



Montessori
Community
School Est. 1985
Salt Lake City, Utah

Elementary Parent Handbook

2416 East 1700 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84108

(801) 355-1555 / phone
(801) 355-7177 / fax
www.mcssl.com

updated 8/2016

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Excellence in Montessori since 1985
Serving Toddlers through 6th Grade

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Mission and Philosophy Statements

Montessori Community School Mission Statement

The mission of the Montessori Community School is to provide a rich educational experience that guides and nurtures the natural unfolding of the whole individual and inspires a lifelong passion for learning and peace.

Montessori Community School Philosophy Statement

The Montessori Community School has been established to encourage and promote the intellectual, physical and social development of children. We offer a traditional, comprehensive Montessori curriculum. Montessori philosophy emphasizes the development of the child in a carefully prepared environment. A prepared environment is one in which the child is able to develop freely at his or her own pace, unhindered in the spontaneous unfolding of his or her natural capacities. This occurs through the manipulation of a graded series of self-correcting materials designed to stimulate the senses and eventually one's thinking, leading from perception to intellectual skills. Responsible freedom and inner self-discipline are encouraged.

The joy of learning is emphasized and the child is helped to develop a positive self-image. We nurture self-worth. We affirm that self-worth is the crucial ingredient for the full expression of a person's potential. We strive to base every interaction between community members on this principle -- from how we communicate, to respecting personal learning styles and stages of development. This is the very fabric of our community and our educational methods. The social development of the children in the class is greatly emphasized. It takes place naturally as the children learn to respect each other and become compassionate and community-oriented. Peace education is implicit in the Montessori curriculum. Peace is cultivated in our classrooms by combining the actual experience of peace with hands-on peace making skills and the cultural activities leading to the understanding of peace.

Our Montessori classrooms are designed to meet the needs, interests and abilities of all the children in the class. The teachers create and adapt the environment with this community of children in mind. They modify the selection of educational materials available, the physical layout and the tone of the class, to best fit the ever-changing needs of the children. The Montessori Community School does not discriminate based on sex, race, color, religion, national/ethnic origin or sexual orientation.

Maria Montessori: A Brief History

Our programs are based on the work of Dr. Maria Montessori, the first Italian woman to become a physician. Born in Chiaravalle, Italy in 1870, she became interested in how children learn and in how their environments affect their learning. On January 6, 1907, Dr. Montessori opened the first "Children's House" for children of working parents in an apartment complex in Rome. Using scientific methods to observe and analyze how children learn, Montessori revolutionized our understanding of children and their education. She discovered that children's learning capabilities are specific to their developmental stage of life. A complete Montessori education, for infants through secondary school, allows children to maximize their learning potentials.

Montessori observed that young children are capable of long periods of concentration and use learning materials repeatedly. She devised sets of sequenced learning materials that guide children towards reading, writing, understanding place value in mathematics, geometrical shapes and a geographical recognition of the continents and nations. While concentrating, children's movements become refined and coordinated, leading to increased self-discipline. Later Dr. Montessori recognized the unique learning capabilities of elementary and middle grade students. Elementary students seek answers to large questions about the universe, their place in it, the human purpose and issues of social justice. Montessori created an integrated curriculum incorporating anthropology, astronomy, biology, chemistry, geology, history, literature, mathematics and zoology. These studies continue during the middle grades as young adolescents, now ready for higher-order critical thinking, use primary source materials to explore integrated themes drawn from history, philosophy and science.

Dr. Montessori devoted her life to the education and understanding of children. She believed the purpose of education was to assist the process of life. She died in 1952, leaving a legacy that continues to grow as more of her ideas are implemented in classrooms worldwide.

Administrative Staff

General Contact Information

Phone number: 801-355-1555 Fax Number: 801-355-7177 Website: www.mcssl.com

Voicemail

When you telephone the school, your call may be answered by the voicemail system if all lines are busy or if you have called after the office is closed for the day. Please feel confident in leaving your name, a message, and a number where you can be reached as voicemail is checked throughout the day.

Administrative Staff and Contact Information

Robyn Eriwata-Buchanan

- Owner/Head of School
email: robyneriwata@mcssl.com

Ramira Alamilla

- Associate Head of School – Operations/Admissions
email: ramiraalamilla@mcssl.com

Britney Peterson

- Associate Head of School – Staff Development
email: britneypeterson@mcssl.com

Margaret McDonald

- Education Director
email: margaretmcdonald@mcssl.com

Kathy Campbell

- Business Manager
email: kathycampbell@mcssl.com

Pamela Bunnell

- Administrator
email: pambunnell@mcssl.com

Ashlee Haslam

- Admissions and Office Administrator
email: ashleehaslam@mcssl.com

Kim Brown

- Administrative Assistant/Billing Officer/Accounts Payable
email: kimbrown@mcssl.com

Head/Associate Head of School Office Hours

We love talking with our families and we greatly appreciate hearing your questions, comments and suggestions! Please feel free to stop by the office anytime and meet with Robyn, Ramira, or any member of the office staff. If you arrive before or after hours, please send us an email and we can schedule an alternate time to meet with you.

We do ask that if you have any questions or concerns specifically related to your child or the Elementary Program, that you first talk with your classroom teachers, or one of the Program Heads, Britney Peterson for Lower Elementary and Margaret McDonald for Upper Elementary, as they will usually be in the best position to directly address classroom-related issues. If you continue to have questions or concerns, please feel free to meet with the Head and/or Associate Heads of School.

Classroom Emails

Each classroom and teacher has an email address, which is typically the best way for you to contact your child's teachers. Our teachers use email to communicate with parents (classroom notes, letters, reminders, etc.). While teachers are unable to respond to emails during class time as their responsibility is to the students, most emails will be answered during planning time after school.

Elementary Teacher Office Hours

Anytime you have a question, feel free to send a written message with your child, use e-mail, or leave a voice mail. Our teachers also have office hours so that you can stop by and meet with them if you have any questions, comments or concerns regarding your child, the classroom or the Elementary program in general. Elementary Teacher Office Hours are announced at Back to School Night. If this day and time does not work for you, please send your child's teachers an email and they can schedule an alternate time to meet with you.

Elementary Staff

Upper Elementary Program Head

Margaret McDonald
email: margaretmcdonald@mcssl.com

Lower Elementary Program Head

Britney Peterson
email: britneypeterson@mcssl.com

Lower Elementary Oquirrh Classroom

Brandi Allen
Diana Haro Reynolds
email: oquirrhteachers@mcssl.com

Lower Elementary Wasatch Classroom

Bonnie Bracken
Ruth Jennings
email: wasatchteachers@mcssl.com

Upper Elementary Uinta Classroom

Margaret McDonald
Christian Olson
email: uintateachers@mcssl.com

Extended Day

Stephanie Long
email: stephanielong@mcssl.com
Roger Quinones-Melgar
email: rogermelgar@mcssl.com

Specialty Classes

Music Specialty Class

Christine Burningham
email: christineburningham@mcssl.com

Movement Specialty Class

Haley Dame
email: haleydame@mcssl.com

Art Studio Specialty Class (Elementary)

Kindra Fehr
email: kindrafehr@mcssl.com

"GO"/Outdoor Classroom

Donda Hartsfield
email: dondahartsfield@mcssl.com
Stephanie Long
email: stephanielong@mcssl.com

Spanish Enrichment (LE/UE)

Maria Reynosa
email: mariareynosa@mcssl.com

For a complete listing of MCS staff, please refer to the Staff Directory on our website (www.mcssl.com).

School Hours and Attendance

School Office Hours

The school office is open from 8:15am to 6:00pm, Monday through Friday. The school office is closed on all school holidays. The building is open from 7:30am to 6:00pm to accommodate Early Morning Drop-off and the Extended Day program.

Elementary Hours

The Elementary School day begins at 8:30am and ends at 3:00pm.

Elementary students should arrive at school any time between 8:15 and 8:25am (Extended Day children can arrive as early as 7:30am) and are considered tardy if not in the classroom by 8:30am. If an earlier morning drop off time is required, indicate that you will be signing up for Early Morning Drop-off on the Enrollment Form. If your child is enrolled in the Extended Day program, there is no additional charge for early morning drop off. If your child is not enrolled in the Extended Day program, there is an annual fee for this service.

Attendance and Tardiness

Students must arrive in their classrooms by 8:30am. A late student misses important instructions, activities and field trips, disrupts class, and takes the teachers' attention away from other students. Attending for the entire school day is also an important requisite of your child's learning experience at the Montessori Community School. Students need to be picked up on time. The school office should be notified when a child will be arriving late, or if the child's transportation will be late at pickup.

Regular attendance is important to a student's progress, and to their community role in the classroom. Parents are strongly encouraged to schedule vacations and appointments during school breaks when possible. All aspects of the Elementary curriculum, including specialty classes such as the environmental expeditions ("GO" program) on Fridays, are a mandatory part of the curriculum and should not be missed.

Upper Elementary

If your Upper Elementary child is going to miss school for any reason (illness, vacation, etc.), please give written notice (via email or a note) to your child's teachers. If they have a planned late arrival (i.e. doctor's appointment) or absence (i.e. vacation), Upper Elementary students are responsible for writing a note or sending an email (signed by one of their parents) to their classroom and specialty teachers in advance, letting them know date and class time(s) that they will be missing. They are also responsible for coordinating with the teacher(s) about any make-up work and with their classmates about classroom and school-related responsibilities. If your Upper Elementary child is ill and will be absent for that reason, please notify his/her classroom teachers by sending them an email or leaving a message with the administrative staff.

Lower Elementary

If your Lower Elementary child is going to miss school for any reason (illness, vacation, etc.), please give written notice (via email or a note) to your child's teachers. If your child will be late for school due to a scheduled appointment, please coordinate with your child's teachers so that your child's late arrival can be accommodated. If your child is going to miss school for a pre-planned event, parents are asked to consult with his/her classroom teachers about what will be missed and to make arrangements for making up work, if appropriate.

Tardy Policy

Any students arriving to class after 8:30am will be marked tardy. Should you arrive after 8:30, please have your child enter the classroom as quietly as possible and then please email the teachers to inform them of the reason for the tardy.

Unexcused Tardies

We understand that an occasional tardy can be unavoidable due to weather, traffic, etc. We trust that every family does what they can to arrive at school on time. After an extensive number of tardies, the classroom teachers will contact the family to discuss the reasons why, and to encourage a plan for timely arrival. If the

trend continues, the family may be asked to discuss it and its repercussions for the student and classroom, with the Head/Associate Head of School.

Excused Tardies

A dental or medical appointment would be considered an excused tardy. Although we appreciate parents scheduling dentist and doctor appointments during times when school is not in session, we understand that sometimes it is unavoidable.

Visitors

All visitors (other adults designated to pick up students, presenters, observers, prospective parents, etc.) should check in with the Office before proceeding anywhere else in the building. At the Office visitors who will be staying for any length of time will be signed in and given a visitor badge to wear while in the building.

