



Student / Parent Handbook

2016-2017

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Introduction

This handbook has been devised as a resource for you – the Montessori parent – to use throughout the academic year as your guide to information about school policies. We ask that you refer to this handbook for answers to your policy questions before calling the school. Most everything, from general school policies and procedures to financial guidelines and curriculum issues, are addressed inside. We encourage you to keep it in a handy place for future reference. Should you have questions that are not covered in the manual, please feel free to call the school at (717) 560-0815.

Welcome to Montessori Academy of Lancaster

The dedicated professional staff of Montessori Academy of Lancaster provide a thoroughly comprehensive Montessori program within an environment of freedom. This freedom is made possible by a foundation of structured ground rules. We encourage responsible behavior in response to this structure. This allows the staff to nurture each child while providing challenges, excitement, fun, and guidance. All of our employees, administration, faculty, and support staff follow the highest standards of professionalism.

In return for our commitment, we expect a respectful attitude. Following the parents' example of respecting us for our expertise in early childhood education, the children should respect their peers, the teachers, and all school property. We expect both parents and children to respect school policies and structure.

We believe all children want to develop to their fullest potential and want to respond to our highest expectations for them. Our faith is rewarded by their positive behavior, attitudes, and achievements.

Mission Statement

Our Academy is dedicated to excellence in education and to instilling in our children self-motivation, a love of learning, respect for others and the environment and a sense of community.

Philosophy of Montessori Academy of Lancaster

Montessori Academy of Lancaster strives to provide an educational environment in which the child is respected for the individual that he or she is, with special consideration for differences among children. The child is a whole being whose physical, emotional, and cognitive parts are interrelated. This unity of the entire child is maintained in the school setting.

In the prepared environment of the Academy the teachers act as facilitators and enablers to encourage each child to fulfill his or her potential. The child manipulates materials in the practical life, sensorial, language, and math areas of the classroom to gain skills, which will enable him or her to develop physically, emotionally, and cognitively.

The mission of Montessori Academy is to prepare the child for life, by instilling in each child a love for learning, a respect for the world in which we live and a consideration for all people of the world.

History of the Montessori Academy of Lancaster

Montessori Academy of Lancaster was founded in 1982 by three women dedicated to the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori and to meeting the needs of today's children.

A volunteer Board of Directors has maintained the Academy, which is a non-profit, no ownership, corporate structure.

The Academy admits students, ages 18 months - 12 yrs., of any race, religion, national or ethnic origin, to all the privileges and programs of the school. The Academy is also an equal opportunity employer.

The Pennsylvania State Board of Private Academic Schools through the Pennsylvania Department of Education in Harrisburg licenses the Montessori Academy. The Department of Public Welfare licenses the before and after school programs as well as those programs for children under the age of 3 years old. The American Montessori Society (AMS) is the “quality control” organization certified to supervise the implementation of the Montessori philosophy.

Fundraising and tax-deductible gifts are used to supplement the tuition income of the school. Maintaining a reasonable tuition for a quality program relies heavily on such gifts and contributions.

Dr. Maria Montessori and Her Philosophy

Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952) is regarded as one of the world’s most outstanding educators and psychologists. The first woman to receive a medical degree in Italy, she became interested in education as a pediatrician, dealing with children called mentally retarded and unmercifully also labeled insane. Montessori found that these children could learn many things that seemed impossible. After further study and clinical observations, she began to apply her teaching methods to children, who were considered normal at that time, in the slums of Rome. There she opened her first Casa dei Bambini, or “Children’s House” in 1907. What followed revolutionized educational thinking and today Montessori’s innovative approach to education is used successfully in schools throughout the world.

Montessori’s keen observations of young children led to her conviction that the child possesses an innate desire to learn and a unique sensitivity and aptitude for absorbing knowledge from his environment, especially during early childhood. She respected the individuality of each child, and recognized that without liberty this individuality could not develop. Thus, Dr. Montessori felt that the classroom must be an enriched learning environment, prepared especially to meet the needs of the whole child, in which he is free to act within a disciplined structure, and to develop himself along the lines of his own inner direction.

Scientific observation has established that education is not what the teacher gives; education is a natural process spontaneously carried out by the human individual, and is acquired not by listening to words but by experiences upon the environment. The task of the teacher becomes that of preparing a series of motives of cultural activity, spread over a specially prepared environment, and then refraining from obtrusive interference. Human teachers can only help the great work that is being done, as servants help the master. Doing so, they will be witnesses to the unfolding of the human soul and to the rising of a New Man who will not be a victim of events, but will have the clarity of vision to direct and shape the future of human society.

- Dr. Maria Montessori, Education for a New World

Suggested Reading List

The books listed below are a few of those published on the Montessori Method and are recommended to gain a deeper understanding of Dr. Maria Montessori’s approach to education. Most are available at the public library or can be purchased in paperback at local bookstores.

Maria Montessori, Her Life and World, by E.M. Standing
The Secret of Childhood, by Maria Montessori
The Discovery of the Child, by Maria Montessori
The Absorbent Mind, by Maria Montessori
Maria Montessori, by Rita Kramer

Qualities of a Montessori School

From The Authentic American Montessori School, By Nancy Rambusch and John Stoops

Quality #1: The Montessori Learning Environment

- A Child Centered Environment: The focus of activity in the Montessori setting is on children's learning, not on teachers' teaching. There should be a very limited number of whole group lessons, and these appropriate to the particular children's level of development.
- A Responsive, Preparing, Adaptive Environment: An environment responsive to children's emergent needs is one proportioned to their interests, abilities and potential. The school is prepared in advance of the children's entry into it. And the school adapts to the child's needs and the evolving interests of the child.
- Individually Construed Competence: Within a Montessori setting, each child strives to realize his or her fullest potential in a socialized context.

