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TMA

THE MONTESSORI ACADEMY
of Arlington







FAMILY GUIDE

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A WORD FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

We want to extend a warm welcome to all our new and returning families. We are so happy you are part of the TMA community! As we embark on the 2025-26 school year, I want to take a moment to remind you of our mission:

> *To provide quality Montessori education to a diverse student population in partnership with parents.*

While there are so many powerful words in that statement, I'd like to focus on one particular word this year…partnership. In order for our children to be successful on their educational journey, all the adults in their lives must work collaboratively. We need to be positive role models, demonstrating with our actions the behaviors we would like to see in our child. Together we will foster not just the child's academic growth, but also their social, emotional, and physiological growth.

Our Montessori classrooms are also a beautiful partnership of interior and exterior spaces. We encourage the children to explore nature, and develop love and respect for the flora and fauna in our community. We offer the child an environment designed uniquely for their stage of development.

We look forward to growing in partnership with our families this year!

Sincerely,

Crystal Jordan

Head of School









"We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are part of the universe and are connected with each other to form one whole unity."

-Dr. Maria Montessori





DID YOU KNOW?

TMA is one of just under 200 schools fully accredited by the American Montessori Society and one of only three in the Dallas/Fort Worth area!

A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

With students and staff members representing more than 20 countries, we consider TMA to be a small-scale global community!

ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Montessori Academy was formed as a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) private school in 1981 by a group of thirteen families. The school, originally named Arlington Cooperative Montessori School, was established as a parent cooperative that would provide high quality education at a reasonable price for preschool and elementary students. In January 1986, the name of the school was changed to The Montessori Academy (TMA).

TMA has grown from two Early Childhood classrooms and one Elementary classroom to its present size, Infants through sixth grade. A Toddler classroom was added in 1987, Extended Day in 1988, and full-day Early Childhood and Extension classes were added in 1991. The current Elementary schedule of four academic days and Enrichment Friday was added in 1996. A middle school pilot was conducted between 1996 and 1999. Most recently, an Infant class was added in 2014.

TMA received American Montessori Society (AMS) accreditation in November 1994 and became accredited as a private school in Texas through Texas Alliance of Accredited Private Schools (TAAPS) in July 1999. In May 1999, TMA received recognition from the U.S. Department of Education as a "Blue Ribbon School." TMA received accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in June 2008.

The physical home of TMA has changed several times since its formation. A church, a warehouse, and a vacated real estate appraisal building with a concrete playground provided housing for the educational program for 18 years. While the outside facades of the buildings were nondescript, the classrooms within were always beautifully prepared learning environments. Three years of planning went into creating a new facility whose character matches the quality of the educational programs. The current 10.29 acre-site was acquired in May 1997, the ground-breaking was held on October 1, 1998, and the school moved into its present facility in August 1999.

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

The Montessori Academy is chartered as a non-profit corporation in the state of Texas. All parents with currently enrolled children are automatically members of the corporation. The corporation is comprised of school community members. As defined by the Bylaws, teachers, parents, and interested members all have voting power in Board member elections. A Board of Trustees formulates general policies. The Board of Trustees hires the Head of School. The Head of School is held accountable for the day-to-day operation of the school.

CORPORATE STRUCTURE

The Montessori Academy is chartered as a non-profit corporation in the State of Texas and governed by a set of Bylaws. All parents with currently enrolled children are automatically members of the corporation. TMA teachers, parents, and interested members all have voting power according to Bylaw specification. The members of the corporation elect a Board of Trustees which formulates general policies. The Board of Trustees hires the Head of School. The Head is charged with overseeing the effective administration of all aspects of the school's operation, including faculty, staff, and student selection, evaluation, and dismissal. The Head is also responsible for conveying the mission of TMA to the staff, for the professional quality and behavior of the staff, and expanding leadership capacity within the staff.

Parents may serve on the Board of Trustees and on school committees. Parent participation in organizing various fundraising efforts during the school year is especially important. Opportunities are also provided for parents to assist the teaching staff. Parents are expected to attend parent development opportunities each semester to increase their understanding and appreciation of the Montessori Method and its application in our classrooms. Parents are also expected to attend orientations and meetings regarding the business of the corporation. Parents may attend Board meetings if they desire.

DID YOU KNOW?

50% of TMA's 10 acre campus is used for our Outdoor Classroom!



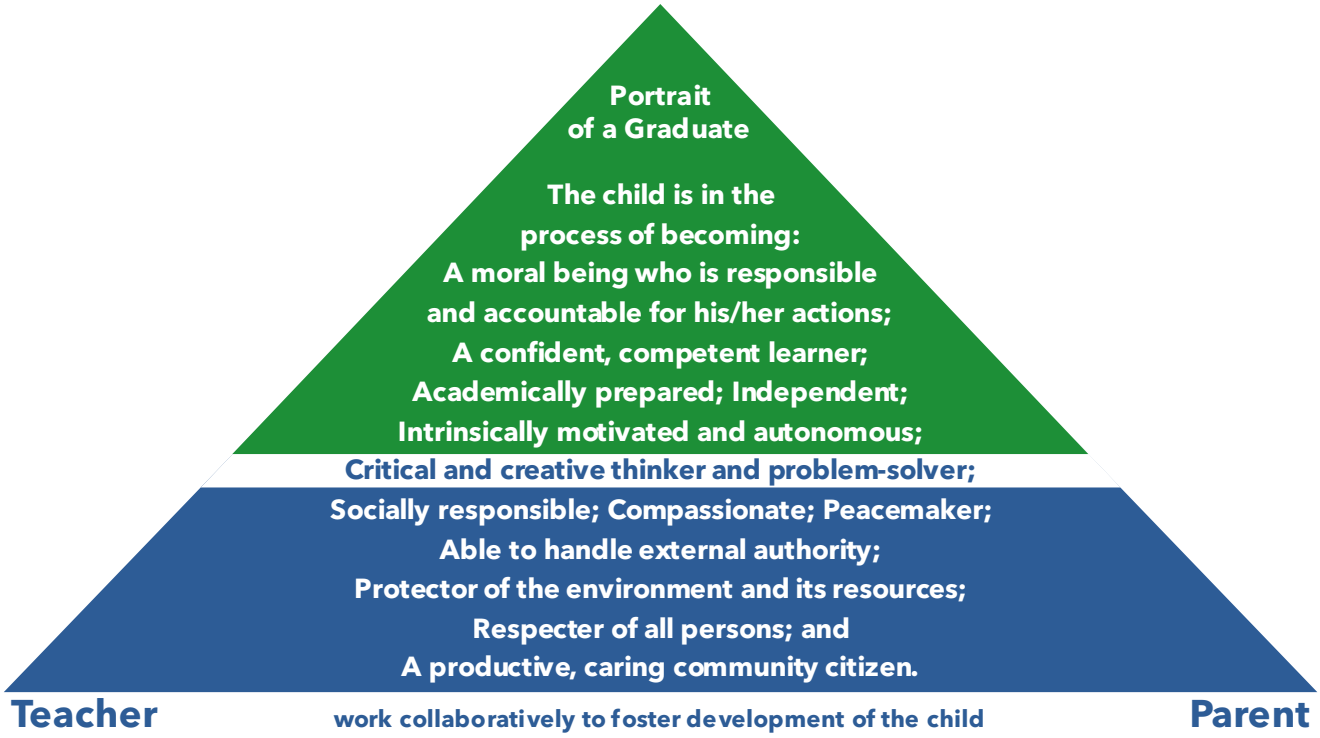
FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Family involvement is an integral component of the culture at TMA. Please see The TMA Community booklet for detailed information about parent involvment opportunities, committees, and the Board of Trustees. A few ways to partner with us in your child's education include:

- Speak with us anytime with our open-door policy
- Learn strategies to improve parenting skills by attending Parent Development Opportunity Events
- Learn more about Montessori with our Family Resource Library
- Work with us on TMA Community Service projects
- Stay informed about important topics in The TMA Connection
- Stay connected with the TMA Family Network Facebook page
- Witness your child's progress and communicate through Bloomz
- Communicate with teachers during Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Participate in Board meetings
- Attend Fundraising Events
- Provide feedback through surveys
- Share ideas and concerns



PARENT-TEACHER-CHILD TRIANGLE









COMMUNICATION



FAMILY COMMUNICATION

- The TMA Connection (weekly e-newsletter)
- Bloomz
- Email
- Parent Alerts/Texting
- TMA Family Network (closed Facebook group)
- Infant daily sheets
- Display boards in the hallway

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences are held three times a year. Together, parents or guardians and the child's teacher(s) will review a progress report that highlights your child's learning. Together you will also develop goals and next steps for your child. Additional conferences with teachers are always available at your request.



TMA LINES OF COMMUNICATION

These are the proper channels to follow in communicating with the school about your child's progress or concerns involving your child or the classroom:

Parent >> Lead Teacher

Communicate directly with your child's teacher:

Your child's teacher is the best source of information about any issue related to or impacting your child in the classroom or school environment. Many times, during the course of a child's development, there will be unique issues to consider or you may have questions about something that occurred during the school day. Working directly with the teacher in a spirit of collaboration is the most effective way to receive additional information, resolve any issue, and build a solid partnership between school and home for future work. To speak to others about the issue may make you feel better, but it will not help your child.

