PARENT HANDBOOK

Huntsville Campus (CTR)
15975 Chaney Thompson Road
Huntsville, AL 35803
(256) 881-3790

Hampton Cove Campus (HC)
284 Miller Lane
Owens Cross Roads, AL 35763
(256) 534-6469

www.montessorihuntsville.org

Revised 3/27/2017
MISSION STATEMENT

The Montessori School of Huntsville educates children to prepare them for a life of purpose, integrity and academic accomplishment. We develop independent learners, critical thinkers and tomorrow’s leaders.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Montessori School of Huntsville shall not discriminate, endorse, or affiliate with those who discriminate on the basis of age, religion, genetics, race, creed, ethnicity, color, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or national origin.

VISION STATEMENT

The Montessori School of Huntsville (MSH) will be well-known in the community as an accredited provider of quality Montessori education for toddler through upper elementary students. MSH, a private 501(c)(3) organization, will be financially stable and growing in enrollment. We will provide an environment that nurtures children to reach their fullest potential and teaches them to love learning, while creating a high-quality, enriching environment for staff and a welcoming, open partnership with parents and families.
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WELCOME
We welcome you to the MSH community where children, parents and staff work together to create a calm, orderly and nurturing learning environment for your child’s total development – physically, socially, academically and emotionally.

THE STRUCTURE OF MSH
The Montessori School of Huntsville was founded by Imogen Wheeler and Miriam Gates in 1965. It operates under the auspices of the Montessori Society of Huntsville, a non-profit corporation formed by the founders of the school. When your child is accepted into the MSH program, you become a member of the Society. The school is administered by a volunteer Board of Directors, elected by the society members. Board of Directors’ meetings are open to parents and staff. Meeting minutes are posted inside the school.

Two MSH Society meetings are held each year--one in fall and one in spring. When you sign your child’s enrollment contract, you agree to attend both of these meetings. (Each family receives one hour of credit for Service Hours per meeting.) The primary purpose of the fall meeting is to introduce the Board members and answer questions about the school. At the spring meeting, new Board members are elected, if necessary, and the budget for the coming year is presented.

MSH is proud to be an accredited school through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS). MSH is an affiliate of the American Montessori Society (AMS), a national organization that certifies teachers and evaluates schools to ensure they follow Montessori principles to maintain highest professional standards.

MSH is licensed by the Alabama Department of Human Resources, requiring our compliance with the Minimum Standards for Day Care and Nighttime Centers. A copy of the DHR Standards is available for your inspection in the office, and the inspection report is posted.

A WORD ABOUT OUR NON-PROFIT STATUS
As a non-profit, 501(c)(3) corporation, donations you make to the school for which you do not receive goods or services in return, may be considered tax-deductible. Your taxes or employment benefit plan may require our Employer Identification Number (EIN): 63-0504958.
KEY PHILOSOPHICAL MESSAGES THAT MAKE MONTESSORI UNIQUE

• Deep respect for children as individuals.

• Multiage classes allow teachers to develop close and long-term relationships with their students and encourage older students to become role models, mentors, and leaders to younger students.

• An integrated curriculum is carefully structured and connects subjects within programs (e.g., history and cultural arts to maximize the opportunity for learning that builds from program to program, progressing from concrete to abstract learning).

• Independence is nurtured and leads children toward being purposeful, motivated, and confident in their own abilities.

• Peace and conflict resolution are taught daily. Children learn to be a part of a warm, respectful, and supportive community.

• Character development is a central focus of the AMS Montessori curriculum. The child creates, in a very real sense, the adult that he/she is to be through his/her experiences, interactions, and environments.

• Hands-on learning is central to the curriculum in all programs and leads to children being engaged rather than passive with their work.

• The environments are responsibly and carefully prepared with multisensory, sequential, and self-correcting materials to support self-directed learning.

• Teachers, students, and parents work together as a warm and supportive community.

• Self-expression is nurtured in all children. Children experience art, music, poetry, theater, writing, and other forms of creative arts with confidence and passion.

DESIRED LEARNER OUTCOMES

Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator, developed a method of teaching based on her scientific observations of young children's behavior. Her first "Children's House" was established in Rome in 1907. She found children learned best in a homelike environment filled with developmentally appropriate materials that provide experiences, which contribute to the growth of self-motivated, independent learners.

The outcomes we aspire to teach are lifelong developments.

● Independence
● Confidence and Competence
● Autonomy
● Intrinsic Motivation
● Social Responsibility
● Academic Preparation
● Global Citizenship
● 21st Century Leadership
# PARENT-TEACHER-CHILD PARTNERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Parent</th>
<th>The Child</th>
<th>The Teacher</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lifetime Role Model</strong></td>
<td><strong>Peer Role Model</strong></td>
<td><strong>Classroom Role Model</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Models patience, respectfulness, and peacefulness</td>
<td>• Respects self, others, and the environment</td>
<td>• Models patience, respectfulness, and peacefulness</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Promotes development of independence, responsibility and accountability of the child by modeling and reinforcing desired behaviors</td>
<td>• Practices Grace and Courtesy</td>
<td>• Promotes development of independence, responsibility, and accountability of the child modeling and reinforcing desired behaviors</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Respecter of Montessori Professional</strong></th>
<th><strong>Montessori Student</strong></th>
<th><strong>Montessori Professional</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>• Seeks to understand and embrace the Montessori philosophy and how things are done in the classroom</td>
<td>• Loves to learn</td>
<td>• Works with the child in a manner consistent with the Montessori philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Abides by the school’s policies and guidelines</td>
<td>• Comes to school prepared and with openness and a positive attitude</td>
<td>• Abides by the school’s policies and guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respects the teachers’ expertise in the classroom</td>
<td>• Abides by the school’s policies and guidelines</td>
<td>• Continues professional development</td>
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<td>• Reads communications that are sent home and asks questions when needed for clarity</td>
<td>• Shares ideas &amp; interests with others inside and outside the learning environment</td>
<td>• Provides opportunities for parent education regarding Montessori philosophy and curriculum</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrates the desire to create quality work and strive for their full potential</td>
<td>• Shares information about academic and developmental progress in a timely manner</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Instructional Supporter</strong></th>
<th><strong>Creative, Eager Learner</strong></th>
<th><strong>Instructional Designer, Facilitator, and Assessor</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Reasonably adapts home environment and routines to support developing independence and responsibility</td>
<td>• Seeks to learn and views mistakes as opportunities for learning</td>
<td>• Follows Montessori philosophy to provide each child with appropriate and challenging work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Chooses intellectually useful and challenging work</td>
<td>• Uses observation and</td>
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- Commits to adapting parenting style to be consistent with Montessori philosophy
- Attends conferences, society meetings, and educational programs
- Advocates for child
- Asks the teacher, “What can I do to support my child?” Follows through on agreed-upon steps.
- Allows child to take responsibility for his/her own education
- Commits to MSH education at minimum for the duration of the 3 year cycle to maximize full potential of the program offered, and preferably through 6th grade to fully benefit from the entire MSH curriculum