Quality #2: Montessori's Learning Activity

- First Hand Experience with Materials: Children learn by acting on their environments. They need materials with which to interact. At whatever developmental level the particular child, there should be available materials to interact with as well as models and relationships, which Montessori characterized as "materialized abstractions".
- Spontaneous Activity: Children spontaneously seek growth and development because it is in their nature to do so. The Montessori environment seeks to provide a setting in which the children can "epitomize" their true emergent selves.
- Active Learning Methods: The Montessori environment is one in which children pursue their learning intentions themselves. They initiate their work and persist in it until they have completed it to their respective criteria of completion.
- Self-Directed Activity (Auto-Education): The child constructs his or her own intelligence, choosing his or her activity, fueled by the need to be competent. The child constructs his or her own morality, through social interaction with others.
- Liberty Within Limits: The activity engaged in by a particular child in an environment, characterized by "liberty within limits", rests on the child's right to do what is normally and appropriately dictated by the particular culture and by the developmental level of the child.
- Intrinsic Motivation: The motivator for learning in a Montessori environment comes from within the individual child. This drive toward competence is fueled by the child's curiosity and interest. This is the child's self-initiated activity considered its own reward.

Quality #3: The Montessori Learning Relationships

- Mixed Age (Family) Grouping: In order to respond to the variety and evenness of individual children's developmental needs (and as a reflection of Montessori's developmental schemata), classes typically group children across a three year age span.
- Social Setting as a Community: The social setting is somewhat like that of an extended family. The emergent skills of individual children are harnessed for the good of the whole group. Children routinely demonstrate newly achieved competencies to one another.
- Cooperation, Collaboration, Not Competition: Children are encouraged to support one another in their efforts at mastery. The life of the group is the context in which individual activity is seen. By having children do the same thing at different times, and different things at the same time, comparisons are avoided. Montessori's developmental focus implies that all children will, over time, master the social system and the curriculum.

Quality #4: The Montessori Spirituality;

- The Child as a Spiritual Being: Dr. Maria Montessori saw beyond a purely materialistic view of the organism to the child as a spiritual entity, animated by a Divine life force. She saw the child as a spiritual embryo developing according to a definite plan.

Quality #5: What the Montessori Teacher Is

- Authoritative: The teacher is firm at the edges and empathetic at the center, the kind of adult who responds empathetically to children's feelings, while firmly establishing limits for the group.
- Observer: The teacher is capable of inferring the children's intentions through observations.

- Resource/Consultant: The teacher embodies the behaviors, dispositions, aspirations, and possibilities that the children experience in the Montessori environment.

Quality #6: What the Montessori Teacher Does

- Respectfully Engaged With the Learner: The teacher is mindful of her responsibility in facilitating the cognitive and moral development of those in her charge.
- She sees the responsibility in terms of individual children’s needs for optimal development and of the need to create an intentional community.
- Able to Facilitate “Match” Between Learner and Knowledge: The teacher knows the “rightest” response to the individual learner’s needs at whatever point the learner is, in his or her acquisition of new knowledge.
- Environmental Designer/Organizer/Preparer: The teacher can organize the appropriate social and cognitive environment for children at different levels of development, refracting through the curriculum, the expectations of the culture.

Affiliations, Associations and Licensing

American Montessori Society

North American Montessori Teachers’ Association

The Montessori Academy of Lancaster is licensed by The Pennsylvania State Board of Private Academic Schools
 Pennsylvania Department of Welfare

American Montessori Benefits

Each Montessori family pays a \$50.00 membership fee annually. AMS family memberships benefits include: AMS group related health insurance, \$5 off any one purchase of \$25 or more from Nienhuis Montessori USA

Admission

Admission Statement

Montessori Academy seeks to attract those children whose families are looking for a Montessori environment that fosters independent study and self-discipline in an ungraded classroom setting. Parents of children going to the Montessori Academy are considered “partners in education,” and are expected to become actively involved in their child’s school.

Montessori Academy enables the child to create an order within him or herself. This self-discipline becomes the basis of freedom, within a framework, for children to learn through their senses according to their own timetable of growth and level of interest. By achieving continuous successes in learning experiences, the child will develop self-confidence and competence, which is carried into maturity. When children acquire self-mastery and self-respect, they then respect others.

Parents considering Montessori Academy of Lancaster are invited to visit the school, by appointment, during school hours. Observations can be made at any time between mid-September and the end of May.

Admission Process

The admission process at Montessori Academy has been established to acquaint prospective students and their families with the school. Applications are accepted at any time, but families are urged to apply by March for the following school year. The admissions process generally involves the following steps:

1. Inquiries by telephone (560-0815), letter (2750 Weaver Road, Lancaster, PA 17601), or email (Director@montlanc.com) are welcomed.
2. After receiving Montessori Academy information packet, parents are requested to call the school for an appointment. The initial parent visit includes a tour of the school and a description of the program at Montessori Academy.

3. After the visit to the school, applicants are then required to send a \$50.00 application process fee and a \$100.00 enrollment fee, both of which are non-refundable. These fees must accompany a signed copy of the Enrollment Agreement before the admission process continues. Payment of these fees with contract submission does not guarantee a reserved space.

