



Montessori
Community
School Est. 1985
Salt Lake City, Utah

Toddler/Early Childhood Parent Handbook

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updated 8/17



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Excellence in Montessori since 1985
Serving Toddlers through 8th 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 outside of office hours. 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
Head of School
email: robyneriwata@mcssl.com

Britney Peterson
Associate Head of School – Staff Development
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Ramira Alamilla
Associate Head of School – Operations/Admissions
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Nanette Cenaruzabeitia
Toddler Program Head & Staff Development
email: nanettecenaruzabeitia@mcssl.com

Ashlee Haslam
Admissions and Office Administrator
email: ashleehaslam@mcssl.com

Kathy Campbell
Business Manager
email: kathycampbell@mcssl.com

Kim Brown
Finance Administrator
email: kimbrown@mcssl.com

Crystal Wells
Administrative Assistant
email: crystalwells@mcssl.com

Classroom Emails

Each of our classrooms has an email address, which provides another way for you to contact your child's teachers. Our teachers monitor these emails throughout the week and will respond to emails as soon as they are able. Some of our teachers use email frequently to communicate with parents, often sending classroom notes, letters, reminders, etc. If you do not receive a response using a classroom email, forward your email to one of the members of our administrative staff so that we can assist you.

Toddler Program

Toddler Suns: sunsteachers@mcssl.com
Toddler Moons: moonsteachers@mcssl.com
Toddler Stars: starsteachers@mcssl.com

Early Childhood Program

Sequoias Class: sequoiasteachers@mcssl.com
Willows Class: willowsteachers@mcssl.com
Magnolias Class: magnoliasteachers@mcssl.com
Aspens Class: aspenteachers@mcssl.com

Specialty Classes

Music Specialty Class
Ana Bunce
email: anabunce@mcssl.com

Dance Specialty Class
Haley Dame
email: haleydame@mcssl.com

Outdoor Classroom
Donda Hartsfield
email: dondahartsfield@mcssl.com

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

School Hours and Attendance

School Hours and 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 accessible from 7:30am to 6:00pm to accommodate Early Morning Drop-off and the Extended Day program.

For Toddler and Early Childhood students, school begins at 9:00am and ends at 3:30pm. For Toddler morning-only students, the school day starts at 8:30am and ends at 11:30am.

Parking Lot

Please enter and exit the parking lot slowly, do not use cell phones, and park carefully and courteously. Also, please do not leave any valuables in your car. When walking in the parking lot, an adult must always accompany children at all times. Do not let your child walk alone or even a few paces in front of you. Please help us keep our parking areas an idle free zone.

Visitors

All visitors will need to check into the office and wear a badge before proceeding anywhere else in the building.

Attendance and Tardiness

Regular attendance is important to a child's progress. Parents are strongly encouraged to schedule vacations and appointments during school vacations when possible. If your child is going to miss school for any reason (illness, vacation, etc.), please notify your child's teachers or the administrative staff. 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 best be accommodated.

Children are expected to arrive in their classroom no later than 9:00am when the school day begins. Early care children may arrive between 7:30am and 9:00am and school day students may arrive as early as 8:45am. Attending for the entire school day is an important requisite of your child's learning experience at the Montessori Community School. A student who arrives late often misses important instructions, activities, field trips, and disrupts the class. If you are arriving late and class is in session, please have your child enter the classroom alone and very quietly. If your child is having a problem separating and a teacher is available please ask for help or bring your child to the office for assistance. Unless a late arrival has been prearranged with your child's teachers, please do not bring your child to school after 10:30am.

Students need to be picked up on time, based on the schedule for which the child is enrolled. The school office should be notified when a child will be arriving late or picked up late.

Sign-in and Sign-out

All students need to be signed in and out each day. Sign-in/out sheets are located outside each classroom. You are required to park in the school parking lot, enter the school, sign in/out your child on

the clipboard outside of each classroom and deliver your child to (or pick up your child from) a teacher on duty. 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.

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. The Elementary playground in particular is not safe for younger children.

When picking up your child(ren), please accompany them from the classroom to the exit doors. As a safety concern, it is important for children to stay with the person picking them up and not to approach or wait at the exit doors alone.