Parking Lot

Arrows indicate the proper direction of traffic flow in the parking lot. Please enter the parking lot slowly, do not use cell phones, and park carefully and courteously. Also, please do not leave any valuables in your car.

Sign-in and Pick-Up

For safety measures, all students need to be signed in and out each day. Sign-in/out sheets are located outside of each classroom. We ask that you park, enter the school, sign in/out your child and check your child's bulletin board for special announcements. Only parents or persons with written authorization (either listed in the child's Emergency Medical Release form or through the Alternate Pickup form) may pick up a child. The sign-in and out sheets not only tell us who dropped off and picked up on a given day; they also tell us which students are in the building in the case of an emergency.

Although your child has access to the playground and gymnasium during the school day, once you have picked up your child, these areas should no longer be accessed. When you pick up your child, you are welcome to invite your child to share a classroom work or project with you.

If your child has an appointment during the school day and will be picked up and then returned to school, please sign her/him out and back in at the Office front desk.

Montessori Greeting/Goodbye Protocol

It is Montessori tradition for children to verbally greet and shake the hands of their teachers in the morning and to verbally say goodbye to their teachers in the afternoon. This helps children to learn grace and courtesy as well as gives them more confidence in interacting with adults. Lower Elementary parents may need to walk with your child to his/her teachers at morning drop-off to facilitate the morning greeting and encourage your child to say goodbye to his/her teachers in the afternoon until they feel comfortable with this routine.

Alternate Pickup Procedures

If someone other than the parent/guardian will be picking up your child, please fill out an Alternative Pickup Form for authorization. These forms are available in the Administrative Office. A staff member will ask the person you have designated to pick up your child to provide identification (i.e. driver's license) if that person is not recognized. The safety of your children is our highest priority.

We have had instances of elementary students asking to use the office phones to coordinate play dates. Please remind your child that play dates need to be scheduled in advance by parents and not on the day of the play date. We will only allow an alternate pickup of a student if a parent/guardian of that student has either filled out an alternate pickup form or called the office to authorize the alternate pickup. If the play date will require one student to stay for Extended Day, parents will need to request that from the Office *in advance* to ensure that the student-teacher numbers in Extended Day can accommodate the extra student. If the child is able to stay in Extended Day (if space allows), there will be a \$15.00 charge, which can be submitted to the Office.

Extended Day Program

The Extended Day program ends at 6:00pm sharp. **In practical terms, this means that parents should arrive no later than 5:55pm to allow enough time for their children to gather belongings in order to leave by 6:00pm.** Many of our Extended Day teachers have evening commitments and need to be able to leave by 6:00 pm

If your child is not enrolled in the Extended Day program and on a rare occasion circumstances require you to be late picking up your child, we will accommodate your child on that day if space allows at a rate of \$15 for Elementary students.

If you have children in both the Toddler or Early Childhood Program and the Elementary School, your Elementary School student may go to the Extended Day Program for the half hour difference in school release time (from 3:00pm – 3:30pm) at no additional charge.

Early Care

If your child is enrolled in the Extended Day program, there is no additional charge for early morning drop off. If your child is not enrolled in the Extended Day program, there is a monthly fee for this service.

If you have children in both the Toddler or Early Childhood Program and the Elementary School, your Toddler or Early Childhood Program student may go to the Morning Extended Day program for the half hour difference in school start time at no additional charge.

Late Fees

Pick-up time for school day Elementary School students is 3:00pm. Lower Elementary students should be picked up in the classroom and Upper Elementary students will be waiting in the lobby. If your child is not picked up by 3:15 pm, your child will need to be supervised by the office and you will be charged a late pick-up fee of \$10. If you pick up your child late more than three times in a given month, any subsequent late pickups will be charged at a fee of \$20.

If your child is in the Extended Day program, **he or she needs to be picked up no later than 6:00 pm.** When students are picked up late, it prevents the teachers from ending their own day on time. A late pick up fee of \$10 will be charged if you pick up your child between 6:01 pm and 6:15pm. After 6:15pm an additional \$1 per minute will be charged. If you arrive after 6:00pm more than three times a month, any subsequent late pickups will be charged at the rate of \$20 for the first fifteen minutes and \$2 per minute after 6:15 pm.

School Closures due to Severe Weather or Emergencies

The start of school may be delayed due to a temporary loss of heating, water or electrical power or severe weather such as heavy early morning snow. School may also be canceled before the scheduled end of the school day for the same reasons.

MCS follows the Salt Lake City school district's decisions unless our needs dictate measures beyond their decision. The Head of School will decide whether we will have a late start, early closure, or school closure after consulting with Facilities. If the Head of School is not reachable, a member of Facilities and a member of Administration will make the decision.

In the event of an emergency or when MCS is closed or its opening is delayed by an unusual situation, notification will be made through School Messenger. School Messenger will use one or more of the following methods for notification: email, text messaging, and/or voice mail. *(Please see "Emergency Notification and School Messenger" at the end of this Handbook for further information about School Messenger.)*

Admissions Information

The Lower Elementary class enrolls 1st, 2nd & 3rd year students (1st, 2nd and 3rd grade equivalent). The Upper Elementary class enrolls 4th, 5th and 6th year students (4th, 5th & 6th grade equivalent).

A completed tour, application form, a non-refundable application fee of \$50, parent interview, and a student visit are required to be considered for enrollment in the school. In addition to the application, the office needs to receive two recommendations—one from a teacher and one from an adult leader—and a copy of the student’s most recent evaluation and the previous year’s end of year evaluation. Current students are given first priority for continuing enrollment as long as they do so by the designated enrollment deadline. Applications of new students are considered after continuing enrollment on a rolling basis as space is available. If school enrollment is at capacity, a student’s name will be placed on the waiting list and the parents are notified as space becomes available.

When a child is enrolled in our school, our focus is on meeting the needs of that child as well as the needs of the classroom community. Although it is a very rare situation, if we feel that we are not able to meet the needs of a child or the needs of a class as a result of a particular child’s challenges, we may need to ask that the child be withdrawn from our school.

Enrollment, Tuition Deposit and Forms

Once accepted for enrollment, parents/guardians are asked to sign the Enrollment and Release Agreement and return it with the non-refundable \$600 commitment fee, which reserves your child’s space. Of this \$600 fee, \$400 will be applied towards your student’s tuition should your student be enrolled for the entire school year. An early withdrawal will result in the forfeiture of the entire \$600 commitment fee. The Enrollment and Release Agreement (“Continuing Enrollment and Release Agreement” for continuing students) outlines terms for tuition payment, as well as parental obligations.

All continuing and new students will also need to complete and submit the following forms, many of which will be sent via email to parents to fill out electronically:

- Child’s Health Assessment
- Field Trip Authorization and Release Agreement - Early Childhood and Elementary Only
- Emergency Medical Authorization and Release Form

In addition, all new students will need to complete and submit the

- Student and Family Information Form
- Utah School Immunization Record
- Request for Student Records
- AND, a copy of the Student’s Birth Certificate (to verify date of birth)

Tuition, Payment Plans and Discounts

The Montessori Community School administration sets academic year tuition annually in the early winter. Tuition is intended to cover the costs of offering a complete educational program in the classroom. Tuition also includes administration, facility maintenance, staff salaries and supplies.

Enrollment Options

Full Year Option

Students may enroll for the entire full year, August to August (includes the School Year and the following Summer Adventures Camp). The benefit of choosing the Full Year Option is that the School Year and Summer Adventures Camp monthly tuition amounts remain the same. For those who wait to register for Summer Adventures Camp, the fee for camp will be at a higher rate. Schedule changes must be made before January 31st, and are dependent on space availability. Tuition does not include Winter Camp, Spring Camp, or Interim Camps.

School Year Option

Students may enroll for the School Year only, from August to June. For families who choose this option and then opt to register for Summer Adventures Camp at a later date, the fee for camp will be at a higher rate. Schedule changes must be made by January 31st, and are dependent on space availability. Tuition does not include Winter Camp, Spring Camp, or Interim Camps.

Discount for Paying in One or Two Payments

If you pay your child's tuition in one payment (July 20), you will receive a 3% discount and there is no FACTS enrollment fee. If you pay your child's tuition in two payments (July 20 and November 20), you will receive a 1.5% discount and there is no FACTS enrollment fee. If your child does not complete the entire school year, these discounts are forfeited. Parents have the option to have FACTS automatically withdraw payment if they pay the FACTS enrollment fee and submit a check to the Administrative Office by July 20. Discount is applicable only on tuition.

Paying in Monthly Installments

If you choose to make monthly installment payments, there is a \$45 FACTS enrollment fee, which is non-refundable. Upon receipt of your agreement, FACTS will automatically deduct this fee from your designated payment method. They will then automatically withdraw the monthly tuition installments on the 20th of each month. If you choose the Full Year Option, there will be 12 monthly installment payments, from July 20 through June 20. If you choose the School Year Option, there will be 10 monthly installment payments, from July 20 through April 20.

Withdrawal Policy

All withdrawals must be submitted to the Director of Admissions in writing. Any early withdrawal will result in the forfeiture of the entire \$600 commitment fee. *If you withdraw your child:*

** between July 21 and August 21 preceding the start of the academic year, you will be responsible for payment of 30 days of tuition and any applicable fees, in addition to the forfeiture of the \$600 non-refundable commitment fee.*

** between August 21 and November 30 of the academic year, you will be responsible for 50% of the school year tuition and any applicable fees.*

** after December 1 of the academic year, you will be responsible for 100% of the school year tuition and any applicable fees.*

** after January 31 of the academic year, you will be responsible for 100% of the school year tuition and any applicable fees, plus summer tuition if you chose the full year option.*

Tuition Assurance Program

If a family elects to participate in the Tuition Assurance Program, the withdrawing family's/student's obligation will be limited to and prorated to the actual number of days attended, plus all fees associated with the student's program level. Of the \$600 commitment fee collected, \$400 will remain applied to tuition and will not be forfeited, as it would be if participation in the Tuition Assurance Program were not elected. 30 days written notice is required for all withdrawals covered under this program. Should 30 days notice not be given, the family/student will be obligated to pay for any shortfall in notice, up to 30 days. The fee for the Tuition Assurance Program is 2.5% of the student's tuition and must be paid in full by July 20.

Missed or Sick Days

The Montessori classroom is prepared to accommodate your child and his/her space is reserved. We cannot credit days or money for missed days due to vacations or illnesses.

Tuition Assistance

Tuition Assistance is available to families at the Montessori Community School based on need. Fostering student diversity at the School is an important goal of the financial aid program. Tuition assistance information can be obtained in the school office. Submission of a tuition assistance application does not guarantee an

award. Tuition assistance awards are not automatically renewed. A new application must be filed. Families who receive tuition assistance are expected to stay through 8th grade.