- Pursues and develops his/her own interests
- Takes responsibility for his/her own education
- assessment to meet the needs of each child
- Seeks input from parent, child, and colleagues to maximize child’s learning potential
- Nurtures the child to reach his/her full potential
- Fosters each child’s independence in daily classroom activities and work
- Expects the child to take responsibility for his/her own education
- Prepares the child for any school environment after Upper Elementary graduation or the end of the 3 year cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Parent</th>
<th>The Child</th>
<th>The Teacher</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteer and Society Member</strong></td>
<td><strong>Community Member</strong></td>
<td><strong>Classroom Architect, Builder and Guardian</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Volunteers time, energy, and resources to identified school/classroom needs</td>
<td>- Participates in the care of the indoor and outdoor classroom</td>
<td>- Prepares and maintains an authentic Montessori learning environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Serves on at least one parent committee, attends meetings, and provides support for committee projects</td>
<td>- Guides and seeks/accepts guidance from other students as well as adults</td>
<td>- Balances the needs of the child and classroom community</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Attends biannual Society Member Meetings</td>
<td>- Demonstrates empathy and compassion</td>
<td>- Provides boundaries and choices and respects the child’s need for freedom within limits</td>
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<td>- Asks teachers, “How can I help?”</td>
<td>- Works non-violently to prevent and resolve conflict</td>
<td>- Participates in the life of the school community beyond the classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Follows the lead of the classroom teacher when working in the classroom and respects the teacher’s classroom guidelines and processes</td>
<td>- Acts as a responsible and contributing member of a greater community (family, class, school, neighborhood, city country, world)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Parent</td>
<td>The Child</td>
<td>The Teacher</td>
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| **Effective Communicator**  
- Has an open, honest, respectful dialogue with teachers and child  
- Partners with teacher and child in problem solving to improve the educational experience for the child | **Effective Communicator**  
- Talks with and listens to teachers and parents openly, honestly, and respectfully  
- Self-advocates  
- Partners with teachers and parents in problem solving | **Effective Communicator**  
- Has an open, honest, respectful dialogue with parents and child  
- Partners with parent and child in problem solving to improve the educational experience for the child |
| **Facilitator of Problem Solving**  
- Gives child the time and support to work through challenges on his/her own  
- Asks questions to help the child solve problems rather than solving problems for the child  
- Promotes the child’s care of self by setting boundaries (sleep, proper nutrition, exercise)  
- Allows the child to experience logical consequences to actions, rather than using punishments and rewards | **Responsible Problem Solver**  
- Takes the time to work through challenges  
- Asks critical and compelling questions in a respectful way  
- Accepts responsibility for his/her actions  
- Participates in the process of developing logical consequences  
- Seeks solutions | **Facilitator of Problem Solving**  
- Gives child the time and support to work through challenges on his/her own  
- Asks questions to help the child solve problems rather than solving problems for the child  
- Allows the child to experience logical consequences to actions, rather than using punishments and rewards |
ADMISSIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Children from 18 months of age through sixth grade are eligible for admission to MSH. Because Montessori education is based on three-year cycles, we encourage enrollment at an early age for maximum benefit.

1. **Visit our campus:** To initiate the enrollment process, parents must contact one of our campuses to schedule a tour. Tours typically last from 20–40 minutes and are offered by appointment only during the Montessori morning work cycle, between 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

2. **Submit an application and $150 application fee:** Following your tour, you will be given a student application for enrollment. The completed application and fee are required to move forward with the next step in the application process.

3. **Begin reading** *Follow the Child: The Basics, the Misconceptions, and the Underlying Lessons of a Montessori Education.* A copy will be provided for you to read throughout the admissions process to be returned at the scheduled parent meeting.

4. **Request student records/transcripts and immunization record:** If your child is currently attending another school, please request his/her records to be sent to the Montessori School of Huntsville ATTN: Director of Admissions 15975 Chaney Thompson Rd. Huntsville, AL 35803. All students 3 years of age and up must have a current, original immunization record on file to participate in the student visit. No copies will be accepted.

5. **Student Interview:** For all prospective toddler and primary students, 18 months through kindergarten, a member of our admissions team will schedule a student interview as the first step in the admissions process. Parents of toddler students, 18-36 months, will be present during the student interview. After an introduction, parents of primary students, 3-6 years, will wait in the administrative office while the student interviews with the Primary lead teacher.

6. **Student Visit:** A student visit will be scheduled for all students 3 years of age and up. Toddlers are not required to participate in a student visit. These visits vary in length according to your child’s intended program.

7. **Parent Interview:** A parent interview will be scheduled by our admissions team for all prospective families. Student success at MSH is dependent on an open partnership among students, parents, and MSH teachers and administrators. The parent interview is a step in building that partnership. We value this opportunity to get to know you as well as your child during the admissions process. During this meeting, you will be able to ask questions regarding our educational philosophy, curricula, logistics, or any other questions you might have about your child’s application. Parents will return the copy of *Follow the Child* loaned to them during the admissions process at the parent interview.

8. **Notification of enrollment status:** Assuming that parents, teachers and the administrator agree that enrollment is appropriate, your child will be
conditionally enrolled\(^1\) and assigned to a class or, if enrollment is full, placed on a waiting list.

9. **Enrollment Paperwork Meeting:** A member of our admissions team will contact you to schedule a final meeting for submitting your child’s completed enrollment packet. You must bring your completed packet to be reviewed by an admissions team member. Incomplete paperwork will not be accepted. Please do not return your child’s paperwork before your scheduled meeting. All paperwork must be completed and submitted prior to your child’s first day of school.

Enrollment in MSH is renewed annually, with the student records and fees required each year. The enrollment period begins in February for the coming school year. Currently enrolled families have two weeks to secure their place for the next year before enrollment is opened to the community at large.

\(^1\) All incoming and bridging students will complete a six-week trial period before full-acceptance to the program is granted.
PHASING-IN AND TRIAL PERIOD

All incoming and bridging students must complete a six-week trial period, beginning on the student’s first day in the new program. The trial period ensures that each child is developmentally ready for her/his intended program. Should a concern arise during the trial period, a conference will be scheduled between the teachers, administration, and parents to address any concerns and find a plan of action to assist the child in her/his transition into the new environment. The parent/teacher partnership is critical to each child’s success in the classroom.

An adjustment period is expected for all newly enrolled children. All toddler and primary students (18 months - kindergarten) will have a phasing-in week at the beginning of each school year. A gradual entry period will be scheduled for children admitted mid-year. The phasing-in week is designed to assist children with “settling in” at MSH. Each child is different, and one may need more time than another to feel comfortable in a new setting. Your child’s teacher will contact you to set up an abbreviated schedule that allows your child to transition smoothly into the new classroom environment. The phasing-in week is critical to a successful trial period for our younger students. Good communication between you and your child’s teacher will smooth the transition. Please note that morning and afternoon extended care are not available for all toddler and “new-to-MSH” primary students during the phasing-in week.

WAITING LIST

The Montessori School of Huntsville reserves the right to accept applicants based on the following priorities: 1) Siblings of currently enrolled families 2) Children of MSH staff 3) Children of previous MSH society members and legacies. Within each of these enrollment categories, enrollment is offered according to longevity on the waiting list and availability of age related space.

If the class is full, your child’s name will be placed on a waiting list upon receipt of the Application Fee. Once a spot becomes available the family will be notified using all contact numbers and email addresses listed on the application. You will be given three business days to respond before we move to the next family on the list.

If the spot offered is accepted, the family will have one week to complete a contract and pay all applicable fees. If the spot offered is declined and the family wants to remain on the waiting list, the child’s name will move to the bottom of the wait list as of the date it was declined.
SCHOOL POLICIES

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES
Children who are enrolled in the Morning Care (MC) program may arrive at MSH any time after opening, 7:00 a.m. Children who are enrolled in Afternoon Extended Care (EC) may be picked up any time prior to closing, 6:00 p.m. -- provided that their departure does not occur during nap time (2:00 to 3:00 p.m.).

All families will receive a personal identification number (CTR) or key fob (HC) to permit classroom access.

Children arriving at the CTR Campus after 8:15 a.m. (Elementary) and 9:00 a.m. (Toddler and Primary) must be escorted to class by a staff member at the CTR campus. Sign-in sheets will be located in the front office between 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. at the CTR campus. Sign-in sheets will be kept in the classrooms at the Hampton Cove campus.

Be sure that a teacher is aware of your child’s arrival and departure.

Upon arrival, please do not attempt to engage the teacher in conversation. If you need to have a conversation, set up a time to meet. The teacher may not be able to speak with you at that time based on the number of students she has or the preparation needs for the day. Her obligations at that time are to the children in the room and welcoming each child into the classroom environment. We expect all children to participate in the full range of Montessori activities.

Children are only allowed to leave the MSH building with a parent or other adult for whom we have written authorization from you. Parents may submit an email or written note to authorize a one-time pick up by an adult not listed on the child’s Preadmission Form. Parents should only add adults to their child’s Preadmission Form who are able to have unrestricted access to their child. Persons unfamiliar to MSH staff should be prepared to show a photo ID each time.