Late applicants are considered on an individual basis, pending availability of space in the class.

Admission Requirements

All students are required to have current medical records and current emergency contact forms on file at the school. No kindergarten or elementary student will be admitted without the proper medical and dental forms on file. Prior to admission of elementary students, all previous academic, medical, and dental records are required to be on file.

Non-Discrimination in Services

Admission, the provision of educational services, and referrals of students shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin, age or sex.

Program services shall be made accessible to persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aids, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Any parent or guardian who believes they, or their student have been discriminated against may file a complaint of discrimination with:

Montessori Academy of Lancaster
2750 Weaver Road
Lancaster, PA 17601

Bureau of Civil Rights Compliance
Department of Public Welfare
P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105

Office for Civil Rights
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Region III, P.O. Box 13716
Philadelphia, PA 19101

Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission
101 South Second Street, Suite 300
Harrisburg, PA 17105

Program Information

General Educational Objectives

- To provide opportunities that permit the child to be successful, thus creating a positive self-image.
- To help the child become competent, independent, and self-confident and to learn to respect freedom with responsibility.
- To encourage the child's natural curiosity and love of learning within a structure, that respects the child's inner time clock.
- To provide a more natural, multi-age, vertical grouping of children so that they may learn from each other.
- To encourage independent study as well as group cooperation to foster self-discipline.

Student Evaluations and Conferences

The Toddler classes will have parent/teacher conferences twice a year with a copy of a written report given to the parent. However, we urge parents to call whenever they desire a private conference. The teacher will call the parents if there is a need for a conference. If you do not hear from the teacher, you may assume your child is progressing normally between conferences. A copy of a written report will be given at that time.

There are scheduled parent-teacher conferences for all Primary and Kindergarten children twice during the school year. Written Progress Reports are issued in January and May.

Elementary evaluations are issued two times during the school year. Included in these evaluations are parent-teacher conferences held twice a year, usually in November and April.

Prior to the conference day, parents will be asked to select the time of the conference that best suits their schedule. If it is impossible for the parent to be present on conference day, then a telephone conference may be scheduled. During the conference, teacher-prepared, written evaluations are presented to the parents and discussed confidentially.

Special Programs

Art

Art is integrated into the curriculum in such activities as geometric drawings, mapping skills, botany and zoology nomenclature, and historical illustrations for period costumes and architecture. In addition, classroom teachers introduce the children to a variety of techniques and media for artistic expression. Art Appreciation is encouraged as a different artist is introduced each month.

Computer

The computer classes in the Elementary Program are designed to enhance the classes. Students use PC computer systems and iPads to acquire computer literacy, keyboarding skills, and computer applications. Special attention is given to the development of problem solving strategies, critical thinking skills, and memory building.

Foreign Language

Each class receives weekly lessons in a foreign language. In addition, the foreign language may be integrated with the music program. At the primary level, an aural-oral approach is used. The children hear the spoken words and repeat the material presented. They are also given the opportunity to identify objects in the foreign tongue and to follow simple directions. The program is outlined in units, which contain basic conversation patterns, vocabulary categories, pronunciation, and songs.

The aural-oral approach is continued at the elementary level with the gradual introduction of the written word. The children see words they already know and then later begin to write them in controlled situations. The program is outlined in units, which contain expanded conversation patterns, vocabulary categories, pronunciation practice, songs, and cultural insights.

Library

- To support the curriculum: the books in the library have been carefully selected to enhance all areas of study.
- To build excitement about reading: studies show that when children are permitted to choose books for themselves, they read more. The more a child reads, the better reader he or she becomes.
- To expose students to a variety of literary genres: through read alouds and book talks, students broaden their reading selections. By reading books from different genres children build more diverse vocabularies and become more sophisticated readers
- To provide instruction in print and online research skills: in the 21st century, children are bombarded by information. They need to become savvy consumers of information. In the library we teach students how to find accurate information quickly. We teach them which resources are best for which kinds of research. We teach them to evaluate information sources for accuracy, currency and bias.

Toddlers come to the library for songs, nursery rhymes and stories. After each story time, students have five to ten minutes to explore our board book collection.

Primary students come to the library for songs, nursery rhymes and stories. After story time, there is time for browsing and borrowing from the picture book collection.

Elementary students come to the library several times a week. In addition to read alouds, and book exchanges, students have lessons in research methods, information literacy, poetry, literary criticism, readers' theatre and the use of technology. Library lessons emphasize critical thinking skills.

Children are encouraged to contribute to the library resources through the Birthday Book Club. Through this program, students donate a book from the library's "wish list" on his or her birthday.

Music

The music program consists of singing, tone matching, rhythm activities, music appreciation, and singing games. Students use instruments to enhance songs learned in class. In addition, music is integrated into the curriculum through the study of history and different cultures.

Physical Education

The physical education program offers a variety of physical and social experiences. Students play games and learn gymnastics, rhythms, and dance. Children use incline mats, flat mats, foam shapes, and a variety of other equipment to develop large muscle coordination.

Summer Programs/(Summer Camp)

Summer sessions are held in one-week intervals at the school and vary in themes that support the Montessori philosophy. Brochures about the summer program, including fee schedules, are available by March. The summer program is open first to students enrolled at the school and then to the general public.