Schedule Changes

Beginning September 1 each year, there will be an administrative \$25 fee for any schedule changes (e.g., changing from regular school day to Extended Day).

Staffing is established at the beginning of the year based on requests from applications and continuing enrollment forms. Changes after that date that might require staffing changes may not be accommodated, but we will always do our best to meet parents' requests.

Field Trip and Activity Fee

The field trip and activity fee are in addition to tuition and cover the costs for field trips, special guests, special classroom activities, transportation, and use of other facilities.

Teacher Development Fee

There is an annual non-refundable Teacher Development Fee for each student. The Fee enables our teachers to have the opportunity to attend Montessori conferences and to continue their Montessori training through professional development courses. This fee is due no later than the first day of the academic year or within one week of enrollment.

Winter Sports Program

For five weeks in January/February we participate in a Winter Sports Program for Third year Early Childhood (Kindergarten) students and all Elementary students. Elementary students can choose between downhill ski lessons or snowboarding (minimum age of 8) at Snowbird Ski Resort. Information and forms are distributed in November/December. ***The costs associated with the Winter Sports Program are in addition to tuition and the field trip/activity fee and will be included on the invoice at the beginning of the academic year.***

Day Camps during the Academic Year

A Day Camp is offered during the school closures for Winter Break, Spring Break and the week between the end of the school year and beginning of summer camp. Teachers provide this camp for those working parents in need of childcare. We do not provide a day camp during the week prior to the start of the school year. ***These day camps are provided at an additional cost and Parent Handbook policies apply.***

Kids' Night Out

Teachers typically hold Kids' Night Out opportunities during the Academic Year for enrolled students and their siblings on site at the Montessori Community School. Art activities, movies and snacks allow children to have nighttime fun with their classmates and allow parents to enjoy an evening out. ***Kids' Night Out is provided at an additional cost by the classroom teachers who choose to offer it.***

Parent Participation Hours

Montessori Community School requires a minimum of ten (10) hours of Parent Participation per child enrolled at Montessori Community School during each academic school year. Parents are responsible for recording hours served on their family record sheet and submitting the sheet to the administrative office upon completion of hours or at the conclusion of the academic year.

Parent participation is welcome in the classroom and guided by the needs of each particular class. Teachers provide sign-up sheets and post opportunities on classroom bulletin boards that give parents/guardians (and aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.) a variety of opportunities to volunteer in the classroom (e.g. artist/composer of the month activities, cooking projects, field trip chaperons, etc.) or to assist with other aspects of classroom life (e.g. bringing flowers for flower arranging or food for the classroom animals, etc.).

If parents have skills in areas such as science, carpentry, sewing, dance, tumbling, cooking, art, puppetry, music, etc., they check with teachers or the office about coming in to share their skills with our students or to assist with a facilities project. We invite parents to share with the children their ethnic customs and

celebrations, travels in different countries, language and song. We welcome parents' professional expertise (i.e. medical career, architect, firefighter, scientist, etc.) inside the classroom to provide lessons to our students. Exposure to such activities will help broaden our children's interests. Participation hours can also include doing laundry, being a classroom community builder, working in the gardens, organizing parties, driving on field trips, PSA committee participation, etc. In the interest of building community at MCS we feel that involvement in a child's classroom and school community is most beneficial.

School Life

Weekly Email Newsletter

The MCS Weekly News is our primary means of school-wide general communication. It is published via email, weekly during the school year. Please check your inboxes and read it for reminders, upcoming events, news, and calendar changes or additions.

Montessori Compass: Parent Communication & Student Assessment

Montessori Compass is an online software program that our teachers have been incorporating into their routine for record keeping in recent years. For parents it is a parent portal made specifically for Montessori schools that helps with online parent communication, school record keeping, and sharing photos of classroom activity. With weekly activity reports, Montessori Compass makes it easy for teachers to share their observations of a child's social development and academic progress, and provide glimpses into the classroom that cannot be captured with words. In addition to showing the lessons each child has received, Montessori Compass provides some descriptions of common Montessori works. These brief summaries each week give parents the opportunity to engage their children in a real conversation about what they may be working with in school.

In a Montessori classroom observation is the primary form of assessment. Observation informs which lessons each child will receive at a given time, throughout the three-year cycle. Through Montessori Compass, the teachers will send a Student Evaluation three times per year, twice before Parent/Teacher conferences and once at the end of the school year. By providing opportunities to learn about the many benefits of a Montessori education, we hope that Montessori Compass will not only assist in parents' understanding of Montessori but also empower parents to be advocates for our school and the Montessori community.

School Communications and Monthly Calendars

Each Elementary classroom posts a calendar and letter detailing the upcoming month's events, field trips and academic activities on the classroom bulletin board. These calendars and letters are emailed to parents and also sent home in take home files. Please allow your child to post the paper copy in a prominent spot at home so that he/she can refer to it and be prepared for each day's activities. It is recommended that families develop a routine for reading and discussing the calendar and letter, to support the student in preparing in advance for upcoming events, etc., and to encourage dialogue about school, the classroom and lessons.

Please ask your child to check his/her take home folder each day for classroom work and school communications from the administration and teachers. In addition, to minimize paper waste, most communications, like reminders or adjustments to the calendar, are sent via email. Unlike traditional school environments, what you receive in your child's take-home file is miniscule compared to what your child does in the classroom on a daily basis. Since most of the learning is hands-on, the best way to stay in touch with what your child is learning is to talk with your child about his or her experiences and to check Montessori Compass, bulletin boards and calendar on a regular basis. You can also stop by the classroom at the end of the school day with your child and invite your child to share a favorite classroom work with you and chat with his/her teachers during their classroom office hours or schedule a time to talk with them. We invite you to be as involved as you can in your child's experience at our school. The more that you participate, the more you will understand the incredible experience your child has each day.

School Website

Our website URL is www.mcssl.com. The school calendar, special notices, upcoming events, newsletters and parent education information will be posted on the MCS website.

Birthdays

A school directory is available to each family with names, addresses and phone numbers of all the children in your child's class. Please refer to this when sending invitations for home parties. Invitations to birthday parties or other out of school activities should be mailed to guests and not distributed before, during or after school. Please do not send invitations home through school take home files. Also, please caution your child to refrain from discussing party invitations or party activities at school. This prevents hurt feelings of those children who are not invited. Due to the difficulty of cleaning and the competition birthday treats can sometimes lead to, we ask that parents not bring in food to celebrate their children's birthdays. The classroom teachers honor each student on her/his birthday with the rest of the class. Students who wish to share something with their classroom friends are welcome to bring in a gift to share with the classroom, e.g., a class book, or a plant.

Cell Phones

Cell phones are not allowed in our classrooms and we prefer that students do not bring them to school. If your child needs to have a cell phone for safety reasons, the cell phone must be checked in to our administrative office at drop-off time and will be returned to your child at pick-up time. If you need to reach your child for any urgent reason, contact the administrative office and we will bring your child to the phone.

Classroom Observation

You are invited to observe your child in his/her classroom. To avoid disruptions resulting from too many adults in the classroom, please contact the Office to make an appointment. We ask that you wait for at least six weeks from the beginning of the academic year before requesting a visit, to honor the students' normalization period by allowing them time to establish routines and become familiar with the environment. All visitors are asked to be considerate of our classroom's day and allow their own child, the other students and the teacher to go about their daily routine and activities. When you arrive for a scheduled observation, please check in with the Office so that we can orient you on the observation process and escort you to the classroom. Should you need a follow-up to your observation, please schedule a time for you to meet with your child's teacher(s).

During the observation, we ask that you sit in a chair and quietly observe what is going on in the classroom. Please do not be offended that the teacher(s) will not visit with you during this time. They are, of course, very busy with the academic work of their students. Also, please keep in mind that children will often behave differently than their classroom norm when they are aware that their parent or guardian is in the classroom, so the more silent and inconspicuous you are able to be, the more likely you will be able to observe your child's typical classroom experience.

Cultural Diversity and Honoring Cultural Holidays

We have approximately 200 students enrolled at our school -- representing different ethnicities, races, religions and varied family compositions. For several of our students, English is not their first language -- they speak Arabic, Spanish, Estonian, Russian, French, German, Japanese and Chinese. Although it is not our intent to "celebrate" the holidays of students from various cultures, as part of our cultural curriculum we sometimes have the opportunity to honor these holidays through their songs, foods and art activities. If your family has a special tradition that you would like to share, please speak with your child's teachers. We love parents' involvement in the school.

Dress Code/What to Bring to School

Your child should be dressed appropriately for each day's activities. Please pay particular attention to the week's schedule to ensure that your child is dressed appropriately for specialty classes such as G.O. and Movement. On most days, children should be dressed in comfortable, washable clothes and in non-slip safe shoes so that he/she may feel free to participate in all activities. Sneakers are most appropriate for outdoor play. High heels and flip-flops are not appropriate footwear. Sandals may be worn if they have a strap to secure the sandal on your child's foot. In addition, we do not allow 'roller sneakers'; they are unsafe and leave marks on school floors.

Inside shoes are needed for the inclement weather months and can be stored in your child's locker. Please note these can be shoes, they do not need to be slippers. If your child does use slippers, please do not send animal or character slippers or those that roar, jingle, squeal, etc.

Because children have daily outdoor recesses and activities that require "going out," except in extreme weather, please be sure that your child is dressed appropriately for outdoor activities throughout the year. During the winter, a warm jacket, gloves, snow pants, hats and boots are necessary. If attending summer camp, a hat, sunscreen, and a water bottle are necessary.

Please label all clothing with your child's name, to assist in its quick return if lost.

Field Trips

Teachers plan field trips and off-campus activities as additional learning opportunities outside the classroom. Each year when filling out the electronic enrollment form, parents sign a release form that gives permission for their child to attend all field trips. MCS field trip t-shirts are distributed by classroom teachers before each off-campus outing and returned to the classroom upon return.

Monthly classroom calendars will announce any scheduled field trips in advance. The school takes every reasonable precaution to ensure student safety. Students are transported in school and/or parent vehicles. If children do not arrive on time to go on the field trip, parents are responsible for their care until the class returns from the field trip.

Jewelry, Electronics and Toys

Please make sure that your child does not wear any jewelry or bring any electronics (ipods, DS, etc.), toys or games to school. This policy applies to both the school day and extended day programs. These items become a major distraction in the classroom and can easily be lost. If your child's class has a "game day," your classroom teacher(s) will send a note home outlining what games are appropriate for your child to bring on that day.

Labels

Your child's name should be clearly marked on all of his/her personal belongings. This is especially important for items of clothing, bags and lunch containers.

School Directory

A directory of students' classmates, with names, addresses and phone numbers, can be obtained from the Parent Center on the MCS website and hard copies are available in the MCS office. This directory is intended for school use only and should not be sold or used for commercial or other purposes.