Release of a child to either natural parent cannot be denied unless a legal custody document prohibiting such release is on file in the MSH office. If you have any questions about how this legal stipulation affects your family, please contact the administrator. Please be mindful of the speed limits on Chaney Thompson and Miller Lane.

The CTR driveway is one-way. You enter from the south. The speed limit in the CTR driveway is 5mph.
We urge you not to leave unattended children in your vehicle while you enter the building. Shut down the engine and remove the keys unless an adult is in the front seat.
All toddler and primary students should hold the hand of an adult in the school parking lot.
SIGN-IN/OUT
All children must be signed in and out everyday. Sign-in sheets provide us with a record of each child’s attendance, and tell us who must be accounted for in the event of a fire or other emergency. After 9am at the CTR campus, parents will sign in their child in the CTR office and a staff member will escort the child to class to prevent the disruption of class time. The Toddler and Primary Sign In/Out Sheets are found at the classroom doors. Upon escorting your child to the classroom, please sign her/him in. Our DHR license requires your complete name (not just initials) when you sign your child in and out. Please write legibly. You also need to record the time of arrival and anticipated and actual times of departure, as well as any lunch or milk orders. It is from this sheet that your account is charged for milk, lunches and extra hours. If you mistakenly mark “buy” when you meant “bring”, your child’s account will be charged for the order.

LUNCHES
Lunch is served between 11:30 and 12:00 each day.

We encourage families to pack a nutritious lunch for their child each day. Please keep nutrition a priority when helping your child choose items for her/his lunch each day, even if you doubt that your child will eat it all. Letting your child help plan her/his lunch is an excellent opportunity to talk about food and nutrition. In packing your child’s lunches, we ask that you follow these guidelines:

- Do not send sweets. We encourage you to check the labeling on packaged foods to monitor your child’s daily sugar intake. If you’d like to send a dessert for your child, send in fresh or dried fruit.
- Do not send in nuts—tree nuts or peanuts—nut butters, or items containing nuts. Sunbutter (from sunflower seeds) or soybutter is a wonderful nut-free substitute.
- Avoid artificial food dyes which have been linked to health and behavioral problems.
- If you choose to send juice, please send only 100% fruit juice (check labels). We encourage children to drink water at meals and throughout the day. Water will be provided to all children during snack and lunchtime.
- Label lunch boxes and bags clearly with first and last name.
- Remind children that they cannot share food with others.
- Send any necessary spoons, forks, and napkins.
- We cannot refrigerate every child’s lunchbox. Please use thermoses or include an ice pack in the lunch box if needed.
- Teachers are happy to microwave lunch items as long as preparation takes only a few seconds.

For your convenience, meals are available daily at the CTR campus from Jason’s Deli Monday through Thursday consisting of a protein source, a vegetable or fruit, a grain product and milk. Catered lunches are not available at HC Monday through Thursday. The weekly menu does not change and is posted in the office and in the hall for your
convenience. Pizza from Domino’s Pizza is available for purchase on Fridays at both HC and CTR. Lunches cost $3.99.

Milk is available for $0.75 per day and is included in the lunch price. If your child will order milk or lunches regularly, we ask you to prepay with tuition.

REST TIME (Toddlers and Primary Students)
At the beginning of the year, the youngest Toddlers may have a short morning nap period around 10:00 a.m. You may see signs in the hallway asking that you keep voices down near their door. Toddlers begin preparing for rest at 1:30 and Primary at 1:45. This period lasts until 3:00. To avoid disrupting nap time, we ask that you pick up your child by 1:30 or after 3:00 p.m. Children who do not fall asleep will be encouraged to rest and engage in quiet activities such as looking at books.

MSH provides cots and sheets, but each child needs to bring a small (crib-size) blanket, beach towel or other covering. If your child prefers a pillow, it must be a very small one because of storage limitations. Your child may bring a small stuffed animal just for rest time. Blankets will be sent home each week to be washed and returned. We also request that a parent sign up to wash sheets on the weekend, with credit of one hour being earned toward your Community Service requirement.

EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM
MSH offers Extended Care to families needing care before the Montessori program begins or after class ends. The Morning Extended Care hours for before school care are 7:00-8:15 a.m. Afternoon Extended Care school care begins 1:45 (Toddler and Primary) or 3:00 (Kindergarten and Elementary) until 6:00 p.m.

Full time EC is paid monthly in advance with tuition. EC is considered late if unpaid by the first working day following the 5th of the month. Morning or Afternoon Extended Care is available as an add-on to your regular tuition. Tuition is based on the ten month academic year and divided over ten payments August through May for your convenience.

To ensure appropriate staff to child ratios as well as quality programming in our afternoon extended care programs, we ask that you make every effort to pick your child up by his/her stated times. We are unable to accommodate drop-in or occasional care in our toddler and primary extended care programs. Parents who need regular care past their child’s dismissal time should sign up for the annual extended care program. On very few occasions, we are able to accommodate a toddler or primary student until 3:00 for nap provided the child has a sibling in kindergarten or elementary and is committed to regular attendance in the napping room. Young children who do not nap regularly at school often have difficulty transitioning into the nap room and can create a disturbance for children who are trying to rest.
EXTENDED CARE FOR WEEKLONG BREAKS AND HOLIDAYS
Children from both campuses who are enrolled in afternoon extended care program may attend Fall, Thanksgiving, Winter, and Spring Breaks at the CTR campus for no additional charge. The HC campus will be closed for all weeklong and holiday breaks. Pre-registration is required to guarantee attendance as it ensures adequate staffing ratios. Registration forms will be sent via email four weeks prior to the break.
Lunch from Jason’s Deli will not be offered during the breaks. We will continue to order pizza on the last day of the weeklong break.

ATTENDANCE POLICY
Montessori School of Huntsville (“MSH”) is dedicated to providing an environment that nurtures children to reach their fullest potential and teaches them to love learning, while creating a high-quality, enriching environment for staff and a welcoming, open partnership with parents and families. One of the most valuable life skills a child can learn is taking the responsibility of arriving on time. This skill can easily be accomplished and will transfer as a valuable asset for the future. One of the most important times of the school day is the morning. This is the time when teachers greet the students and begin their morning routines.

SCHOOL SCHEDULE:
● 8:00 - 8:15 a.m. Elementary Drop off
● 8:15 a.m. Elementary Sign-in sheets are pulled and students arriving after 8:15 are tardy and must sign in at the office and be escorted to class.
● 8:30 a.m. Primary classes begin
● 8:30 a.m. Toddler classes begin
● Toddler/Primary sign in sheets are returned to the office at 9 a.m. to order lunch. Primary/Toddlers arriving after 9 a.m. at the CTR campus must sign in at the office and be escorted to class at the CTR campus.

EXCESSIVE TARDY/ABSENCE PROCEDURES:
● 3rd tardy/unexcused absence Verbal warning
● 5th tardy/unexcused absence Letter sent to parent/guardian outlining this policy
● 10th tardy/unexcused absence parent conference with the teacher and the head of school

EXCESSIVE TARDINESS AND ABSENCES:
When students miss school, they miss the opportunity to learn in a prepared environment. When students arrive late, it has a negative impact on their own learning and disrupts the flow of the day for other students who are engaged in the work cycle. If a student arrives after the work period is complete, an absence will be counted. It is essential that students attend school every day they are healthy. Absences may be excused for personal illness with a parent excuse up to ten absences. After ten parent-excused absences a doctor’s note will be required to excuse an absence for health reasons. Other excused absences may include personal illness with doctor’s note, death in the family, legal requirements with provided documentation, religious purposes and educational opportunities pre-approved by the Head of School. In compliance with Alabama state law, MSH maintains attendance records on all students and files appropriate reports with all state regulatory agencies including, but not limited to, the Department of Human Resources and the Alabama Department of Education. As always, we encourage frequent, open communication between home and school to provide the highest quality of education to your child.