Toddler Program

The program offers several options for 18 month – 2yr. old children. This program meets Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Wednesday, Thursday, Friday or Monday, Tuesday or Thursday, Friday, or Monday Through Friday 9:00AM – 12:00PM or all day 9:00AM – 3:00PM. Please see the tuition schedule for further information. It is designed to acquaint your child with the Montessori experience using the Sensorial Apparatus and Practical Life activities. The number of days your child attends each week depends on the option you choose and availability.

Diaper Policy

Since we are promoting independence in the child, it is expected that parents will encourage use of the toilet. However, the child's inner time clock must be respected and we do not suggest parents force toilet training to meet the start of the school deadline. Our Toddler group does work with diapering and training and toilet habits of the children.

Primary (3-6) Program

Statement

The Primary curriculum includes those activities and learning materials that aid the child in natural development and provide the multi-sensory stimuli to which the child responds in the process of learning. Practical Life Activities develop within the child an awareness of his environment, care of the environment, and the ability to successfully cope with his/her personal needs.

Sensorial Apparatus

The sensorial apparatus provides the necessary stimulation for learning to discriminate between similarities and differences, to recognize basic relationships, and to classify and categorize.

Preparatory Academic Materials

These materials assist the child in learning the basic skills and knowledge of language, mathematics, geography, botany, history, science, art, music, and library. In addition, a language is offered to all 5-Day Preschool children. Physical training via games and playground equipment are also part of the program. Social development occurs naturally through various group activities.

Field Trips

Primary classes will be taking field trips during the school year. A separate permission notice will be sent home for EACH trip, along with details concerning the trip. We are always in need of parent volunteers to chaperone field trips.

Phasing In

In order to create a smooth beginning, Montessori Academy reserves the right to assign varied starting dates to all students. Generally, five-year-old students begin the first scheduled day of school so they can help the three and four-year-old students and newly enrolled students. This process is called “phasing in.” This procedure is highly effective and is used in many Montessori schools nationwide. It has proven to be a very functional system that gives your child the maximum opportunity for a most successful beginning.

Elementary Program

Statement

Continuing with the more advanced Sensorial and Practical Life Apparatus and Academic Materials, the Elementary curriculum provides a multi-age grouping which permits the child to be an active learner. Children help to choose the learning activity that suits their needs at that particular time. These learning activities are within the structure of teacher-prepared, stimulating, progressively challenging learning tasks, which concentrate on basic skills, as well as cultural subjects and physical education. The curriculum has a flexible structure so that children can progress at their own developmental rate in cooperation, rather than competition, with others. There is time to experience the joy of creating music, art, and drama. A child’s social awareness and his or her individual growth are an integral part of the Elementary Program.

It is requested that each elementary child have a bookbag or backpack for transporting books, papers, notices, etc. to and from school. This helps to prevent these valuable items from becoming misplaced or damaged. All book bags should be LABELED with the child’s name.

Hours

The hours for the Elementary Program are 8:30 AM – 3:15 PM.

Homework Policy

Children are encouraged to read every night, review their weekly spelling words and math facts. Homework assignments are along the lines of “practical life” exercises and encouraging further exploration in topics of each child’s interests.

Remedial Services

Under Act 89 of the Pennsylvania Legislature, remedial services are provided in the area of speech, language, and remedial reading for those students who are eligible and registered in the Kindergarten and Elementary Programs. In addition, counseling and evaluation services are provided under this Act for eligible students. If you feel that your child is in need of any of these services, please see the Director for eligibility requirements.

Field Trips

Elementary classes will be taking field trips during the school year. A separate permission notice will be sent home for EACH trip, along with details concerning the trip. We are always in need of parent volunteers to chaperone field trips.

Absences

Kindergarten and Elementary students returning to school after an absence must bring a signed excuse from home. The excuse should note the reason and dates of the absence. If a child has missed three or more consecutive days, a doctor's excuse or explanation must accompany the signed parent excuse. An absence will be recorded as unauthorized if the school receives no signed excuse. Three unauthorized absences are reported to the State and parents may incur a fine. When an extended absence is necessary, parents should meet with the teacher for special assignments.

The parent should notify the school on the day the child is absent. Whenever possible, medical appointments for children should be made after school hours. If this is not possible, a written notice is needed to excuse the student during the school day.

Tardiness

The school day begins at 8:30 AM sharp. Drop off time is between 8:20 and 8:30 AM. Please allow your children time in the morning to unpack his/her backpack and get organized so that he/she will be in the classroom by 8:30 AM. If a student arrives after 8:30 AM, he/she will be marked tardy. Tardiness will be excused for reasons that are beyond parent, guardian, or student's control. If there is not a written note to accompany the tardy, it is considered an unauthorized tardy. The amount of tardiness time is applied to count as an unauthorized absence.

Before and After School Care (B&AC)

Statement

B&AC exists as a service to our families who need child care before or after school. The program utilizes the Montessori technique of a prepared environment within a comfortable, home-like setting. It is the intent of this program to provide a nurturing extension of home during the specific times in which the children are registered in the program. A variety of organized activities, seasonal crafts, and creative play are offered in this program. Children have the freedom to choose their own activities.

In order for the B&AC staff to properly care for a child's individual needs, it is important for our parents to share any information which may be pertinent to your child such as the following: family concerns, medication the child is taking which may impact behavior, etc.

Admission Requirements

All children who attend the B&AC program MUST have an emergency contact form and a current physical form on file at the school. These forms must be filled out annually and updated every six (6) months. Regulations set by the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) require that these forms be on file before any student can attend the B&AC program.