School Pictures

Class photographs are typically scheduled in the month of September. All children will be photographed for class pictures by a professional photographer. Individual pictures will be taken of children whose parents choose to purchase a photo package. Siblings may also be photographed.

Lost and Found

Items that are found and are not clearly labeled with a child's name will be put into the Lost and Found bin by the Administrative office. You may check this bin at any time. Items that are not claimed will be given to a charitable organization several times throughout the year. We ask that parents discourage students from bringing valuable items to school. The school is not responsible for the loss of items on school property.

Lunch Guidelines/Snacks/Nut Allergies

Our students bring their own lunches to school. **The lunches should be nutritionally balanced.** We ask that you add a cold pack to the lunchbox if an item needs to be kept cold. A microwave is available for each class to heat up – not cook – foods. It is preferred that food requiring a microwave not be sent every day as time does not allow this accommodation for each child during their lunch period. Elementary students are allowed to use the microwave by themselves so, before sending food that can be "zapped," please ensure that your child is competent and comfortable in using this device.

Please encourage your child to pack his/her own lunch, as this is an important practical life skill. Candy, soda and gum are not allowed at school and we ask that students do not bring “lunchables,” as they have minimal nutritional value. As part of our “Green Committee” initiatives, we ask that students pack their food in reusable containers. Please remind your child not to throw reusable silverware or containers in the garbage.

If your child forgets his/her lunch, the administrative staff will provide lunch for your child for that day. There will be a \$6 charge for this service, and a note will be sent home with the child. Your payment will be due to the Office the following school day.

All students have access to a nutritious snack in their classroom throughout the day (as well as during Extended Day). Elementary parents rotate through the responsibility of providing the snack for the elementary class. A schedule and suggested snack list will be provided to parents at the beginning of the school year.

We sometimes have had students with very serious nut allergies. The Administration reserves the right to designate a classroom as nut-free.

Summer Adventures Camp

We offer a nine-week Summer Adventures Camp during the months of June, July and August for Lower Elementary students only. The Lower Elementary Summer Adventures Camp format includes field trips, gardening and outdoor play, as well as opportunities to work on Montessori projects.

Parent Conferences and Communications

The teaching staff and administration try to maintain close personal relationships with parents to enable us to effectively meet the needs of each child. Montessori schools do not rely on tests to evaluate children; our teachers use observation as the primary form of assessment. The Montessori classroom encourages, and teaches, the student a system of self and peer evaluation. Self-assessment plays a big part in the child’s evaluation and a portfolio of work is kept by our older Elementary students. While the students receive “follow-up” assignments after receiving a lesson, they are encouraged to plan their time in order to complete those by the deadline in class. If a student is not using work time effectively to complete those assignments, teachers and parents will discuss the best arrangement, which may include taking work home.

Standardized testing does not show all sides of a child and not all children “test successfully.” Therefore, other forms of evaluation are implemented at Montessori that show a truer representation of the child’s progress and skills. We do not grade children in our program. Each year we send home evaluations that give details of your child’s development and progress. Elementary parents receive three written evaluations via Montessori Compass and have two parent-teacher conferences per year.

In the event a significant change occurs in your home, please inform your child’s teacher or the administration as soon as possible. All information is kept highly confidential. We will be in a much better position to meet your child’s needs if we are kept up-to-date on major changes in his or her life. Common causes of distress include: either or both parents being away from home for an extended period of time; a new person living in the home; illness in the family; accident or death in the family; separation or divorce; death of a pet, etc.

Unscheduled and Impromptu Conferences

In order to avoid disrupting class time, supervision of children, or preparation for class, we ask that parents keep interactions with teachers brief when dropping off their child unless the situation is time sensitive. For longer check-ins, it is best to meet with teachers during their office hours or request an appointment at a mutually agreed-upon time. Notes placed in the teacher bins in the administrative office or emails are the best way to contact them during the school day. Your cooperation in this matter would be greatly appreciated. This allows the teacher to be prepared and completely focus on the parent’s questions. Elementary teachers are able to return phone calls or respond to emails during their afternoon planning time (3:15 – 4:30pm). Any questions related to administrative issues should be directed to the administrative office. Your questions, comments and suggestions are welcome anytime.

Any questions related to administrative issues should be directed to the Head of School, Robyn Eriwata-Buchanan or one of the Associate Heads of School, Britney Peterson or Ramira Alamilla, in the administrative office. Our Office & Admissions Administrator and/or Business Manager can answer any questions you may have related to tuition, fees and payment schedules. Your questions, comments and suggestions are welcome anytime.

Parent Education Opportunities

Throughout the year and at many different levels (school-wide, program-wide, in the classroom) opportunities arise that familiarize you with, and answer questions you may have about, the Montessori method and with what your child is doing at the school as well as other topics of interest. Notices will be sent home advising you about the more formal opportunities, which supplement the insight parents can gain from asking their children to show them a work they are currently working on, observing in the classroom, attending parent teacher conferences, etc.

Parent Responsibilities

As parents, you are a critical part of your child's educational team. As educators, we recognize our responsibility for performing our service as partners with you. The primary right and duty of education rests on you, the parent. When you send your child to school, you are delegating some of your responsibility for your child's education to the School. We encourage you, while your child is at school, to fully support the teaching efforts of the faculty and staff. To increase the effectiveness of the educational process, we ask that elementary parents, teachers and students sign an Elementary Family-School Commitment Form at the beginning of each academic year. The purpose of this affirmation of the Student, Family, and School Partnership is to establish the criteria for each elementary student, teachers and parents to work together collaboratively. This collaboration is an absolutely integral component of the Elementary Montessori experience. This commitment form includes the following responsibilities:

Student's Pledge

1. To be a contributing member of the class and work to build a peaceful community.
2. To act with integrity, respect and responsibility.
3. To work hard, use time wisely, and complete each work cycle.
4. To participate in classroom activities, school events, field trips and GO with a positive attitude and energy.
5. To work towards completing assignments by the due dates.
6. To work towards being an effective and respectful communicator.

School's Pledge

1. To create a healthy and positive atmosphere for learning to occur.
2. To facilitate the students learning by inspiring and engaging the natural curiosity of the child.
3. To provide opportunities for challenging and meaningful work.
4. To meet with each student regularly to review progress and discuss any concerns.
5. To facilitate parent/teacher conferences and communications
6. To help the child become independent, responsible and to develop a love for learning.

Parent's/Guardian's Pledge

1. To support my child in completing assignments and to provide access to the necessary resources and materials for learning such as transportation to the local library.
2. To attend parent/teacher conferences and to review my child's written evaluations.
3. To support my child's participation in field trips, school events and G.O.
4. To communicate and discuss any questions or concerns with my child's teachers and to meet with them should they request a conference.
5. To support my child in learning organizational, decision-making, and time management skills at home and at school.
6. To help my child be on time for school.

Parent School Alliance (PSA) - Our "Parent-Teacher Association"

The Parent School Alliance offers its support to the efforts of the teachers and administrators so that the students may receive the utmost benefit from their education.

PSA Mission

The Montessori Community School Parent School Alliance (PSA) works in partnership with the MCS Administration and Staff to help strengthen, support, and empower our community of students, teachers, staff and families. We achieve this by executing the following pillars:

- **Collaboration:** We work together with the mission to offer support to the school, which allows our children to get the most out of their education. We work in partnership with a wide array of individuals and organizations to accomplish our defined goals of community building.
- **Commitment:** We are dedicated to promoting children's educational success, health and well-being through strong parent, family, and community involvement.
- **Respect:** We value our children and ourselves. We expect the same high quality of effort and thought from ourselves as we do from others.

While in a given year there may be two to five PSA representatives, who will oversee various events and committees, all parents of children at the school are automatically members of PSA and are encouraged to participate in PSA activities and events. All hours spent in this role can be logged as parent participation hours.

The Montessori Educational Foundation is a non-profit foundation associated with the Montessori Community School and is a 501(c)3 organization. Donations made to Montessori Educational Foundation are 100% tax deductible and are currently distributed to our selected charities: COEEF and the Adopt-a-Native-Elder program. Your support for these service learning programs is greatly appreciated!

Photo Release

Photography, video and other media of students may be used within Montessori Community School internally and with appropriate identification if possible. Montessori Community School has many visitors during the course of the school year, and students from other schools participate in many of its events and activities resulting in photographs, video and other media of your child. These photos will be used internally on the lobby slideshow, class posters, yearbook, etc.

You may choose to allow your child's image used in our public marketing materials or you may opt-out of this. Photographs of the Montessori Community School members, including students, alumni, faculty, staff, are used on the Web site, Facebook, other publications and media. We will use first names ONLY when referring to students' work or images.

Please be aware that Montessori Community School has no control over photos and materials once they are posted online, and these can be copied or sent without our knowledge or permission.

Social Media

Social media (such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogs, etc.) can serve as a bridge between teachers and families in the MCS community, but care must be taken to ensure respectful communication and confidentiality. Interacting online is no different from interacting with individuals or groups face-to-face--i.e., we encourage students and families to maintain the principles of respect, dignity, prudence and professionalism and concern for the safety and protection of children, parents, families and Montessori Community School in all interactions.

MCS provides information for parents of MCS through the MCS website, weekly email newsletters, class lists, the MCS Facebook page, emails, etc. These communications are strictly for informational purposes and content is not to be redistributed to public forums or in any other inappropriate manner.

When they reach Upper Elementary, students will have regular access to computers, primarily for word processing, Rosetta Stone Online for Spanish, and an occasional search. The students sign a computer use policy and discuss together the expectations for how to use the computers and the Internet. (*Please see the Computer and Internet Safety Agreement that Upper Elementary students agree to at the end of this Handbook.*) We encourage families to have similar discussions at home, to set the expectations for the use of social media, and encourage parents to set up a plan for monitoring that use at home. Family members today have a new role: helping children behave safely and responsibly when they are using social media, whether for fun or for learning. The following is a helpful guide:

Service Learning and Community Outreach Programs

An important part of the Montessori program is the service learning component. Students are involved in projects helping members of the community throughout the year. In the past, our students have visited residents at local Nursing homes where they sang to them or worked on crafts together. Our students have also raked leaves for elderly neighbors, brought toys, clothing and other requested items to children at the Christmas Box House and the Road Home, rebuilt bicycles for the Bicycle Collective, and have mentored Spanish speaking children at the Guadalupe Center. These are just a few examples of the many projects in which our students become involved throughout the course of an academic year.

