



MHFC/MHES Parent Handbook 2016-17

www.montessorihouseforchildren.com

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20625 Lakemont Bend Lane**

&

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“Education is a natural process carried out by the human individual, and is acquired not by listening to words, but by experiences in the environment”

Maria Montessori

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About Us

Purpose of This Handbook

To provide service of professional quality to the community, Montessori House for Children) and Montessori House Elementary School (MHES) must have sound practices through which these services are most effectively offered. To simplify our two entities, the lower school, Montessori House for Children (MHFC), and the upper school, Montessori House Elementary School (MHES) will both be referred to as “School” in this Handbook. The School works in partnership with parents to support and foster whole child development. Parent, teacher, child and school form a union based on mutual respect and support which, in turn, enhances everyone’s understanding, knowledge, and insight and offers a cohesive, prepared learning environment.

The Parent Handbook Acknowledgment Form (included in registration) indicates your agreement with the School’s philosophy, mission, policies and goals of Montessori Education and agreement to adhere to the School’s policies contained within.

Mission Statement

To cultivate human potential.

History

Montessori House for Children (MHFC)

MHFC was founded in 2006, a successor organization to Lakeview Montessori School in Sugar Land, TX, originally founded in 1997. MHFC is a private, non-sectarian school with an international clientele from over 34 countries. MHFC educates students aged Toddler through Early Childhood, ~18 months through 6 years.

Montessori Education Fund Inc. (MEFI)

Founded in 2013, MEFI is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit corporation that operates as a separate entity from MHFC School. MEFI has two components 1) Operations of the non-profit **Montessori Elementary School** and 2) Provider of **Educational Services** to the School and Community.

- Elementary tuition supports operations of the Elementary School (faculty salaries, educational materials, classroom furnishings, operating expenses for the Elementary School).
- Contributions (fundraising and donations) towards MEFI’s general fund supports “educational services”. Educational services are those that fall under the mission and goals of Montessori - tuition assistance, community outreach, assistance towards professional development and parent education.

All contributions, donations and funds received by MEFI “general fund” are tax deductible.

Montessori House Elementary School (MHES)

Fall of 2016 marks the grand opening of our newest building, which houses the Elementary School and *Handworks Studio*. The Elementary School is a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization, governed by the MEFI. The Elementary School initially began in 2013 as part of MHFC and has grown ever since. MHES educates students aged ~ 6 through 12 years.

Philosophy

Montessori Education is guided by the work and writings of Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952). At its core, the philosophy is simple, to *follow the child*, which assumes that every child is a unique individual who is naturally driven to grow, develop and learn. The educational goals include instilling in children a love of learning, the ability to make appropriate learning choices, and respect for oneself, other people, and their physical surroundings.

Parents are Essential

Parents are the child's first and most important educator. We believe as parents learn and experience Montessori with their child, that a powerful alliance will develop that supports each child in their quest for learning and self-fulfillment.

Partnership Agreement

School and parents enter a cooperative relationship at School. The Parent side is to make a continuing effort to understand and embrace the Montessori approach, to get involved in the life of the school community, to model respect in all associations with others in the community and to strive to incorporate Montessori principals in parenting skills in order to achieve consistency between home and school. The School side is to follow the commitment to develop the whole child- emotionally, socially, physically and academically, to model and practice human virtues and practices, to communicate effectively with parents and to maintain high standards in the program, guides and curriculum.

Affiliations and Memberships

American Montessori Society (AMS)

MHFC/MHES schools are members of the American Montessori Society. Credentialed teachers must hold Montessori credentials in the level(s) they are teaching. These credentials must be issued by a teacher education program accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE).

Eco-School

Eco-Schools USA is a holistic program. It strives to make environmental awareness and action an intrinsic part of the life and culture of a school, including students, teachers, administrative staff, non-teaching staff and parents, as well as the local community. Eco-Schools USA works to extend learning beyond the classroom and develop responsible environmental attitudes and commitments, both at home and in the wider community.

National Wildlife Federation

The School has been designated a Certified Wildlife Habitat in our play spaces which provide water, food and shelter to the area wildlife. All students are involved in the pleasures of taking care of living things and watching them in their natural environment.

Katy Prairie Conservancy

The School supports the environment efforts that are on going in the Texas Coastal Plain region, especially by the Katy Prairie Conservancy by having our own 'Pocket Prairie', which benefits the ecosystem by having authentic Texas Native plants in our yards and environments.

What Makes Montessori Unique

- **Multiage** classes allow teachers to develop close and long-term relationships with their students, allow them to know each other's learning style well, and encourage older students to become role models, mentors, and leaders to younger students.
- **Integrated curriculum** is carefully structured and connects subjects within programs (e.g., history and cultural arts to maximize the opportunity for learning and builds from program to program to progress from concrete to abstract learning).
- **Independence** is nurtured and leads to children becoming purposeful, motivated, and confident in their own abilities.
- **Peace and conflict resolution** are taught daily and children learn to be a part of a warm, respectful, and supportive community.
- **Character development** is a central focus of the AMS Montessori curriculum.
- Hands-on learning is central to the curriculum in all programs and leads to children being engaged rather than passive with their work.
- **Carefully prepared environments** with multisensory, sequential, and self-correcting materials to support self-directed learning.
- **Family and school partnership** – teachers, parents and students collaborate to support the mission and goals of the Montessori program.
- **Self-expression** is nurtured in all children. Children experience art, music, poetry, theater, writing, and other forms of creative arts with confidence and passion.

Montessori in the 21st Century. The American Montessori Society. 2003

Desired Learning Outcomes

The outcomes we aspire to teach are lifelong developments. The original American Montessori agenda of learner outcomes are as follows.

- **Independence:** Is the child able to choose his or her own work, apply energy to that work, complete it to a personal criterion of completion, take and return the work to the place it is customarily kept, in such a way that another child will be able to find the work ready to do? Is the child able to seek help? Is the child able to locate resources to continue the self-chosen task without necessarily involving the teacher?
- **Confidence and Competence:** Are the child's self-perceived successes far more numerous than his or her self-perceived failures? Is the child capable of self-correcting work, upon observation,

reflection, or discussion? Can the child manage the available array of “stuff” with a clear sense of purpose?

- **Autonomy:** Can the child accept or reject inclusion in another child’s work or work group with equanimity?
- **Intrinsic Motivation:** Is the child drawn to continue working for the apparent pure pleasure of so doing? Does the child, once having achieved a particular competence, move on to revel in mastery by showing others?
- **Ability to Handle External Authority:** Is the child able to accept the “ground rules” of the group as appropriate in his or her dealing with other children? Is the child, distant from the teacher, able to function as if the teacher were nearby?
- **Social Responsibility:** Independent and autonomous persons are always a part of a group and must attain independence and autonomy through participation in group activity. The loss of these qualities by one of a group is a loss for all. Do students attain independence and autonomy and, at the same time, develop social responsibility?
- **Academic Preparation:** In Montessori education, children learn to learn by learning. Academic preparation entails activation and cultivation of inherent powers and processes through which the learner becomes a supplier of meanings or of things-meaningfully-known. Academic skills are essential to learning and knowing, not the aim of learning and knowing. Do students acquire academic skills and apply them in learning to learn?
- **Spiritual Awareness:** Montessori views the child as a spiritual embryo. Implications are conveyed by the metaphor. All humans are spiritual beings as well as physical beings. They have spiritual health as well as physical health. Montessori sees no need to establish whether or not the source of spirit is theological and does not offer theological explanation. The spiritual embryo simply thrives on spiritual investment. The investment can be theological, humane, or a combination of the two. What are the spiritual outcomes of school experience?
- **Citizens of the World:** All children are part of both a world political system and a world ecological system. Both systems have their constitutions and all must learn to live by the letter and spirit of their laws. As a naturalist, Montessori knew about the laws of mind and of nature and understood the consequences of disobeying either of them. What are the citizenship outcomes of school experience? Are the children acquiring civic virtue? Are they acquiring dispositions to understand the natural world, to cherish it, and to live harmoniously within it?

Suggested Reading

Below is a partial list of Montessori publications.

E. Mortimer Standing, [The Montessori Method: A Revolution in Education](#)

Rita Kramer, [Maria Montessori: A Biography](#)

Angeline Lillard, [The Science Behind the Genius](#)

Paula Polk and L. L. Jessen, [Montessori from the Start](#)

Nancy McCormick Rambusch, [Learning How to Learn: An American Approach to Montessori’s Writings](#)

Dr. Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method
Dr. Maria Montessori, Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook
Dr. Maria Montessori, The Advanced Montessori Method, I & II
Dr. Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind
Dr. Maria Montessori, To Educate the Human Potential
Dr. Maria Montessori, The Secret of Childhood

School Administration, Faculty & Support

Governance

MHFC - From its formation to the present day, MHFC has been governed by a founding Board of Directors (six members). This is a strategic planning Board that established the core mission and goals of the School and oversees the business operations.

MHES – Beginning in the Fall of 2016, MHES is a part of the Montessori Education Fund (a 501c3 public charity) and is included in the charter of the MEFI Board of Directors. This is a strategic planning Board that oversees the business operations of the MEFI, including the Elementary School.

Admin

Head of School	Barbara Nelson
Business Manager	Pam Nelson
Admissions Coordinator	Yaneth Poo
Before/Afterschool Coordinator	Neelofur Surty
Development & Advancement Coordinator	Theresa O’Toole
Admin and parent volunteer liaison	Norma Angulo
General Admin	Blanca Smith, Omer Klug
School Cook	Mary Russell
Building Maintenance	Elliot Garcia

Auxiliary staff

These are private contractors who work with THE SCHOOL students during and/or after the school day. Parents pay fees directly to these auxiliary staff.

Speech-Language Pathologist	Jennifer Schababerle, M.S. CCC-SLP www.katyspeechtherapy.com
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Board Certified Behavior Analyst	Graciela Umerez, M. Ed. BCBA gumerezbcba@gmail.com
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Faculty

The school aims to ensure that the Toddler, Early Childhood and Elementary School teachers are trained in Montessori pedagogy under the auspices of the American Montessori Society (AMS) or Association

Montessori International (AMI). The School prides itself on the quality, educational depth and talent of its faculty. Teacher Bios can be found on the School web-site.