Hours and Fees

The B&AC begins at 7:30 AM and end promptly at 5:30 PM. Families interested in contracted time will sign a contract at the beginning of the school year to reserve a specific block of time for their child. Contract changes are permitted once a semester. Should the need arise for a change in contract time, the business manager needs to be consulted in order to verify available space in the B&AC room.

Drop-In

B&AC is available. It is necessary to give a 24-hour notice to the school to ensure availability for drop-in care. If there is less than a 24-hour notice. A bill will be provided to each family monthly by the business office, payable upon receipt.

Overtime Charges

If it becomes necessary for your child to remain in B&AC beyond contracted hours, the billable rate is \$10.00 per child for every hour or portion of each hour your child is picked up beyond contracted hours until 5:30PM.

Drop-In Overtime Charges

If your child is picked up between 5:30 and 5:45PM, the billable overtime charge is \$15.00 per child. After 5:45PM, the billable overtime charge is \$30.00 per child. The business manager will provide a bill for "overtime" charges to each family, payable upon receipt.

Rest Period

Each child who naps in B&AC will need one child's size sleeping bag to be left in the AC room. Children should also have one seasonal change of clothes (including socks), and one set of underwear or an ample supply of diapers and wipes to keep in the AC room in addition to the change of clothes in their classroom. These items will be stored at school. Should any of these items be sent home for laundering, please send in replacements the following school day. Please label all items with your child's name. It is the parent's responsibility to keep their child's backpack stocked with diapers, wipes and a set of seasonal clothing.

Snacks for B&AC

Some parents choose to send additional snacks in the lunch box. Limited space often makes this difficult. These snacks are intended for after school, but often get eaten at lunch instead of lunch food. Therefore, in order to provide the working parents with an opportunity to share in their child's B&AC environment, it is requested that families donate snacks to this program.

Arrivals and Departures

Primary and Kindergarten

A teacher from each classroom will greet your child at your car starting at 8:45AM, and then a teacher will escort your child inside. Please respect this time as the teachers use the earlier time to properly prepare the environment. Children may not be dropped off and left unattended at school. If a child is dropped off any earlier than 8:50AM, the child will be considered part of the Before Care program. As part of their independence training, the children will be asked to care for their own belongings (such as hanging up their jacket and placing boots and mittens in their proper place.) Therefore, both as parents and teachers, we should give the children every opportunity to practice this.

At the noon and 3:00 PM dismissal, a Primary teacher will escort the children from the classroom or the playground to the dismissal area. We request that you wait for your child in your car at the pick-up line. Parents, for your safety please DO NOT get out of your car during the morning drop-off and/or afternoon pick-up process. Have your child stay in their car seat, drive to the parking lot and then buckle your child into their car seat. Due to insurance policy restrictions, the Staff is not allowed to buckle children into their carseats; parents must pull to the parking lot and buckle their children.

With little time between the morning and afternoon sessions, it is imperative that parents be prompt in picking up their children. Please follow the drive-in procedure for arrivals and departures.

Arrivals prior to 8:45 AM will be charged the hourly before and after care rate (\$10.00). Pickups after 12:10 will result in the same charge and your child will go to recess with the B&AC group. Since we have parents who pay for B&AC, it is only fair that you adhere to these times when picking up your child. See Overtime Charges in the Before and After Care section of this manual.

Toddler Arrivals and Departures

Morning Drop-Off begins at 8:45 am and ends at 9:00 am. A teacher will greet your child at your car, and that teacher will escort your child inside. Parents, for your safety please do not get out of your cars during the drop-off

and pick-up process. Pick-up begins at 11:45 am and ends at 12:00 pm. If you are late, please know that your child is safe at school. Call and let the school know that you are going to be late so that the Toddler teacher can tell your child. Any child that is not picked up by 12:10 PM will be billed for "After Care."

Before and After Care

B&AC children should not be dropped off at school before 7:30 am. If you and your child arrive at school earlier than 7:30, please wait for the B&AC teacher to arrive before leaving your child. Please do not leave any children unattended in cars and always turn off the motor and take your keys with you. The first thing parents must do is sign-in their child in the Before Care Sheet. Parents should then drop off any personal belongings or items under their child's coat hook.

It is imperative that parents be prompt in picking up their children. Children must be signed out daily by their parent or pick up person. This is for your child's protection. It is as important for the pick up person to VERBALLY inform the B&AC teacher that the child is leaving.

IF FOR ANY REASON THERE IS A CHANGE IN THE PERSON WITH WHOM YOUR CHILD USUALLY LEAVES, PLEASE INFORM YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER BEFOREHAND WITH WRITTEN NOTIFICATION. If the person picking up your child is not recognized by the B&AC staff or your child's Teacher, he/she will be asked for identification. If a note is not sent to school authorizing your child's release to someone different than the usual person picking up your child, your child will not be released. THIS IS FOR YOUR CHILD'S PROTECTION!

Transportation

Public School Busing

(School Age Children- Kindergarten through Elementary)

Under Act 372 of the PA State Legislature non-public school children are provided bus transportation to private school within a ten-mile radius of their residential school district's boundaries. There is no fee for this transportation. The public school districts arrange schedules. Questions concerning bus routes, schedules, etc., may be directed to the specific school districts. This service must be requested by the parent via a telephone call to the appropriate district office and a form in the Academy's office must be completed. If the bus schedule warrants your child's arrival prior to their class starting or after dismissal time, there will be no Before & After Care charge. If your child is absent and not using the bus, it is your responsibility to notify the district transportation office.