DISCIPLINE POLICY
Montessori discipline is an inner discipline. The child develops control over his/her own behavior through his/her interest in the prepared environment, positive social interaction, and in caring for others and the environment. The Montessori School of Huntsville helps children reach their richest potential for learning by offering an educational environment with freedom of movement and freedom, within limits, for work choices. In order to provide a safe environment for all students to learn and grow, we establish ground rules which are consistently followed and reinforced. If external discipline is deemed necessary, we follow the guidelines listed below. Our partnership with parents is essential to the success of all students. Parents of children who experience impulsive or aggressive behavior may be advised to seek a different learning environment.

- Rules are stated on the child’s first day of school. Daily reminders are given, if necessary.
- Behavior deemed inappropriate by the teacher is stopped by a teacher or staff member.
- If possible, work/activity is offered before isolation. If the child is not exhibiting peaceful behavior or demonstrating self-control, the child will be isolated from the work or the classroom activities. The child will be given a short time to gain self-control and then be invited to rejoin the work or the class. Explicit teaching/reinforcement of appropriate behavior will be provided.
- Continued misbehavior will result in isolation from the group with adult supervision.
- Parent will be called to discuss the child’s behavior concerns.
- Parent will be called to take the child home immediately. A parent conference will be scheduled if the behavior continues.
In the case of persistent, inappropriate behavior, as determined by the Head of School, that disrupts the learning environment, the Head of School can require the family to find another learning environment for the child.

Our teachers and staff supervise students closely at all times. However, biting is a common behavior in toddlers. The prepared environment minimizes the occurrence of biting, but biting typically occurs when the child is frustrated and unable to use words to communicate a need. Our teachers will work to coach our toddlers to use words to express frustration. If a bite occurs, parents of both the giver and receiver of the bite will be notified.

The Montessori School of Huntsville is committed to providing a safe and peaceful environment for all. Beginning as early as the toddler years our students learn peacekeeping and conflict resolution. Bullying is defined as aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power. Most often, it is repeated over time. (e.g., Olweus, 1991, 1992, 1994; Olweus & Limber, 1999.)

Physical violence and verbal abuse will not be tolerated. The guidelines listed above will be followed in instances where bullying is observed. Any time a child’s behavior requires a child to be removed from the classroom, a child is physically aggressive to another individual, or damages the environment teachers will complete a behavior report to be signed by the head of school or site director and a parent. This report will remain on file for the duration of the child’s enrollment at MSH.

PARENT/GUARDIAN’S ROLE IN SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

**Modeling**
A parent is the most important teacher in a child’s life. Children observe and imitate the behavioral responses that are used by the significant adults in their environment. Parents who are respectful and kind to others, especially their own children, are likely to see that same behavior develop in their children. Demonstrating a variety of healthy responses to frustration and setbacks, as well as modeling effective problem-solving techniques and respectful communication, are especially valuable to young children who are still learning to establish their own self control.

**Discussion**
While children absorb a great deal by observation, discussing ways to show respect, build trust, show empathy, manage anger, and practice forgiveness can help a child build successful relationships.

**Reinforcement**
Montessori philosophy does not advocate external rewards for desired behavior, as this tends to reduce intrinsic motivation. However, acknowledging positive behavior is always important and will help shape a child’s behavior far better than criticism.

**Teaching Values**
MSH is built on the concept of community. A community shares common values. Its members seek to give as much as they are able for the good of the whole, and take only what they really need. At MSH, we value:
Respect for ourselves, others, and the environment;
Honesty;
Grace and Courtesy;
Empathy for others and respect for differences among people and cultures;
Accepting responsibility for personal decisions and actions;
Working cooperatively with others; and
Creating a balance between the needs of individual students and families and the needs of the school population as a whole.

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION
Changes in a child’s home life may affect his/her behavior and performance at school. Please notify the office and your child’s teacher if any significant changes occur, such as:
Extended vacations or business trips by a family member;
Child staying somewhere other than home (relative/friend’s house) for more than a day or two;
Loss of family member, including pets;
Moving; and
Change in family environment (separation, divorce, new partner, new baby).

FIELD TRIPS AND TRANSPORTATION
Field trips will be scheduled occasionally. You will be notified at least two weeks in advance of any trip that might involve your child. Each student must have a permission slip signed by a parent or guardian. Please note if the field trip involves sending a picnic lunch, outdoor clothing, or an entrance fee. Student entrance fees will be charged to your MSH account.

All toddler and primary students must be transported by a parent or authorized adult for class field trips. Parents may choose to allow their child to “carpool” with another MSH parent by submitting written authorization to have the their child signed out by the designated adult. Please note that this adult assumes responsibility for the safety and care of your child. Staff may not transport students for field trips.

For elementary field trips, MSH may contract with a local school bus company for transportation. School buses must pass a vehicle safety inspection, and documentation of that inspection will be provided to MSH as verification. The cost of using the school bus varies depending on the location and duration of the field trip. The transportation cost will be included in the cost of the field trip and billed to your MSH account.

DHR does not inspect activities away from the school.
Children must wear their Montessori shirt on all field trips or another shirt of the designated color, due to insurance requirements.
CONTRACTING MSH STAFF FOR BABYSITTING OR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

MSH staff, including substitute teachers, may not be contracted by currently-enrolled families to provide services outside of their employment with MSH. This includes, but is not limited to, after-hours childcare, babysitting, house cleaning, and transportation services. We understand that you place a great deal of trust in the staff at MSH, and we are proud to employ dedicated, trustworthy, and highly-qualified individuals. However, this policy safeguards our staff and reduces the risk of creating a conflict of interest. Additionally, this policy protects confidentiality of MSH students, parents, and staff members and ensures the highest level of professionalism and integrity in the parent-teacher-child partnership that is integral to our school culture.

DRESS CODE

Please dress your child in comfortable clothes that are easy for him/her to manage and suitable for the weather outdoors. We do go outside almost every day. Hats and gloves or mittens are a necessity on cold days. You will be called to bring warmer clothing if your child cannot comfortably remain on the playground. Soft-soled shoes with laces or Velcro closings are the only safe foot-coverings on the playground. Sandals are discouraged because they cause many trip-ups and discomfort from intrusive playground pea gravel. Heavy boots (potential for injury to others) and clogs and shoes not secured around the heel are not allowed.

Students are required to wear clothing that is free of licensed or fantasy images. Non-licensed, naturally occurring, and cartoon renderings of naturally occurring images are acceptable (e.g. cats, baseball gloves). Clothing bearing the MSH logo is permitted. Solids, stripes, plaid, and geometric prints are allowed. For the purposes of this policy, "clothing" includes tops, bottoms, jackets, hats, and shoes but excludes underwear and diapers/training pants. In addition, lunch boxes, and other items worn or brought to school should be free of licensed or fantasy images. Avoid sending children to school in light-up shoes. Bottoms must be worn at waist-level. Shorts and skirts should be no shorter than fingertip length. Shirts and tops should completely cover the student’s midriff. Elementary age students should avoid shirts/tank tops with straps less than 1.5 inches wide. Students who come to school wearing clothing that violates the dress code will be asked to change.

The student's teacher(s) shall provide the parents and students with guidance on attire should questions arise. In cases where the policy does not provide specific guidance, the Head of School shall make the final determination as to the appropriateness of the student's attire.

Because spills and accidents are frequent occurrences, all children must have an extra set of clothes (shirt, pants, underwear and socks) in a one-gallon zippered plastic bag clearly labeled with the child’s name. Each item must also be labeled. Garments should be
changed seasonally and as your child grows. If your child does not have a change of clothes when needed, you may be called to pick up your child or to bring a change of clothes. Clothes that are too good to play in should not be worn. If a photography session is scheduled, it usually starts as early as possible in the day. You may want to send your child with a change of clothes so normal activities without risk to good clothing are possible.

TOTE BAGS
MSH provides one logo tote bag for your child with initial enrollment. Replacements are available for $10. We expect all MSH children to bring their tote bag to school and take it home daily. We kindly request that you only use our logo bag to transport items to and from school. Many of our cubbies are narrow and cannot support bulky backpacks. Occasionally it will be empty, but on other days there will be projects your child has made, clothes needing laundering, or important information from the school office.