Montessori Credentials

AMS Credentialed teachers have successfully completed their MACTE affiliated Montessori training in addition to holding a BA, BS or higher degree. AMS Associate Credentialed teachers have successfully completed their MACTE affiliated Montessori training.

THE SCHOOL'S teachers working with at the EC level or higher have at least a Bachelor's degree in addition to their Montessori credential.

Professional Development

Faculty are required to add to their training each year by completing a minimum of 24 hours of additional professional development, which may include attendance at national or local conferences, university courses, or in-service work sponsored by the School. Donations made to MEFI contribute towards faculty professional development.

Faculty In-Service

Faculty in-service days are marked on the school calendar. These days are used for a number of purposes, including workshops, faculty meetings, and preparation of the environment.

Faculty are actively working in the classrooms at least one week prior to the opening of school in the fall and several days after school dismisses for the summer, in order to prepare the classroom environments and teaching materials. A Montessori classroom is a highly enriched and complex environment that demands much time and effort from the faculty to prepare and maintain. Consequently, Montessori schools typically devote more days to preparation than other schools do.

Faculty Assignments

Faculty includes lead guides, assistants, support staff and substitute teachers. Changes in faculty for the upcoming school year are formally announced, once contracts are signed. Any changes after school year begins are communicated to parents by letter.

Parent Involvement

The volunteer force is essential to enriching the community life of the school. What one person can't do, many can and it's a great way to meet and connect other parents. Also, research provides evidence that children benefit from parental involvement in school. Not only in the area of academics (motivation, engagement, performance), but also with mental health (resilience and self-esteem) and social functioning (developing relationships). Knowing that the biggest obstacle for parents is time, we have structured events and meetings to coincide with childcare or involve the entire family.

Parent Involvement Opportunities

Volunteer opportunities are available through the Parent Association of Volunteers (PAV) and throughout the school community.

Parent Volunteer Association is made up of parents, guardian, and administrators who function as the backbone of our volunteer force and help our school to fulfill its mission and create a sense of community. Officers are elected on an annual basis. Our 3 main goals are: Community Building, Social/Special Events, and the MEFI Annual Fundraising Campaign.

The PAV meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 5-6:00pm (childcare is available). Information is provided to all parents during Parent Orientation, or by contacting Norma Angulo at norma@mhfcschool.com.

How can I be involved?

- Attend PAV Meetings
- Assist in event coordination (through PAV)
- Host a “Parent Coffee” (held monthly at MHFC)
- Join the Eco-School Action team (includes gardening)
- Join the Care Committee (extends care to families within the school – in time of celebration or of need)
- Become a **Room Parent**

Room Parents have a unique opportunity to be a part of their children’s classroom experience. They serve as representatives of their classroom in the PAV. Still others offer goods and services in support of our PAV efforts.

Other opportunities include:

Classroom:

- Parent Readers (EC and Lower Elementary): Excellent opportunity to support and encourage our emergent and fluent readers.
- Cultural Enrichment: Share your cultural celebrations and customs through classroom activities.
- Library Assistants: Collect/return library books for the classroom on a monthly basis.

Whole-School:

- Drive-through Assistance: Greet arriving students in drive-through, assisting out of their cars.
- Grandparent Group: Grandparents are welcome to be a part of any one of the above-mentioned opportunities; grandparents are of great significance to our community.

School Programs

School Hours	Monday – Friday	6:30am – 6:00pm
Extended-Day	Academic Day	8:30 – 2:30 (T & EC) 8:30 – 2:55 (EL)
Full-Day	Includes before/after-school care	6:30 – 8:30 (morning care) 2:30 – 6:00 (EC/T after-school care) 2:55 – 6:00 (EL after-school care)

The school is staffed according to student population and follows State mandates. Requests for extensions beyond the program time you have registered may be accommodated on a space available basis and need prior approval.

Academic Year

Full-Day & Extended-day Elementary and EC programs follow the Academic School Year Calendar: [2016-17 Academic Calendar](#) (Summer sessions' enrollment is separate).

Full- Year Program

The Toddler Full-Day program is year-round: August – July (summer sessions are included).

The Toddler Extended-Day program is closed for the summer.

Summer Sessions

Summer sessions for Early Childhood and Elementary begin the first full week in June and end on Friday, one week prior to the start of school.

- Registration for summer sessions begins March 1
- Toddler summer sessions are included in the full-day program.

After-School Enrichment Programs (EC and Elementary only)

During the academic term, a wide variety of extra-curricular programs are offered through independent providers beginning at 2:30 pm. Information about these programs activities is available during parent orientation and thereafter on our web site or at the front office. Enrollment and payment of chosen programs are handled directly through the providers.

Admissions Policies and Procedures

Admission Process

- School Tour and/or scheduled classroom observation
- Submit Application (Elementary students include prior teacher's recommendation form)
- Teacher/Child Interview (EC and Elementary Level)
- Notice of Acceptance (or waiting pool status)
- Completed enrollment (form & fees)
- Home/Class visit (T)

Admission Decisions

Children are evaluated on the basis of readiness for school and potential for success in a Montessori classroom. It is equally important to determine whether the parents' educational philosophy and goals are compatible with that of THE SCHOOL.

Admission Policy

Elementary (Lower EL 6-9 yrs. and Upper EL 9-12 yrs.)

Students must be 6 years of age by September 1st to enter Lower Elementary; a list detailing desired milestones can be found on page 12 of this handbook. Meeting these suggested milestones will help to ensure success in the Elementary classroom.

Elementary students coming from our EC program or another Montessori school are given priority. Students coming from non-Montessori backgrounds are eligible for admission, based on congruence with the Montessori classroom.

Elementary student applications require the most recent progress report/report card and a confidential teacher-recommendation form. The teacher-recommendation form must be signed by the parents, for release of information, and mailed directly from the previous school, to MHES. These forms can be obtained from the Admission Office. A visit will be scheduled for the student and an informal assessment will be made of the child once the application and teacher-recommendation forms are received.

Early Childhood (EC)

The Early Childhood community is a three to four year program, starting at ~three years of age and continuing through age six. Admitting children at the first year, age three, and continuing through the end of the cycle, age six, is optimal for their growth and development and will help ensure readiness for the next level. In following this procedure we are able to maintain the integrity of the classroom and offer all students a quality Montessori educational environment.

Toddler (T)

Children ages ~18 months up to age three may begin their Montessori experience in our Toddler Community.

Financial Policy

New Students:

A non-refundable security deposit fee is due upon submittal of enrollment forms

Current Student Re-enrollment:

Re-enrollment Feb 1 – 15: A non-refundable re-enrollment of \$100.00 plus material fees, are due upon submittal of re-enrollment.

Re-enrollment after Feb 15: A non-refundable security deposit fee is due upon submittal of re-

enrollment.

Sibling Discount: A 10% tuition discount is applicable for a sibling (on the lower tuition)

Payment Options:

Semester Payments due Aug 1 & Jan 1	Summer Session I payment due May 1
Ten Payments due Aug 1 through May 1*	Summer Session II payment due June 1
Monthly Payments (Toddler Full-Day/year-round program) due Aug 1 – July 1	

*The 10-month payment schedule is formulated by: **Annual Tuition ÷ 9.5** with the .5 payment due Aug. 1 and the remaining 9 payments due Sept. 1 through May 1.

Tuition is late when received five (5) calendar days after the due date. A late fee of 10% is applied after this grace period. The school reserves the right to suspend attendance or withdraw a child if tuition is not paid within 10 calendar days of the due date. A bank service fee of \$25 is charged for returned checks. A 10% tuition discount is applicable for a sibling (on the lower tuition).

Refunds or allowances in tuition will not be made to compensate for extended absences in the event of illness, vacations, inclement weather, school holidays or other circumstances. All admission, re-enrollment and material/activity fees are non-refundable.

The SCHOOL reserves the right to terminate the enrollment contract if:

- The parent or guardian does not consistently follow policies, procedures and guidelines as stated in the Parent Handbook;
- The student's behavior, or lack of cooperation, is deemed unacceptable;
- The student poses a physical or psychological threat to themselves, staff, or another child within the school environment;
- Tuition payments are not paid;

Withdrawal Policy

The Security Deposit will be applied to the last month of the final academic term attended at THE SCHOOL, provided 30 days written notice is given. If, for any reason the student withdraws or is required to withdraw prior to the last month of the academic term, the deposit is non-refundable. (For extended-day Toddlers and EC/EL students, the academic term ends in May. For full-day Toddlers, the academic year ends in July).

*Tuition deposit *may be refunded* due to family relocation in excess of 20 miles – with 30 days written notice.

Student Records

Student records must be complete prior to the child's first day and prior to the *toddler* home/school visits. Student records are kept in the admission office and include complete registration forms, progress reports and conference notes. All student records remain the property of the school. Student records are confidential and can only be released with written parent permission.

New Student Six-Week Follow-up

New students normally assimilate into a Montessori environment with ease and joy. Because it takes about 30 days to establish habits and learn the ground rules, there is time given for this transition. The Lead teacher provides a six-week follow-up either by meeting with the parents in person, or by phone, to let them know how their child has adjusted.

Immunizations

Each child enrolled or admitted must meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the TX. Dept. of State Health Services.

Hearing and Vision Screening

State requires all children age 4 by September 1st receive vision/hearing screening. We provide this screening at the beginning of the school year or you may obtain on your own and provide the school with results. Results must be provided by May 1st.

Classroom Placement, Transitions & Move-ups

School Considerations

The Montessori placement process is different from what parents may have experienced in child care centers or standard schools where a placement is often determined by filling the spaces on a “first come, first serve” basis. Montessori is not a teacher-centered educational system; it is child-centered. Placement is determined by matching the skills and needs of the individual with the skills and needs of the learning community. The teacher is one part of the learning community. Other factors included are age, gender and the personalities within each community.

Parent Requests

The School is responsible for providing qualified and talented teachers in every classroom and works very hard to ensure that each child is placed in the environment where her/his needs will be met.