Alternate Pickup Procedures

If someone other than the parent/guardian or pre-authorized person 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.

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. Please 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.

Early Care

If your child is enrolled in the Early Care program, there is no additional charge for early morning drop off. If your child is not enrolled in the Early Care program, there is a daily fee for this service, and it needs to be pre-arranged.

Toddler students remain in the Toddler classrooms for Morning Care/ Extended Day. Early Childhood Early Care is in one designated classroom; Early Childhood Extended Day meets in two of the four EC classrooms.

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 Care program for the half hour difference in school start time at no additional charge.

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 the building by 6:00pm.** Many of our Extended Day teachers have evening commitments and need to be able to leave by 6:00pm.

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, please contact the office regarding availability based on staffing and rates.

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

Late Pick-up Fees

Pick-up time for school day Early Childhood and Toddler students is 3:30pm. For Toddler morning-only students, pick-up time is 11:30am. If your child is not picked up by 3:45pm for school day students or 11:45am for Toddler morning students, your child will be brought to 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 6:00pm**. A late pick up fee of \$10 will be charged if you pick up your child between 6:01pm 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

Admissions

The Toddler Program enrolls children aged 18 months to 3 years. The Early Childhood Program enrolls children aged 3 to 6 years. The Lower Elementary School enrolls 1st, 2nd & 3rd year students (1st, 2nd and 3rd grade equivalent), and Upper Elementary enrolls 4th, 5th and 6th year students (4th, 5th & 6th grade equivalent).

A school tour, completed application form and a non-refundable application fee are required to be considered for enrollment in the school. 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. Applications from siblings of current students who complete their kindergarten year at our school **at a minimum** (or their Lower/Upper Elementary 3-year cycle for Elementary students) are given a high priority for enrollment. If school enrollment is at capacity, a student's name will be placed on the waiting list and the family will be notified as space becomes available.

In the Toddler program, while our normal guidelines are that we accept children aged 18 months or older, on occasion, a child who is younger than 18 months may be accepted. These children would be staff children or younger siblings of children who are already enrolled. Our teachers are Infant and Toddler Certified. When considering adding a younger child, we look carefully at the make-up of the class, the teacher-student ratio, and the benefits for the child and the other children who are currently enrolled.

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 behavior, 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 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
- Teacher Evaluation (if child is coming from another school)
- 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 22 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 (unless enrolled in the Tuition Assurance program).*

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 financial need, commitment to our school and involvement in our school community. Fostering student diversity at the School is an important goal of the Tuition Assistance 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 including your most current tax return must be filed. *Families who receive tuition assistance are expected, at a minimum, to stay through their kindergarten year or, in the case of Elementary students, through 6th grade.*

Schedule Changes

After July 20th each year, there will be an administrative \$50 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, though we always do our best to meet parents' requests.

Field Trip and Activity Fee for Early Childhood Students

The field trip and activity fees 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.

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. Third year students take downhill ski lessons 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

We 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 Progress Report 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.

Monthly Calendars

Each Early Childhood and Toddler classroom posts a calendar detailing the upcoming month's events, field trips and academic activities on the classroom bulletin board. Hard copies of these calendars are also sent home in take home files, posted on classroom bulletin boards for easy reference, and emailed to families with a letter each month. Please allow your child to post their paper copy in a prominent spot at home so that he/she can refer to it and be prepared for each day's activities.

Take Home Files

Please check your child's take home folder each day for classroom work and school communications from the administration and teachers. To minimize paper waste, most communications will be sent via email and the weekly email newsletter. Unlike traditional school environments, what you receive in your child's take-home file may not be reflective of 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 check the weekly activity reports in Montessori Compass, visit the classroom before or after the school day, or schedule a time to talk with his/her teachers. We invite you to be as involved as you can in your child's experience at our school. The more that you take advantage of the forms of communication we have in place, the more you will understand the incredible experience your child has each day.

School Website and/or Facebook

Our website URL is www.mcssl.com. Special notices, upcoming events, calendars and parent education information are posted there, in addition to information about how MCS operates. Our Facebook page also has periodic updates about classroom or school wide activities and articles of interest.