Parent or Lead Teacher >> Administrator >> Head of School

Going beyond the classroom:

At times, you or the classroom teacher may feel the need for a fresh perspective on the issues under discussion. In this case, either the teacher or parent may arrange a meeting which includes parent(s), teacher(s), and the administrator. All meetings with the administrator are by appointment and can be scheduled by contacting the front office. Involving the Head of School is an option of last resort and is to be used only when problem solving efforts have been exhausted. At times, the Head of School may choose to ask another administrator to meet with the parent and teacher or may invite a member of the Board of Trustees to participate.

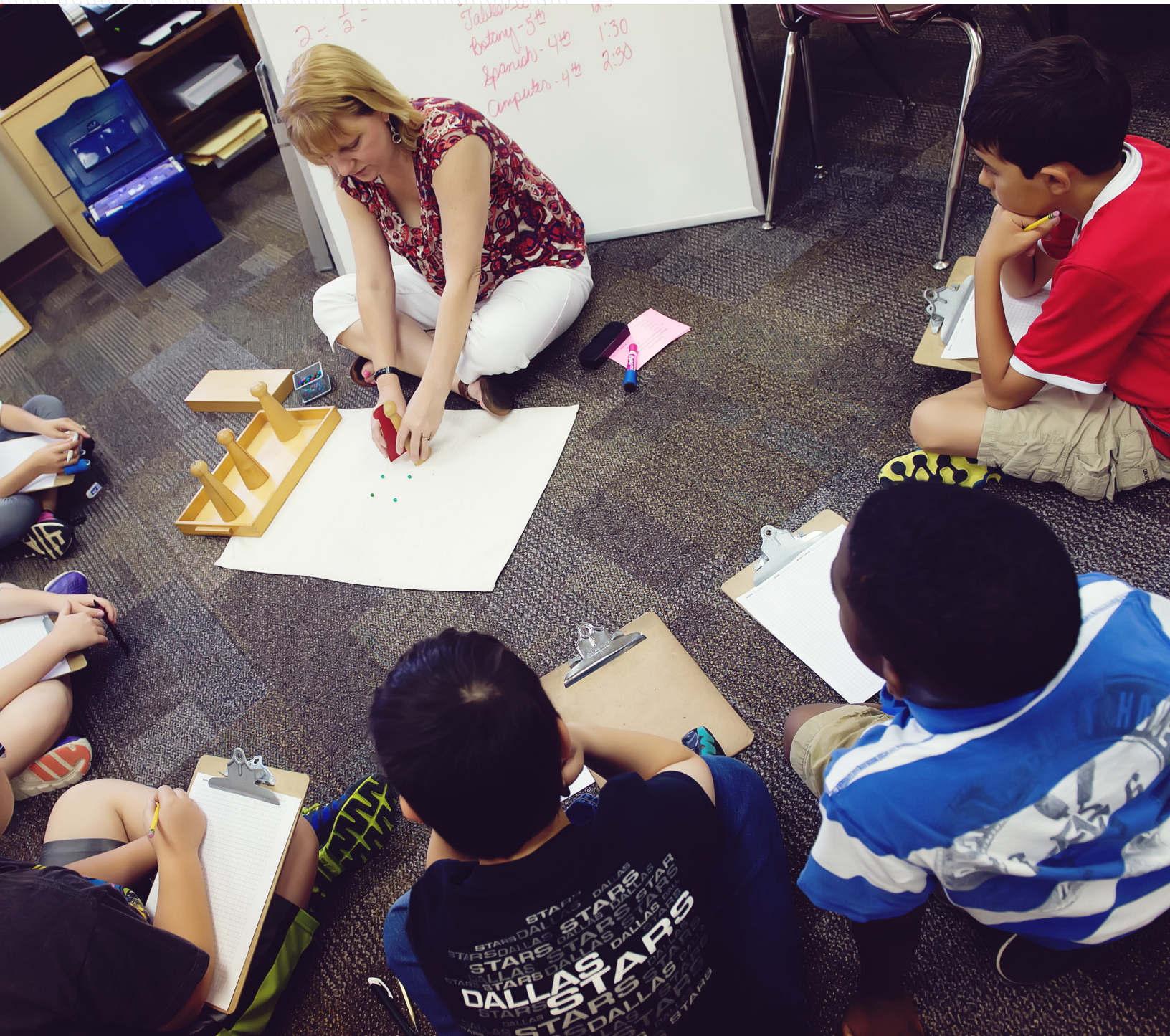
REFERRAL PROGRAM

Reduce your tuition by earning a $500 tuition credit. You will receive a tuition credit for every new student you are responsible for enrolling at TMA.

GUIDELINES:

- For every new student who lists you as the referral source on the application, you will receive a $500 tuition credit.
- There is no limit to the number of tuition credits that can be earned.
- The tuition credit is not cash.
- The tuition credit is applied at the end of the semester following the new student's enrollment date, with a minimum enrollment period of two-months since the start date.

PROGRAM STANDARDS



TMA'S MISSION

To provide quality Montessori education to a diverse student population in partnership with parents.

TMA'S BELIEF STATEMENTS

- We believe that Montessori classrooms are based on the principle of respect: respect for the child, respect between children, respect for individual and cultural differences, respect for the teacher, parents, and for the Montessori materials.
- We believe that children learn best when they are active participants in their own learning and are expected to work to their potential.
- We believe that TMA students are in the process of becoming academic achievers with a love of learning, critical thinkers, creative problem-solvers who use technology as a tool, peacemakers, protectors of the environment and its resources, and responsible, productive, and caring community citizens.
- We believe that the triangle of parent-teacher-child working together facilitates optimal learning and high self-esteem.







TMA'S VISION STATEMENT FOR THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The Montessori Academy, in partnership with parents and community, is committed to providing an affordable, quality Montessori program for students of diverse abilities, economic, and cultural backgrounds in a way that:

- provides individualized learning and group experiences;
- integrates learning across all subjects and makes connections with real-world application of knowledge;
- infuses and integrates technology into the academic curriculum and classroom environment;
- promotes respect for all cultures; and
- develops a sense of community

so that students become academic achievers with a love of learning, critical thinkers, creative problem-solvers who use technology as a tool, peacemakers, protectors of the environment and its resources, and responsible, productive, and caring community citizens.

Vision Statement

To build TMA into a "great" Montessori learning community, sustainable and independent of any one person's leadership, with impact beyond the school community to the local community and greater Montessori professional community.

LICENSURE INFORMATION, PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS, AND AFFILIATIONS

TMA holds accreditation as a Montessori school though the American Montessori Society, and as a private school in Texas through Cognia, formerly known as AdvancED. TMA is also a member of the Texas Private Schools Association (TPSA).

All of our programs through age 12 are also licensed by Texas Health and Human Services. Our most recent licensing inspection report is always posted or can be found online. The local DFPS office is located at 1200 E. Copeland Rd., Ste. 400, Arlington, TX 76011 and can be reached at (817) 792-4400.

AMS Pathway Accredited School

cognia™

TEXAS PRIVATE SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION







AMS CORE COMPONENTS OF A MONTESSORI EDUCATION

The American Montessori Society (AMS) recognizes five core components of a Montessori education:

1. Properly Trained Montessori Teachers
2. Multi-Age Classrooms
3. Use of Montessori Materials
4. Child-Directed Work
5. Uninterrupted Work Periods

Detailed explanations of these components can be found on the AMS website. As an AMS accredited school, TMA meets or exceeds these standards and criteria.



MULTI-AGE GROUPING: BUILDING COMMUNITY

At each level above Toddler, grouping students in small learning communities for a three-year period (sometimes 3.5–4 years in Early Childhood) provides a number of advantages not found in traditional schools. In these multi-age communities, students work and learn together utilizing each other's gifts and strengths to complete the work. The older students serve as role models and mentors for the younger students, and in the process they gain confidence in their own abilities and self-esteem regarding their skill level and expertise. The younger students watch the older ones, and in the process gain a clear vision of what is expected of them. They have the benefit of working with and learning from their peers, as well as the teacher. This small community is a direct preparation for life in the family and the work place. Being able to communicate and to work with others is an important life skill.

Infants and Toddlers are grouped in 18 month communities to support their rapid growth in development at this age.



BALANCE OF AGES, GENDERS, NEEDS, AND LEARNING STYLES

Each small learning community develops its own personality. The placement of children in these communities as they move from one level to another is a very important task. As most of the children have already been in their community for at least one year, it is important that children entering the community fit with the existing community and maintain or add to the balance. Each community needs a blend of learning and personality styles, as well as ability levels, so it truly reflects larger communities.

TRANSITIONS/CLASS PLACEMENT

Several factors determine when children transition to the next age group: chronological age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. Current and future teachers meet with parents during the transition to ensure full understanding of the process. Children are gently integrated into the new environment through a series of classroom visits.

Elementary program placement occurs at the beginning of the school year and is based on chronological age and a set of benchmarks. Children entering this program must be 6 years of age by September 1st.

TMA does not honor parent requests for children to be placed in particular classrooms.