Classroom placements are based on these criteria and not on parent requests for a particular teacher or classroom.

Classroom Transfers

Because the composition of a learning community is selected very carefully, it is unusual for children to be transferred from one class to another during the three-year cycle. However, if there appears to be a beneficial reason for a change in classroom, you will be notified and included in the evaluative process.

New Student Transition (Toddler Community)

Following acceptance, your child’s teacher will contact you to schedule the home/school visits. During the home visit, the schedule for transition will be discussed and a plan agreed to. Following this process of transition is a vital aspect of introducing our School to both parents and child. Ideally, the schedule is as follows:

1. Parent Observation
2. Home Visit / School Visit
3. Begin transition schedule

Moving-Up

Most commonly, move-ups occur in August, at the start of the school. Occasionally, toddlers will move-up in January. Transitions during School Holidays/Breaks and the Summer Sessions are uncommon, due to merging classrooms and differences in regular lead/assistant teachers.

Move from Toddler to Early Childhood

When it is determined that your child is ready to 'move up', the following process is followed:

- Parent observes the EC classroom and/or parent/teacher meeting is arranged to discuss the differences/share important information.
- The child *may* visit the EC classroom for an introduction of the new environment.
- The final move-up can be celebrated by formally moving the child's belongings from one room to another. Also, the child's records and information will be transferred to the child's new teacher.

Move from Early Childhood into Lower Elementary

The move from Early Childhood into Lower Elementary marks the end of the first plane of development and the onset of the second plane. The ideal age for entry into the Lower Elementary is six years by September 1st.

In determining a child's readiness for moving up, faculty first considers social and emotional maturity. We also look very closely at the child's academic skills. The child needs to be reading and writing with fluency to prosper at the Elementary level. There also needs to be a strong sense of self-direction and independence, and the ability to work with concentration – alone or in cooperation with a group.

Elementary teachers begin observing candidates in January. After placement in the spring, candidates will be invited to visit the class for a morning.

Readiness Guidelines Lower Elementary:

Social/Emotional Domain:

- Understanding and experience with the process of conflict resolution
- Social awareness – the child respects others, self, and the materials in the room
- Child exhibits a fair amount of self-control and self-discipline
- The child has the desire and ability to be a leader among younger children
- The child has the ability to work independently, without the frequent direction or involvement from the teacher and has some idea regarding time management

Cognitive Domain:

Math:

- The child exhibits a strong understanding of the decimal system and place value
- Has experience and understanding of the four mathematical operations
- Has a clear understanding and experience with linear counting

- Has received upper level sensorial experiences with the geometry materials

Reading:

- Has committed to memory many of the phonogram and puzzle words
- Can read simple and/or complex sentences that include short vowels, long vowels and sight words
- Can express thoughts through simple written sentences and phrases

Writing:

- Holds a pencil correctly
- Writes legibly in cursive and is able to form all lower case letters
- Knows how to write first and last name as well as the date

Cultural:

Received lessons and maintains an intellectual curiosity about cultural subjects

Other:

Gross motor skills are adequately developed so that the child displays bodily control and coordination.

This is a guide and it expresses an *ideal* for readiness on paper. In order for children to fully embrace and enjoy the elementary curriculum as it is designed, the children need to have the skills necessary to engage in extensive research.

We all also agree that holding children back can be problematic (children maturing after two years of elementary and needing to move up). If the child's social and emotional readiness is there, we agree that the child should move up.

Getting to and from School

Timely Arrival

School begins promptly at 8:30 am. **A family considering THE SCHOOL should determine if their schedules and family circumstances permit consistent on-time attendance before enrolling in the school.** Children arriving after 8:30 are marked as tardy.

Frequent late arrival is considered problematic as it interrupts the work period of your child and others. Habitual late arrival will be addressed by the following:

1. Teacher will meet with parents directly to discuss plans for timely arrival.
2. Head of school will meet with parents to reach a solution.

We ask that discretionary dental/doctor appointment and well-checks be scheduled later in the day, so as not to disrupt the routine of your child and that of others.

Arrival

Before School Arrival – Parents are welcome to walk their child into/out of school except during designated drive-through times. When arriving prior to the morning drive-through time (before 8:20):

- Parents are to walk their child to the classroom and say good-bye at the door. This routine establishes clear boundaries for the child and eases in successful transitions. It also respects the children in the School as it minimizes interruptions.

Drive Through Arrival - The drive through lane opens promptly at 8:20 and closes at 8:30 or as the last car in line exits.

The safety of our children always comes first; therefore, use of the drive-through lane is **mandatory** for **ALL** students arriving/departing at these specific times and will be strictly enforced.

Designated drive-through times:

8:20 – 8:30	Morning Arrival
2:30 – 2:40	T & EC extended-day dismissal
3:00	Elementary extended-day dismissal

Late Arrival - Should your arrive child late (after 8:30), you will be asked to sign-in your child on the late arrival form. If your child needs help walking to class, a staff member will escort him/her to the classroom. **Parents are not permitted to escort their children beyond the lobby once class has started.**

Dismissal

Drive through Dismissal - Children are gathered at the entrance of the school under the covered area and walked to their car by a teacher.

After-school Pick Up

When picking up after designated dismissal drive-through times (after 2:30/3:00): Parents pick up children from their classroom. Wait at the door and the teacher will dismiss your child once their work is complete. Parents are not allowed in the classroom at this time as it causes frequent interruptions.

Late Pick-up

In the event that you are running late, please notify the school.

Late pick up for extended-day dismissals: After the last car has left the carpool lane, children will be brought into the front office and a call will be made to parents. Parents arriving after this point will come into the School and sign their child out. There is a late pick-up fee of \$20 if arriving 15 minutes beyond dismissal time and \$1 per minute thereafter.

Late pick after the school is closed (6pm): There is a 5-minute grace period. 5 – 15 minutes late is \$20; beyond 15 minutes is \$1 per minute thereafter.

Separation

To ease separation, we ask parents to establish a routine that is assuring and encourages independence:

- Help your child by keeping to a schedule
- Encourage independence such as walking on their own or helping to carry his/her belongings.
- Short & sweet goodbyes - lingering usually causes emotional distress for the child.
- Once a child enters the classroom, a teacher warmly greets him/her.

Safety Policies

- Posted speed limit is 5 mph on driveway, parking lot and carpool lane.
- Stay in your car while in drive through.
- Pedestrian traffic is prohibited during designated drive-through times
- Children are to exit/enter on the passenger side.
- All children younger than 8 years old, unless taller than 4'9" are required to be in the appropriate child safety seat system whenever they ride in a passenger vehicle. The safety seat system must be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions. Staff will not place a child into a vehicle that does not appear to meet these requirements.
- Use of cell phones while driving is prohibited in school zones. This includes our drive through lanes. THE SCHOOL asks that all parents refrain from cellular use while in the parking lot and/or while dropping off or picking up your child.
- You are responsible for your child's safety entering and exiting the school.
- ONLY staff and adults push the "Red Button" that releases the door lock.
- Parking in the 'fire lane' is prohibited.

Procedures for Changes in Pick-up Routine or release of Children

- Your child will be allowed to leave the school only with parents or persons designated on enrollment form. In an emergency, or if there are temporary departure arrangements, the parent must send a written note giving the name, date and identifying information about the person picking up the child. This person must give proper identification, such as a valid driver's license. We will make a copy of their license and keep it in your child's file.

Absences

Please notify the school of any planned absences or call the front office if your child's absence is due to illness. When a child's attendance is inconsistent to the point that the child and/or classroom is adversely affected, the School will meet with the parents to reach a solution.

Please make every effort to ensure your child's regular attendance. In this regard, we specifically request that you schedule family vacations and trips to coincide with school holidays.

Elementary Students:

Attendance standards require a student attend 90% of instructional days per semester. Absences are calculated by day.

Policies and Procedures

Uninterrupted Work Period

As per our accrediting agency, the American Montessori Society, we are to uphold the standard of providing an uninterrupted work time. AMS Standard 3.9 states: *Schools are to allocate and protect large blocks of uninterrupted instructional time to support student learning. Optimal learning takes place during two- to three-hour blocks of time. Schools should make every effort to schedule enrichment programs and transition times to accommodate these blocks.*

The purpose of long, uninterrupted blocks of work time is to allow students to freely select work, eventually becoming absorbed in work that has a particular fascination for them at this point in their development. Interruptions disturb the development of the child's focus, concentration, and opportunity to deeply delve into work. During this uninterrupted work time, teachers also have the opportunity to present lessons to the children, ensuring that lessons are given and work is explored in all areas of the classroom.

Our day begins at 8:30 and continues through to 2:30/2:55. An integral part of your child's day is the uninterrupted block of work time. This is of utmost importance to your child for his academic, personal and social growth. Our daily schedule is designed so that all children are included in this community effort, regardless of their chosen program. It is also a measure of respect to all the students already working that we expect no disruptions once the morning work period has started.

Discipline

The educational philosophy of THE SCHOOL is that real, effective discipline is one that comes from within a person. Developing this inner discipline is one of the objectives Montessori education. It is our belief that inner discipline develops in a child through active involvement in self-chosen tasks and the development of self-control. The development of inner discipline in a child is always the goal of a THE SCHOOL. The clear organization of the physical environment; the structure, consistency, and predictability of daily school life; the indirect manner of teaching interpersonal skills through the lessons of "grace and courtesy"; the reliance on peer modeling and coaching channel positive behavior and appreciation and empathy help to limit difficulties.

Behaviors which are contrary to our CODE OF CONDUCT will be addressed immediately and appropriately:

- Disruptive behavior, which deprives others of learning.
- Intimidation, verbal abuse, physical threats and hurtful acts (such as hitting, punching, kicking or biting).
- Destruction of school property (classroom & playground equipment, supplies).

It is our belief that if the ground rules are consistently followed and positively reinforced, the necessity of external discipline will be diminished. However, when such external discipline is deemed necessary, the following will be observed without failure:

- Suggest alternative activities; re-direct.