Parent/Guardian Observation

We strive to honor the children's six-week normalization period by allowing them time to establish routines and become familiar with the environment before inviting parents into the classroom. Beginning in October, parents/guardians of Early Childhood students are invited to come into their child's classroom in the morning and to encourage their child to show them a Montessori work. This is a wonderful opportunity to gain an understanding of what their child is learning and how their child uses Montessori materials. We have found that children are typically more willing to discuss their classroom experiences at home if they feel that their parents/guardians understand what they are talking about. To support the continuity of your child's drop-off routine, we suggest that you choose one day a week to come into the classroom and stay no more than 10-15 minutes. Please plan ahead and talk with your child about which day and how long you will be staying.

Early Care Students

If your child is enrolled in the Early Care Program, you are welcome to come into your child's classroom anytime from 8:30 am until 9:00 am.

School Day Students

If your child is not enrolled in the Early Care Program, you are welcome to come into your child's classroom from 8:45 am until 9:00 am.

To help maintain an effective learning environment, we ask that you respect the following guidelines:

- Please turn off your cell phone before entering the classroom.
- This invitation is for adult family members only. Please do not bring siblings or other children with you into the classroom.
- Please speak quietly while in the classroom.
- If you would like to have a conversation with another parent, please go to the upstairs lobby where we have couches set up for this purpose. Adult conversations during work time are very distracting to the students.
- Please sit on the floor or at a table with your child and invite him/her to show you a Montessori work.
- Please refrain from correcting your child's work (i.e. "Andrew – you put the 'c' in 'cat' backwards"). Many of the materials are self-correcting and a child learning to correct his/her own work is part of the Montessori process. Your child's teachers will correct his/her work at the appropriate time and are trained in methods of correction that will not hinder the child's motivation.
- Please do not be offended that the teachers cannot visit with you. They are very busy with the children in their care. If you would like to have a conversation with your child's teacher, please schedule a time to meet.
- Please let your child know that by 9:00 am, you will be leaving. If they are still finishing a work, they can continue working on it after you are gone. When you leave the classroom, please leave as quietly as possible.

Individual observations can also be arranged with your child's teacher. We ask that you wait for at least six weeks from the beginning of the academic year before requesting a visit. All visitors are asked to be considerate of the 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, we ask that you sit in a chair and quietly observe what is going on in the classroom. Please keep in mind that children will often behave differently from 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.

Specialty Classes

As part of a well-rounded educational experience, our Early Childhood students participate in Music & Dance and Outdoor Classroom specialty classes. Third Year Early Childhood students participate in art

studio once a week as well. Our Early Childhood and Toddler students also have opportunities to explore music, movement, art and cultures throughout the world within their classroom environments.

Field Trips for Early Childhood Students

Teachers plan field trips each month as additional learning opportunities outside the classroom. Parents sign a permission slip upon enrollment that gives permission for their child to attend all field trips. Monthly classroom calendars will announce any scheduled field trips in advance. Parents are often invited to join the class to help transport and chaperone students, and these are opportunities for parent participation hours. You will be able to sign up to assist with individual field trips on your class bulletin board. If you choose not to have your child attend a specific field trip, other off-site arrangements will need to be made for the child on that day. 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.

An MCS field trip t-shirt will be provided when students enter the Early Childhood program. A second shirt may be purchased from the office for \$10. The shirts are all the same color green and help the teachers and chaperones keep children in their view. The classroom teachers keep the shirts and distribute them every field trip day. The shirts are laundered at the school between field trips.

Car Seats

New car seats are purchased based on the manufacturer's recommendations. We follow a standardized specification for five-point and booster seats from the same manufacturer. We will be measuring the height and weight of students at various times throughout the year to ensure that we are following these guidelines:

Five-point seats: 22-40 pounds and 33-43 inches tall

Booster seats: 40-80 pounds and 43-52 inches tall.

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.

Lost and Found

Items that are found and are not clearly labeled with a child's name are put into the Lost and Found bin by the Administrative offices. You may check this bin at any time. Items that are not claimed within several months are given to a charitable organization. We ask that children never bring valuable items or toys to school. The school is not responsible for the loss of items on school property.