ITEMS FROM HOME
Children may not bring gum, candy, money, toys, dolls, action figures or weapons (real or pretend – including pocket knives) to school. Please do not allow your child to get out of the car with such items.

THINGS IN POCKETS
Occasionally small pieces of school materials may make their way into pockets or tote bags. They may not seem significant, but they can be very expensive and take weeks to replace, causing work to be removed from the shelves. If you find any objects in your child’s pockets (e.g., marbles, balls, wooden or glass beads, cubes, etc.), please return them to the school promptly. There is no need to scold younger children. Simply explain that school items stay at school.
We do not allow children to give away their things to other children. Such exchanges should take place away from school.

HOMEWORK
Montessori classes do not place an emphasis on homework, so expect homework to be minimal, if any. Homework may include spelling practice, reading and reading logs, or specific research or skill practice. We want students to finish work in class so they are ready for family and extracurricular activities after school.

LOST AND FOUND
The Lost and Found collection area is in the adult restroom at the CTR campus and the student’s classrooms at the Hampton Cove campus. Please check it for any items your child may have lost. Be sure to put your child’s name on all clothing, lunch boxes, etc. to help in their return. Lost and found items will be donated every two months.
CHILDREN’S BIRTHDAYS
Beginning at age three through age six in the primary program, birthdays are observed with a “Celebration of Life” ceremony. A few weeks before your child’s birthday you will need to ask his teacher to send home the special Celebration of Life form on which you write a sentence or two about each year of your child’s life. You are invited to come to the Celebration to read the story of your child’s life, or it can be read by his teacher. If you like, you may also send a special snack (minimal to no sugar). Suggested items include fruit kabobs, trail mix (no nuts or chocolate chips), or plain yogurt parfaits with nut-free granola and berries. If your child has a summer birthday, you and the teacher may decide whether to celebrate his half-birthday.
Elementary students celebrating their birthday must also follow these snack regulations.

If invitations to a party are distributed at school, all children in the class must be invited to the party. Please do not expect teachers to pass out birthday party invitations. Also, we cannot accommodate private birthday parties on school grounds. You may use the Bloomz app to coordinate birthday party details with other MSH parents if you choose.

ESPECIALLY FOR TODDLER PARENTS

PHASE-IN
All students should plan to attend all of the four short days of Phasing-in even if they are on different schedules that do not fall exactly on the designated phasing-in days. There is no extended care available for toddler students during the phase-in week.
Arriving at school a little early to avoid communicating a sense of being in a hurry to leave may help your child feel more comfortable. Sometimes a grandparent or parent who spends less time with the child finds it easier to be the one dropping your toddler off in the morning. Please make every effort to have the same person bring your child to school each day during the phasing-in period. Consistency and predictability can greatly impact your child’s experience with phasing into the toddler environment.

TOILET LEARNING
Toilet learning is part of the toddler curriculum. All toddler students will be introduced to toilet learning as part of their daily experience in the toddler environment. We introduce many skills such as reading and writing early on in a child’s development without an expectation that she/he will master these skills and concepts before the child is ready. We introduce toilet learning in the same way. The Toddler environment is structured with an emphasis on building independence. Your child’s teacher will work with you through this process and will provide resources to guide you to an informed understanding of the toilet learning process, as needed. We ask that you do not discourage your child from toilet learning and follow the recommendations given to you by your child’s teachers. The Montessori philosophy asks that we “follow the child” to encourage her or his natural development.
We ask that you provide an adequate supply of diapers or pull ups, extra clothes, and underwear as requested. Please refer to the Medication section regarding MSH policy for applying diaper creams and ointments.

BUILDING A PARENT PARTNERSHIP

COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS
Families are required to perform 15 hours of service each year (20 hours for multiple children). This requirement is prorated late entry only. Should you choose to withdraw your child from MSH during the academic school year, your account will be billed for any unfulfilled volunteer hours at a rate of $20 per hour. Your child not only benefits from the effort you contribute through service to the school, she or he benefits from the countless hours other MSH families have contributed each year through their volunteer efforts. You may choose from a variety of jobs that can be done either at the school or at home. Standing Committees are an excellent way to focus your volunteer efforts in a meaningful way. Parents can choose to serve on a committee or support as a volunteer for special projects and events.

If you choose not to contribute service hours, you may pay $300 ($400 for multiple students) by October 1 to cover the cost of having these jobs done.

Any hours not fulfilled by the end of the school year will be billed at the rate of $20 per hour. Remaining hours are added to your bill April 1 as a reminder at the $20 per hour rate. Hours not fulfilled by May 31 are due with your June 1 payment.

MSH families should document their hours using the Community Hours Binder located at their respective campus. Binders are located by student sign-in sheets at HC and in the foyer at CTR. Families are encouraged to check the log throughout the school year, whenever possible.

Community service hours are calculated based on time spent on a requested task or requested monetary contributions at a rate of $20 per hour. Please submit receipts for documentation. The following activities have a specific assigned value:
- Field Trips - 2 hours
- Laundry - 1 hour
- Society Meeting - 1 hour per family
STANDING COMMITTEES

MSH Committees give parents the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to their child’s school experience while supporting our school mission. Parents may choose to join a standing committee as an active member or can be identified as a committee volunteer to support a specific committee’s projects and events.

The following committees have been approved through our Bylaws:

- **Finance Committee**
  The Finance Committee shall assist the Treasurer in the performance of the financial management responsibilities of the Society (as specified in Article X, Section 5). The Finance Committee shall consist of the Treasurer, who shall act as chair, the head of school, who shall act as an advisor, and other members as may be appointed by the Treasurer.

- **Buildings and Grounds Committee**
  The Buildings & Grounds Committee shall have the overall responsibility for the grounds, buildings and equipment owned or leased by the Society to provide a safe and attractive learning environment. They shall provide for and supervise the upkeep, repairs and minor capital improvements, which may be authorized. They shall prepare and recommend an annual budget to the Finance Committee.

- **Long Range Planning Committee**
  The Long Range Planning Committee shall advise the Board of Directors on all matters concerning the planning of the Society’s academic, physical, and operational development. They shall lead the development and maintenance of the Society’s Long Range Plan, which shall address the objectives, strategies, resources and time phasing.

- **Parent-Teacher Committee**
  The Parent-Teacher Committee is responsible for planning and hosting school-wide events, supporting relations and communication between the parents and staff, and creating a sense of community within families at the school.

- **Communications Committee**
  The Communications Committee is responsible for informing the public about the Montessori School of Huntsville and for stimulating participation and interest in
its programs and services.

- Fundraising Committee
  The Fundraising Committee shall be responsible for a community-wide signature event, Annual Fund, and Retail Fundraising Programs. In addition, this committee is responsible for developing fundraising ideas, conducting feasibility studies of those ideas, making fundraising recommendations to the Board, appointing chairmen for each fundraising event, and implementing the fundraisers.

MONTESSORI SOCIETY OF HUNTSVILLE MEMBERSHIP
Parents of currently-enrolled students comprise the membership of the Montessori Society of Huntsville. As members, your attendance at the fall and spring Society Meetings is vital. In addition to nominating and electing board members, this is your forum for receiving information, asking questions, discussing issues, and sharing your input.
Attendance at the Society Meetings and other special meetings may be counted as part of your service hour requirement. Credit is awarded at the rate of one hour per meeting per family, verified by the meeting sign-in roster.

COMMUNICATING WITH MSH

GENERAL INFORMATION
You are encouraged to email, call, or schedule a conference time with your child’s teacher when you have questions or concerns, even if they seem minor. School rosters of addresses and contact information for families and staff who choose to share their information with the MSH community are published and updated regularly. This information may not be shared with anyone outside MSH or used for solicitation. You may call the office (256-881-3790 - CTR and 256-534-6469 - HC) to leave a message during class time so that your child’s teacher can arrange to call you back after class.