- Persistent misbehavior in a group setting may be dealt with by temporary removal from the group, but remain in the classroom. Behavioral expectations are made very clear and the child is asked if he/she is ready to return to the group.
- Talk with the child who is in need of help, work to build understanding. Facilitate problem-solving as well exploring ideas for alternatives behavior choices.
- Teach the child that emotions are real and valid, and how to deal with them in constructive ways with kind words rather than physical responses.
- Allow for natural or reasonable consequences to take place that are understood and logical to the child, ex: Cleaning up after a spill.
- Recognize and encourage concentrated and appropriate efforts.
- Model appropriate behaviors and actions.

Under no circumstances shall any child be subjected to corporal punishment in any manner upon the body or to verbal abuse.

We encourage our parents to mirror these basic behaviors at home, to make for consistent environments in your child's main areas of life. While a parent is on school grounds, the above-mentioned guidelines must be followed.

In nearly all cases application of the foregoing guidelines will suffice. However, if the child still finds it difficult to function well within the community, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Parents/teacher conference to determine joint plan which addresses unacceptable behavior. Head of School will be notified of the plan with a follow-up within 1 week.
2. Parent/Director/Teacher conference to make recommendations in regards to outside referrals and additional behavior management program(s). Parent/director communication on a weekly basis until determination of improvement is reached.
3. The Director will make suggestions regarding alternative schools that may better meets the needs of the child, as necessary.

The school reserves the right to terminate the attendance of any student or family whose presence is considered by the school to be detrimental to the best interest of the school and/or children. The school reserves the right to ask a parent to collect their child from school as an appropriate action when the child is displaying harmful behavior.

Acts resulting in physical and/or verbal injury of another person are not tolerated. Such behavior is grounds for immediate exclusion from school:

1. 1st occurrence, parents must come for their child with permission to return the following day.
2. 2nd occurrence, parents must come for their child and the child must not return the following day.
3. 3rd occurrence, the child will be able to return following treatment with professional services and with a remedial behavioral plan.

Dress Code

Every Friday is **School Spirit Day**, a day to wear your green School T-Shirt! School t-shirts are available for purchase, please see the front office.

The School promotes an environment **FREE of media influences**. We ask for your support our effort to protect this environment by dressing children in attire (shirts, shorts, shoes, jackets, etc.) free of popular TV shows, movie characters (Cinderella, Spider Man, Hulk, Dora, Bratz, and other TV/movie stars).

Blinking shoes and shoes that make sounds are a distraction and are not permitted in school.

Children should be dressed appropriately for weather, activities and comfort - painting, gardening, water work and food preparation takes place every day.

Leather shoes and 'tennis shoes' are most practical for our playground surface. Cowboy boots and flip-flops should not be worn, as they are safety concerns for your child and others.

School Confidentiality and Social Media Policy

It is our duty to protect the confidentiality of our students, parents and staff. Release of records, sharing information or discussion of current or former members of our community is against school policy. All who belong to the school are expected to follow this policy.

Parents who post pictures of children from the school must have permission from that child's parent to do so. Children should not be named in postings.

To maintain the professional relationship between parent and teacher, staff members are not permitted to "friend" current families within the School.

Transporting children

Our school has a policy that no enrolled child be transported to or from the child's home to the school by faculty.

The Elementary School program includes 'going out' trips as part of the learning experience. Notifications with parental consent forms will be sent prior to the occasions. Parents will have the option of transporting their own child or will ask for transport from a parent volunteer. Employees' *may* be involved in transportation provided proper documentation is on file (see Elementary Community/Chaperone)

Possessions

What Not to Bring to School

- Clothing, books, magazines/catalogs with media related characters
- Backpacks (Elementary students **only** may bring backpacks)
- Shoes with lights
- Toys, stuffed animals and electronic devices
- Sippy cups, bottles, pacifiers, blankets or pillows

- Accessories that cause distraction for others
- Valuables

What to Bring to School

Please see “School Communities” for specific information on items needed for school.

Lost and Found

Unlabeled lost/found items are kept in a small box located in the Lobby. Following each semester, unclaimed items are donated to a charitable organization.

Observation/Open Door Policy

Parents are free to visit the school at any time during school hours to observe their child and program activities. We request that you schedule a time with the front office, whose job it is to manage numbers and times of visits in each classroom in any one day. Unannounced classroom observations are done from outside the classroom window to protect the concentration of the children working and the classroom environment.

Classroom observations are strongly encouraged and scheduled during the school year, after new students have settled in (October – April). There are guidelines for entering classrooms and recording observations without disrupting the working children. Staff is available after observations to answer questions.

Babysitting, Attending Children’s Parties

To maintain the professional integrity of our school, employees of THE SCHOOL must not provide babysitting or childcare services for students OF THE SCHOOL. Employees may not attend birthday parties for students currently enrolled unless it is to accompany their own child.

Employees of THE SCHOOL must refrain from discussing the School’s students or issues when they are in the company of parents before or after school hours; ex: public encounters, sports events, etc. Mini-conferences must not occur away from school; please contact during school hours to schedule an appointment with your child’s teacher.

Nutrition

THE SCHOOL is a **low-sugar facility and food from fast food restaurants is not allowed.**

This policy is to be followed in breakfasts, snacks, lunches brought to school and in community celebrations (such as birthdays) and special occasions. In the event that food brought to school is not low in sugar, it will be returned home with your child.

The school serves water and milk. Drinks from home must be low sugar, water or milk. **Juice drinks and “sippy cups” are not allowed.**

Breakfast is available from 6:30 – 8:00 a.m. for full-day children. Snack is offered mid-morning for Toddler and EC children and mid-afternoon (schedules vary per class) for full-day children. Food prep is also a part of the classroom, and this is in addition to snacks listed on our menu. Breakfast, snack and lunch menus are posted on the web site.

Catered Lunches are available through “*The Simply Fresh Kitchen*”. Enrollment and payment are handled through the provider at: www.thesimplyfreshkitchen.com.

Children are encouraged to eat but will not be forced to do so. Any recurring eating problems will be discussed with the child's parent.

Family Supportive (Breastfeeding)

Our school strives to support a healthy family life. In that effort, if you are nursing an infant and need a quiet place to do so, please let our front office staff know and we will happily accommodate you and your child.

Communications

As an “Eco School”, our primary form of communication is via email; therefore, it is essential to have accurate email contact information.

Change in Contact Information

It is vital that we have current contact information in the event of an emergency. If you have a change of address, e-mail, or phone number, update immediately through the MRX parent portal. An email will be sent to both the admissions coordinator and your child’s teacher with the updated information. Contact information may also be updated via email to yaneth@mhfcschool.com

Communication from School

The School sends quarterly newsletters and Friday “News Blasts” via email. Useful Information is also available through:

Facebook page:

“Friend” our Facebook page & stay up-to-date with current events & beneficial tips!

Montessori House for Children: <https://www.facebook.com/MontessoriHouseforChildren>

Montessori House Elementary: <https://www.facebook.com/Montessorielementary/>

Family Folder (located in the lobby):

This folder is used for afterschool extra-curricular/miscellaneous communication; please check on a regular basis.

Parent Portals

The School use record 2 management systems; OnCare is for family records and MRX is for classroom specific records. Parents will have access to both:

- **OnCare** - parents have real-time access to financial account balance/pay online, print reports (tax statements, company reimbursement, etc.)
- **MRX** classroom information, including important dates, pictures, videos, resources, and class/school directories. Teachers also use MRX each child’s Montessori record keeping and generate progress reports from this system.

Contacting Your Child’s Teacher

We value open and consistent communication regarding your child. During parent orientation, teachers will provide you with their contact information. In general, we use two primary forms:

- Contact via email at the address provided by the teacher during parent orientation.
- Call the front office and leave a message for your child’s teacher; a timely response will be given.

Please avoid:

- Dropping by the classroom to speak to the teacher during the school day.
- Sending oral messages to the teacher via the classroom assistant, front office or drive-through staff.

School Closings & Other Emergencies

Parents will be notified via email of School closings – information will also be posted on the website and updated through Facebook. In the event of a school wide emergency, parents will be sent a message via email. **It is important that parents keep the school up-to-date on emergency contact information, including e-mail.**

Business Hours

6:30 – 6:00	School Hours
9:00 – 12:00	Business Office
8:00 – 5:00	HOS (by appointment)

Proper lines of Communication

For matters related to....

Contact:

School mission and goals, faculty, curriculum, academic counseling, school policies and procedures, safety and security	Head of School Barbara Nelson barb@mhfcschool.com
Tuition payment and billing	Business Manager Pam Nelson pam@mhfcschool.com
Admissions, student records and transfer of records	Admissions Coordinator Yaneth Poo yaneth@mhfcschool.com
Child’s progress, classroom activities and	Classroom Lead Teacher

classroom procedures	Teacher's name@mhfcschool.com MRX – Parent Portal
Parent Association of Volunteers, School Observations, public relations, etc.	Admin Norma Ortega norma@mhfcschool.com
Marketing, School Development, School/Community Events, web & social media	Development & Advancement Coordinator Theresa O'Toole Theresa@mhfcschool.com
Afterschool Enrichment/Program	Before/Afterschool Coordinator Neelo Surty neelo@mhfcschool.com
Menus, afterschool enrichment, parent resources, forms, newsletter, school calendar, etc.	MHFC Website www.montessorihouseforchildren.com

Illness

When to keep a child home

We are not licensed to provide get-well care or to isolate children who cannot participate in school activities.

- If your child’s illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in the normal activities of the day (including outdoor play), your child should not be brought to school.
- If your child is required to have more than one breathing treatment/ medicine treatment per day.

If your child has one of the following, unless medical evaluation by a health-care professional indicates that you can include the child in the child-care center's activities:

- Tympanic (ear) temperature equal to or greater than 101 degrees and/or behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness;
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill.
- If your child has had to have fever reducing medicine or has had fever within the past 24 hours.
- Pink Eye Policy-If your child has one or both eyes that are itchy, red or crusty, **DO NOT BRING THEM TO SCHOOL.** If a child develops any signs of eye infections, the parent will be called to pick up the child. Children going home due to possible eye infections shall remain home for at least 24 hours before returning to school and have at least 3 doses of medicine, or a note from their pediatrician saying when they may return to school.

