an event for each year of your child’s life. A photograph from each year is a nice way to share your child’s history with his or her friends.

For example: 1 year Susie learned to walk.
2 years Susie got a new brother.
3 years Susie began Montessori.

Children who have a summer birthday may celebrate their birthday at school during the year. Please make arrangements with the teacher.

If you would like to share a special snack with the class on your child’s celebration day, please check with the teacher ahead of time.

Please be aware that students may have severe food allergies. Common allergens, like nuts, should be avoided when sending a group snack.

A **small** cookie, **mini**-cupcake, or cut fruit will make a nice, special snack/treat for this day.

To create a peaceful celebration, please provide the correct number of treats and **please have all the items be the same** in size, shape, color and decoration. Party favors are not permitted at school as they tend to be a distraction and source of distress.

In order to avoid hurt feelings among our students, if **party invitations** are distributed, they must be provided to all students in the class and must be given to the teacher no later than Friday for the following Tuesday folder. All invitations must go home in Tuesday folders. Invitations may not be distributed in car line. Do not send gifts to school for another child.

Confidentiality of Records

Every effort is made to safe guard the student records. Records are kept in a locked file in the director’s office. Access to files is restricted to office personnel and teachers, on a need to know basis.

All staff and visitors must sign a Confidentiality Statement.

Acceptable Use Student Policy for School Computer Devices

This policy encompasses all computer technology devices including, but not limited to the following:
computers, laptops, and tablets.

1. I will always use the school computer devices with consideration and respect for others.
2. I will leave all systems and control panels as I have found them.
3. I will respect others' computer work and not interfere with it.
4. I will use all school computer devices for academic work only.
5. I will ask permission before using personal CDs or USB (flash) drives and have them scanned for viruses before each use.
6. I will keep food or drink away from all computer devices.
7. I will not access personal email or personal accounts online from any school computer device.
8. I will not create an online account or save personal information from an online account on any school computer device.
9. I will access only appropriate internet sites from any school computer device.
10. I will not access internet sites for social media purposes, including, but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Vine, YouTube, Twitter, etc.
11. I will not knowingly deface, damage, or render inoperable any computer device or its components.
12. I will not write, download, or introduce software programs or applications (Apps) on any computer device.
13. I understand that all data on school computer devices are not to be changed at any time.
14. I understand that all of my files on any school computer device are subject to review by the administration.
15. I understand that failure to follow these rules will result in parent notification and severe limitation of computer access, with possible legal and/or disciplinary action at the discretion of the administration.

(The above will be presented to students before their uses of computers.)

Permission to Administer Medications

Medications can be given by the staff provided that the following conditions are met:

- A. a completed "Permission to Administer Medications" form (located in back of handbook or from front office).
- B. medication is in its original container with a legible, label in place
- C. a measuring device furnished by the parent

Permission to Administer Medications

Child's Name _____

Name of Medication _____

Refrigerate? Yes /No Dosage _____

Times to be given _____

Dates to be given _____

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Office Use:

Date _____

Time _____

By _____



Permission to Administer Medications

Child's Name _____

Name of Medication _____

Refrigerate? Yes /No Dosage _____

Times to be given _____

Dates to be given _____

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Office Use:

Date _____

Time _____

By _____