PARENT OBSERVATIONS
Parent observations may be scheduled through your child’s teacher. Parents are required to read and sign the MSH Observation Guidelines prior to their observation time. Observations are limited to one hour per visit. We encourage you to visit your child’s classroom after the class has had six weeks to settle into a routine. A visit is especially informative since the children are learning through their work with specially selected materials, resulting in less paperwork going home than in other programs.
February is “Child Observation Month,” and we ask that you sign up for a day to observe in the classroom. There are also two “Parent-Child Sharing Nights” during the school year, when your child brings you to school to show you what she/he has been doing.
These immediately precede Parent-Teacher Conferences, so this is a good way to familiarize yourself with the materials and help you formulate questions for the teacher.

To protect the privacy of other children, observers are prohibited from taking photographs, videos, or audio recordings, or sharing with others identifying information regarding students.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES
Conferences are scheduled twice a year, in fall and spring, to discuss your child’s progress. A written report will be given to you at that time.

If you manage to catch your child’s teacher when she is available for a few moments of face-to-face conversation, please show your child the respect that she/he deserves by refraining from talking about her/him in his presence. Remember that the teacher may have obligations that prevent her from spending more than a moment with you, but she will be happy to make an appointment. You can reach any teacher or staff member via email. All staff members have an individual email that follows the same address pattern, firstname@montessorihuntsville.org. For example, to contact the head of school, you would email jennifer@montessorihuntsville.org.

WEBSITE
The MSH website www.montessorihuntsville.org is a good place to review the Parent Handbook, school calendar, staff information and classroom blogs. It is also a good way for you to invite your friends to learn more about MSH from the comfort of their homes.

BLOOMZ
MSH will begin using the Bloomz communication platform starting July 2017. As a parent of a currently-enrolled student, you will be invited to join Bloomz via the email addresses you provided with your enrollment paperwork. We encourage parents to download the free Bloomz app on your mobile device. Bloomz is currently available on Apple and Android operating systems. If you choose not to use the app via your mobile device, you may access our school page and your child’s classroom through the Bloomz website. Parents who do not access Bloomz through the app will still receive updates via the email address you provided on your child’s admissions paperwork. Parent participation is required. This will be our primary way of communicating with parents regarding upcoming events, volunteer sign-ups, shared documents, and updates. Documents such as the MSH Parent Handbook and Medication Authorization forms are available in Bloomz. Checking the app or site daily will ensure that you are up to date on upcoming events or any updates that might affect your child.

SOCIAL MEDIA
We have a public Facebook page and a public Instagram account. If you use any of these social media platforms please follow us!
PARENT EDUCATION
From time to time, MSH will offer information on sessions for parents to hear from education specialists or to learn more about the Montessori philosophy and method. We hope you will take advantage of such opportunities.

MSH NEEDS TO KNOW:
When you have changed your address, place of employment, home phone, work phone, cell phone or email address;
When there is any change in the phone numbers of the persons who are permitted to pick up your child (or a change in the persons themselves) or those you have listed as emergency contacts;
When changes occur in your home routine or situation, such as moving into a new home, pregnancy, a death or serious illness in the family, a parent on an extended trip, parents separating or moving toward a divorce.
Events like these, happy or not, almost always affect children’s behavior. It will help your child’s teacher to have a “heads up” about goings-on in your family, and we promise that such information will be treated with the confidentiality it deserves.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCERNS
We welcome any suggestions you have regarding MSH and its operation. Please help us make it the best it can be.
If you have a concern about a classroom occurrence, please discuss it first with the teacher or other person directly involved. Concerns about a teacher or administrative issues may be addressed to the Head of School. If you are unable to resolve the issue, you may contact the Board of Directors Chair.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES
MSH always has at least one person on site with a current certification in Pediatric CPR and First Aid. If a child receives a minor injury at school, we will provide appropriate care and determine whether parents need to be notified. HEMSI emergency personnel will be called if we suspect serious injury. If it is determined that the child needs emergency treatment, she or he will be transported, at parent expense, to the hospital that you indicated on the Child’s Preadmission Record Addendum. The staff person accompanying the child will take a copy of the Emergency Treatment Authorization while another staff member attempts to contact you.

HYGIENE
One of the most serious challenges facing group care situations for young children is preventing illness. Every effort is made to prevent the spread of germs. We strive to maintain the highest standards of cleanliness, which includes daily sanitizing of materials
and surfaces, frequent hand washing for children and teachers, and instruction in hygiene to help minimize the spread of germs. **Children should not be brought to school if they exhibit any symptom on the following list:**

- fever, vomiting or diarrhea (within the past 24 hours)
- pink eye
- head lice/scabies
- undiagnosed rash
- deep cough
- sore throat or earache

In addition children should be kept at home if:

- illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in classroom activities or outdoors
- illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health, safety and supervision of the other children

Please pick up your child **immediately** if you receive a call from MSH telling you that your child is ill. If you cannot be reached, we will call the other persons listed on your child’s Preadmission Record. **Please notify the school if your child has contracted a communicable illness so we can alert the other parents.**

**THE 24 HOUR SYMPTOM FREE RULE**

MSH policy requires that your child be free of symptoms of illness: fever, diarrhea or vomiting for at least 24 hours. Fever-free means *without* medication for fever reduction. Please keep in mind that if we send your child home because of illness, the child will not be readmitted the next day because the 24-hour period will not have elapsed. Do not rush a child’s return to school following an illness. We reserve the right to require a doctor’s statement before the child can be readmitted.

**MEDICATIONS**

MSH will only administer medication and medical procedures when the parent or guardian has completed, signed, and dated an Authorization for Administering Medication (downloadable from Bloomz). MSH will not administer the ‘lollipop’ type of cough medicine. All medications must be in their original container and labeled with the child’s name, name of the medication, and dosage. Please provide a dosage cup or spoon. To avoid carrying medication back and forth between home and school daily please ask the pharmacist to put half of the medication in another prescription bottle to be left at school. Medications must be handed directly to a staff member by the person dropping off so it can be stored properly. Never send medication or items requiring a medication form, like sunscreen, in the child’s bag. When no longer needed, medication will be returned to parents.

A Medication Authorization Form is valid for no more than seven days unless a Physician’s Authorization to Continuously Administer Medication Form (available in the
office or website) has been completed. This is our authorization to administer sunscreen, insect repellent, allergy/emergency medications and topical creams such as lip balm, anti-itch or diaper rash ointments.
If you want the teacher to decide when the medication should be used, you must write indicate the dosage amount, e.g. dime-sized amount or 5mL, the frequency, e.g. every four hours or one hour prior to sun-exposure, and under what conditions the medication should be administered, e.g. prior to sun-exposure or when X symptoms are present. You must also note the time it was last given at home.
It important to remember that we cannot diagnose your child. You, the parent, or your child’s physician must give detailed instructions for administering medication, even medications purchased over-the-counter. Descriptions such as “liberally,” “as-needed,” or “small amount” are unacceptable. You will be asked to provide a corrected form before we can administer the medication to your child.
We request that you apply sunscreen and/or insect repellent at home because of the amount of class time it takes for staff to do so. We will reapply it after lunch as needed if we have a current medication form.

**NUT ALLERGY POLICY**
The Montessori School of Huntsville (MSH) has implemented the policy below. While every effort will be made to follow these guidelines to keep children safe from allergens, MSH cannot guarantee that a child will not be exposed to a potentially hazardous or life threatening allergen.

The following procedures will be enforced regarding nut safety:

1. Children with nut allergies will be admitted to MSH. They may attend classes when the following conditions are met:
   a. An “Allergy Emergency Health Care Plan” is completed (at least annually) and on file in the office
   b. An EpiPen (if required) is delivered to the school

2. It is the duty of parents of a minor child to inform the school of a nut allergy

3. If a class has a child with a nut allergy
   a. Snack and cooking class ingredients containing nuts will not be allowed in the child’s classroom
   b. Parents of other children in the class will be notified about specific products that are not allowed to be included in their child’s lunch
   c. If a child does come with a lunch item containing nuts, that item will be removed from the lunch and returned home; MSH will provide a substitute item and a reminder will be sent to the parent

4. Children will continue the policy of washing their hands thoroughly before and after lunch.

5. All classes will continue to educate the children on allergies and not sharing food with their classmates.

6. If a child with a nut allergy attends the school, nut products will not be allowed at any school or campus-wide event; reminders will be sent to parents before such events
(7) All staff will be trained at least once a year in the use of EpiPens and on the signs/symptoms of an allergic reaction.