If a health-care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, the child must have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious, in order to return to school.

Should your child become ill during the course of the day, you will be notified immediately. You must arrange to have him/her picked up as soon as possible – we are NOT licensed to provide care for sick children. Your child will await your arrival in a safe area away from other children. If it is difficult for you to get to the School within a reasonable time (30 – 45 minutes), please designate another person to pick up your child.

Children sent home due to fever or vomiting/diarrhea must be symptom free and without need for fever reducing medicine for 24 hrs. before coming back to school. We will provide you an “Illness Report” letting you know what symptoms your child experienced at school. This note will explain the 24 hr. rule for returning to school.

If your child has been diagnosed with a communicable illness, please notify the school so that the other parents can be alerted to watch for symptoms.

Medications

The school administers prescription medications only. Over the counter medications will only be administered with written permission from your child’s physician.

Medications are to come into the school in their original container with prescription date, doctor’s name and child’s name. These are checked in at the front desk and a Medical Authorization Form filled out (also located on our web-site).

Any exceptions need to be accompanied by a written doctor’s note indicating dosage for the child.

Prescriptions and breathing treatments are given once daily and usually given after lunch.

Medications, such as diaper rash crème etc., will be handled on a case basis.

Guidelines for Head Lice

Treatment: Parents/guardians should consult their physician, pharmacist or Texas Lice Squad for advice on the proper use of an approved medicated shampoo for the head lice.

Exclude from attendance: Yes

Re-admission Criteria: Student’s scalp is free of lice and nits.

Sunscreen & Insect Repellants

If you would like your child to wear sunscreen or insect repellent at school, apply it to your child prior to sending them to school that morning. Those parents who wish for sunscreen or insect repellent to be reapplied on their child in the afternoon are to provide the school with sunscreen and insect repellent. These items must be labeled with the child’s first and last name and for safety reasons and will only be used on the child whose name is on the bottle. The second application will be applied in the afternoon, following lunch/rest period.

School Communities

Developmental Distinctions

Toddler and Early Childhood

Children age birth through age six are considered to be in their “first plane of development”. During this period, children undergo substantial physical and psychological development. They immensely enjoy work (purposeful activity) using the concreted and sensorial materials found in the areas of the classroom. At this stage of development, children possess a natural ability to “absorb” all that is learned through their experiences within the classroom and ‘construct themselves’ as individuals.

Elementary

Children age six through twelve are considered to be in their “second plane of development”. During this period, Dr. Montessori saw children change profoundly from the Early Childhood to the Elementary years, in how they approach each other and how they encounter their environment. This “new child” requires a new educational approach: Montessori Elementary programs build on prior Montessori year’s foundation to produce successful, confident, and joyful students.

Elementary Community (Lower and Upper)

The Montessori elementary curriculum was designed by Dr. Maria Montessori to give the child between the ages of six and twelve the opportunity to gain an understanding of how the universe came into being and the place of the human being in that great drama. The guide begins this through the presentation of five “great stories”. These stories include the origin of the universe, the coming of life on Earth, the coming of human beings, the story of oral and written communication, and the story of numbers. These stories are a springboard from which the child begins to explore and appreciate how interesting and exciting learning can be.

The Montessori curriculum does not present isolated subjects. Rather, the child is presented with the whole, from which the parts emerge in a natural fashion. The stories are then referred to again and again as the child gains more and more knowledge. Awareness of the interrelatedness between all living things is what Dr. Maria Montessori called “Cosmic Education”. Children see themselves as part of a whole. They become aware of their relationships with other people and things, which brings them to an understanding of the responsibility they have to others.

Elementary Environment

Mathematics

Math curriculum is designed to help students develop: (1) a conceptual understanding of basic number facts and functions, the value of money, the meaning of time, and (2) computational and problem solving skills.

Language

Language curriculum is designed to help students develop: (1) the muscle control required to produce written language, (2) the listening and reading skills required to understand the tone, as well as the substance, of verbal and written communications, (3) the critical thinking required to analyze thoughts and ideas and, (4) the basic skills required to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing. Reading skills acquired at the primary level are continually enhanced through direct applications in the classroom such as literature, poetry, and book discussion groups.

Being a multi-cultural school, many languages are heard and spoken here. **Spanish is the 'second language' of the classroom**, with exposure to all languages of children and teachers included. Latin is also introduced in Lower Elementary.

Geometry

Geometry has been defined as an awareness of the relationship between man and the objects in his environment. Montessori saw the study of geometry as practical, based on the physical reality of our world. Exploration of these shapes, and their names and structure, provide the groundwork for later studies ranging outside the confines of the classroom.

Culture

Cultural Studies are designed to help students appreciate the impact of geography and technology upon the history of the human race. Montessori materials familiarize students with various land-forms, bodies of water, continents, countries, and capital cities. A historical perspective is reinforced through the development and use of time lines in conjunction with research projects on subjects such as "The Creation Story", "Timeline of Life", "Timeline of Early Humans" and "The Civilizations".

Science

The Science curriculum is designed to (1) familiarize students with some of the fundamental principles of scientific investigation, (2) to strengthen their powers of observation and critical thinking, and (3) to explore some of the basic concepts within the fields of biology, chemistry, physical science, astronomy and earth science.

Fine Arts

The Fine Arts curriculum (art, theater and music) is designed to familiarize students with some of the great masters and to encourage the students to recognize the Fine Arts as a creative means for expressing one's observations, feelings, imagination, and personal experiences. Many of the class projects thematically relate to other academic areas. Elementary students also have weekly art class with an art instructor.

Physical Fitness

Large running and sports activities occur in the recreation field daily. Elementary students also have weekly organized physical fitness with a physical fitness instructor.

'Going Out' Trips

"Going out" on trips is encouraged for the Elementary students. Although some outings may include the whole group, smaller group outings may be initiated under the guidance of the teacher. The purpose of "going out" is to foster independence by making connections with the world beyond their community to support ongoing classroom work. Parent chaperones may be necessary for trips involving travel.

Parent Chaperone responsibilities:

- Parents must read, agree to and sign forms for going out and/or transporting children.
- Parents must commit to escorting children from school to the field trip **and** from the field trip back to school. No side trips are permitted. Parent chaperones may not leave the group at the field trip site to return home.
- Parents must be in charge of and aware of the children they are responsible for at all times on the trip.
- Parents must follow the plan and guidelines established by the teachers prior to the trip.
- Parents are discouraged from bringing younger siblings on the field trip. They cannot give their attention fully to the students they are responsible for if they have another child in tow.

What to bring to school:

- Backpack (supplies are provided by the school)
- Melamine plate and drinking cup
- Water bottle

Typical Schedule

6:30 - 8:00	Early morning care (breakfast available)
8:20 - 8:30	Drive-through arrivals
8:30 - 12:00	Uninterrupted work period (includes outdoor work/exploration)
12:00 - 12:30	Lunch
12:30 - 1:00	Lunch clean up
1:00 - 2:55	Uninterrupted work period and specials*
2:55	Extended Day Drive-through dismissal
3:00	Afterschool Enrichment Programs Begin (Independent providers & separate enrollment)
3:00 - 6:00	After-school care (Includes snack & outdoor exploration)

***Specials include Art, physical fitness and Spanish**

Early Childhood (EC)

Our Early Childhood community is a three to four year program comprised of children age ~3 through 6 years of age. The mixed age grouping is intentionally designed to give children the unique opportunity

to succeed in a miniature community, where mutual respect, caring, sharing and self-reliance can flourish. Older children are mentors and role models for the younger children. Through teaching and mentoring the younger children, their knowledge is reinforced.

Completing the cycle (through age six) is most important in both the development of the child and for the classroom dynamics. The final year within the Early Childhood Classroom (age 5 as of Sept. 1) is a monumental year and an extremely rewarding and joyous experience for the child. It not only serves as the year of culmination for all previous lessons, it allows the child to transfer his knowledge from the absorbent mind (concrete) to the rational mind (abstract). It also provides an opportunity for the child to embrace his new position of leadership and mentorship. Knowing how important his or her role is in their community builds self-esteem and confidence, which are primary ingredients for future success.

EC Environment

Early Childhood guides (teachers) prepare the classrooms to support a child's natural curiosity; encourage creativity and aid in cooperative learning. Children learn individually and in small groups. The child is free to choose work that has been introduced to him/her from the different areas of the classroom. Each classroom consists of the following areas:

Outdoor Environment

Our work continues into the outdoor classroom, where children work with our Outdoor Nature Guide. Children have the opportunity to cultivate our organic school garden, and learn about beneficial bugs and care of wildlife.

Practical Life

Exercises such as washing dishes, polishing objects, setting the table, watering plants and sewing are designed to develop self-reliance and respect for the environment. These exercises build and refine the child's sense of order, concentration, coordination and independence, which prepares the child for all other areas of the classroom. It is the foundation from which all other areas construct.

Sensorial

Activities in this area cultivate the senses and help the child become a keen observer. The sensorial materials develop visual, tactile, auditory and olfactory discrimination of differences. Another important aspect of this material is the preparation for more advanced skills in concepts of language, geometry and science.

Language

The Montessori language curriculum includes all the elements of language: auditory, oral, mechanical, interpretive and grammar. There is great variety of materials in this area. The most classic of which include the sandpaper letters and moveable alphabet. Language development is embedded in the entire classroom (rather than an isolated subject) with plenty of opportunity for language in all areas of study.

Math

Math materials are esthetically appealing, precise and simple. This is one of the most desired areas of the classroom. Concrete representation of abstract ideas and symbols help the child understand concepts and prepare him for future extensions of the work.

Physical and Life Science

Children learn about the world through observation, experimentation and care of our environment. Young children love nature and are truly intrigued by its mysteries. We offer an abundance of hands-on opportunities for children to understand and appreciate science. Activities range from the study of animals, botany, rocks & minerals to simple science experiments and the outdoors – gardening and wildlife.