PROGRAM ENRICHMENTS

Extended Day

At TMA, skill-building is not confined to the regular school day! TMA offers extended hours:

- Before Care: 7:00 – 8:30 am
- Extended Day: 3:30 – 4:30 pm
- Extended Day Plus: 3:30 – 6:00 pm

Our Extended Day program is aligned with Montessori philosophy to help provide a consistent experience in which students are able to work and play indoors and outdoors. TMA also offers parent-paid after school activities, such as soccer, dance, taekwondo, science lab, and choir.

Year-Round

TMA offers a 12-month contract for all programs. Infant and Toddler students continue year-round in their classrooms. Early Childhood students enjoy the benefits of remaining in an environment designed to support year-round learning with peers from other Early Childhood classrooms, improving information retention during the summer months. The Upper School (Elementary) offers a separate program to provide for engaging enrichment opportunities during the summer months.







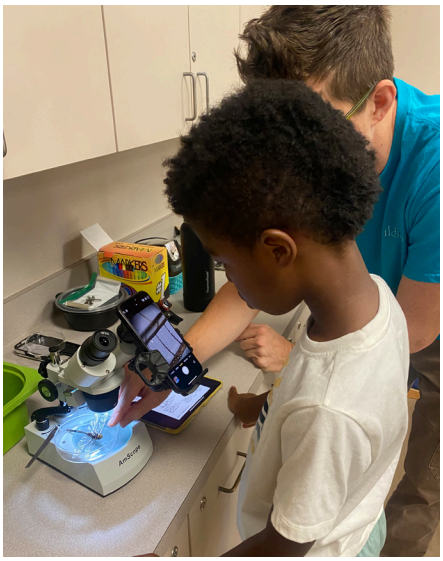


Elementary Enrichment Summer

Our amazing TMA staff, including Montessori credentialed teachers and our enrichment specialists, provide engaging outdoor activities to keep the brain and the body working throughout the summer.







TEACHING STAFF

Parents can rest assured that children enrolled at TMA are in safe, capable hands. All TMA teachers and administrators have been certified in First Aid and CPR Training. This training is recertified every two years.

Background checks are completed for every employee of TMA, all after-school program providers, and volunteers who come into contact with students. This check is completed every two years. Additionally, all employees working in the Licensed Programs undergo an FBI background check.

All of our teaching staff participate in new employee orientation and ongoing professional development throughout each school year. Every classroom is led by a MACTE Montessori credentialed teacher and assisted by highly qualified teaching assistants where appropriate. In our Elementary Program, Enrichment Specialists bring specialized knowledge to our Enrichment classes which include Latin, Spanish, Drama, Music, Art, Science, Health, Conflict Resolution, Computer Lab, and Fitness Education.





DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY

We believe children are in the process of becoming moral beings who are accountable and responsible for their actions. We want children to respect external authority, but not be *controlled* by it. Ultimately, the goal is for them to become self-controlled, self-assessing, and self-correcting. We discuss good and poor *choices*, not good and bad children. A poor choice represents an opportunity for a child to improve his or her problem-solving and critical thinking skills; the Montessori professional guides the process.

The Montessori professional uses discipline and guidance as a tool to facilitate the development process. *Freedom within limits* is the guiding principle. Adults are the limit setters and provide children with choices within those limits. As children make appropriate choices, more freedom may be given. When children make inappropriate choices, the Montessori professional first restates and/or clarifies the expected behavior. Using questions, we *think out loud* and help the child or children acknowledge what has happened, what actions led up to the poor choice, and identify what needs to be done differently next time. Logical consequences are used as learning opportunities, not to punish; they are most effective when related to the situation and must always be age appropriate. Some exhibited behaviors may require outside professional assistance.

Respectful Breaks

Asking a child to take time to calm down, separate from the group and/or observe how others are playing or working is appropriate; forcing a child to sit for a given length of time is not. The goal is changed behavior, not forced compliance. The phrase, "as soon as…," sends a clearer message to the child that there is an expectation for behavior and that they control how quickly they are reintegrated into the group. Montessori professionals should refrain from using the phrase *time out* when talking with children and parents, as there are many practices viewed as time out that are not respectful of the child and work at cross purposes for developing self-control.

Harmful Behaviors

Patterns of behavior that are deemed harmful to self and/or others may be resolved by asking the student to leave school for the remainder of the day. This is a drastic but effective method of solving some behavioral difficulties. If limits are repeatedly tested, parents are again requested to take the child home. To return to school, the student, parents, teacher, and the administrator must agree on a plan of action. If discipline problems persist, The Montessori Academy of Arlington may ask the student to leave our community.

Prohibited Punishments

Discipline associated with food, naps, or toilet training is never used. Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child are also unacceptable forms of discipline. Under no circumstances shall any child be subjected to verbal abuse or corporal punishment, in any manner. We do not engage in harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment including pinching, shaking, biting, or hitting, or requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time. We would never put anything in or on a child's mouth or place a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet. We practice discipline as outlined in our Discipline Philosophy, rather than punishment.

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES



HEALTH & SAFETY PRACTICES

TMA maintains stringent health and safety practices. Our health and safety policies and practices are based on *Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Standards: Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs; Fourth Edition*, a joint collaborative project of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Public Health Association, and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education.

Staff members undergo a thorough screening and hiring process, which includes a background check. All staff members are certified in first aid, CPR, and bloodborne pathogens (infection control). Comprehensive health and safety checklists are completed and routine fire and emergency drills are conducted on a regular basis. In addition, we have an Emergency Action Plan in place. If an emergency requires the school to evacuate and leave the premises, families will be notified via our Parent Alert System about the safety and location of their children.

Visiting the School

Families of enrolled children are welcome to visit at any time during the day; however, this open door policy may not be used to supplement a custody or visitation schedule. We ask that you request a time to observe so there is limited disruption to the classroom. In addition to security measures promoting indoor and outdoor safety on the school grounds, TMA provides its own security keypad system and secured access, ensuring that access is available only to parents/guardians and authorized personnel. To make certain that the school is kept as secure as possible, we ask that you only use the main entrance and do not allow others to come in upon your arrival or departure. Please remember the access code is only for families of enrolled students and may not be shared with other family or friends. Staff members and students have been directed not to open classroom courtyard doors to anyone.

MEDICAL RECORDS

To protect the health of all children and to satisfy state regulations, current medical information for each child is required prior to enrollment. These records, which must meet state immunization and hearing and vision screening requirements, need to be updated when new screenings or immunizations are given. An annual physical is required for children in the Infant, Toddler, and Early Childhood programs.

ALLERGY PREVENTION

Families are expected to notify TMA regarding children's food or environmental allergies. Parents/guardians of children with diagnosed allergies or asthma are required to provide the school with an individualized health care plan, signed by the child's medical provider, detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, care, and all necessary medications (see Medication Administration). A list of children with medically documented food allergies is posted in every classroom throughout the school. Contact with nuts, including peanuts or products containing traces of nuts or oil, can be critical or even fatal to a child with a severe nut allergy. We do our best to keep nut products out of the school. All families and staff are asked to carefully monitor all product ingredients to avoid products containing peanuts. Despite our diligent efforts, it is impossible to eliminate all risk for children with food allergies.



INFECTION CONTROL

All teachers are trained in proper hygiene practices, which include hand-washing procedures, general infection control, safe food handling, and diapering and toileting procedures.

TMA staff will sanitize certain equipment, items, and surfaces using soap and water followed by disinfectant on a regular schedule. The disinfectant can be either a bleach solution or a commercial disinfectant registered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The following practices are performed on a regular basis:

- Infant materials are washed and sanitized daily or after they have been mouthed.
- Floor bed sheets, blankets, and machine-washable fabric toys are washed on a weekly basis or more often if needed.
- Nap mats are sanitized after each use.
- Blankets and washable toys that belong to children are sent home at the end of each week for washing.
- Diapering surfaces are cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- Food preparation surfaces, including tables, are cleaned and sanitized before and after each use.
- Toilets, toilet seats, flushing handles, containers/lids used to hold soiled papers, water tables and water play equipment, work tables, and smooth nonporous floors are cleaned and disinfected daily or whenever there is visible contamination.

DIAPERING

Children's diapers will be checked at least every two hours as well as upon awakening, and will be changed promptly when soiled or wet.

Diapers will be changed in compliance with state licensing and in accordance with requests of families. Children will be encouraged to help with the process in accordance with his/her physical and emotional abilities.

TMA does not allow the use of baby powder during diaper changes. Baby powder can enter a child's lungs, causing swelling and irritation and potentially causing breathing problems. When exposed to the broken skin of a diaper rash, it can also cause an inflammatory reaction in some children. To reduce rubbing and prevent diaper rash, cornstarch or cornstarch powder is a safer choice. See the Medication Administration policy for information regarding the use of diaper cream.

Cloth diapers with a waterproof covering may be used if allowed by licensing. The soiled diaper and covering will be changed as a unit and not reused. Due to the risk of contamination, soiled diapers will not be emptied. Items will be double bagged, sealed, and labeled with the child's name for return home.