Service and Community Outreach Programs

An extremely important element of a Montessori program is the service component. Our school has two main charities, which we support through our annual spring fundraiser, the Fun Run.

Adopt-A-Native-Elder Program

For more than fifteen years, the Montessori Community School has sponsored three Navajo grandmothers through the "Adopt a Native Elder" program. The children collect food and deliver it to our Grandmothers during the Navajo Rug Show at Deer Valley and during another time of year we also collect money to buy gift certificates and wool for the beautiful rugs they weave. The Adopt-A-Native-Elder Program exists to create a bridge of hope between Native Americans and other cultures. It allows us to reach out to one another, share our gifts, and mend the broken circle of our relationship with the Land and the Native Americans who hold it in sacred trust.

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.

Each year our students raise money through our annual Fun Run for our grandmothers. We use the money to purchase gift certificates to Walmart (the only real shopping option that they have and it does afford them the opportunity to buy most items that they need, such as clothing, household and gardening items etc.) and also to purchase several boxes of yarn for them to use to weave the beautiful rugs that they sell at the Deer Valley Rug Show each fall (the money raised from the sale of the rugs is their main source of income for the year). If we collect enough money we also buy gift certificates for the Bashi food stores that operate on the reservations.

Each fall Grandmother Elvira and Grandmother Anita attend the Rug Show. Some of our Elementary students are given the opportunity to attend special cultural events on the Thursday or Friday prior to the first public event and spend time with the grandmothers. Grandmother Elvira has also visited our school to talk to all the children about her life on the reservation. She is a wonderful woman with a generous spirit and the children love the interaction with her.

Children of Ethiopia Education Fund

For over five years, we have supported the COEEF (Children of the Ethiopia Education Fund). Our school is currently sponsoring a number of girls attending school in 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, please visit the COEEF website at www.coeef.org.

Parent Education Opportunities

Parent Education opportunities are held throughout the year to familiarize you with, and answer questions you may have about, the Montessori method as well as other topics of interest. In order for you to fully benefit from your child’s involvement in our Montessori program, we ask that at least one parent from each family attend our Parent Education Opportunities. For your convenience we also have copies of *Tomorrow’s Child*, a Montessori publication, available for checkout from our parent library in the office. There are other educational materials available as well. Time spent attending a Parent Education Opportunity counts towards the required annual Parent Participation Hours.

Progress Reports, Parent Conferences and Ongoing Communications

Our teachers maintain detailed academic and social records on each student, using observation as the primary form of assessment. We do not grade children in our program. We publish a progress report in *Montessori Compass* three times a year that provides details about lessons given and your child’s development and progress. MCS also hosts parent-teacher conferences each Fall and Spring.

It is important for our teachers to maintain ongoing communication with parents to effectively meet the needs of each child. In the event that a significant change occurs in your home, please inform your child’s teacher or the administration as soon as possible. All information is 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 request an appointment at a mutually agreed-upon time.

Notes placed in the teachers' bins in the administrative office, classroom mailboxes, or emails sent to the classroom email address are the best way to contact teachers during the school day. Your cooperation in this matter would be greatly appreciated. Teachers typically respond to emails by 4:30pm each day. School hours are spent with students.

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

The Parent School Alliance (PSA) is our Parent-Teacher Association. The PSA 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 is greatly appreciated!

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 you can:

- Ensure that your child attends school regularly, arrives and is picked up on time each day.
- Stay informed about school events and activities.
- Volunteer whenever possible.
- Inform the teacher of special needs your child may have or difficulties he/she might be experiencing.
- Ask questions and give your ideas.
- Act as an advocate of the Montessori Community School and the Montessori method.

Problem Resolution

If you have a concern about 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 our Staff Development Administrators, nanettecenaruzabeitia@mcssl.com and/or britneypeterson@mcssl.com. If this meeting does not resolve the issue, please schedule a meeting with the Head/Associate Heads of School. Please do not ever talk 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 sometimes the Program Head or the Head/Associate Heads 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 notified for permission to have their child observed by our school psychologist. 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

MCS is dedicated to a philosophy of respect for the individual. All students are provided with an understanding of school rules at an age-appropriate level. Emotional literacy and conflict resolution skills will be taught at the child's level so that s/he can solve problems independently whenever possible. At MCS we use a positive approach with an emphasis on redirecting and helping the student learn appropriate problem solving. 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 Grace and Courtesy.