Culture

Culture: The study of Culture and Geography start with the sensorial exploration of directionality, body awareness, weather and the calendar. From there we begin to study our world, starting with the sand paper globe, identifying land and water, then beginning to name continents, oceans and seas. The puzzle maps accentuate mapping skills and exploration of different countries and their cultures. Our Cultural studies encompass the traditions, holidays, music and food from all over the world. Our diverse community of students is always a positive and interesting advantage to our Cultural studies.

Art, Music and Movement

The children are given an opportunity to develop their gross and fine motor skills through creative movement and art. Music is integral to our day, incorporated into much of our cultural work and often as a soothing background to our work period. Art encourages the natural desire to create. Our art program also emphasizes the *process* rather than the *product*, giving children more freedom to be creative. Music and Art have a known scientific connection to cognitive development, emotional health and academic achievement.

Clothing

Please label all clothing. We are not responsible for unlabeled clothing. The school has extra clothing should your child need a clean change of clothes. It is not necessary to send extra clothes; however, we are happy to accept clothes that you are no longer in need of to add to our school's supply.

What to bring to school

- Items of interest for "show & tell" every Friday
- Water Bottle (labeled)
- Framed family picture to display in the classroom

Your Child's Work

A majority of the work completed in the classroom cannot be sent home because it is a part of our classroom materials on our shelves. This is especially true for younger children who are not able to write and/or read. We will conduct observation opportunities through the school year so that you will have the chance to see your child's work.

Older children who are working on extensions to the classroom materials will take homework that has been completed. 'Friday Folders' are used to send work home. Please help your children become responsible for returning their folder to school the following Monday.

"Afternoon Worker"

The afternoon work period (12:30 – 2:30) is open to students who exhibit a readiness for a longer workday. Prerequisites for entrance into extended-day class are:

- Strong concentration and focus
- Long attention span
- Controlled behavior
- Follows instructions well
- Sense of maturity

These attributes usually develop in a child around the age of 4 ½ to 5 yrs. When the teacher sees these developments in a child, she will extend an invitation to the child to attend the afternoon work period. Children who are "in-between" will be given the opportunity to engage in a quiet activity after a brief resting period.

Reading Folder

Children showing an interest in reading books will be sent home with a book. Please *encourage* your child to share the book with you but be careful to not *discourage* your child by forcing them to read it. Reading folders will be sent home once per week upon return of the previous book.

Show & Tell

Show and Tell is every Friday. Your child is always encouraged to bring an item of interest that will enhance our learning. **Toys are not permitted.**

Parent Volunteers

Your involvement will always serve to enhance your child's learning enjoyment. During Parent Orientation, parents will have the opportunity to sign-up for various volunteer opportunities. Also, we welcome special talents and cultural events that you would like to share with us.

Typical Schedule

6:30 - 8:00	Early morning care (breakfast available)
8:20 - 8:30	Drive-through arrivals
8:30 - 12:00	Uninterrupted work period (includes snack and outdoor work/exploration)
12:00 12:30	Lunch
12:30 2:30	Rest period for those who nap
12:30 1:00	Lunch clean up
1:00 2:30	Uninterrupted work period
2:30	Extended Day Drive-through dismissal
2:30/3:30	Afterschool Enrichment Programs (Independent providers & separate enrollment)
2:45 6:00	After-school care (Includes snack & outdoor exploration)

Toddler Community

The toddler community provides the child with an atmosphere of freedom and respect; where his blossoming independence is encouraged. Children are given the freedom to make choices and to explore interests. While learning to care for one's self, the community and the environment the child will develop and practice skills that serve as the foundation and preparation for life.

The Guide's role in the community is to follow and observe the child; discovering his needs and interests as they are revealed. The Guide also offers assistance in a way that *helps the child to help himself*.

It is our hope that every child will leave the toddler community with a foundation of confidence, strength and independence upon which he will construct his future self.

Transition into the Toddler Community

We suggest the following schedule for introducing our community to both parents and child:

1. "Home Visit" - The purpose of the Home Visit is to establish the child/guide relationship, sharing of information about the toddler environment and a time to learn more about your child's history and behavior patterns.
2. "School Visit" – We ask the parent and child to visit the classroom for about a half hour as the child becomes familiar the new environment.
3. Gradual Transition - Over a period of (about) three to five days, the transition occurs with the child staying from just a short time in the morning to the full schedule by the end of the week.

To ease the transition it is suggested that the child have experienced some separating from parents with either family or friends before entering the TC.

Toileting

Children actively participate in the toileting process. The child is encouraged to remove his own clothing and diaper and is offered the use of the toilet at every diaper change. This is the beginning stage of self-toileting. Toilet learning occurs at each child's individual pace. A conference between the parents and the guide will be scheduled to discuss the switch to underwear once the child exhibits these signs of readiness:

- Continued success while sitting on the toilet
- Diaper stays dry for longer periods of time.

Once your child is wearing cloth-training pants (underwear), we ask that parents do the same at home. Putting a child back into a diaper sends mixed messages and impedes the progress that the child wishes to make.

Privacy and body awareness

Our practices are an extension of these Montessori and developmental views:

- Bodies are beautiful and natural. Children are given proper language for their body parts and have an active role in process of undressing, dressing and toileting.
- Learning to dress/undress and use the toilet includes being without clothes.
- It is respectful to a toddler to help them be clean after toileting and playing in the sand and/or mud. Summer-time outdoor play may be followed by an outdoor shower, as needed before returning to the classroom for dressing.

- The toddler classrooms are ***their own world (home)*** when at school, adults who must enter should do so with respect and understanding that they are in another's place – a child's space.

Clothing

Please label all clothing. We are not responsible for unlabeled clothing. Upon arrival children change from their home clothes to their school clothes, which consist of a t-shirt and cotton underpants (or diaper). Before going home for the day they change back into their home clothes.

When choosing clothing for your child, please consider the following, as it should:

- Allow for freedom of movement and be comfortable.
- Be easy to put on and remove: easy zippers to manipulate, sleeves without tight elastic, only one layer of clothing, pants easy to unbutton, large neck openings.
- Shoes should have rubber soles and easy fasteners (Velcro) or slip on. Your child's foot should fit into the shoe with minimal effort.
- Please do not send "onesies" (shirt and underwear in a single unit)
- Three changes of clothes should be kept at school at all times

What to Bring to School

For your child's first day of school, please provide the following supplies:

- 3 cotton t-shirts (one size larger than the child normally wears) clearly labeled and in a gallon sized zip lock bag
- 1 dozen (Full-Day) or ½ dozen (Extended-Day) Gerber cloth-training pants sized 2T, per semester, or as needed. (These are kept and laundered at school)
- 1 package of disposable diapers as needed
- 3-4 pictures of your child and his family (pets and grandparents too)

What not to bring to School

- Sippy cup
- Pacifier
- Blankets and/or pillow (bed linens are provided by the school)
- Pull-ups (cloth training underwear are used during the toilet learning process)
- Stuffed animals or toys

Toddler Environment

Entrance Area

The area just inside the classroom door is the symbolic point of separation for the parent and the child. The child exchanges kisses with mom or dad and is assured that he will be picked up later. The child is greeted by his teacher and proceeds to the cubby area for changing into school day clothes.

Bathroom

This area is different in that there is not a changing area but instead a bathroom with one or two toilets. Communal underpants are stored here. A child sized sink is just outside the room with a supply of soap and single use washcloths for drying hands.

Work Area

This area is divided into several sections. It is the largest in the environment and includes the language area, practical life materials, manipulative and expressive materials.

Dining Area

Social exploration takes place here and children eat family style at a communal dining table. Teachers eat with the children modeling grace and courtesy. Children serve others as well as themselves.

Sleeping Area

Sleeping mats are stored and brought out at nap time. Linens & blankets are provided by the school and are laundered weekly or as needed.

Outdoor Area

The toddler environment opens directly onto a private and secure butterfly garden with herbs, bird feeders and play equipment. The early impressions of natural beauty, observations of living things, the joy of being outdoors and being able to easily view it from within the classroom – all give a contact with nature that no image in a book or description can ever duplicate. In time, as the toddler starts to see beyond self and his/her own needs, they will want to participate in the care of what they have come to love. From appreciation comes the desire to work with indoor plants, gardening and feeding wildlife.

Typical Schedule

6:30 – 8:00	Breakfast and Early morning arrivals
8:30 – 11:30	Uninterrupted work period (includes snack & outdoor exploration)
11:30	Lunch
12 - 2:30	Rest period
2:30	Extended-day dismissal
2:45 – 3:00	Full-day children arise, toileting
3:00 – 6:00	Afternoon work period (includes snack & outdoor exploration)
	Food preparation & snack
	Outdoor exploration ~ 30 minutes
	Afternoon group time (songs & stories)
	Change into home clothes

Classroom Life

Homework

Generally speaking, *homework* refers to academic work. However, we Montessori educators like to broaden the term: all work that is done at home is *homework*.

We hope that all children leaving SCHOOL for the day are given time to both relax and be responsible for the activities surrounding home life.

The practice of “reading” greatly influences a students’ academic success. For our youngest children, parents model a love for reading by reading stories with their children and incorporating specific “reading time” for the family. Children can also be encouraged to “read by picture”, practicing storytelling and imagination. Those children who have skills necessary for early reading (emergent readers) will be sent home books that are at their level – helping to make this special time successful for the child.

Homework expectations for the Elementary Community *may* include the following:

- Home and family responsibilities
- Practice daily reading
- Memorization of weekly spelling words (according to the “new rule”) and math facts.
- Classroom work will be assigned every Monday and due each Friday. Throughout each day, the students are responsible for time management and meeting their responsibilities.
- Projects of the child’s own choosing, either related to topics being explored in class or of their own interest.

Please note: Unfinished classroom assignments will carry-over to the next day. Schoolwork is not to be worked on during parent pick-up time or while parents are waiting.

Missing Materials

Any small object you may find in your child’s lunchbox, pockets, or folders, regardless of how insignificant it may seem (or who he says gave it to him), should be returned as it is significant to the classroom.

It is quite normal for children to pocket things, especially tiny or unusual items, so we hope you will stress only the need to return it and not mention the child’s act of removing it.

If your child goes through a period of pocketing, please help us during that time by checking carefully each day. Let him/her help you check and seal the objects in an envelope and write “for the school” on it. This may also be a sign of love for his school, or a need for security (not theft at a young age).