Car Pools

In our school directory, sent home with your child at the beginning of the school year, are the names, addresses, and phone numbers of families attending Montessori Academy. If a car pool is formed, notify the office in writing of the person who is authorized to take your child. We do not need a schedule, as they tend to change. We will not release your child to anyone else unless we have written notification.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are celebrated in a very special and unique way at Montessori Academy. We ask that you send one picture for each year of your child's life. Your child will get to walk around a candle that represents the sun, while carrying the globe. The child will make one rotation for each year of his/her life. Birthday snack may be a special treat. We ask that you check with the teacher for any special diets or allergy restrictions of your child's classmates.

Children are encouraged to contribute to the library resources through the Birthday Book Club. Through this program, students donate a book from the library's wish list on his or her birthday. Each donation is inscribed with the child's name and the birthday date on which s/he presented the gift. This gesture helps to develop an awareness that "it is better to give than to receive."

Child Abuse Policy

Staff members will report any suspected abuse according to Pennsylvania law. The report to the Department of Social Services will be followed (within 48 hours) by a written report to:

Department of Social Services
Lancaster County Police (Youth Division)
State's Attorney for Lancaster County

Changes in Home Situation

Parents should inform the school in writing if there is a change in the home situation, such as a new baby, friends or relatives visiting, either parent away, any family member ill, a new baby sitter, a change in car pool or anything that disrupts the child's daily routine. A change at home probably will be reflected simultaneously or subsequently in school behavior. Communication from parents will enable the staff to attune themselves to, and cope with, a child's temporary difficulties. Please be sure to notify the office, in writing, of a new address and/or telephone number.

Clothing

PLEASE LABEL all articles of clothing and other items brought to school with your child's name. When buying shoes or boots, make sure that they are large enough for your child to put on by him/herself. Please use Velcro if your child cannot yet tie.

Please remember that they are encouraged to be totally independent in the bathroom. When dressing them for the day, belts and jeans with snaps can make this accomplishment difficult. Elastic waistbands are very comfortable and appropriate for children. We go outdoors every day that weather permits. We feel it is important for the children to have some fresh air and exercise every day possible. Please dress your child in clothing appropriate for the weather.

Primary Classroom Change of Clothing

Please have an extra set of clothing for your child at school. Place them in a Ziplock bag and label both the bag and the clothing with the child's name.

Toddler Change of Clothing

Please have an extra set of seasonal clothing for your child at school as well as a week's supply of diapers and wipes. We will notify you when you need to replenish.

Before and After Care Clothing

Each child is asked to provide a bag. This bag should contain a complete change of labeled clothing and any other items necessary for their extended stay. This bag should remain in the After Care Room, if it is sent home, please launder the clothing and return it the next day.

Communication

Newsletter and Parent Meetings

The Montessori Academy's calendar, info sign, newsletters and bi-weekly e-mails are your primary source of information concerning all school happenings. Please make sure you have received your calendar and look for a newsletter monthly. Parent meetings/gatherings are held throughout the year to inform you, and at times, entertain you. Please take time out from your busy schedules to attend these meetings. This is a good time to get acquainted with other Montessori families.

All children receive a folder at the beginning of the school year and use this folder to transport school communications home. This folder will be sent home every Wednesday and should be returned the following school day.

Telephone Calls

Please limit calls during hours to emergency messages concerning children only. Staff will be happy to talk to you before school between 8:15 - 8:45AM and after 3:15 PM.

Parents should not conduct personal business on school phones. The telephone lines need to be available for school business and emergencies.

Suggestions for Effective Communication

First talk with your child's teacher openly and honestly about both family or school matters that directly affect your child. Before and after school calls are encouraged. Home phone calls are reserved for emergencies. Please refer any questions to the Head of School in a timely manner. Attend all meetings and school events. Positive comments are always welcome!

Discipline: The Montessori Concept

Child discipline is the responsibility of parents and teachers. Through cooperative parent/teacher collaboration, the Academy's mission of preparing each child individually for life can be attained. Guiding the child with discipline will foster:

- The development of respect for self and others.
- The recognition and acceptance of responsibility for personal actions and outcomes.
- The development of independence while caring for the welfare of others.
- The development of inner discipline for self-control.
- The goal of discipline is education and learning which promotes growth.

Natural consequences and logical consequences are usually effective in encouraging respectful behavior. The Academy is an environment that allows your child to "unfold spontaneously" and become the person that he/she is capable of being through guidance and discipline.

In guiding the shaping of a child's behaviour it is necessary for parents and teachers to ask: What will most likely change his/her behavior? All children are individuals and will respond differently to the techniques of guidance. Therefore, parents and teachers need to know the child so that they can select the appropriate means to guide the individual child's growth. The course of discipline generally begins with simple communication with the child, reinforcement of appropriate behavior, natural consequences for behavior, logical consequences, imitation of appropriate behavior and home/school collaboration.

If a resolution is not reached as to the behavioral concerns, the Head of School may ask the parents to temporarily remove the child from school, obtain outside professional assistance, or withdraw enrollment. If parents feel that they have been unfairly asked to withdraw their child, they may appeal their case in writing to the Board of Directors. The board will engage in fact-finding by interviewing the teacher(s), the Head of School, the parents and, when appropriate, the student. A review of all pertinent documentation of behavior and interventions will also occur and the Board and Head of School will render a decision of appropriate action to be implemented.