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.

All students are expected to –

1. Support the Montessori Civil Rights of all.
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 possibly 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 review these reports and discuss each incident with their children. 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 in the classroom or on the playground and, as a core part of our peace curriculum; we use a “Work it Out” method to address interpersonal conflicts. If a teacher is unable to redirect the behavior and the student continues to be disruptive, the student may be sent to the office to 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.
- Possible loss of privileges; e.g., field trips, specialty classes, recess, etc.

As stated in this Handbook, under “Special Needs and Outside Professionals,” 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.

School Directory

A directory of the students’ and parents’ names, addresses and phone numbers for a given classroom can be from the MCS Office. This directory is intended for school use only and must not be sold or used for commercial or other purposes.

Lunch Guidelines/Snacks/Nut Allergies

Unless participating in our current hot lunch program, MCS 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 every child during their lunch period. Glass containers should not be sent to school. Items in the lunchbox should be packaged so that your child can easily open them. Utensils, when needed, should be included. Milk is provided for any child who requests it (please provide a cup for that purpose). 100% juice or water sent in the lunchbox is acceptable. Candy, gum and soda are not allowed.

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). Parents provide the classroom snacks approximately once a month through the “Leader of the Day” program. “Leader of the Day” sign-up sheets are located on the class bulletin board. A new sheet is provided each month. Parents choose a day during that month as their child’s special day. On this day, the child performs special duties to assist his/her classroom teachers, brings in a book to be read during circle time and two classroom snacks to share. Please refer to your child’s classroom bulletin board for a list of acceptable snacks. **Sugary snack items and soda are not allowed.**

We have had and do have students with very serious nut allergies. The Administration reserves the right to designate a classroom as nut free. If your child’s class is Nut Free, you will be informed in the Welcome Packet sent home a couple of weeks before school starts.

Birthdays

We ask parents to involve their children in making a “Timeline of Life” with photographs and captions representing each year of your child’s life. Please schedule a day with your child’s teachers when you can celebrate your child’s birthday and bring the Timeline in. On this day, your child will be invited to do his/her “birthday walk around the sun.” This is a Montessori tradition, where your child walks around a special candle to commemorate each year of his/her life. Parents are invited to participate in this ceremony. Parents and the birthday child are also invited to present a book or a new classroom material to his/her class. You could check with one of your child’s teacher for suggested items. Summer birthdays can also be celebrated during the school year – please schedule an “unbirthday” date with your child’s teachers. Because of the various food allergies in any given classroom, the wear and tear on the floors, and the precedent that can be set as far as competition with gift-giving, we do ask parents not to bring in gifts, cupcakes, or any kinds of desserts on their child’s birthday. Parents could sign their child up for “Leader of the Day” that day and bring in a healthy snack to share with the class.

A Parent Directory is available in the Parent Center of the MCS website. A classroom directory is available from the office at the family’s request with names, addresses and phone numbers of the children in your child’s classroom. 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 unless every student in the class is invited. Also, please caution your child to refrain from discussing party invitations or party activities at school if not all children were invited. This prevents hurt feelings of those children who are not invited.

Cultural Diversity and Honoring Cultural Celebrations

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. In our Toddler/Early Childhood classrooms and in the Extended Day program, we will try to honor as many traditions during the year as possible. Do not be surprised if your child comes home singing a Hanukkah song or talking about Kwanzaa as well as decorating a Christmas tree or learning about the Solstice. Although it is not our intent to “celebrate” the holidays of students from various cultures, sometimes we 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 teacher. We love parents' involvement in the classroom and in the Extended Day program as well.

Dress Code/What to Bring to School

We invite parents to help us ensure that each child is dressed appropriately for each day's activities. On most days, children should be dressed in comfortable, washable play 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. We do not allow 'roller sneakers' because 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 cubby. 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. We recommend hard-soled inside shoes, in case they must be worn outside (for an evacuation drill, for example).

Because children play outside for morning and noon recesses, 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, waterproof gloves, snow pants, a hat and boots are necessary. If attending summer camp, a hat, sunscreen, and a water bottle are necessary.