Student Assessment

We provide a qualitative evaluation of a child’s performance that takes into consideration the whole child, including strengths, limitations, and social, physical, and creative achievements.

Traditional grades provide a quantitative evaluation of a child’s work. Grading creates an environment of winners and losers, undermining the spirit of cooperation and community. Research indicates that grading actually reduces creativity, as students aim for work that will be safe and acceptable to the adult. And therein lies a third powerful reason not to use traditional grades: the children begin to work to please the adult rather than themselves, to work for the extrinsic rather than the intrinsic reward. For these reasons, Montessori does not “grade” children’s work.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences will be held twice yearly, during the Fall and Spring sessions. Daily questions, concerns or updates will be addressed in a timely manner, outside of the children's work period. If you would like to talk, call the school and leave a message for your child's teacher with the front office. If you have an immediate question or concern, the front office will be able to help.

Produce Basket

Toddler and EC parents are asked to participate in the produce/flower basket rotation for children to use for morning food prep activities, snack and flower arranging. Family involvement will help to enrich our children's appreciation for good nutrition. Participation is voluntary and rotational. Elementary students plan for and prepare meals on a regular basis. Volunteer parents may help in purchasing supplies needed and/or in preparing the meals.

Conferences Reports

The teachers who have worked with your child will produce evaluations during the year of your child's performance in the classroom. You will receive two written conference reports each year. These reports will be reviewed with you in person at conferences with your child's teacher once each semester.

Anytime throughout the year, if you have a question about your child's progress, please contact the teacher for a discussion.

Lunch Options

Parents have two lunch options:

THE SCHOOL offers an optional lunch program from ***The Simply Fresh Kitchen***- meal options include vegetarian, dairy and gluten free, in small and large sizes. Meals are made fresh with organic and local foods (when available). Parents must order in advance, on-line:

- 1) Log on to www.thesimplyfreshkitchen.com.
- 2) Click "Accounts" in the top navigation bar. This will take you to the main store page.
- 3) Click the item labeled "Montessori House of Children Lunch Payment".
- 4) Fill in the Student's Name and Class
- 5) Select Regular or Large portion size
- 6) Select the dates you would like to order lunch for, in the section marked "Order Dates."
- 7) If applicable, select a dietary restriction from the Dropdown menu marked "Dietary Restrictions." If "Other", please specify in the box marked "Comments" at Checkout.
- 8) Click the button marked "Add to Cart" and proceed to check out.

If home provided lunches are preferred, please make sure it meets nutritional guidelines set forth by the school and state and includes the following:

- Cloth Napkin or paper napkin with cutlery
- Healthy and balanced meal providing a protein, grain fruit and vegetable
- Lunches that are perishable need to have ice-packs. Thermal containers must be used for warm food; classrooms are not equipped with microwave ovens.

Do not pack gum, candy, chips, cake, cookies, soda or fruit juice.

All food allergies must be listed in the school enrollment forms.

Laundry

Laundry of all bed linens and toddler training pants is done on-site, weekly or more often as needed. The children fold all laundry; this gives them a sense of belonging and responsibility to the classroom community.

Rest Period

MHFC provides sleeping mats, linens and a blanket. These are laundered and sanitized on a weekly basis or more often as needed. Every child has different sleep needs. Children are required to have a rest period but are not forced to sleep.

Celebration of Life (Birthday)

Birthday Party Invites – Invitations are not to go into the classroom and are not to be handed out by staff. Invitations can go directly into the family folders or sent via e-mail. Class directories are available through the parent portal.

Balloons, class decorations, goodie bags, paid entertainment and high sugar snacks are not allowed in School.

Elementary Communities celebrate through their “Me Box” with classmates. A “Me Box” can be a box, bag, carton, etc. – whatever your child chooses. Your child should put whatever they want to share about themselves in their “Me Box”, and decorate their “Me Box” however they choose (or choose not to). On the day of their birthday celebration, your child will sit at the head of the class circle and share their “Me Box” with the other children, teachers and attending family. Some things children have brought in their “Me Boxes” include: objects that are important or meaningful to them, written lists of things they like, pictures of important people in their lives, or pictures of places they have been or would like to go. We encourage you to let your child create, decorate and fill their own “Me Box” in whatever way they choose.

You are welcome, if you like, to bring a small “treat” for all of the children to share after your child’s birthday celebration. ***Please remember that this is a low-sugar facility -- cake, cupcakes, donuts and other sugary treats are not allowed.*** Fruit, vegetables, or a low-sugar dish representing your family’s culture are acceptable options. If you are not sure about a certain food item, please do not hesitate to contact your child’s teacher.

Early Childhood Communities celebrate birthdays through the “Celebration of Life”. The birthday child holds the globe and walking around a “sun” as a story of his/her life is read. This is a lovely and natural way to symbolically experience the passing of years. Each class has its own variation of this theme. Please talk to your child’s teacher ahead of time, if you wish to participate. Pictures, simple outline highlighting an event for each year and a low sugar snack/fruit tray may be brought to celebrate the occasion.

Toddler Communities may bring a low sugar snack to share with their class and we also suggest donating a book or other item to the class in honor of their child's Birthday.

Cultural & Community Events

Cultural/Community events involving parents are integral to the life of the school. Many of these celebrations revolve around the activities of individual classes, while others bring the larger community together. Whether small and informal or organized for the whole school, celebrations and rituals highlight and affirm the values and vision of our school.

Study of Living Things

At SCHOOL students study, observe and care for an assortment of plants, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, fish and mammals.

Water Play

Children enjoy many aspects of water, from actual work in the indoor classroom and in our "outdoor classroom"/ (watering gardens) to playing in sprinklers and water tables. For the safety of your child, we will limit water activities to aforementioned uses and will not have wading pools on school premises.

Health & Safety

Accidents and Emergencies

Should your child be injured while at the school we will advise you as soon as possible. Our first and immediate concern will be to care for your child. Depending upon the severity of the injury, you will be contacted and consulted about the procedures you want followed (doctor or hospital etc.). All of our staff members have been trained and certified in both First Aid and CPR.

All significant incidents, accidents, injuries and illnesses will be documented on a "Incident/Illness Report" and the parents will receive a copy to be signed; one copy will remain at school and the bottom copy will go home with the parent.

Communication during an Emergency

The school will communicate with parents via e-mail through our School management system. It is very important to keep contact information updated.

How parents can communicate with the school:

Depending on the circumstances, communications may be limited: In the event that the phone lines remain open, they may be tied up if there are multiple calls that come in at the same time.

Our first priority in the event of an emergency is to ensure that children and school staff are safe. Our second priority is to contact parents and to keep you informed.

The school would contact the Sheriff's Department in the event of an emergency and follows their instructions.

CONTACT NUMBERS:

- SHERIFF'S OFFICE: 281-342-6116
- SCHOOL BUSINESS MANAGER: 281-468-0160
- HEAD OF SCHOOL: 713-875-3347

Travel Alert Status

As you travel abroad please be aware of health and safety precautions that could prevent the spread of infectious disease. The America Red Cross advises travelers coming back into the State from SARS affected areas to stay home from work or school for at least 10 days in order to monitor any symptoms that may or may not appear. This procedure may also help prevent the spread of other contagious diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, influenza and severe diarrhea disease. To find out more about Travel Advisories and health visit the World Health Organization's website at www.who.int or the Center for Disease Control at www.cdc.com.gov.

Daily Inspection

An admin person conducts grounds inspection on a daily basis. However, everyone is responsible for reporting anything that looks unsafe or poses a potential safety hazard. If you encounter a hazard, notify admin immediately.

Annual Inspection

Building inspections are done each May by local county, fire and safety inspectors.

Building Security

Our school has two security systems. The first is a badge that allows entry into the foyer of the building, the second is a locked door that opens to the classrooms/common areas.

At all times except drive through times, you should use your badge. Always have your badge with you. The doorbell is primarily for visitors. If you misplace your badge, the school will issue a new one for a fee of \$10/badge.

All visitors and volunteers must be checked-in through the front office and are accompanied from there by a staff member. Family members (other than parents) who wish to visit must have parental permission and should be arranged in advance. We ask all families to please keep in mind that when a child sees a family member at school, they think it's time to go home.

Policy on Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting

State law and licensing requirements state that childcare personnel are required to report immediately to the police or Child Protective Services (CPS) if they suspect child abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Please visit the corkboard for information and warning signs that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect. All Employees are required to undergo annual training on laws regarding childcare professionals and the duty to report suspected child abuse & neglect. This training also includes warning signs of abuse & neglect and how to report to Child Protective Services. (CPS)

If you are the parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect, please call the Child Abuse Hotline for assistance and intervention. Child Abuse Hotline (800) 252-5400 or visit www.dfps.state.tx.us

Gang-Free Zone

Texas House Bill 2086 requires all schools and child care centers to notify parents/guardians that gang related criminal activity or anyone engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of a child care center is in violation of the law and is subject to increased penalty under state law.

Local Licensing Office

(713) 940-3009

1110 Ave. G (271-6) Rosenberg, TX. 77471

The HOS has available a copy of the minimum standards for your review. THE SCHOOL'S's most recent Licensing inspection report is posted on the cork board in the middle room and can also be found at: www.dfps.state.tx.us/

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on school property or at school related functions.

School Emergency Preparedness Plan

Emergency Phone Numbers

If an emergency requires calling for an ambulance, Police, and/or Fire Department, the following procedures should be followed:

- **Ambulance/Police/Fire: 911**
- **Poison Control Center: 1-800-222-1222**
- **TDFPS 1-800-252-5400/Local Office 281-341-4082**
- **For all area-wide emergencies, listen to the radio for instructions from emergency personnel.**

Primary Safe Meeting Place

MHFC Inside school's fenced playground, along Lakemont Bend Ln

MHEL Inside school's fenced playground, along Lakemont Bend Ln

Secondary Safe Meeting Place

If the danger requires an evacuation of one of our School Grounds, a building evacuation to the secondary building will be done.