For more than fifteen years, the Montessori Community School sponsored three Navajo grandmothers, Elvira Horseherder, Roseline Jackson and Emma Bahe, through the “Adopt a Native Elder” program. The Program supports the traditional Elders who live in the cultural and spiritual traditions of The Dine' People. Most live in remote portions of the Dine's (Navajo) reservation. Many live in traditional hogans, and some raise sheep as a means of maintaining themselves. The Program provides food, simple medicines, clothing, fabric and yarns to help these Elders live on the Land in their traditional lifestyle. As they have become elderly, it has become more difficult for them to support themselves on the Land in their traditional ways. After Roseline Jackson and Emma Bahe died, after many years as our “adopted” grandmothers, we adopted another grandmother. We now have two Navajo grandmothers, Grandmother Elvira Horseherder and Grandmother Anita Jackson. Grandmother Anita is a relative of Grandmother Roseline. She is 85 and lives in the Teestos area. She is a beautiful weaver. She is very happy and grateful to have been able to join this program.

For over five years, we have supported the COEEF (Children of the Ethiopia Education Fund). Our school is currently sponsoring seven girls from Ethiopia. Without our assistance, these girls would not be able to attend school. Our students raise money by collecting pledges during our annual school-wide Fun Run. For more information about this wonderful program, you can go to the COEEF website at www.coeef.org.

Specialty Classes

As part of a well-rounded educational experience we offer specialty classes in disciplines such as Music, Art, Movement, Theater, Outdoor Classroom (Lower Elementary), and Great Outdoors (GO, for Upper Elementary), to give our students an excellent foundation in these areas and additional opportunities for each child to express their creativity. Nurturing a child’s creativity is essential to their overall development. These classes are provided at no additional cost. Parents can communicate with specialty teachers by dropping off a note with the office staff or sending the specialty teachers an email.

Problem Resolution

If you have a problem with something or someone in your child’s classroom, please schedule a time to meet with your classroom teacher(s) about your concern. If you feel the issue has not been handled to your satisfaction, we invite you to meet with Margaret McDonald, Upper Elementary Program Head, Britney Peterson, the Lower Elementary Program Head and/or the Head/Associate Heads of School. Please do not speak directly to other students in your child’s class regarding any issue you may have with them.

Special Needs and Outside Professionals

If your child is experiencing academic, social, emotional or physical difficulties, we ask that you have frequent and consistent verbal and/or written contact with his/her teachers. A recent physical exam to check for visual or hearing difficulties may be deemed appropriate. Classroom observations by the teacher(s) and administrative staff can be used to help identify areas of special need. Appropriate strategies for addressing the student’s difficulties will be addressed in a meeting with your child’s teachers and the Head/Associate Head of School. When planned strategies are not successful, we may choose to involve our school psychologist for social/emotional issues and/or Salt Lake School District specialists for learning issues. Parents are responsible for following up with outside professionals or specialists if a referral is made. We require that parents provide their child’s teachers with copies of any outside testing results as well as access to outside professionals consulted so that the teachers can have all of the information needed to address the child’s needs.

Parents are financially responsible for any options that necessitate the use of outside professional(s). The school can provide assistance in selecting outside professionals by providing recommendations and sharing information with the provider. The Montessori Community School is dedicated to supporting the varied learning styles of our students to the full extent possible within our program.

“Anti-Bullying” Policy

We teach students to accept full responsibility for their behavior, their attitudes, their experiences and their lives. As necessary, we cue and remind students of appropriate behaviors before inappropriate behavior occurs. When behavior is inappropriate, and a gentle reminder is not effective, we intervene and respectfully, but firmly stop the misbehavior. Our ultimate goal is to encourage students to behave appropriately through self-discipline and self-motivation, rather than using external rewards and punishments. Discipline means to teach, and in keeping with that definition we model and encourage appropriate, kind, and considerate ways to behave and respond. Peace education is infused throughout our curriculum as well as in our emphasis on the Civil Rights of All.

All students are expected to –

1. Support the Montessori Civil Rights of all, including:
 - The right to be happy and treated with compassion
 - The right to be myself
 - The right to be safe
 - The right to hear and be heard
 - The right to learn about myself
 - The right to be free as long as I am responsible
2. Follow directions.
3. Respect others.
4. Be courteous and responsible both with people and our school’s materials, building and grounds.

When a first behavioral incident that the parent needs to be aware of and address at home occurs at school, teachers will contact the parents/guardians with a phone call or discuss it with them face to face. After that, a child’s teacher fills out an Incident Report when there has been another incident of similar nature. We ask that parents discuss each incident with their children to reinforce the importance of appropriate behavior. We require that parents sign and return the report to the office. After three incident reports for similar behavior, the teachers will contact the parents to arrange a conference/meeting.

Our teachers make every effort to redirect disruptive behavior and, as a core part of our peace curriculum, we use a “Work it Out” method to address interpersonal conflicts. If the student continues to be disruptive, the teacher will discuss the situation with the Head/Associate Heads of School.

Unacceptable Behavior

Disruptive, disrespectful, and/or inappropriate behavior is handled on a case by case basis. In determining the consequences to be taken, the teachers and administration take into account the circumstances in which the behavior/incident has occurred, the harm to others or materials, the child’s age, and the child’s unique set of circumstances.

When the above strategies (discussion of incident reports, redirection, “Work It Out”) have not proven effective, one or more of the following strategies will be implemented:

- The student will be separated from the group and will not be allowed to return until the teacher determines that the student is calm and ready.
- Parents will be contacted either face to face or by phone and a conference with the family will be scheduled to determine a course of action that best supports the student and his or her classmates.
- The student’s parents may be asked to pick him or her up.
- The school reserves the right to determine whether additional outside resources need be contacted.

- With elementary children, suspension is also a possibility if the child is violent and a danger to him or herself and others. This might only occur in occasions when the school feels we cannot effectively meet the needs of the child or when parents do not follow up on recommendations of the specialists or staff. This may include children who are highly aggressive or have more involved special needs that may be treated more effectively in another program.
- Possible loss of privileges; e.g., field trips, specialty classes, recess, etc.

As stated in this Handbook, under “Special Needs and Outside Professionals” (above), when planned strategies are not successful, we may choose to involve our school psychologist for social/emotional and/or behavioral issues. Parents are responsible for following up with outside professionals or specialists if a referral is made. We require that parents provide the school with copies of any outside testing results as well as access to outside professionals consulted so that the teachers can have all of the information needed to address the child’s needs.

Parents are financially responsible for any options that necessitate the use of outside professional(s). The school can provide assistance in selecting outside professionals by providing recommendations and sharing information with the provider. The Montessori Community School is dedicated to supporting the varied learning styles of our students to the full extent possible within our program.

We are successful in working with a very wide range of students. One of our greatest challenges is to be objective and compassionate, yet realistic in considering the needs of each child. If we fail, despite our best efforts, to help a student to meet appropriate behavioral expectations within the school’s fundamental ground rules, we will help the family seek another school setting in which their child can experience success.

Health and Safety

Immunization Records

Your child’s health is of major importance to us. Utah State Law requires that your child be immunized against polio, mumps, measles, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, HIB hepatitis A and B, and chicken pox. To comply with Health Department regulations, we must have a copy of your child’s immunization records and a health assessment form on file before he or she begins school. If you have chosen to exempt your child from immunizations, the Health Department requires that you sign their official exemption form, and a copy of this must be kept at the Montessori Community School office.

Medications

Students who need to take medication at school may do so only if a parent or guardian fills out and signs a Medication Release Form. With the exception of epi-pens and Benadryl for severe allergic reactions, all medications are kept in the school office. Students are not allowed to keep any medications on their person or in their lockers unless prior arrangements have been made with the administrative staff. Teachers will take necessary medications on field trips.

Prescription medications need to be in their original container with the prescription directions attached. Over the counter medications will need to be brought to school in the original container.

Food and other Allergies

If your child has a food allergy or other allergy, please notify the school office and inform the school of the procedure to follow in the case of an allergic reaction. It is important if your child has a food allergy to teach them not to share or exchange food with other students. It is also important to teach your child to recognize the signs of an allergic reaction.

Illness

Colds, flu and other contagious diseases are a serious issue in a school environment because they can spread so rapidly. Parents are encouraged to keep children home when they show symptoms of illness. If the child is ill, please call the school before 8:30 am to report the absence. If your child exhibits any active symptoms of illness, he/she will not be admitted to the school, both for the child's own comfort and to minimize the spread of illness to other children in the school. In the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease, such as measles, MCS will follow the guidelines set forth for schools by the Utah Department of Health.

The following tips are to help you decide if your child should be kept home from school:

- How does your child feel? Variations from normal behavior are the best indicators of illness. You know your child best; trust your instincts.
- *Fever.* If your child has a fever at night, he/she must not attend school the next morning. Temperatures are lower in the morning and a fever may occur again in the afternoon. You are required to wait 24 hours after the fever breaks before sending your child back to school.
- *Upset stomach.* If your child vomits during the night, do not send him/her to school the next day. You are required to wait 24 hours after a child vomits before sending your child back to school.
- *Diarrhea.* Loose and frequent stools have many causes. Do not send a child to school until bowel movements are normal.
- *Cold.* Be sure a child knows how to handle tissues for coughing, sneezing and nose blowing, and practice good hand washing techniques. Your child may go to school as long as he or she does not have a fever or discomfort. If symptoms are severe (e.g., persistent cough or severe runny nose with thick mucus that will consistently interrupt their work or rest time), please keep your child at home so he/she may rest and recover.
- *Earache.* Never ignore an earache. Contact your physician and keep your child at home.
- *Strep Throat.* A strep infection requires a doctor's visit and medication. Strep can lead to a more serious illness if not properly treated. The child must be on medication at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- *Contagious Condition.* Lice, scabies, impetigo, chicken pox, strep throat, measles, rubella, mumps, whooping cough, meningitis and some forms of conjunctivitis (pink eye) are contagious and must be properly treated and no longer contagious before your child may attend school. *Please notify the school if your child has a contagious condition so that other parents can be alerted.*
- *Head lice.* Due to the fact that our classrooms are not the traditional separated-desk elementary classrooms, and that many students share head space in the reading lofts and on the rugs, if we find signs of lice (nits/eggs), in order to contain the spread we may ask parents to pick up their student early to begin treatment. If parents detect lice at home, please let the Office know immediately so that we can check the rest of the students in the class. Prior to the student's return to school, we will need to know the specific treatment that s/he will be undergoing and the date that the treatment began, so that we can follow up regarding the second application of the treatment (which typically needs to be applied 7-10 days after the first application). *Upon returning to school, before the child enters the classroom, please bring her/him to the Office where he/she will be checked for nits, and where we can record treatment dates and methods. We ask that parents carefully comb through their child's hair to remove all nits/eggs during the entire time s/he is being treated. Thorough combing with an egg removal comb each day during the 10-day period following the first treatment is an essential part of eliminating the lice and helping to prevent a lice recurrence. When the child returns to school, we will discreetly recheck the scalp and hair of the child and the class as needed following initial treatment to ensure that all active lice and eggs have been removed.*
- If your child has been out of school due to illness, we ask that you consider whether he or she is well enough to be outdoors before you send him or her back to school. The outdoors is part of our program and we do not have the staff to supervise students indoors and outdoors simultaneously.