TOILETING

Children will begin learning about toileting as soon as signs of readiness are displayed. The sensitive period for toilet awareness is around 15 months old. Adults can help the child with this natural process during this time. This will become an independent part of the child's development when parents and teachers work together to express confidence in the child's ability to feel a sense of accomplishment and success. Children will learn to sit on and be encouraged to use the toilet several times a day. Children will be transitioned from diapers to underwear so that they will feel the sensation of being wet. Children will never be made to feel as though they have done something wrong by having an accident when wearing underpants. They simply clean up or participate in the cleaning up process. Children will only use diapers at nap or at nighttime once success has been achieved with underpants. However, we prefer to use underpants with covers while the child sleeps to further encourage use of underwear. The child's toileting journey will be most successful when the parents and teachers are aligned in their practices.





BITING

Biting is a normal stage of development, commonly seen in infants and toddlers, sometimes even in 3-year-old children. Almost all young children will try biting at least once. Brief episodes of biting do not mean a child is having a social or emotional problem, nor does it mean the family, child, or teacher is to blame. It simply indicates that the child is experiencing a natural stage in his or her development. As with many developmental stages, most biting behaviors end quickly.

In all cases of biting, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten, support the other child in learning a more appropriate behavior, and examine our program to ensure we maintain an environment that is consistent with children's needs.

Our focus will not be on punishment, but rather on effective techniques that address the specific reason for biting. We encourage parents to discuss the behavior with your child, but we also caution that delayed punishment at home, hours after the incident, will not be understood by the child.

Biting may occur for any of the following reasons:

- oral exploration
- teething
- hunger
- fatigue
- lack of awareness that biting hurts
- frustration, anxiety, or stress
- inability to express feelings or needs verbally
- mimicking behavior
- inexperienced peer interactions
- showing affection
- exploring cause-and-effect relationships
- exploring holding on to and letting go of relationships
- making an impact
- impulsiveness and lack of self-control
- excitement and overstimulation

INFANT SLEEP POSITIONS & FLOOR BED FURNISHINGS

We follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the Association of SIDS and Infant Mortality Programs, which strongly recommend that infants be placed to sleep on their backs in a crib. This is the best sleep position for your baby. Additionally, as recommended by AAP, to reduce the risk of SIDS, suffocations, entrapment, and strangulation, no soft items of any kind may be placed on the floor bed with a child under the age of one. This includes blankets, pillows, and toys.

The AAP recommends no covering or sleepers or other sleep clothing as alternatives to blankets. Swaddling is only allowed using a swaddle sack. Swaddling using a square cloth of any kind is not allowed. The use of swaddle sacks will be discontinued when any of the following occur:

- the child begins to roll over,
- the swaddle sack begins to limit the child's movements, or
- the child becomes overheated.



REPORTING ABUSE & NEGLECT

TMA provides resources for parents and staff and partners with appropriate community organizations to increase awareness of child abuse and neglect. If parents suspect child abuse or neglect, please contact the administrator. The Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline is available at (800) 252-5400.

Individuals working with children are mandated reporters and are required by law to make a report to the appropriate state authorities if they have reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect. All staff receive annual training in identifying and reporting suspected abuse and neglect. Child Protective Services will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It is the agency's role to determine if the report of abuse or neglect is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. TMA will cooperate fully with all appropriate authorities and will maintain confidentiality. Our foremost concern is always the protection of the child.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In any emergency situation, the safety of children is of the utmost importance and we will enact our Emergency Action Plan. TMA complies with the state regulations requiring that emergency procedures are followed in the event of a fire or tornado, and that all employees and students understand these procedures. The school works closely with the City of Dalworthington Gardens (DWG) Police and Fire Departments to ensure appropriate preparedness. Fire drills are conducted monthly; severe weather drills and lockdown drills are conducted quarterly. During a crisis situation, school personnel will follow practiced procedures and, if necessary, instructions from the City of DWG emergency personnel. In case of medical emergencies, parents will be immediately notified and the child will be taken to the nearest emergency room if necessary.

When an immediate medical response is required, the following procedures will be utilized:

- First aid techniques will be administered and 9-1-1 and/or the poison center will be called.
- Child will be transported by emergency personnel to a local hospital.
- The parent/guardian or emergency contact will be called as soon as it is practical.
- A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and will stay until the parent/guardian or emergency contact arrives.

In the event of a crisis, individuals identified in the child's emergency contact list will be notified by phone of the operation's status including the approximate duration of the emergency and when children will be available for safe pickup.

Please ensure changes to contact information are immediately updated in ParentsWeb to ensure receipt of important communication.



POLICIES & PROCEDURES



ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE

Our enrollment process for new families includes the following steps:

Step 1: Schedule a visit.

All of our visits are scheduled online and held during the morning hours so visitors can observe students during their morning work cycle.

Step 2: Complete an Online Application and pay the $300 Application Fee.

Complete an online application and submit $300 application fee. The application fee is fully refundable until an enrollment contract is signed.

A 3-day classroom evaluation will be scheduled for students applying for a space in the Elementary program; a 3-week trial may instead be offered during the summer months when an evaluation is not possible.

Step 3: Visit with the Head of School.

During this meeting, TMA's vision will be discussed as well as the family's expectation for their child's education, information about the classroom evaluation (if applicable) and a detailed tuition payment schedule.

Step 4: Accept offer and complete enrollment process.

Upon acceptance, a link is sent for Online Enrollment which includes the Enrollment Contract. Upon completion and submission of Online Enrollment and the Enrollment Contract, the Application Fee becomes non-refundable. Your enrollment is complete once all Online Enrollment paperwork has been submitted and your first tuition payment has been received (within one week of enrollment).

ADMISSION DETERMINATION

The following priorities are observed in determining admission:

- Classroom space availability
- Currently enrolled students
- Siblings of currently enrolled students
- Balancing of ages and genders in each classroom
- Transfers from other Montessori schools
- Date of application
- Student evaluation

If classes are full, prospective students will be placed in a wait pool. Returning students will be given priority over new students in the wait pool. The Head of School, with input from the admissions and teaching staff, makes the final decision regarding student enrollment and class placement. Parents will be notified in a timely manner regarding their child's admission status and class placement.



FORCE MAJEURE

All contracts include a Force Majeure clause which reads as follows:

TMA and [Parent(s)] agree that TMA shall not be liable or in breach of this Contract, and performance of its obligations under this Contract shall be suspended, in the event of a force majeure or other event or occurrence beyond TMA's control. This shall include but is not limited to, a war; riot; fire; flood; tornado; hurricane; lightning strike; hailstorm; earthquake; other extreme weather event or natural disaster; loss of electrical or other utility service; act of terrorism; local, state, or federal governmental action; epidemic or pandemic; or any other event or occurrence which renders TMA's performance of its obligations under this Contract impossible, illegal, impracticable, or inadvisable.

In such event, TMA's performance of its obligations shall be suspended until such time, in TMA's discretion and judgment, TMA determines that it may safely resume its operations and performance or its obligations under this Contract.

[Parent(s)] understands and agrees that during the period of suspension of TMA's performance, [Parent(s)] shall continue to make payment of all tuition and fees owed under this Contract and will not be refunded any such payments. Provided, however, that should the period of suspension exceed thirty (30) calendar days, [Parent's] payment obligations shall be excused beginning the 31st day after commencement of the period of suspension until the date TMA resumes its operations and performance of its obligations under this Contract, at which time [Parent's] payment obligations shall resume.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

It is the policy of The Montessori Academy to maintain a school environment that is free from discrimination and to conduct its educational practices, admissions program, financial aid policies, hiring, and other school-administrative programs on the basis of an individual's qualifications and abilities. The Montessori Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (unless it is required as a bona fide occupational qualification), sex, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law.

We require that all of our parents take personal ownership of community responsibilities as a condition of student enrollment. These responsibilities include required community service hours, attendance at school business meetings, participation in fundraising projects, attendance at Parent-Teacher Conferences, and other duties as outlined in this guide.

An enrollment contract must be completed for each student enrolled at The Montessori Academy. An addendum to the enrollment contract may be added in the event of conditional acceptance of a student for enrollment. The addendum will state the conditions of enrollment and consequences for failing to meet the conditions.

The parent or guardian's obligation to pay the tuition and fees for the full academic year is unconditional and no portion of fees paid or outstanding will be refunded or canceled in the event of the student's absence, withdrawal, or dismissal from the school. Student transcripts will not be released unless all tuition and fees have been paid in full.

The Montessori Academy reserves the right to remove any student from the school permanently or temporarily and may immediately terminate the enrollment contract if deemed necessary in the best interests of The Montessori Academy or the student. The Montessori Academy may remove any student from the school permanently or temporarily and may immediately terminate the enrollment contract if the tuition and fees for such student are more than fifteen (15) days past due. The Board has the authority to make decisions regarding student enrollment contracts.

The Board is charged with the responsibility to ensure the fiscal well being of TMA and, therefore, enforces the terms of the enrollment contract. Families who sign an enrollment contract are contractually obligated for payment for the full length of the contract. In the event that a student withdraws or is dismissed during the school year, a claim will be filed with the tuition refund insurance company, provided the tuition refund plan premium has been paid and the student has attended more than 14 consecutive calendar days beginning with the student's first day of attendance in the academic year. The financially responsible person, indicated by signature on the enrollment contract, is responsible for payment of the remaining balance once the insurance payment has been determined.

RE-ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE

Re-enrollment for the following school year is open during the month of February. Parents are provided with the Tuition and Fee Schedule, a notification of any policy changes, and a link to complete the online re-enrollment process. The Re-enrollment Fee of $150 per student is automatically billed to each account once Online Re-enrollment is complete and is due with the March 1 tuition payment. Program availability can only be guaranteed for families who complete the Online Re-enrollment process during the open re-enrollment period.