Fire Safety

Fire drills are held to train students in safe emergency procedures. State regulations require that fire drills be held every 60 days

Fresh Air Policy

If your child has been ill and you prefer him/her not to have an outside/gym time, please keep him/her home that day. It is best not to make your child feel isolated by requesting that he/she be removed from the group. Students staying all day go outside, except for extreme cold or wet days. Please be sure your child is dressed for the weather, including labeled hats, mittens, boots, and snow pants.

Holiday Celebrations, Vacations, and Snow Days

Montessori Academy of Lancaster encourages celebrations as a means of creating community, understanding human needs, and appreciating diversity. The school respects and values all cultures and religions. The curriculum introduces students to the diversity of world cultures and religions, many of which are represented in the school's heterogeneous community.

Throughout the year, classes celebrate a variety of special days. These experiences help children to value cultural, ethnic and religious differences.

Parents are also encouraged to arrange with teachers to create celebrations of less widely known holidays. Parents may explain the origin and significance of a holiday they celebrate, bring in or help children prepare traditional food, teach a song or dance, or demonstrate a family custom. The holidays studied during the year usually depend in part on the classroom curriculum and on the parents who are available to share cultural activities.

Holidays, which are culturally recognized, include:

September	Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur
October	Columbus Day
November	Thanksgiving
December	Hanukkah, St. Nicholas Day, St. Lucia Day, Christmas, Kwanzaa
January	Martin Luther King Day, Chinese New Year
February	Valentine's Day, President's Day
March	St. Patrick's Day
April	Easter, Passover
May	May Day, Mother's Day, Memorial Day

Each family will receive a calendar of the holidays and school closings for the academic year. School cancellations or delays due to inclement weather will be announced on the radio or television. In the event of doubtful weather, please tune in to WGAL-TV Channel 8 to learn the schedule status of the school or visit their website, www.wgal.com. WGAL-TV is our primary notification medium. If you have any doubts, feel free to call your room parent between 8:00 and 8:30AM. Room parents will be announced in our October newsletter.

Students who utilize their public school district's busing system need to also note their school district's schedule changes. For example, if Montessori Academy has a two-hour delay but Manheim Township is closed for the day, students riding a Manheim Township bus will not have that service available to them that day. Parents will then be responsible for their child's transportation that day.

Please do not jeopardize your safety. Remember that the Montessori program is individualized, so if you choose wisely to stay home on a day that is questionable, your child will not miss a group lesson.

Once the school day has started, and the weather is threatening, please listen to the radio or TV at home or your place of business in the event we must close before our regular dismissal time. The Before and After Care Program operates on the same equivalent delay, cancellation, or early dismissal.

Snow Day Delays

If there is a 1-hour delay, classes will meet from 10:00 - 1:00 PM.

If there is a 2-hour delay, classes will meet from 11:00 - 2:00PM

In-Service

In-service days are scheduled for the teachers during the school year. This time has been set aside for staff development.

Illness

When a child is ill, we would appreciate knowing the nature of the illness, particularly if it is something contagious. State policy dictates that contagious childhood diseases be treated and an incubation period completed before returning to school. After a contagious illness, a doctor's excuse must be presented at the office before returning to class. Following is a detailed list of illnesses and a description of what must occur before your child may return to school:

Illness	May Return
1. Fever of 101 degrees or higher	When child is fever free for 24 hours without medication
2. Vomiting two or more times	When no longer vomiting
3. Diarrhea two or more times	No more diarrhea
4. Earache or draining ears with pain	When treated
5. Pink eye	24 hours after treatment
6. Impetigo	24 hours after treatment
7. Ringworm	24 hours after treatment
8. Pinworms	24 hours after treatment
9. Head lice	24 hours after treatment
10. Scabies	24 hours after treatment
11. Influenza	With doctor's excuse
12. Chicken Pox	May return after 6 days or when all scabs are crusted and dry.
13. Active TB	State health official approval
14. Unexplained rash	When diagnosed and treated
15. Measles	Six days after rash appears
16. Cold sores	When healed and no oozing or bleeding occurs
17. Fifth's disease	When treated and incubation period has passed
18. Scarlet fever	With doctor's excuse

Please keep a child at home if it is obvious that a cold or a fever related to an illness is starting. The child is likely to recover more quickly, and it will help to keep absenteeism throughout the school year to a minimum. If your child has a fever, please do not give your child Tylenol in the AM and send him/her to school. You will be telephoned to pick up your child if they seem tired and irritable.

Should a child become ill or have a minor accident while at school, we will contact the parents immediately. All EMERGENCY FORMS must be on file at school before your child's start date listing current and correct phone numbers for home and work, as well as a number for three (3) neighbors, friends, or relatives. Somebody MUST be able to be reached. Please be sure that your alternate emergency contacts are aware that they are being listed on your Emergency Form. Should any change occur in your residence, phone number, or place of employment, please contact the school office to request a new Emergency Form immediately.

Immunization

All children, toddler, primary and elementary are required to have state mandated immunizations on file at Montessori Academy.

Please return complete immunization information to Montessori Academy of Lancaster by the first day of school. We need all immunization dates. Please be aware of new requirements for the current year.

Medication Administration Policy

Please note that by law, we cannot administer medication. Therefore, we ask that no medication be sent to school with your child. Do not pack medication to be taken at any point during the school day; we cannot ensure the child will take it and available medication can put other children at risk. Should your child have a prescription that requires an inhaler or an EpiPen be available to him/her at school, please send this medication in the original packaging and include the physician's instruction regarding taking the medication.