**NO SMOKING ANYWHERE ON MSH CAMPUSES**
According to our licensing requirements, MSH is a non-smoking facility. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the MSH grounds.

**EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**
In most circumstances MSH follows the Huntsville City School system when closing for emergencies. MSH will make every attempt to notify staff and parents of any school closings by use of Bloomz, SchoolCast, local news network WAFF 48, and Facebook. If the Huntsville City Schools are closed for the day, close early, or open late due to weather or an emergency, and MSH sees the city school system’s decision as being in the best interest of our school community, then MSH will follow the HCS’s decision. Please do not attempt to pick your child up during a Madison county tornado warning. Your child will be safer in our CTR campus’ reinforced hallway or Hampton Cove campus’ middle closet.

**EMERGENCY PLANS**
The architect and the Emergency Management Agency have identified the center portion of the CTR hallway as our “safe area” at the CTR campus and the back hallway between classrooms at the Hampton Cove campus. MSH holds occasional tornado drills during the school year. We will move the children into these areas when there is a tornado warning for Madison County.

We also hold periodic fire drills to ensure that all children know how to exit the building quickly and in an orderly fashion. The building is certified annually by an inspector from the Huntsville Fire Department.

In the event of a fire, power failure, water shut-off or other problem that would interfere with the children’s well-being, parents will be contacted immediately to pick up their children. **Parents have a half hour to an hour to pick up their children before late charges will occur.**

In the event of a toxic spill, gas leak, earthquake or other emergency that would require evacuation of the building and area, the local Emergency Management Agency would direct our relocation and parents will be contacted as soon as possible.

**SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**
All employees of schools and child care centers in Alabama are required by law to report to the local Department of Human Resources any incidences of suspected child abuse or neglect. MSH is not expected to have “proof” – it is the job of DHR to determine if further investigation is warranted. Our teachers receive training annually on this topic.
ANNUAL FUND, FUNDRAISING, AND GIFTS
Charitable Gifts Made to The Montessori School of Huntsville
Like virtually all independent schools, MSH cannot meet its total financial needs from tuition alone. Charitable gifts are an important and necessary part of the school’s fiscal management.

MSH is most appreciative of the generosity of parents, grandparents, faculty, staff, alumni/ae, former parents, corporations, and friends whose faithful support through gift giving has helped the school continue to provide the best possible learning environment for the students.

Kathy O’Reilly Memorial Scholarship Fund
The Kathy O’Reilly Memorial Scholarship Fund was created in memory of Kathy O’Reilly, former administrator of the Montessori School of Huntsville, who died in December 2009 after a battle with cancer. Kathy was at the heart and soul of MSH for 23 years. Her years of service to MSH include serving as an administrator, member of the board of directors, lead teacher, and substitute teacher before retiring in 2008. One of her greatest strengths was her generosity of spirit. Her delight in working with children, her compassion for those in need, and her willingness to lend a hand made her a most valuable member of the community.

The scholarship fund is designed to benefit children who would not otherwise be able to attend MSH. Recipients will be added as funds permit. Donations are accepted year-round and are tax-deductible. If you would like to serve your community by giving a child the gift of a quality Montessori education, please contact Jennifer Stark, Head of School, jennifer@montessorihuntsville.org or the MSH Board of Directors Chairperson, chair@montessorihuntsville.org

Annual Fund Campaign
Each year the Board of Directors appeals to current parents, alumni, and staff to join the board in contributing to the Montessori School of Huntsville Annual Fund. Contributions to the Annual Fund provide operating funds for the current fiscal year. These indispensable funds bridge the gap between tuition income and the true cost of a quality Montessori education. In previous years faithful giving to this fund by our board, parents, teachers, and staff has helped with financial aid, technology, faculty, art programs, facility upkeep, and teacher/staff continuing education. The Annual Fund is the most effective avenue of giving to the school, and we hope every parent will join us in this critical endeavor.

All gifts to the Annual Fund are tax-deductible as contributions to our 501(c)3 nonprofit institution. We encourage you to give according to your family’s financial means, and are grateful for any and all contributions made by our donors. We strive to earn 100% participation from board, current parents, teachers, and staff as it significantly increases...
our chances of winning grants from foundations and government organizations proving to them and ourselves that 100% of our constituents support our mission and vision.

Disbursement schedules for pledges to the Annual Fund may be designed to suit your family’s needs within the school’s fiscal year. Many current families commit to giving $200 annually by adding a $20-25 donation to their monthly tuition disbursement. We are grateful for all contributions to the Annual Fund. Our generous community of donors make a Huntsville Montessori education possible.

**Employer Matching Programs**
Employer matching programs allow your tax-deductible contributions to go even farther while helping these employers contribute their tax-deductible dollars to valuable community initiatives. Please consider contacting your HR department about this opportunity.

**Memorials and Honoraria**
Throughout each school year gifts are received to honor a special person, memorialize a loved one, or celebrate special events such as birthdays and graduations. The administration notifies the individual or family of these thoughtful gifts upon receipt. We are fortunate that some grandparents and other extended family generously choose to donate to our school in the interest of their family’s education.

**Gifts-in-Kind**
These gifts are of tangible property or professional services designated by the individual donor for a special one-time project or purpose not included in the operating budget of the school. Though these kind and generous gifts do not count toward the Annual Fund, their value is tax-deductible and greatly appreciated by MSH.

**Fundraising and Special Events**
Every effort is made to keep fundraising and parent solicitations to a minimum. All school-related groups and individuals must obtain from the Head of School written approval for any event or activity conducted for the benefit of MSH. The Head of School may delegate this approval to the Fundraising Committee.

No event or activity shall include door-to-door fundraising by students in which students would be selling items or soliciting contributions, pledges, or orders from people unless they know them, e.g. neighbors, relatives, teachers or friends.
**FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**
The Montessori School of Huntsville is a 501(c)(3) institution that complies with all appropriate federal and state laws. All cash gifts to the school for which the donor receives no goods or services are tax deductible. Certain donations (such as ticket purchases), auction donations, gifts of stock, and gifts in kind are deductible to the manner and extent provided by law in accordance with IRS regulations. Upon request, the administrative office furnishes letters to donors for tax purposes.

**APPLICATION AND SUPPLY FEES**
A $150 Application Fee is required with each application. Currently enrolled students also pay an Application Fee when they enroll for the coming year. A $300 supply fee is due by May 1 for all students who have enrolled prior to that date; for students enrolling after May 1 but before the start of the school year, the supply fee is due immediately upon acceptance into the school. The Supply Fee is not prorated for students enrolling mid-year and is due upon enrollment. All fees are non-refundable.

**TUITION**
Tuition is based on a ten-month academic school year and divided into equal monthly installments, August through May, for your convenience. This means that the months of October (Fall Break), December (Winter Break), March (Spring Break) and May (school year’s end), where there are fewer regular school days, tuition remains the same.

Montessori School of Huntsville is wholly supported and operated from the income derived from tuition, fees, and donations.

**STATEMENTS**
Monthly statements will be sent via email five calendar days before the first of each month. Your statement will reflect monthly tuition installments dated on the first of the month and any elective charges, e.g. donations, catered lunches, field trips, etc. from the previous billing cycle.