TUITION & FEES

For students new to TMA, a non-refundable $75 Application Fee is due with the completed application. A non-refundable $325 Registration Fee is due when the contract is submitted. There are two options available for the payment of tuition:

1. Installment Payment

Tuition is an annual amount divided into monthly payments. Parents selecting the installment payment option are required to participate in the Tuition Refund Plan (TRP). For newly enrolled families, your 1st payment and full TRP payment are due within 1 week of submitting your Enrollment Contract through Online Enrollment. Your remaining payments are due according to the Tuition and Enrollment Fee Worksheet provided during enrollment. For returning families, your first payment, along with your full TRP payment, is due May 1st. Payment is due the 1st day of each month and is considered late if received after the 10th of the month. On months when the 10th falls on a weekend, payment is considered late if received after the next full business day.

2. Prepaid Annual

For newly enrolled families, your 1st payment is due within 1 week of submitting your Enrollment Contract through Online Enrollment, with the balance due before the first day of attendance or May 1st if starting at the beginning of a new year. For returning families, tuition is paid in full and due before the first day of attendance or May 1st if starting at the beginning of a new year. If a child is withdrawn for any reason, no portion of the fees paid will be refunded by TMA. Under this payment plan, participation in TRP is optional. The TRP provides reimbursement for a portion of your prepaid tuition.

Other Fees

Extended Day fees are paid on the 1st of the month for which Extended Day is used. Extended Day rates are payable on a monthly basis and cannot be prorated.

A $50 Contract Change Fee will be assessed when parents initiate changes to the enrollment contracts for the educational program, Extended Day, or summer programs. The fee is effective on or after the first day of the program enrolled. After January 1 of each school year, no changes can be made to shorten the length of the current year enrollment contract.

Additional fees may be associated with special activities or field trips.

If Tuition and Extended Day Fees are not paid by the due date, a $50 Late Fee will be assessed. If payment in full has not been made by the 15th of the month, the child may be removed from the school. Tuition must be current before the Re-enrollment Fee is accepted for the following school year. Student records will not be released if the account is delinquent. Please reach out to the business office if you are having issues with your tuition payments.

Discounts

For families with two or more children enrolled concurrently, TMA offers a 10% tuition discount for each additional child enrolled. The discount is applied to the child with the later initial enrollment date or to the younger child(ren) when enrollment date is the same. We do not offer discounts for children enrolled in the Infant program.

We also offer a $150 new student registration discount for staff and siblings of currently enrolled students.



Tuition Credit

For every new student who lists you as the referral source on the application, a $500 Tuition Credit will be applied to your account. See Referral Credit for details.

Withdrawal

The school must be notified in writing 30 days in advance of the withdrawal date. If TRP insurance has been purchased, a Tuition Refund Plan Dismissal or Withdrawal Certificate must be completed by the parent/guardian and returned to the Business Office, prior to the withdrawal date. Student transcripts will not be released unless all tuition and fees have been paid in full.

Scholarships

TMA's admission process seeks to select those families who we believe would be most compatible with a Montessori approach to education. Our admission decisions are made independent of a family's ability to pay full tuition. We are acutely aware of the sacrifices families make in order to provide a TMA education for their child(ren). Additionally, TMA seeks to achieve socio-economic diversity within our student body. It is our belief that diversity of talent and background strengthens and enriches the school community. To that end, need-based financial aid is available. See our Financial Aid Policy for requirements and procedures.

Pete Goad Scholarship

The Pete Goad Scholarship was established in 2018 and is available to those who are eligible for financial aid. This scholarship is awarded in addition to any other financial aid received from TMA.

Emergency Financial Aid

TMA recognizes that from time to time, emergencies may arise in a family that makes it temporarily difficult to make tuition payments. Funds may be available to assist families at such times. If emergency financial aid is needed, the family must make a written request to the Head of School for referral to the Financial Aid Committee. This request should include details of the difficulty and the length of time the family anticipates aid will be needed. Emergency financial aid will be considered for all children enrolled at TMA. Emergency financial aid will be given at the discretion of the FAC based upon the circumstances, available funds and length of time aid will be needed. Emergency aid will not carry over to the next school year. If a family situation has not resolved itself by the beginning of the next school year, it will be necessary to apply for financial aid.

COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS OR PAYMENT

As a condition of our student enrollment contract and in line with our school's culture, we expect our parents to provide five hours per family per semester (a total of 10 hours per school year) of on-site or prearranged at-home work hours. We refer to these work hours as Community Service hours. Community Service performed outside of the TMA community which is to be used towards TMA Community Service hours requires approval in advance from the Head of School. In lieu of this obligation, parents may pay $300 for the full school year.

To ensure that the five hours per semester commitment is fulfilled by all parents, a $150 Fall Semester Community Service Fee deposit is required with the August tuition payment and a $150 Spring Semester Community Service Fee is required with the January tuition payment.

- For each hour up to five hours worked during the fall semester, $30 per hour will be applied to the $150 Spring Semester Community Service Fee.
- For each hour not worked during the fall semester, $30 per hour will be retained by The Montessori Academy.
- For each hour worked during the spring semester up to five hours, $30 per hour may be deducted from the last tuition payment.

All hours must be logged into the Service Hours tab on the FACTS Family Portal. TMA families are responsible for logging their own hours. A reconciliation will be made in December and May. Hours not logged for the fall semester by December 15th, or the spring semester by May 10th, will not be counted in the five hours per semester requirement. Those families who have not fulfilled or made arrangements to fulfill their semester Community Service hours will be issued a statement. Unfulfilled Community Service hours will be charged at the rate of $30 per unfulfilled hour.

If the Community Service commitment is fulfilled by working 10 or more hours during the school year, families will be given an opportunity to designate the appropriation of the $150 fee deposit. If the designation is not made by the stated deadline, the Community Service Fee deposit will be considered forfeited by parents. No refunds will be made after the due date. All forfeited Community Service Fee deposits are designated to the Scholarship Fund.

Please help us maintain Community Service hours in a positive and spirited manner. To provide a fair and just system for all of our members, we will maintain strict enforcement of this policy.



DROP OFF & PICK UP

General Guidelines

- Please ensure that everyone who will be dropping off or picking up your child is familiar with these procedures.
- Please use patience during drop off and pick up as safety is our primary concern. Obey all stop signs and drive slowly while in the parking lot. If using the carline, please do not exit your vehicle or pass other vehicles in the line.
- Give hugs and kisses prior to leaving the house and speak positively about the child's upcoming day. Say a quick, happy goodbye when the teacher or administrator opens t he door for your child.
- Please leave all toys and electronics at home to ensure a smooth drop off for your child. Separation is more challenging when a child is asked to part with a favorite toy.
- If your child is in Early Childhood or Elementary, please wait for an administrator or teacher to open the door and greet your child.
- Please remember the parking lot is a cellphone free area.

Infant and Toddler

Families with infants and toddlers should park in a parking space (not the fire lane), then, using the crosswalk, walk your child to the classroom courtyard entrance. For families enrolled in Before Care, this can take place anytime between 7:00–8:15 am. All other students should be dropped off between 8:15–8:30 am.

Please follow the same parking procedure when you arrive to pick your child up. Half day toddler students should be picked up between 11:15–11:30 am, full day students between 3:15–3:30 pm, Extended Day students between 4:15–4:30 pm, and Extended Day Plus students between 4:30–6:00 pm. Please do not use a car seat or stroller to transport your child.

Early Childhood and Elementary

Early Childhood drop off and pick up occur at the south pavilion and Elementary at the north pavilion (see map). In order to support your child's growing independence, we ask that all families use carline. During afternoon carline, children will only be released to authorized adults through carline. For safety, we are not able to dismiss students to anyone who walks up to the pavilion.

Your child should be dropped off in the morning between 8:15–8:30 am. It is incredibly important that your child arrives on time, leaving time to greet friends and teachers before the morning work cycle begins. Students arriving after 8:40 am will be counted as tardy. A note from the doctor or professional is required if arriving after 10:00 am.

For Early Childhood half day students, please check in at the front desk between 11:15-11:30 am for pick up. First afternoon carline occurs from 3:15–3:30 pm, with second carline occurring between 4:15-4:30 pm. Students not picked up on time will join Extended Day and charges will be applied to your account. Students participating in Extended Day Plus can be picked up in the Multipurpose room between 4:30–6:00 pm. Please ensure you connect with the staff member supervising your child before you leave.

Separation

Short and sweet is best. Please say goodbye at drop off and leave promptly. This helps with a smoother transition for children. Separation anxiety is a normal part of development. If a child has trouble with the transition, a teacher or administrator will be there to offer comfort.

Tardiness

It is very important to bring your child to school on time. This allows all children to begin their day together as well as creating routine for your child. Late arrivals do not allow the teacher to properly greet your child or for your child to greet their friends as the work cycle has already begun. When at all possible, schedule routine medical and dental visits later in the day. If a late arrival is unavoidable, please ring the bell at the front entrance and a member of the administrative team will walk your child to class. If you are running late to pick up your child, please call or text the front office so we can communicate that information to the teacher. When you arrive, please ring the bell at the front entrance.