Homeopathic, Nutritional, or Alternative Products

As with medication, the school cannot administer any homeopathic, nutritional, or alternative products. We ask that all such products be kept at home.

Nutrition Policy, Lunch, and Snacks

At Montessori Academy, we study and stress good nutrition and request that parents keep this in mind when preparing snacks and lunches. Because we stress good nutrition at the Academy, all children must eat healthy items in their lunches prior to eating any snack/dessert items packed. Children will not be permitted to eat snacks/desserts until their healthy food has been consumed.

Because many parents earnestly try to monitor their children's diet, it is requested that children not exchange food during lunch. We also request that each child bring a napkin (cloth or paper) and whatever utensils he/she may need. Please see that the foods that are sent in closely conform to the policy of good nutrition fostered at the Academy. Children will bring home unfinished portions of their meal. This will enable parents to monitor their children's daily food intake and help parents learn what their children like and dislike.

Healthy Beverage Suggestions:

Water should be the main drink served to kids at lunch and snack times. Water satisfies thirst without adding calories or sugars (and is available at school)

Seltzer or Sparkling Water - Look for calorie-free varieties; flavoured or unflavoured.

Low-Fat and Fat-Free Milk - Milk is terrific source of calcium and vitamin D. Choose fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) instead of whole or 2% (reduced-fat) milk. Soy and rice "milks" (fortified with calcium and vitamin D) are also healthy options.

Fruit Juice –100% fruit juice is best, but limit juice to no more than 6 ounces for 1-6 year olds and no more than 12 ounces for 7-18 year olds. Avoid juice drinks with sugar or high fructose corn syrup in the ingredient list.

Each month a SNACK CALENDAR will be going home in your child's folder. Please check this calendar for your child's appropriate snack day. Because of the number of children who have peanut allergies, some life threatening, snacks that contain peanut products will not be accepted. Class snacks must be sent to school in an unopened container. Should your child miss the assigned snack day, please bring in a snack when possible for our snack cabinet. If your child has specific restrictions or food allergies other than peanuts, please be sure to alert all teachers.

Class Snack Foods We Welcome:

Apples, Carrots, Celery, Cheese Nips, Oranges, Goldfish, Graham Crackers, Pretzels, Raisins, Ritz Crackers, Saltines, Wheat Thins

Please NO peanuts, peanut butter, trail mix, granola bars, almonds, cashews, or snack mix. Most commercially prepared foods have warnings on the ingredient labels.

There are staggered lunch and recess periods beginning at 12:00PM until 12:45PM. Parents picking up at 12 Noon should be punctual to respect these times. Should the weather prevent outdoor recess, the children will remain in the all-purpose room or their classrooms for indoor activities.

Toys from Home

Toys should remain at home. Please assure your child that toys are for home use and that at school, the children have special work to do. Although children in the toddler class are permitted to bring "lovies" from home, it is not encouraged because of items being misplaced. If your child brings in a "lovie" please make sure it is labeled.

Tuition Late Fees

After a 5-day grace period, a \$25.00 late fee will be charged to your account for any monthly payment not received by the due date unless previous arrangements were made with the business office. A \$100.00 fee will be assessed for annual and semi-annual past due payments. For returned checks, the charge is \$35.00. If the tuition and late payment is not paid after 30 days, the child will be automatically suspended until the payment and late fee is made current. The late penalty and suspension can only be waived with the approval of the Board through a written request. A re-enrollment will not be accepted if there is an outstanding tuition balance. The school reserves the right to retain academic records until any outstanding tuition balance is paid.

Visitors and Observations

We welcome you to observe your child; however, we ask that you give your child and us a period for adjustment. Once we are settled, you will gain a more accurate picture of how a Montessori classroom runs. Due to space, please make an appointment for observation with the office. Parent observation is done through the two-way mirror outside the classroom. Special requests for in-class observations are reviewed and decided on an individual basis.

Volunteer Time

Your Children Need You! – And We Do Too!

Montessori Academy has an exciting plan for our future growth and we need your support! We hope all of our parents will become committed volunteers in this school year! What can you do?

Read your newsletter and respond to our Wish List Requests when you are able.

Call the office if you have an area of expertise we might utilize, or if you have some time to do volunteer work at the school. For example: Can you sew to make simple aprons, smocks, or repairs? Can you do simple carpentry, woodworking, or painting? Please call us at the office and let your child's Teacher know.

Support our fundraisers

PAL Program

The objective of this program is to establish a cooperative effort between the school and the families in order to ensure the best possible learning environment for the enrichment and personal growth of all involved, especially the children. Montessori Academy views the education of our children as a partnership between parents and school personnel. In keeping with that belief, the Parent Assisted Labor in our PAL Program has been developed to bring our school community together while assisting the school with other needs in a cost-effective manner. If you are unable to personally participate, a designee such as a grandparent, aunt, uncle, etc. may participate for your family. Or you may opt not to participate in the PAL program by paying the fee of \$200.00 per school year.

Each family is required to complete 20 hours of volunteer service (on a committee or within the classroom or a combination of both) as part of the PAL Program (Parent Assisted Labor) at Montessori Academy of Lancaster. Upon completion of the 20 hours, a reimbursement check for \$200.00 will be issued to you.

Please join us with your service to help create our united school community!