Montessori House for Children will evacuate to the Elementary Building:

7233 South Mason Rd.
281-239-3400

Montessori House Elementary will evacuate to Montessori House for Children:

20625 Lakemont Bend Ln
281-239-3400

Annual Inspection

Building inspections are done each May by local county, fire and safety inspectors.

Daily Inspection

An admin person conducts grounds inspection on a daily basis. However, all employees are responsible for reporting anything that looks unsafe or possess a potential safety hazard. If you encounter a hazard, remove it and notify admin immediately.

Staff Orientation to the Emergency Plan

All employees are oriented to the Emergency Plan at least annually. Orientation includes a review of employees' roles during an emergency and our emergency procedures.

The HOS may ask employees with specific skills to fulfill certain emergency management roles (e.g., first aid, CPR).

Home and Family Disaster Preparedness

An immediate post-disaster consideration for most people is the well-being of family members and loved ones. Since it may not be possible for some employees to return home following a disaster, all employees are encouraged to inform their loved ones of the School's plan and develop a home and family disaster plan.

Message to Parents

Each year all parents are asked to complete and sign the emergency contact and release forms that provide emergency and trip releases for the child and designate persons who are authorized to pick up their child.

Red Emergency Bag (Front Office):

- First Aid Kit
- Medical authorization/release and contact information for each child enrolled

- Flashlight w/ extra batteries

Training and Drills

In accordance with State law, fire drills are conducted monthly. Severe weather and intruder drills are conducted once every three months. Building evacuation drills to our secondary safe meeting place is held at least annually. All students and staff are required to participate in these mandated drills. The Office Staff will maintain a record of these drills. Staff/faculty will receive training on the School's Emergency Plan implementation, including their respective assigned emergency response functions and use of supplies in the disaster kits.

RESPONSES TO SPECIFIC SITUATIONS

(In all situations, follow instructions from local emergency personnel, notifications and announcements.)

Fire - Evacuate to primary safe meeting place. "Fire Alarm" will Sound

- Line children up for building evacuation.
- Count to ensure all in attendance are present.
- Check all restrooms and middle room for students.
- Close all doors to rooms.
- If smoke deepens, stay low to the ground.
- Evacuate building to safe meeting place and take attendance (face-to-name recognition).
- Hold up green sign once roll is taken to communicate safe evacuation of all students and staff.
- If a student is missing and conditions allow, a staff member will re-enter the building for the child.
- Approval must be received before reentering building.

Fire Safety Tips

Each guide should know at every moment where each child in his/her group is.

Safe, orderly leaving is to be observed; there is much danger in running.

Keep calm. Never try to hide. If the room is smoky, crawl along the floor.

Feel the doors. If they are warm, do not open them.

If your clothes catch on fire, **stop, drop** to the ground, **and roll** around to smother the flames.

Follow the procedures posted in each room.

Never block doors or exits with furniture, strollers, or toys.

Armed Intruder/Threatening Individual – "Shelter in Place" will Sound

- Lock Down, Shelter in Place and take attendance
- Summon students and employees into shelter in place location.
- Take care not leave out students or employees still in hallways or bathrooms.
- Turn off lights.
- Sit on floor away from windows and remain quiet.
- Do not leave a classroom, office, or building without approval from the police or HOS.
- Do not attempt to confront or subdue intruder.

Bomb Scare - Evacuate

- Evacuate building and go to our Secondary Safe Meeting Place.
- Turn off cell phones and walkie-talkies.
- Do NOT touch thermostats and light switches.
- Approval must be received from Police or Fire officials before reentering building.

Biological Attack (Area-wide) – Lock Down & Seal It Up

- Call students and employees into our building.
- Seek shelter in and take roll.
- Shut down HVAC systems (air conditioners and fans).
- Close windows and doors.

Localized Biological Attack (Agent found inside a building) – Call the Administration

- Place a plastic sheet, towel, or cloth over the item or substance and leave the room.
- Close and, if possible, lock door to room where item or substance was found.
- Shut down HVAC system (air conditioners and fans).
- Evacuate entire building and take roll.
- Do NOT handle, shake, touch, or in any way disturb the item or substance.
- Record names of all persons who came in direct contact with the item or substance, or were in the room at the time of discovery.
- Approval must be received from Emergency Service/Health Department officials before reentering building.

Chemical Attack (Area-Wide) – Lock Down & Shelter in Place

- Call students and employees into building.
- Seek shelter in your classroom and take roll.
- Close all windows and doors.
- Shut down HVAC systems (air conditioners and fans).
- Place wet towels or clothing in cracks under exterior doors and under doors to rooms used as shelter.

Localized Chemical Attack (Agent released inside a building) – Evacuate the Building

- Evacuate building, go to Secondary Safe Meeting Place and take attendance.
- Approval must be received from Emergency Service/Health Department officials before reentering building.

Nuclear Weapon - Lock Down & Shelter in Place

- Call students and employees into building.
- Seek shelter in classrooms, away from windows.
- If time is short, seek shelter in hallways (close doors leading to hallways).
- Kneel on ground in the “duck and cover” position.
- If time allows, shut down gas, water, and electrical service to buildings used for shelter.

Conventional Weapons (Non-nuclear explosives)

- Follow procedures for Nuclear Weapons above and lock exterior doors.

Radiological Release (“Dirty Bomb,” Nuclear reactor breach) - Lock Down & Seal It Up

- Call students and employees into buildings.
- Seek shelter in safe rooms and take attendance.
- Close all windows and lock exterior doors.
- Shut down HVAC systems (air conditioners and fans).
- Place wet towels or clothing in cracks under exterior doors and under doors to rooms used as shelter.

Earthquake - Lock Down & Shelter in Place

- Do NOT attempt to leave the building you are inside at the time of the quake.
- Take cover where you are, if possible, under a heavy piece of furniture, inside a doorframe, or against an inside wall.
- Stay away from windows.
- Use arms and hands to protect head and neck.
- If outdoors, move away from buildings, trees, and power lines.
- Stay in place until shaking stops.
- Once the quake is over, shut down gas, water, and electrical service; check for hazardous materials spills; and exercise caution before opening any closet doors.
- Do not restore utility services without approval from company officials.
- Approval must be received from officials of the Fire Department and utilities companies, as well as the HOS, before entering damaged buildings.

Tornado - Lock Down & Shelter in Place “3 whistles” will sound

- Call all students and employees into buildings.
- Shut down gas, water, and electrical service (time and safety permitting).
- Seek shelter in designated area, away from windows.
- Use hands and arms to protect head and neck.
- If outside and unable to reach shelter indoors, lie flat, ideally in a ditch or depression.
- Do not restore gas, water, or electricity to tornado-damaged buildings without approval of utility company officials.
- Check for hazardous materials spills in damaged buildings.
- Approval must be received from Fire Department officials and the HOS before entering damaged buildings.

Classroom Staff—Classroom staff are responsible for sealing rooms and caring for students. Specific responsibilities will be assigned to staff, but all staff should be comfortable with all classroom activities in order to act as a back-up. One guide per classroom will be designated as leader and will be responsible for managing an individual classroom plan. Staff members who are outside of their classroom at the time of an emergency should return to their classrooms immediately.

Office Staff—Office staff are responsible for sealing public rooms, giving assignments to visitors, parents, and caregivers in the building, and assisting guides in caring for the students. Specific responsibilities will be assigned to the staff, but all staff should be comfortable with all office and

classroom activities in order to act as a back-up. One office staff member will be designated as leader and will be responsible for managing the office plan. Staff members who are in a classroom at the time of an emergency should return to the office immediately.

Dismissal of Children During Emergency Situations

On walk to safe meeting place: Once we are on route to our Safe Meeting Place, no child will be released until we have reached our destination. A parent's responsibility, should she/he arrive during our safe movement to our site, is to assist in whatever may be needed. We will release children only when we have received advisement from the Fort Bend County Emergency Services.

Shelter in place: Should we need to 'shelter in place' or 'lock down,' no parents will be allowed in or out of the building until we receive advisement from the Fort Bend Emergency Services (listen to the radio).

Parent Notification: If possible, parents will be notified by e-mail and we will leave a message on the answering machine in the school office. Guides will use their classroom lists to make calls by cellular phone should there not be enough time to notify parents by e-mail or change the message on the answering machine. If cellular phones are inoperable, the children will remain with their guides at the Safe Meeting Place until a parent or approved adult arrives to retrieve them.

NOTE: Whether we are in our Safe Meeting Place or in our building, we will ONLY release children to those whose names are on the approved pick-up lists provided by the parents.

THE SCHOOL'S response to specific situations: (In all situations, stay tuned to local authority's emergency notifications and instructions)

Fire - Evacuate to primary/secondary safe meeting place.

Armed Intruder/Threatening Individual - Lock Down, Shelter in Place

Bomb Scare - Evacuate

Biological Attack (Area-wide) – Lock down & Seal It Up

Localized Biological Attack (Agent found inside a building) – Call the Administration

Chemical Attack (Area-Wide) – Lock Down & Shelter in Place

Localized Chemical Attack (Agent released inside a building) – Evacuate the Building

Nuclear Weapon - Lock Down & Shelter in Place

Conventional Weapons (Non-nuclear explosives) - Follow procedures for Nuclear Weapons above and lock exterior doors.

Radiological Release (“Dirty Bomb,” Nuclear reactor breach) - Lock Down & Seal It Up

Earthquake - Lock Down & Shelter in Place

Tornado - Lock Down & Shelter in Place

Shelter in place: Should we need to ‘shelter in place’ or ‘lock down,’ no parents will be allowed in or out of the building until we receive advisement from the Fort Bend Emergency Services (listen to the radio).

Parent Notification: If possible, parents will be notified by e-mail and we will leave a message on the answering machine in the school office. Teachers will use their classroom lists to make calls by cellular phone should there not be enough time to notify parents by e-mail or change the message on the answering machine. If cellular phones are inoperable, the children will remain with their teachers at the Safe Meeting Place until a parent or approved adult arrives to retrieve them.

Parents will be notified, in writing, of any policy change, or change made to the Parent Handbook.

Thank you for choosing Montessori House and Elementary School for your child’s education,

Montessori House for Children
Montessori House Elementary School