Pre-Arranged Early Drop Off or Late Pick Up

If you know you will need to drop off your child early or pick up your child late, you can call the front desk to request pre-arranged drop off or pick up. The cost for this is $20 per hour if you do not have an Extended Day contract, or $10 per hour if you do have an Extended Day contract (minimum one hour charge). Pre-arranged drop off or pick up can be scheduled on a space available basis.

ADHERENCE TO CONTRACTED SCHEDULE

The Early Drop Off/Late Pick Up Fee was established to alleviate the chronic problem of children being dropped off earlier than their designated class time or left for prolonged periods of time after class or Extended Day. This is not only a concern for the child, but it is also not respectful of the TMA employee's time. This policy applies to all members of the community. In case of a late carpool driver, only the assigned late driver will be responsible for assessed late charges.

CHILD CUSTODY

To ensure that TMA is in compliance with any court orders pertaining to the custody of your child, we require a certified copy of the current custody order. It shall be the responsibility of the parent who is granted primary custody or possession of the child (being the one with whom the child primarily lives) to provide TMA with a copy of the current custody decree or agreement (whether an agreed order or not). This information will be kept in a confidential file and used by TMA for the safety and well-being of your child. If a new custody order is issued, or a restraining or protective order has been issued by the court, it shall be the primary custodial parent's responsibility to promptly provide a certified copy of such order to TMA. TMA will remain neutral in all custody matters. By policy, TMA staff may not serve as character witnesses or otherwise be involved in custody proceedings unless served with a court-ordered subpoena. TMA may not serve as a visitation site. TMA will not tolerate parent disruptions due to custody disagreements. Such disruptions may result in the removal of your child from TMA. TMA cannot be and is not responsible for enforcing terms of visitation or custody agreements. Parent and parents, for purposes of this policy, shall include and refer to, if applicable, a grandparent or grandparents or other individual(s) with court-ordered custody and/or visitation rights.

ATTENDANCE, TARDINESS, AND ABSENCE

The Montessori classroom is a prepared learning environment and includes long, uninterrupted blocks of work time and the use of concrete materials and interactive group lessons, particularly in the Elementary classroom. The lessons are critical to the academic and social development of your child. These lessons cannot be recreated after the teachable moment has passed. Maximum benefit is achieved, for an individual child and the classroom community, when students attend regularly and are on-time each day. Families are strongly encouraged to schedule vacations, routine medical appointments, and long weekends during regularly scheduled vacation periods and after school hours.

Toddlers are very sensitive to a daily routine and should arrive on time as much as possible. Arriving between 8:15-8:30 each day supports consistency in their work cycle, snack/mealtime, rest, and outdoor activities. The predictability of the routine helps toddlers to feel secure and positively influences their emotional, cognitive, and social development. Having a routine will also create manageable expectations that allow toddlers to build emotional resilience, such as saying goodbye each morning at drop-off.

Early Childhood and Elementary students begin their 2-3 hour work cycle promptly at 8:30 am, so it is of the utmost importance for students to arrive early enough to place belongings in the cubby and enter the classroom before class begins. Students will be counted as tardy if they are not in class by 8:40 am. Students who do not arrive by 10:00 am will be marked absent and may not attend the rest of the school day unless arriving from a medical or professional appointment with a note from the doctor or professional.

Excessive absences impact the progress of an individual student; excessive tardies impact not only the student, but they disrupt the learning environment for all students. Just one child arriving late breaks the concentration and focus children have established in the classroom through their regular morning routines. Teachers will meet with parents of children who are consistently absent or tardy. If the problem continues, a conference will be held with the Head of School. If the tardiness problem continues after the conference is held, the student may not be offered re-enrollment for the following year.

The law requires a record of absence and the causes of absence; therefore, the school must be notified of any absence and cause. If a child is absent three (3) days and the office has not been notified, a call will be made to determine the cause of absence.

STUDENT RECORDS

A file is kept for each student. Access to the information in the student files is limited to the student's parents, the student's teachers, the administrative staff, and the Board of Trustees.

Requests for student records to be sent to another school must be approved by parents. Releasable information includes the objective evaluation of the student's performance as recorded on Progress Reports, standardized test reports, and other information requested by parents. Psycoeducational evaluation reports or other diagnostic reports will only be released after we have received written permission from parents. Student records will not be released if the account is delinquent.

Student files will be retained for a period of seven years after the student has left the school. Student Accident Reports and standardized test reports for elementary students will be maintained permanently.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Classroom observations are encouraged. If you are interested in sitting in the classroom and observing, please call the office to make an appointment. Observations within the classroom will be by appointment only to avoid having more than one observer per class period. We will provide you with an observation visit form so that we may record your experiences during your visit. You will be asked to fill out a form each time you observe a classroom. Since we have many visitors and wish to keep the children's day as normal as possible, we ask that you follow these instructions:

- Please enter and leave the classroom you are to observe as quietly as possible.
- Sit in the designated chair.

- Do not initiate conversation with the children or attempt to attract their attention. If a child speaks to you, please answer him or her as briefly as possible. Quickly tell the child that you are there to watch him or her work.
- Please do not initiate a conversation with a teacher who is working with children. Note questions you have, and the teacher will be happy to reach out to you at a later time.

Please realize that children may react to your presence in the class with behaviors not exhibited on a regular basis.

BABYSITTING

Staff members are not permitted to babysit for children who are in their class. To support the image of staff members as professionals, TMA strongly discourages staff members from babysitting for any TMA families. If a staff member does babysit for a family whose children attend TMA, the Head of School must be notified in writing. Despite written notice to the Head of School, these arrangements are not sanctioned by TMA and services must be provided outside school premises and with the understanding that such arrangements, liability, and payment for services is solely between the staff member and the child's family.



CHILD ILLNESS POLICY

TMA's policy on child illness is based on Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, *Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers*. TMA understands that it is difficult for a parent/guardian to leave or miss work. We suggest that alternative arrangements be made for occasions when children should remain at home or need to be picked up due to illness. Exclusion from the school is sometimes necessary to reduce the transmission of illness or because the school is not able to adequately meet the needs of the child.

Children should be excluded from attending school for the reasons outlined below:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in all activities including outdoor play.
- The illness results in a greater need for care than teachers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in the class.
- The child has one of the following, unless medical evaluation by a health-care professional indicates that the child can be in attendance:
    - Oral temperature of 101°F or higher or armpit temperature of 100°F or higher AND, has behavioral changes or other signs and symptoms of illness.
    - The child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease. Please see the Reportable Communicable Diseases policy.
    - Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as:
        - lethargy,
        - abnormal breathing,
        - uncontrolled diarrhea (2 or more loose, watery stools in 24 hours),
        - two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours,
        - rash with fever,
        - mouth sores with drooling,
        - behavior changes, or
        - other signs that the child may be severely ill.

A child who was ill may return when he/she is free of symptoms of illness, without the use of medication, for 24 hours or you have obtained a health care professional's statement that the child no longer has an excludable disease or illness.

For severe illnesses, a health-care professional must provide medical documentation that indicates that the child is not contagious and can be included in all school activities. If the diagnosis is a communicable disease, please see the Reportable Communicable Diseases policy.

We can only take oral and armpit temperatures. Rectal temperatures can only be taken by persons with specific health training in this procedure.

On average, young children experience eight to ten illnesses a year. If a child in care is ill, it may be more difficult for families, staff, and children to balance their respective needs. We are committed to implementing policies that balance and respect the needs of children, families, and staff in these circumstances.

Child Wellness Check

If your child appears to be ill when brought to school and he or she cannot be made comfortable, you will be asked to take your child home. If we feel that your child is well enough to attend school but may be becoming ill, we will monitor your child and update you as necessary.



REPORTABLE COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

When TMA is notified that a child enrolled or an employee has a (suspected) reportable infectious disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the Department of Public Health. Authorities may require further information, testing, or preventive measures.

TMA will give serious consideration to all recommendations made by the public health agencies in order to promote the health and safety of staff members and the children and families we serve. We believe it is extremely important to notify families about exposure so their children can receive preventive treatment, if available.

Reportable communicable diseases include:

- Bacterial meningitis
- Chicken pox
- Diphtheria
- Haemophilus influenza
- Hepatitis A
- Measles (including suspected)
- Meningoccocal infection (invasive)
- Pertussis
- Poliomyelitis (including suspected)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella congenital and non-congenital (including suspected)
- Tetanus (including suspected)
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness

INJURIES

Injuries will be promptly treated by a staff member and parents will be notified by receiving a copy of a completed Accident/Incident Report form and/or by telephone. Parents will receive a short report which documents how, when, and where an accident or incident occurred. It is TMA policy not to name any other children involved in an accident or incident. We ask that parents respect this policy and not ask staff members the name(s) of other children. Although we do our best to complete Accident/Incident Report forms in a timely fashion, please understand our priority is to treat the child and occasionally reports are not completed until the end of the business day.



MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

Every child has an occasional need for medication. We encourage you to discuss with your child's medical provider dosing schedules or once-a-day regimens that can be administered at home. You are also welcome to come to TMA to administer medication for your child during the day, but we ask that you do so away from the other children. When such options are impractical, TMA can be authorized to administer medications. Such occasions are governed by specific rules and state regulations. All medications, including non-prescription acetaminophen and antihistamines, will require a parent's or guardian's signed Authorization for Administration of Medication form. Non-prescription medication necessary for more than three days requires a written order from the child's medical provider.