Illness or Injury at School

If a child becomes ill at school, he or she will be taken to the office to wait until a parent can pick him or her up. A parent/guardian will be contacted and will be expected to pick up the child as soon as possible. If a child is injured at school, first aid will be administered if the injury is minor. An accident report will be filed for injuries that require medical attention, including first aid. Parents will be asked to sign the accident report when they pick up their child. Parents will be notified immediately if there are any questions concerning the severity of the

injury. The student's emergency contacts and physicians will be called if the parents are unavailable. All classroom teachers are CPR/First Aid certified. Paramedics will be called when necessary.

Sun Block

Utah has the highest skin cancer rates in the United States. Given our altitude, a large number of sunny days, the availability of a wide variety outdoor activities, and a population with many fair-skinned people, it is critical that we are prepared for spending time outdoors. Sun block should be applied before your child comes to school. Students have both a morning and afternoon recess where they are exposed to the sun. Over-exposure could occur, especially during late spring, summer and early autumn and unfortunately, sunscreen lasts only about 80 minutes before the protective effects diminish significantly. Children should keep sun block in their lockers for re-application at school.

Safety Procedures

While the Montessori philosophy allows for "freedom within limits," and we want to encourage students to feel comfortable and able to explore in their environment, we keep the safety of our students foremost in mind at MCS. We have a number of procedures in place to ensure that safety:

- Outside doors are only unlocked during arrival and dismissal times and are locked at all other times.
- We have a sign-in and sign-out procedure for parents dropping off and picking up students. We also have a signout sheet in the office for families taking their students out for an appointment in the middle of the day with plans to return later. This procedure ensures that the correct person is picking up the student in the afternoon and also gives us a sense of which students are in the building at any given time.
- We ask all staff to be vigilant and watch for people we do not recognize and to ask anyone we do not recognize how we can help them.
- We have a required check-in for visitors at the front office, where they sign in and wear a badge notifying our staff of their visitor status.
- Every classroom has an emergency evacuation plan posted. We practice emergency evacuations once a month, either in classrooms or schoolwide with an alarm.
- We utilize a texting emergency notifications system in the event of a schoolwide emergency or unannounced school closure.
- We have phones in every classroom by which the office can issue a schoolwide page in the event of an emergency and with which each classroom can contact the office immediately in the event of an emergency.
- We have placed buzzers on all upstairs outside access doors that notify us when the doors are opened. Our IT department is currently in the process of designing a more sophisticated entry and exit tracking system through the doors.
- We have various surveillance cameras placed throughout the school and school grounds.
- Our teachers are required to be First Aid/CPR certified.
- At the beginning of the year students receive lessons including a tour of school and general safety guidelines. These lessons will be reviewed as needed.
- We utilize head counts at various times throughout the school day, particularly when children are in transition (i.e., when children leave the playground and once they arrive back in class).

- Children check in to use the bathroom. If a child does not return within a reasonable time (age dependent) a teacher will check on them.
- We often implement a buddy system (pairing younger students with older, more experienced students) for times students are in line, traveling or transitioning. We also place one teacher at the front of the line and one at the back of the line when processing. *In elementary classes these precautions are taken at varying levels, depending on the ages and needs of the students.*
- Our most recent Loss Prevention evaluation was performed in July 2016.

Emergency Notifications and School Messenger

Our school has an Emergency Action Plan, which includes procedures for reporting emergencies and evacuating the facility. This document details for the staff the procedures to be followed in case of fire, earthquake, power outage, etc. Evacuation plans are posted in prominent locations in each room or area of the building. The Montessori Community School holds monthly fire drills and semi-annual disaster drills which are documented.

If there is an emergency or disaster that requires us to leave the school building, we will evacuate to the MCS field. If we are unable to access our field, our back up evacuation site will be All Saints Episcopal Church, which is located directly east of our building, or Hillside Middle School, southwest of our building. Each classroom has emergency contact information, medical releases, and an emergency backpack with a first aid kit. The teachers are trained to take those items with them during an evacuation. In the event of an evacuation, MCS will use our emergency text notification system to communicate with parents. The children will remain with and be accompanied by their classroom teachers at all times and we will maintain required ratios to the best of our ability. No child will be left alone or unsupervised. The shed on the MCS field contains stored water, snacks, emergency supplies such as blankets and diaper changing supplies (for Toddlers), and blankets.

MCS uses School Messenger as our emergency notification system. School Messenger has multiple data centers in different regions; they employ a variety of delivery methods (email, text messaging, and voicemail); they have a solid infrastructure to eliminate any single point of failure in communication. They are used to delivering millions of messages quickly, with over 4000 customers throughout the U.S., including various school districts in Salt Lake City, and a customer renewal rate of 98%.

Families will automatically be opted in to receive these notifications via email, text, and voicemail, and can opt themselves out should they choose not to receive them, though School Messenger will be our primary form of communication in the event of an emergency. We encourage families to include at least one out of state emergency contact in their list. Emergency contacts will only be included in communications concerning incidents that affect the greater community in the case that parents are unavailable to receive them themselves. In order to ensure that we have the most current contact information in School Messenger and the most effective communication, please inform the Office any time there is a change in your emergency contacts names and/or phone numbers, or when you have made a change to your own contact information in Montessori Compass.

Elementary School Program Overview

Lower Elementary (Grades 1-3)

Upper Elementary (Grades 4-6)

“Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment.”- Maria Montessori

The main focus of the Montessori Community School is the development of the whole child—intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual development.

The Elementary Student

The elementary Montessori program and curriculum is structured around the very specific needs and characteristics of students between the ages of six and twelve years.

- **Reason & Imagination** - The inquisitive nature of the elementary student provides the fuel for the research and exploration focus of elementary Montessori. The elementary student wants to know the “why?” and “how?” The six- to twelve-year-old is able to use both reason and imagination to explore and understand increasingly abstract concepts.
- **Exploring Society** – While the early childhood student was primarily focused on the construction of the individual, the elementary student begins to explore his place in society. Opportunities continuously present themselves for the student to observe or participate, moments in which to lead or follow.
- **A Need for Togetherness** – This is the age of clubs and groups. The elementary student explores friendship and cooperation; he learns how to be a leader, a partner and a follower. While collaboration is encouraged, individual contribution and strength is also valued.
- **Exploring Right and Wrong** – The six- to twelve-year-old student is actively developing his moral conscience; “That’s not fair!” is heard over and over again in the elementary classroom. Every student may know the rules but keeping them is another matter. Problem solving techniques are modeled and fostered in the Montessori program. Community brainstorming for solutions and rules helps form the elementary Montessori classroom’s code of conduct.
- **Freedom & Discipline** – Independence and inner discipline continue to develop in the elementary years. The six- to twelve-year-old student is capable of increasingly complex and numerous responsibilities and needs opportunities to exercise judgment and demonstrate self-conduct. Everything from classroom management to the student’s work stems from the student’s freedom to choose and think. Mistakes and failures are viewed as learning opportunities.

The Elementary Classroom

Students learn best within an environment prepared to nurture and enhance each student’s unique development.

- **Multi-Age Groupings** – Elementary Montessori classrooms are comprised of multi-age groupings. This is the practice of teaching students of different ages and abilities together without organizing either the curriculum or the classroom by age or grade designations. The students remain in the same classroom, with the same instructors, for several years.

- **Classroom Areas** – The elementary Montessori classroom is divided into distinct curriculum areas: Science, Geography, History, Art, Math and Language. Many of these subjects are then organized into separate skill areas. There is a large floor area for spreading out work and gathering in for community meetings and lessons. There are tables for individual and group activities. The students have notebooks for recording their work and folders to store ongoing projects. Group supplies are located in a central area. A message board displays the day’s schedule as well as reminders and announcements. A wide variety of plants and animals are located throughout the classroom. Arrangements of cut flowers often decorate the tables and music is almost always playing in the background. Replicas of artists’ work adorn the walls. Cleaning materials are accessible to the students since they are custodians of their classroom. A library is located nearby and available for the students to visit in order to support their research and interests.
- **Materials** – The wealth of materials in each area allows the students to follow their own interests. Materials are arranged so as to allow sequential progress in skills. Usually there is only one example of each material to encourage turn taking and patience. Materials and their activities vary from individual work to partner work to group activities. The materials are aesthetically pleasing with a great many being teacher-made. Many of the materials employ an internal control of error so as to encourage self-monitoring and foster independence in the elementary student.

The Elementary Montessori Teaching Method

Elementary Montessori programs emphasize active learning rather than passive reception of information.

- The Elementary Montessori curriculum builds upon the student’s early childhood experience. The Montessori materials continue to play an important role as the student transitions from the concrete to the abstract.
- Lessons involve exploration and hands-on experiences. The student in the elementary classroom learns by doing hence the classroom is rich in materials, resources, movement and conversation.
- The curriculum is individualized. The needs, ability, interests and skills of each student are taken into consideration when lessons are planned and knowledge assessed. The Montessori student will receive extra help or direction on areas where she needs it and move rapidly through other areas where she excels.
- The elementary program teaches the student how to think clearly, how to research, how to express herself in writing and speech.
- The program fosters independent work as well as group effort.
- The multi-age classroom creates an atmosphere of non-competition making it possible for the student to work at her own pace, unrestricted by traditional grade standards.
- The program supports a variety of learning styles.
- Elementary Montessori education integrates all the different areas of study rather than compartmentalizing them.

The Montessori Teacher

“Follow the child” – as Dr. Montessori asserted, the Montessori teacher focuses on the whole child and not on the daily lesson plan.

Dr. Montessori wanted to create a clear distinction between the role of the Montessori teacher and that of a traditional teacher. She coined the new title “director” or “directress” for the adults in her classrooms and as the name implies their role is that of a director of activities. Nowadays the term “guide” is more commonly used. The Montessori classroom is a student-centered environment rather than teacher-centered. The teacher is rarely the center of attention. She spends the majority of her time in individual or small group activity or observing the progress of the students.

The Montessori guide:

- tailors lessons and activities to suit the student’s learning style and abilities.
- prepares the classroom environment to promote autonomy amongst the students.
- maintains an investigation and discovery approach when presenting topics rather than giving facts and figures.
- is trained to assess knowledge and achievement through observation of the student.

The Elementary Curriculum Overview

Different from a traditional school setting where teacher-directed curricula determines the daily lessons, the Elementary Montessori students choose their own work. Under the guidance of the teachers, the Montessori students select activities that reflect their ability levels yet present opportunities to practice and perfect skills. Students and teachers work together for large blocks of uninterrupted time within a classroom that is rich in resources. The students work at their own pace while the Montessori teachers observe and facilitate the learning process. The curriculum’s goal is to encourage students to become active learners rather than passive participants in education.