**PAYMENT OPTIONS**
- **Payment in Full**
  You may choose to pay your child’s tuition in full prior to the start of the school year.
- **ACH Draft**
  MSH prefers that all families pay through ACH draft. Statement totals will be drafted on the first business day of the month from the bank account on file for each student. Statements are sent five calendar days before the first of the month. Any questions or concerns regarding your statement should be directed to the MSH Director of Finance as soon as possible.
Families who pay via ACH draft must give 30 days notice to make any changes to their account, including but not limited to, suspensions, cancellations or account changes. **Requests must be made in writing.**

- **Personal Check and Bill Pay**
  As a courtesy to MSH families, we will accept payment via check provided that families who choose to do so secure their account with a valid credit card. The credit card must be active and have an available balance to cover the cost of the anticipated monthly balance. Checks are due on or before the first of the month, with a five day grace period offered as a courtesy to families. **Do not wait for the statement to pay your child’s tuition. You may pay the tuition amount listed on your enrollment contract as an “estimate” of what is due to avoid late charges.** Accounts that remain unpaid following the fifth of the month will be charged a $20 late fee without exception. Accounts that remain unpaid following the tenth of the month will incur a penalty equal to 10% of the unpaid balance and the credit card on file will processed for the full amount due subject to a 3.5% processing fee.

  Families may choose to use the bill pay option offered through their personal bank; however, payments made through bill pay that are received after the fifth and tenth of the month are subject to the same penalties. You will need to make arrangements with your financial institution to ensure your check is mailed before the first.

  If your last name is different from that of your child or the same as that of another family, or if you have more than one student, please write your child’s name on the memo line or indicate split amounts to help the office assign credit correctly.

  All checks must be dropped off at CTR in the lock box located in the foyer or mailed to our billing address: Montessori School of Huntsville ATTN: Director of Finance 15975 Chaney Thompson Rd. Huntsville, AL 35803. Returned checks will incur a $50 penalty.

- **Credit Card**
  MSH will accept payment via credit card, subject to a 3.5% processing fee.
OTHER FEES AND CHARGES

LUNCHES
Lunch may be ordered for $3.99 per day at CTR campus or on Fridays at the Hampton Cove campus by checking the appropriate box on the Sign-in Sheet. The Hampton Cove campus will not have catered lunches Monday - Thursday. Lunches are ordered from the caterer at 9:00 each day. Please call us before 8:30 a.m. if your child will arrive after 9:00 a.m. and will need to purchase a lunch. Milk may be ordered for $0.75; it is automatically included in a purchased lunch. Please mark choices carefully. We will charge you if you mistakenly mark “buy” as MSH must pay for all orders. If your child orders milk or lunches regularly, we ask you to prepay with tuition.

CHARGES FOR LATE PICK UP
To ensure appropriate staff to child ratios as well as quality programing in our afternoon extended care programs, we ask that you make every effort to pick your child up by his/her stated times. We are unable to accommodate drop-in or occasional care in our toddler and primary extended care programs. Parents who need regular care past their child’s dismissal time should sign up for the annual extended care program. On very few occasions, we are able to accommodate a toddler or primary student until 3:00 for nap provided the child has a sibling in kindergarten or elementary and is committed to regular attendance in the napping room. Young children who do not nap regularly at school often have difficulty transitioning into the nap room and can create a disturbance for children who are trying to rest. Children who are not picked up by the time designated on the enrollment contract, and who are not enrolled in our annual afternoon care program, will incur an hourly charge for each hour or fraction of an hour they remain in MSH’s care past the scheduled departure time. MSH does not bill in increments of less than an hour. Toddlers signed up for half-day (11:30 dismissal) who are not picked up by 11:45 will be charged $11.00 per hour until 1:30. After 1:30 and until school closing time, any student remaining in our care past his/her pick up time will be billed at a rate of 8.25 per hour.

Students who are not picked up by the 6:00 p.m. closing time will incur a $1 per minute late fee for the first 5 minutes and $5 per minute for each additional minute. This policy will apply if school is dismissed early for inclement weather or other emergency. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have provided MSH with up-to-date contact information for reaching you in an emergency as well as staying connected to MSH when severe weather is likely. All children and adults must have left the building by the stated closing times. If you know that you will be late, please call the school so we can reassure your child that you are on the way.

For families with children who are enrolled for less than five days per week, the day off is set and not transferable.

LATE PAYMENTS
Any extenuating circumstances regarding late payment must be made known in writing to the Head of School.
When a student’s account is in arrears, the student may be prohibited from ordering lunches through our catered service or charging and elective charges to his/her account. No records of any kind, including report cards and test scores, will be released on behalf of any student whose account is in arrears. The Head of School, after conferring with parents whose accounts are in arrears, may prohibit the student from attending classes until the accounts are brought current.

The Head of School has final jurisdiction in the enforcement of these policies. Every effort is made to be responsive to the needs of MSH families and to ensure fairness in the implementation of the financial policies. An unsatisfactory record of tuition and fee payment, however, is considered a factor in the decision to offer a student an enrollment contract for the next year. Families whose financial accounts are not current will not be extended an enrollment contract until the accounts are made current.

**TUITION DISCOUNTS**
Families who have two or more students enrolled at MSH and attending at least until 1:30 five days per week, will receive a 10% discount on school tuition for the second and subsequent children. The discount will be applied to the lower tuition. MSH does not offer a 10% reduction on the already heavily discounted full-time Extended Care or Morning Care fees.

**TUITION REFUNDS AND CREDITS**
Refunds are not given for absences, even absences of several weeks. Refunds are not given for closings due to inclement weather or other emergencies. Tuition is based on a ten-month academic school year and divided into equal installments August through May for your convenience. For this reason, we are unable to reduce tuition for extended vacations or other prolonged absences.

**MSH STUDENT REFERRAL REBATE**
MSH recognizes that our families are the best recruitment tool that we have. To show our support for your recruitment efforts, you can receive a tuition reduction of $100 for referring a student or family who enrolls at MSH.
Referral rebates are not applied until a referred student has completed all enrollment paperwork and paid the application fee and supply fee.
You cannot refer a member of your own family.
You cannot refer a student who has siblings at MSH.
It is the referring family’s responsibility to submit the Referral Form prior to the prospective family’s enrollment. Referrals will not be made retroactively.
The tuition reduction applies only to the cost of tuition (no cash rebates).
Two families may split the tuition reduction if both contributed to a successful referral.
A tuition reduction can be given for a student re-enrolling at MSH after an absence of 2 or more years. There is no limit to the number of students a family can refer, but tuition reductions will be limited to the full tuition of the referring family for one academic year.
NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL FROM MSH

Enrollment is granted to students at MSH with an understanding that the family is committed for the duration of the curriculum cycle in which the child is enrolled, i.e. 3-year cycle for primary students, 6-year cycle for elementary students. At minimum, the enrollment contract confirms a family’s commitment for the full academic year, beginning in August and ending in May. We understand that extenuating circumstances may arise that may result in an inability to complete the academic year.

As a courtesy to our families, we offer a withdrawal policy that allows for a student to be withdrawn from MSH during the academic school year. A family who wishes to withdraw from MSH must give written notice of intent to withdraw from MSH at least 120 days before the last anticipated tuition payment. The written notice must be sent to the HOS and a conference will be scheduled to discuss the reasons for withdrawal and possible solutions to allow the child to remain in attendance at MSH for the full academic year.

Failure to do so will result in an obligation to pay a withdrawal fee equal to four months of tuition. Enrollment contracts for the upcoming school year are due by May 1. Notices of intent to withdraw received between May 2 and August 1 will be considered as of August 1. This means that families who have signed an enrollment contract, but decide to withdraw prior to the start of the school year in August will be subject to the same withdrawal fee equal to four months tuition, i.e. August - November.

DISMISSAL FROM MSH

MSH has the right to dismiss a child if the staff believes that she/he is not ready for the school program or for other reasons including but not limited to academic, behavioral or financial concerns. MSH reserves the right to dismiss a child immediately if it is determined that the child poses a significant risk to the safety and wellbeing of MSH students and staff.

The HOS has the right to waive the early withdrawal policy for students who are dismissed within the six-week trial period if it is determined the child is not developmentally ready for the intended program. No refunds will be given for tuition paid through the end of the month in which the dismissal occurred.

If a child is identified as having significant academic or behavioral concerns, the HOS, the child’s teachers, and the parents will conference to develop an intervention plan and implementation timeline as well as identify possible outside resources to support the student. The parent-teacher-child partnership is vital to each child’s success at MSH.
CONTACT INFORMATION

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