The current prescription label from the pharmacy with complete information and instructions will suffice as the medical provider's authorization for prescription medication. If the label does not include all necessary information, administration instructions signed by the medical provider will be required. Unfortunately, TMA cannot accept physician orders signed by parents/guardians who are physicians.

An electronic medication log is used to track doses; all unused medications will be returned to parents/guardians. We ask that the first dose of any new medication be given at home to note any side effects. We are unable to administer expired medications of any kind.

Designated staff members will administer medication according to the 5 Rights of Medication:

1) Right Child;
2) Right Medication;
3) Right Dose;
4) Right Method;
5) Right Time



General Medication Rules

All prescription and non-prescription medication must be brought to TMA in the original container and labeled with the child's full name, instructions (precise dosage, time to be administered), current date, and name and telephone number of physician, where necessary. Medication requiring spoons or other dosage implements cannot be given unless all implements are provided and labeled with the child's name.

Medication cannot be administered in an infant's bottle without corresponding orders from the child's medical provider.

All medications must be handed directly to front office staff. Please do not place medications, including ointments, lotions, and lip balms, in lunch bags, backpacks, or a child's cubby.

Changes to a child's medication/dosage require a new Authorization for Administration of Medication form and, where applicable, an updated prescription or note from the child's medical provider.

Non-prescription medications including antihistamines, acetaminophen, and cough drops require written authorization from the child's medical provider if:

- the medication is not designated for the age of the child,
- if the instructions specify "consult a physician" for the age of the child,
- if the request is for a higher dosage than what is prescribed on the label, or
- if it is to be used for more than three days.

Medication for Chronic Conditions

Children with chronic illnesses such as severe allergies or asthma, or those children with special circumstances, must have an individualized health care plan on file from the child's medical provider such as these: Sample Allergy Action Plan or Sample Asthma Action Plan. Professional training for staff caring for the child will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian. New medications, those not included on the child's individualized care plan, or changes to doses or instructions for existing medications are subject to the General Medication Rules. Information must be updated annually.

As-Needed Medications

As-needed medications are non-prescription, over-the-counter (OTC) medications such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or antihistamines. These are given to a child for a specific reason when the child presents with mild symptoms. These medications are not usually needed on a continuous basis, but are administered as needed, rather than on a scheduled basis.

OTC medications to be used on a scheduled basis for three or fewer days require parents to complete the Authorization for Administration of Medication form, which must be dropped of at the front desk with the medication. These are differentiated from as-needed medcations, which are are not scheduled. As-needed medications and OTC medications which are used for more than three days will require:

- written authorization from the child's medical provider,
- the reason to administer the medication (e.g., insect bite sensitivity)
- the dosage,
- administration according to the instructions on the medication label or written instructions provided by the child's medical provider.
- a start date and an end date, and be written for no longer than one year, and
- the parent/guardian to be notified each time the medication is given.

Fever-reducing medications such as acetaminophen cannot be administered by staff or parents/guardians so that a child can remain at TMA. Such medications can only be administered to reduce a fever while a child awaits pick-up, and only for children with signed as needed instructions on file. Children can return after being

fever free for 24 hours with no other symptoms (see Illness Policy).

Orajel: Due to the recommendation of the FDA and the AAP, benzocaine products, such as Orajel, can only be administered to children less than two years of age with a medical provider's written permission, and not for more than 7 days.

Non-Prescription Topical Ointments

Before staff can administer any non-prescription topical ointments (e.g., diaper cream, sunscreen, Vaseline, lip balm, and other ointments free from antibiotic, antifungal, or steroidal components) to a child, TMA requires written authorization signed by the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian should provide a completed Authorization for Application of Nonprescription Ointments form and instructions. Duration of administration cannot exceed one year.

If the child has open and/or oozing sores, the ointment can be applied for three consecutive days with written authorization and instructions from the parent/guardian. Written authorization from a medical provider will be required after three days or any time within the three-day period if it appears the sores are worsening.

Diaper Rash Prevention: Diaper cream may be applied to a child as a protective measure after diapering to help prevent diaper rash or to a child with a mild diaper rash. Duration of administration cannot exceed one year. If a child has diaper rash that persists and/or has a rash that is red, irritated, and has open, oozing areas, the child should be seen by a medical provider.

Homeopathic/Herbal Medications

In order to administer any homeophathic/herbal medicine, TMA requires a completed Authorization for Administration of Medication form signed by the parent/guardian including instructions (precise dosage, times to be administered, start date, end date, and method) and the medication in the original container, labeled with the child's full name. A written authorization from the child's medical provider is also required if any of the following applies:

- the medication is not designated for the age of the child,
- if the instructions specify "consult a physician" for the age of the child,
- if the request is for a higher dosage than what is prescribed on the label, or
- if it is to be used for more than three days.

BOTTLES & FOOD

To maintain consistency from home to school, and to meet the individual needs of children, babies will eat according to their own schedule. Fresh formula or breast milk (refer to Breastfeeding procedures) and baby food will need to be supplied to the school daily. Glass bottles are allowed with a silicone sleeve to reduce the risk of dropping the bottle while feeding. All bottles should be capped and labeled with your child's full name. Each infant will be assigned a color code that will be placed on all bottles and food containers. A color coding chart will be kept in the classroom. Staff also use a verbal double-check procedure to be certain all infants receive the correct bottles. Microwave ovens are not used to heat infants' bottles or food due to uneven heating and placing the children at risk of burns. It is TMA policy that all leftover contents of a bottle shall be discarded after 60 minutes to avoid contamination. All bottles and food will be sent home at the end of the day.

Solid food and cereal will not be fed in a bottle unless the child has specific written instructions from their medical provider. Solid food in a bottle is not only a choking hazard, it also teaches the child to eat solid foods incorrectly. Additionally, please note that medications should not be put in a child's bottle. If your child is not feeling well and does not complete the bottle, he/she may not receive the full dosage of the medication. See Medication Administration for further information.



BREASTFEEDING

If you are a nursing mother, we will be more than happy to make arrangements for you to visit your infant at any time. If the school is not convenient to your workplace for nursing visits, please feel free to supply us with expressed milk to feed your baby. We can store a frozen supply for up to one month from the date expressed, or you may provide milk daily.

Although some literature suggests that breast milk may be frozen for a longer period, given the types of freezers in our school and the frequency with which they are opened, it is recommended that breast milk be kept frozen no longer than one month.

LUNCH

Please provide your child with healthy, nutritious foods. Do not include sweets such as cupcakes, cookies, pudding and chocolate. Please refer to our Healthy Lunch Guidelines for great suggestions on food items to send to school. We do not utilize microwaves in the Infant, Toddler, Early Childhood, or Lower Elementary programs. We encourage the use of wide-mouth thermoses for hot foods. In the Upper Elementary program, children have access to microwaves. Food that needs to be heated should be sent in microwavable containers.

Elementary children should pack their own lunches and provide their own napkins and utensils, as this is an age-appropriate responsibility.

Please do not send the following items: sippy cups, juice, carbonated drinks, Lunchables, yogurt/applesauce in squeeze pouch, or items high in sugar, such as cookies, fruit snacks, and Jell-O. These items will be returned in your child's lunchbox. Helping your child make healthy lunch choices will ensure they are able to focus and enjoy the afternoon!

COMMUNITY SNACK

Toddler/Early Childhood

During the school year, snack is assigned on a weekly basis. A snack calendar for the year will be sent out by email in August. Each child will be assigned to bring a week's worth of snack for the classroom approximately two to three times a year. A shopping list with specific items will be sent home on the Thursday or Friday prior to your child's snack week. All items on the list should be brought to the classroom by 8:30 am on Monday morning. A separate snack calendar will be sent out in June for the summer months.

Elementary

Elementary children prefer to bring their own snack each day. Please encourage your child to pack an extra snack or two in their lunch box. It is important for students to have enough energy to complete the morning work cycle.

Extended Day

Extended Day snacks are provided by the school. For the health and safety of all children, outside snack items should not be sent for use during Extended Day.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Maria Montessori developed a very special ritual to honor a child's birthday called the Celebration of Life. Beginning in Early Childhood and continuing through Elementary, your child celebrates by walking around the "sun" as his/her growth and maturity is shared through pictures that you send to school. This simple but meaningful ritual focuses on the child and is not conducted in a party atmosphere.

The date will be arranged in cooperation with the teachers and the parents of the birthday child(ren). You may attend the birthday celebration with your child which is generally held at the beginning or end of class. You may bring a healthy snack, but it is not required. Please let us know ahead of time if you will be sending a birthday snack. Do not send goodie bags.

We are happy to help distribute birthday party invitations, but we only do this if they are going to all children in the classroom.



THINGS TO BRING TO SCHOOL

Backpack

Your child should bring an appropriately sized backpack to school each day. Please make sure it is labeled with your child's name. The backpack is a tool for independence and storage of extra clothes, weekly folder, and reusable water bottle.