The elementary Montessori curriculum is designed to meet the needs of students between the ages of six and twelve. Elementary students have an increasing ability to abstract and to imagine; the curriculum engages the students in activities that utilize these affinities. While the curriculum builds upon the student's early childhood classroom practice, it expands to include experiences, opportunities and instruction that are appropriate for the students’ developing minds. The Montessori materials continue to play an important role as the students transition from the concrete to the abstract. The teachers’ lessons involve exploration, research and hands-on experiences that guide the students in developing their reasoning minds.

Elementary studies include geography, biology, history, language, mathematics, science, music, movement and art. Studies are enriched through field trips, visitors and workshops that support the curriculum and expand the learning outside of the classroom into the community.

Mathematics

The elementary Montessori math curriculum takes the students through a series of precise exercises using specifically designed materials that support the students’ emergent abilities to abstract. Using hands-on manipulative materials the students in 1st – 3rd grade are given tools by which to do their math work and so acquire a concrete understanding of math skills and knowledge. This solid foundation allows a smooth transition to abstract understanding and application of math skills during the 4th – 6th grades.

	Lower Elementary	Upper Elementary
Numbers	Linear counting, sequencing, place value through millions, before & after numbers, <, =, or >, skip counting, ordinal & Roman numbers, one-step word problems, patterns & relationships	Factors & multiples, rounding numbers to nearest 10s & 100s, prime numbers, squaring and cubing, estimating, multiple-step word problems
Operations	+ - x / of whole numbers, regrouping, missing values, inverse operations, memorization of numerical patterns	Large operations in all 4 operations (including long division, multi digit multipliers), operations involving decimals, memorization of tables, percentages, averages
Fractions	Identification of fractions, addition & subtraction with common denominators, multiplication & division of fractions by whole numbers, equivalencies	Mixed numbers, + and – of fractions with unlike denominators, simplifying fractions
Measurement	Standard and metric units of measurement for length, mass & volume	Perimeter, area, capacity, word problems
Time	Telling time to the minute	Elapsed time, 24 hour clock, word problems involving time
Statistics	Interpreting data, block and bar graphs	Line graphs
Geometry	Classification of solids, quadrilaterals, triangles and polygons, study of lines & triangles	Study of circles, congruency & symmetry, use of protractor and compass
Money	Coin value, totaling amounts	Making change, word problems involving money

Language

The elementary reading curriculum is designed to incorporate phonics, whole word and phonetic exceptions. Lower elementary students progress through a leveled reading program using the Pink, Blue and Green Montessori reading exercises while additional materials and experiences allow them to perfect their reading skills, develop their fluency and comprehension. The Grammar and Vocabulary materials allow the students to assimilate an understanding of the structural rules that govern the English language. Literary elements are explored during Group Literature. Lower and upper elementary students practice writing on a daily basis in classroom journals that cover a variety of writing forms. In lower elementary, Writer's Workshops are held throughout the year to target specific writing skills. In upper elementary the different varieties of writing and writing skills are integrated into their cultural, science and literature studies. Our goal is to help the students become comfortable using writing as a communication skill. Students learn to think clearly, to research, and to express themselves with confidence and clarity in writing and speech.

	Lower Elementary	Upper Elementary
Reading	Reading readiness, phonic skills, guided reading, sight words, contextual clues, S.S.R. (Silent Sustained Reading), vocabulary	Shared reading, dictionary skills, fluency, expression
Comprehension	Responding to questions regarding Story-time book (sequencing events, recapping & summarizing, identification of character, plot & setting) context clues & main ideas	Continued study of main ideas, sequencing & context clues, assumptions/inferences, following written directions & instructions
Penmanship	Metal inset exercises, D'Nealian print & cursive, spacing, left justification,	Mastery of cursive

	neatness	
Spelling	Unconventional to conventional, leveled spelling works	Conventional spelling lists, spelling demons, vocabulary, spelling rules
Mechanics	Ending punctuation, capitalization, commas	Apostrophes, commas, quotation marks
Composition	Complete sentences, journaling, picture prompted stories, modeled writing, editing	Journaling, character & plot development, proofreading, revising, publishing
Study Skills	Categorizing, table of contents, index, beginning reports	Outlining, note taking, organizing information, skimming, advanced reports, paraphrasing
Grammar	Parts of speech, parsing	Sentence analysis, verb tenses
Speaking	Poetry presentations, in-class reports, drama, story-telling	Poetry presentations, in-class reports, drama, story-telling

Research Skills

In the elementary classroom, research skills and the preparation of reports are major components of the educational program. In lower elementary students begin learning the skills needed to research areas of interest or assigned topics, and how to communicate their learning through reports—both formal and informal, written and oral. These skills continue to be examined and employed in upper elementary.

Great Lessons

A special series of lessons, called the “Great Lessons,” are presented each year. These beautifully told stories give an overview of the formation of the universe, and provide the student with an understanding of the human's place in time and space. The Great Lessons provide the foundation for study in Geography (How the world came to be and the development of life on Earth), Math (The development of mathematics), Language (The development of language and writing), and History (The story of humans). The students are given the broad story and proceed to fill in the details during the course of their elementary years through subsequent “key” lessons. The intent of the Great Lessons is to create in the students a sense of admiration and wonder. They will then be compelled to discover more on their own.

Cultural Studies

The Elementary Montessori curriculum uses the term “Cultural Studies” for History and Geography and the Sciences.

	Lower Elementary	Upper Elementary
Physical Sciences	Process of scientific inquiry, Experiments, Three states of Matter, Studies of the Earth, Solar System	Process of scientific inquiry, Experiments, Physics, Chemistry
Life Sciences	The Five Kingdoms, External parts of Animals, External parts of plants, Body Systems	The Five Kingdoms, Classification, Internal functions of animals, Internal functions of plants, Body Systems & Functions
History	Days of the week, months, timelines; Study of civilizations, Vertical studies of the fundamental needs of man – clothes, shelter, transportation, defense, communication; US & State History	Earth History Timeline, Study of ancient civilizations, US & State history, World History
Geography	Identification of continents, oceans and countries; Map reading and making; Biome studies; Land & water formations; Studies of countries	Longitude & Latitude coordinates, Scale, Biome Studies, Identification of world land & water formations, Study of countries, states & regions

Science

The Elementary Montessori curriculum includes the Physical and Life sciences. Studies in this discipline follow a three-year rotation.

Lower Elementary			
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Life Sciences	Living/Non-Living, Care and Needs of Plants, Study of Plants, Roots, Leaves, Vertebrates vs. Invertebrates, External Parts of Vertebrates, Little Animal Stories	Further Study of Leaves and Roots, Stems, Types of Vertebrates, Classification of Animals	Further Study of Leaves, Roots, Stems and Flowers, Classification of Plants and Animals, Internal Parts of Vertebrates, Dissection
Physical Sciences	Rocks & Minerals, Sun & Stars, Simple Machines, Magnetism	Faults & Earthquakes, Solar System, Light & Sound	Continental Drift, Volcanoes, Moon, Electricity & Heat

Upper Elementary			
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Earth Science	Atmosphere	Hydrosphere	Lithosphere
Body Systems	Nervous System	Respiratory System	Reproductive System
Physical Science	Chemistry	Physics	Astronomy
Biology	Plant Kingdom	Animal Kingdom	Protista, Monera, Fungi

Geography & History

Our Elementary students are exposed to a global cultural perspective, learning to understand and appreciate a multicultural world. The students participate in an annual Cultural Fair each spring, which is a culmination of that year's continent or history focus. For example, if Africa is our continent focus for a particular year, each student would undertake in-depth research on a particular country and develop a multi-dimensional presentation for the Cultural Fair that is representative of their country (i.e. traditional foods, clothing, instruments, written reports, 3-D representation of topographic features, rivers and mountains, etc.). When our Upper Elementary students were studying the Vikings and Ancient Rome, they designed costumes, made traditional tools and food, developed video presentations and wrote in-depth reports to showcase their studies. The Cultural curriculum is examined in three-year cycle.

Lower Elementary			
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
History	Study of Time, Introduction to Time Lines, Human Needs	Fundamental Needs of Humans, Timeline of Life, Study of Paleozoic, Mesozoic and Cenozoic Eras	Timeline of Humans, Study of History of Humans
Geography	Basic Land Forms, Flag Study, Introduction to	Advanced Land Forms, Study of the Earth, The Earth's	Layers of the Earth, Volcanoes, Earthquakes, Rocks & Minerals,

	Mapping, Continent Study	Surface, Configurations, Hydrosphere, Geodynamics	Mapping, In Depth Study of a Nation
Utah Studies	State Mineral, State Gem, State Flower, State Fossil, Surrounding States	State Tree, State Fish, State Animal, State Bird, Great Salt Lake	State Fruit, State Vegetable, State Insect, State Symbol, State Motto
Upper Elementary			
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
World History	The Aztecs	The Vikings	Ancient Rome
American History	Colonial America Transcontinental Railroad	Westward Movement – Mountain Men, Pioneers Utah Statehood	Native Americans
Geography	Physical Studies – North & South America, Country Study - USA	Cultural Studies – Europe & Africa, Country Study – Ireland	Economic Studies – Asia & Australasia, Country Study – New Zealand
Utah	Physical Studies	Political Studies	Economic Studies

Practical Life

The main focus of Practical Life at the elementary level is guiding the student toward responsible independence in action and thought. Students learn to manage their work and time using a log to plan their day. Once the students are familiar with using a logbook, they learn to evaluate their own work and then practice goal setting. At the lower elementary level students plan a day at a time while at the upper elementary level they create a week’s plan.

Elementary students hold various roles and responsibilities in the classroom, including running classroom meetings, and coordinating with administration on various questions or projects. Elementary students care for classroom animals, provide basic maintenance of their classroom, and learn skills such as flower arranging and knitting. Business ventures include creating products for the monthly market and provide the students with the experience of a micro-economy. Students raise money for the year’s “adventure” and activities and in the process learn to invest, donate, and save their profits after expenses. Practical Life in both Lower and Upper Elementary include school and community services and chores. These include managing our school-wide recycling and composting programs and creating annual campaigns to help our community have more of an awareness on issues such as waste management.

Peace Studies

The Elementary approach to classroom management is to help the students learn that they are responsible for what they do and that their actions have natural consequences. Students are involved as much as possible in the development of the Elementary code of conduct, or ground rules. Whether a problem involves only two students or the whole class, we teach the students a “Work it out” method to help them to become problem solvers. Problem solving techniques are modeled and fostered. One of the techniques that the teachers use is called “Teacher Theatre,” where they model appropriate conflict resolution. The classroom also has an Agenda Book that provides the students with the opportunity to raise issues that are significant to the elementary community. Community brainstorming for solutions and rules helps form the elementary classroom code of conduct. The students are given increasingly complex and numerous responsibilities and many opportunities to exercise judgment and demonstrate self-conduct. Mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities.