An extra set of weather-appropriate clothes should be left at school. This will allow us to assist your child in the event of an accident or if clothes need to be changed after outdoor play. The school has a limited supply of extra pants, tops and underclothing. Please provide a small blanket for rest time/story time.

For Toddler students who are not yet toilet trained, diapers and wipes need to be provided to the school on a monthly basis. These items are not provided by the school. When your child's inventory is low, you will receive a reminder notice.

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

School Pictures

Class photographs are typically scheduled during mid-September. All children are photographed for class pictures by a professional photographer. Parents may choose to purchase a photo package. Siblings may also be photographed if a sibling package is purchased.

Photo Release

As stated in the Terms and Conditions from the electronic enrollment form, the Montessori Community School requires your permission to reproduce through printed, audio, visual, or electronic means school activities in which yourself or your child has participated in and which are related to the school's mission. You authorize the school to make reasonable use of recordings of school activities in which yourself or your child are involved in order to train teachers, increase awareness, and promote continuation and improvement of programs through the use of mass media, displays, brochures, websites, and other means of communication. You may request to have your child's information removed from our public marketing materials but due to the nature of digital media the school has no control over parents sharing your child's image online.

In an effort to protect the privacy of each student the Montessori Community School staff may use first names to identify each student within the web page, Montessori Compass and other platforms used internally by the school, parents and organizations associated with the school.

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 chickenpox. 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

The MCS policy is to administer medication only in life-threatening situations. 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. All medications are kept in the school office. Students are not allowed to keep any medications on their person or in their backpacks.

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 (medical action plan). 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. We ask parents to turn any necessary medications (e.g., epiPens) into the office so that we may log and then distribute them to your child's class.

Illness

Colds, flu and other contagious diseases are a serious issue in a school environment because they can spread so rapidly. Parents are asked to keep children home when they show symptoms of illness. If the child is ill, please call the school before 9:00am 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 mucous 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.* Head lice (see below), 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 arrangement of student work spaces in the Montessori classroom and the number of collaborative work spaces and projects, 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 discreetly checked for nits,* and where we can record treatment dates and methods. Students will be allowed to return to class when they are nit-free. Nit removal can take several comb throughs and we ask that parents check the child each day during their treatment. 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. We will follow up, checking students and classes as needed 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 sick area. 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 which require medical attention, including first aid. Parents will be asked to sign the accident report when they pick up their child and 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.

Reporting Abuse

The safety of our students is our utmost priority. MCS follows state guidelines for reporting suspected physical or sexual abuse.

Sunblock

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. ***Please apply sunblock to your child before he or she comes to school.*** Over-exposure can occur, particularly during late spring, summer and early autumn and unfortunately, sunscreen lasts only about 80 minutes before the protective effects diminish significantly. In order for re-application at recess and Extended Day, please bring in a container of sunblock labeled with your child's name and instructions for re-application. You will find sunscreen listed on your child's classroom supply lists. When your child's sunscreen is empty, you will be asked to bring a replacement.

In addition to preparing your children with sunblock, there are other safety habits that we encourage families to incorporate into their routines and which we will encourage at school:

1. Hats: Because the head and neck regions are not covered with clothes they receive much more sun exposure than other parts of the body. Hats are an easy method to reduce sun exposure. *Be sure to send a hat to school with your child each day as well as taking one along on all your outings that include outside play.*

2. *Encourage sun-safe clothing, sunglasses when appropriate.*

MCS Policy on Air Quality

MCS uses the Air Quality Index (AQI) in making decisions about whether to go outside when the air quality is poor. The AQI is calculated for ground-level ozone, particle pollution (PM2.5), carbon monoxide, and sulfur dioxide. We consider all of our children a “sensitive group” and follow EPA guidelines of not going outside when the AQI rises above 100, or beyond the yellow zone.

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 locked at all times. Families are issued key cards/fobs to access the building during the hours of 7:30am to 6:00pm.
- 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 School Messenger, 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. Children new to the program (Toddler and Early Childhood) will have a teacher accompany them to the restroom.
- 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 Procedures

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 is 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.