- Please send at least one complete set of clothes: top, bottom, underwear, and socks. If your child is younger, you will also need to pack a small laundry bag to store any soiled clothing and you may want to send additional clothing. This can be a gallon-size zipper bag or a folded waterproof laundry bag.
- **Toddlers**: Due to limited storage, if your child wears diapers you will need to send 5 diapers in your child's backpack each day.
- **Toddlers, Early Childhood, & Elementary**:Please send a reusable water bottle clearly labeled with your child's name to be used outdoors.
- **Early Childhood & Elementary**: Weekly folders (9x12) will be sent home in the backpack on Fridays in EC and Mondays in Elementary. They should be returned to school in the backpack on the next school day.

Nap Items

If your child naps or needs some quiet rest time in the afternoons, you may send a reasonably sized thin blanket. These will be sent home on Fridays for laundering and should be returned to school on Mondays. Please do not send large blankets, pillows, or stuffed animals.

Lunch Box

To promote independence, please send lunch in a lunchbox that your child can easily carry and open independently. To avoid excessive trash in the classroom, please use reusable containers. We have found that the containers with snap lids on all four sides are best for children to manage.

Please leave all toys, electronic gaming devices, cell phones, and tablets at home.



OUTDOOR PLAY

Children go outside each day unless there is severe cold, drenching rain, excessive heat, or unhealthy air quality. Real time conditions, specific to our area, are monitored by the front desk staff and teachers are notified when access to the outdoor environment is to be limited or canceled. Children should dress appropriately to move their bodies and for current weather conditions. On rainy days, your child should wear a rain coat to school to be used when we go outdoors. Please do not send your child with an umbrella. If we are lucky enough to have a snow day, please send labeled, warm clothes. Parents should keep children home if they are not able to be outdoors.

ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM

Animals in the classroom are an essential part of the Montessori curriculum. Children are able to observe and help care for animals from each of the 5 animal classifications. The child's age determines what types of interactions are safe, both for the animal and the child. Children in the Infant, Toddler, and Early Childhood programs do not handle chickens or reptiles. All animals, other than small rodents, have a statement of health from a local veterinarian.

CLOTHING/LABELING

Children's clothes should not be a distraction or an obstacle to their enjoyment of the activities in the classroom and outdoors. Clothes should allow them to run, climb, work, and play freely, as well as provide appropriate coverage during Fitness Education. Please review the Upper Elementary Fitness Education Clothing Guidelines for appropriate attire for these students.

Children should not worry about getting messy and need to be able to maneuver their clothes independently, particularly in the bathroom. For small children, this is not possible with overalls and jumpsuits with tight straps, belts, and tight pants. Pants with an elastic waist are easiest for children to handle. You can help your child be self-sufficient by purchasing comfortable, washable clothing with large buttons and big zippers.



Please remember the importance of appropriate footwear. Your child will need at least one pair of shoes that are dedicated indoor shoes. They can be brought at the beginning of the year and kept in the classroom. These shoes are to be worn only in the classroom. Indoor shoes should have a non-marking sole, cover the whole foot, be free of characters or logos and be clearly labeled with your child's name. Croc-style gardening shoes are not safe, and not allowed at TMA. Also, know your child's abilities; please send them in shoes they can manage on their own without assistance to promote independence. Shoes should enable your child to move with coordination and confidence. Outdoor shoes should be sturdy and allow for safe outdoor play. Closed-toe tennis shoes with Velcro are best until a child can manage laces independently. Please avoid jellies, flip-flops, cowboy boots, clogs/Crocs, and tight dress shoes. Please avoid flashing shoes, shoes that make noises, and those that have cartoon or fantasy characters. They are highly distracting for the wearer and other children.

Labeling

All clothing must be labeled clearly with your child's name. Infant bottles, bottle bags, diaper bags, bibs, and blankets must also be clearly labeled. Infant bottles must also include the date. Labeling items helps our staff to send your child home with the appropriate belongings and to quickly discern which personal possessions belong to which student. We cannot be responsible for unlabeled items that your child brings to TMA. If found, unlabeled items will be placed in the TMA Lost and Found which is located in the Workroom near the front desk. Personalized label stickers can be ordered online.

TESTING

Age-appropriate standardized achievement tests will be given to elementary students. Parents will be notified of the testing dates and individual student reports will be discussed during the May Parent/Teacher Conference. For those students with a diagnosed learning difference or disability, testing conditions are modified appropriately in coordination with the parents, teachers, and Hea of School. A student who misses a testing day due to illness will be provided with a make-up session.



POLICY REGARDING CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DIFFERENCES

TMA recognizes and responds to students who learn differently. Children who have diagnosed learning differences will be mainstreamed into the classroom and will be referred for specific services to outside specialists, as needed. The number of

students in a classroom with diagnosed learning differences will be limited to ensure that the needs of all children can be met. Factors affecting the number of students with diagnosed learning differences placed in a classroom include teacher experience and expertise, as well as number and type of learning differences.

While the Montessori philosophy advocates modification to meet individual needs, TMA staff are constrained by the student/teacher ratio as to the extent and duration of modifications that can be implemented and sustained within TMA curriculum standards. Ultimately, the Head of School makes the decision regarding the extent of modification that is workable within a specific classroom. Consistent with Montessori philosophy, the student is accountable for bringing forth the will to complete work once the appropriate modifications are made.

REQUEST FOR OUTSIDE PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE

TMA staff will work diligently with students and families, following TMA procedures, to address behavior issues and to ensure academic progress. TMA may request outside professional assistance to obtain more information regarding the underlying causes of inappropriate behavior and/or the nature of a difficulty in learning and to make recommendations to facilitate student development and progress.

When the school requests outside professional assistance, the family must comply with the school's request within a specified, reasonable time frame. Failure to comply can result in the student being removed from the school during the current year, following TMA guidelines, or not being accepted for re-enrollment for the next academic year.





PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING OUTSIDE PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE

In general, TMA will utilize resources within the school for observation, problem-solving, and curriculum modification before requesting outside professional assistance for a student who is not making anticipated progress in social, emotional, physical, or cognitive development. Steps may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. At teacher or parent request, the Head of School, or designated administrator, will observe the student. Modifications may be suggested and teachers may be requested to document progress made or keep a behavior log.
2. The Head of School may request that other education professionals, including other TMA staff and/or outside specialists, observe the student and make recommendations regarding next steps. Parents will be notified prior to the involvement of education professionals other than the student's classroom teachers. For additional information see the Expectations Regarding Work and Study Habits for Elementary Students.
3. A plan for modification may be developed in collaboration with the student's family. Following the conference, a meeting summary will be provided to all participants.
4. A follow-up conference will be held to discuss progress.
5. If outside professional assistance is requested by TMA, families will be provided with a list of professional resources for evaluations and diagnosis.
6. Families will choose the outside professional assistance that they determine suits the student's needs and the family's resources. In the event of a required outside professional assessment, families may apply for TMA financial assistance to help offset the expense.

7. The outside professional's evaluation must address teacher-identified concerns and involve teacher input in the process.
8. Upon receipt of the outside professional's report, the parents will provide TMA with a copy of the complete report.
9. A conference will be held to determine appropriate modifications. Conference participants may include classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, support staff, parents, the administrator, Head of School, and the student. Following the conference, a meeting summary will be provided to all participants.
10. TMA staff will document success of the implemented modifications and the student's progress will be discussed with the parents.



FAMILY TRIPS

All programs may take family trips. These trips are conducted off of TMA property, where parents are responsible for transporting and supervising their own child(ren). In the event that a parent is unable to attend a family trip, the parent is responsible for making arrangements for other transportation or ensuring that care is provided for the child. TMA staff may not transport or supervise students whose parents are not able to attend.



FIELD TRIPS

Offsite field trips are only conducted in the Elementary program. TMA staff are responsible for making arrangements and sharing responsibility for transporting and supervising students with approved volunteer chaperones and/or drivers. Infants, Toddlers, and Early Childhood students do not participate in offsite field trips.

Ratios

- 1:6 - Elementary offsite field trip
- 1:12 - Elementary walking field trip to Veterans Park

REST

To meet the individual needs of children, infants will sleep according to their own schedules. Following lunch, Toddlers and some Early Childhood students have an afternoon rest period of at least 30 minutes. However, if your child does not wish to nap after the 30 minute rest period, the teacher will provide alternative quiet activities. Children who sleep will be allowed to wake independently. Children will not be awakened while napping unless the parent/guardian comes to pick up the child. Teachers will not wake children early from a nap for them to go to sleep earlier at home.

STUDENT SAFETY POLICY

TMA is committed to ensuring a safe environment, physically and emotionally for all students, including continuous review of recalls from the Consumer Product Safety Commission for children's products. TMA is committed to providing students with a learning environment free of discrimination, harassment, or intimidation. This includes physical, verbal, and written acts.

TMA follows a zero tolerance policy on behaviors and actions that have potential to inflict bodily injury or create an unsafe environment. Corrective action, up to and including immediate suspension, will be given for these types of infractions. Administration will take into consideration age and developmental level of students when making a determination as to the type of intensity of the consequences.

SCHOOL CLOSING POLICY

The Montessori Academy will not close due to cold weather. If inclement weather causes hazardous driving conditions, we typically follow the lead of the Arlington Independent School District. School delay or closing information will be sent out via our Parent Alert notification system.



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