Each year, the Upper Elementary students are given the opportunity to define the values that they will adopt and practice as a class. Recent examples include the values of responsibility, respect and tolerance. Upper Elementary students also participate in Socratic dialogue, which involves open-ended discussion on topics that influence the world around them, as well as the exploration of new ideas.

Great Outdoors Environmental Program ("GO")

In the Great Outdoors Expeditions Program, commonly known as "GO," the Upper Elementary and third-year Lower Elementary students (on certain trips) fulfill the goals of exploring our environment, learning from our environment, celebrating our environment, and protecting our environment in a variety of ways.

The students are responsible for their self-guided studies (S.G.S.) within all of our outings as we visit the desert, riparian, urban, wetland, and montane ecosystems of the Salt Lake region. The MCS GO program also forms mentorships with other environmental and educational organizations such as Swaner Ecocenter, the Ogden Nature Center, and Tree Utah. In addition to the S.G.S., students are expected to be responsible for their preparedness, hiking skills development, trail etiquette, and participation.

Each fall the GO program focuses on getting to as many different ecosystems and elevations as possible before the snow season. In the winter the focus is on the theme studies including research, writing, and finalizing detailed sketches, which lead into the preparation of our annual nature card sale. The card sale is in the spring and becomes the stewardship contribution when the class chooses a protective action effort that usually takes place in May. The class continues to visit the ecosystems throughout each season.

Maturation Class (for Upper Elementary)

Maturation class is offered every other year in the late spring. The classes are held separately for girls and boys, and we ask that at least one parent from each family attend the presentation with their child. The presenters are professional educators from Planned Parenthood, and teach an age-specific curriculum entitled "Growing Up Comes First." The agenda can be made available to parents who wish to preview the content. The objectives of the course are for students to be able to: understand the physical and emotional changes of puberty; learn about the importance of personal boundaries; and address the influence of media and the importance of respecting your own individuality.

Parents are encouraged to attend this presentation so that you can continue the conversation at home with your child after the class. Attendance will allow you to hear which aspects of maturation you should expand on at home as well as provide a means of opening lines of communication with your child regarding puberty. Maturation class is held after school and recommended for 5th grade and higher.

The Arts

Art

Art Supplies are available in the classroom for students to select as part of their daily work. Students also have an Art Specialty class, where they refine basic art techniques such as pattern, design, texture, shape and line, and learn more advanced techniques such as perspective, medium, shading, dimension, transparency, overlapping, and printmaking. During the Spring Art Showcase, our students have the opportunity to share their artwork with our school community.

Each month, the students study the life and work of a famous artist. We rotate these artists over the following three-year cycle:

Lower Elementary		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three

Gustav Klimt	Vincent Van Gogh	Leonardo da Vinci
Piet Mondrian	Georges Seurat	William Morris
Norman Rockwell	Paul Klee	Edvard Munch
Andrew Wyeth	Grandma Moses	Frida Kahlo
Mary Cassatt	Henri Matisse	Frank Lloyd Wright
John James Audubon	Roy Lichtenstein	Katsushika Hokusai
Jackson Pollock	Ansel Adams	Pablo Picasso
Gilbert Stuart	MC Escher	Dorothea Lange
Andy Warhol	Georgia O'Keeffe	Claude Monet

Upper Elementary		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Giotto di Bondone	Limbourg Brothers	Michelangelo
Carl Linnaeus	Fra Angelico	Gustave Courbet
Lorenzo Ghiberti	Albrecht Dürer	Edgar Degas
El Greco	Rembrandt van Rijn	Berthe Morisot
Winslow Homer	Edouard Manet	Paul Gauguin
Auguste Rodin	C.M. Russell	Salvador Dali
N.C. Wyeth	Henry Moore	Louise Nevelson
Victor Vasarely	Christo	Wassily Kandinsky
Diego Rivera	Méret Oppenheim	Joseph Stella

Music

Students have a Music Specialty Class, which provides formal instruction in music. Using ORFF instruments and recorders, the students learn to keep a steady beat, play rhythm rounds with non-pitched instruments, and read music on the staff. The students have the opportunity to share what they have learned in Music Specialty Class with our school community during the annual Spring Performance.

Each month, the students study the life and work of a famous composer. We rotate these composers over the following three-year cycle:

Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Miles Davis	Beethoven	Aaron Copland
John Philip Sousa	Elton John	Johann Pachelbel
Ferde Grofé	Wagner	George & Ira Gershwin
Cole Porter	Prokofiev	Irving Berlin
Duke Ellington	Vivaldi	Meredith Monk
Rodgers & Hammerstein	Gilbert & Sullivan	Frederick Chopin
Scott Joplin	Enya	Marvin Hamlisch
John Williams	Mozart	Aretha Franklin
Bob Marley	The Beatles	The Beach Boys

Dance

Students have a Dance Specialty Class, which provides formal dance instruction. In Dance Class, students work on dance elements such as high and low space, slow and fast energy, positive and negative space, tempo changes, different energy levels, high and low planes and mirroring. The students refine their locomotion skills, which include sliding, galloping, skipping, jumping, crawling, and rolling. The students have

the opportunity to share what they have learned in Dance Specialty Class with our school community during the annual Spring Performance.

Theatre

The students study elements of theatre and have the opportunity to participate in our annual Montessori Community Theatre performance, which is attended by Kindergarten and Elementary students and parents. Poetry recitals occur throughout the year, and at the end of the school year, the students present small skits and songs based on their classroom studies.

Physical Education

Physical education is an important part of the elementary Montessori curriculum. Emphasis is placed on body awareness and physical fitness through playing cooperative games and practicing Yoga. Elementary students also spend a great deal of time hiking and exploring the great outdoors on field trips throughout the year. Students also have at least 30 minutes of outdoor playtime daily where they may choose to play on the playground, organize their own creative or sports activities or just relax.

Winter Sports Program

Each year, elementary students take part in a five-week Winter Sports program. The students have the opportunity to take skiing or snowboarding lessons at Brighton, or to participate in swimming and ice-skating.

Field Trips

Field trips enhance the year's curriculum. The students extend their learning beyond the classroom by making several off-campus trips each month to locations such as art exhibits, hiking trails, theatre productions, museums, cultural exhibitions, local farms and nature preserves. The students also make frequent visits to Salt Lake City area libraries throughout the year to choose books for classroom reading time or for research projects.

Technology

Computers are introduced to the elementary students when they are ready to publish their writing and research. Students learn how to word process, save and edit their work. The use of the Internet is carefully supervised. Students learn how to access online dictionaries and encyclopedias. Keyboard skills are also introduced, typically during the third year of Lower Elementary. Upper Elementary students develop skills in Word processing, Power Point presentations, video and photography, and classroom blogging.

Home Assignments

Each month, lower elementary students are given a Home Assignment, which is typically a project involving library research and hands on learning. Students are not given "busy work". Home Assignments are designed to extend and enrich the curriculum, challenging the students to think and explore. For example, as part of their Egyptian studies, our lower elementary students made Egyptian paper, traditional dolls and scarabs. As part of their medieval studies, the students designed castles out of a material of their choice, labeling all of the parts of the castle.

Testing

We do not use standardized testing as a means of evaluating student progress. Our method of evaluation includes detailed recordkeeping on each student and direct observation of the application of skills and concepts introduced to each student throughout the year. Elementary parents receive two written evaluations and participate in two student-led Parent/Teacher Conferences each academic year. This method of evaluation enables the student to master a concept or skill before progressing and allows us to identify and address any learning issues that may be preventing that student from moving forward. It also allows students to move forward rapidly in areas where understanding comes easily and take more time to comprehend areas that may be more difficult for them.

Freedom and Responsibility

Montessori Elementary students are guided in taking on an important role in their own education. They often have the freedom to choose work partners and topics of study, learning to balance freedom with responsibility. This nurtures adaptability, negotiation, compromise, problem solving, time management, and respect for others and the environment. They develop leadership skills by making important decisions on projects related to their elementary community life, as well as giving presentations and voicing their opinions in community meetings throughout the year.

Community Life

Students learn to become active, positive contributors to their school community, and many events throughout the year such as Elementary Community Meetings and the Spring Elementary camping trips provide ample opportunity for the students to practice these skills and to develop a strong sense of community.

Outcomes

The outcomes of the Montessori Elementary program are:

- Students learn how to learn
- Students become independent
- Students are active learners
- Students learn to manage their time
- Competency and skills in all areas of the curriculum

Montessori Elementary students find deep personal satisfaction in learning through their own efforts. They do not compete against each other for grades, or expect external rewards for their work. Students learn to trust themselves and their own judgments. More importantly, they can acknowledge mistakes and work to correct them in an atmosphere of support and respect. The students take ownership of their work and their environment, and develop self-direction. They develop an innate drive to learn and a natural love for learning that lasts a lifetime.

Upper Elementary Computer and Internet Safety Agreement

Appropriate use of technology resources is the shared responsibility of the school, the student, and the family.

In using the computer, I will:

- Accept the standard established in the classroom- I will not bring food or drinks near the computer. I will not change the settings on the computer. When I finish working I will log off and leave the keyboard and chair ready for the next user.
- Recognize the privacy of others. I will not try to change, read, or use the computer files of another user. I will always log in using my own account.
- Only use the school computers for classroom/school assignments, during class time and with a teacher present.
- Seek approval for image searches prior to beginning my search. When I search images I will view and use ONLY images that appear on the first page.
- I will not access, share or download any information that is deemed inappropriate or offensive.
- Respect and take care of the hardware and software that is provided for my use in the classroom.
- Recognize that software and music are protected by copyright. I will not copy unauthorized software and music from the school, other people's computers, or illegal sites.

In using the Internet, I will:

- Keep my password private and will not have my password automatically entered into any computer.
- Protect myself, friends, and family by never giving out my name, address, phone number, or school name online. I will never arrange to meet another computer user face to face or speak on the phone with one (because people online may not be who they seem to be).
- Never intentionally enter an area that charges for services or download any material, written or graphic, without parental or teacher permission.
- Understand that the Internet may contain information that is illegal, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people. I will be responsible for appropriate behavior when accessing online information, and I will tell a parent or teacher if I encounter anything on the Internet that is obscene, threatening, or makes me feel uncomfortable.
- Use the Internet in public view at home or school.
- Send only appropriate messages over email. The messages should not contain profanity, obscene comments, sexually explicit material, threats, reference to weapons or bombs, or expressions of prejudice, racism, or hate.

Electronics: Students who bring electronics (iPods, cell phones, games, etc.) onto school grounds must keep them turned off and checked into the office the entire time they are on school grounds. Any electronics turned on, heard, or seen will be turned over to the teacher and checked in at the office and kept there until the end of the school day.

I agree to follow these rules and code of ethics in all my work with technology resources at school while attending Montessori Community School of Salt Lake City.

Student signature

Parent signature

[Parent and Family Guide to Student Social Media Guidelines](#)