



Montessori

SCHOOL *of* HUNTSVILLE

FAMILY 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 3/28/2018

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 children. 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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission Statement, Nondiscrimination Policy, Vision Statement	1
The Structure of MSH, A Word About Our Non-Profit Status	3
Key Philosophical Messages that Make Montessori Unique	4
The Four Planes of Development	5
Family-Teacher-Child Partnership Expectations	6
Admission Policies and Procedures	9
Phasing-In and Trial Period	11
Waiting Pool	11
Arrivals and Departures	12
Lunches, Snacks, and Other Food-Related Policies	14
Rest Time	15
Enrichment and Extended Day Programs	15
Attendance Policies	17
Discipline in a Montessori School	18
A Note on Teasing, Peer Conflict, and Bullying	19
Family Roles and Responsibilities for Supporting Positive Behavior	20
Contracting MSH Staff for Services Outside of Employment	21
Dress Code	21
Homework	23
Children's Birthdays	24
Especially for Toddler Families	25
Building a School Partnership: Volunteer Hours and Committees	25
Communicating with MSH	27
Health and Safety Policies	31
Severe and Life-Threatening Allergy Policies	33
Emergency Closings	34
Annual Fund, Endowment, Scholarship Fund and Fundraising	36
Financial Obligations	38
Notice of Withdrawal from MSH	41
Dismissal from MSH	42

WELCOME

We welcome you to the MSH community where children, families and staff work together to create a calm, orderly and nurturing learning environment for your child's total development – physically, socially, intellectually, and emotionally.

THE STRUCTURE OF MSH

The Montessori School of Huntsville was founded by Imogen Stooke Wheeler and Miriam Hoyle 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 meeting minutes are posted for families to view following each meeting.

Two MSH Society meetings are held each year--one in fall and one in spring. When you sign the Handbook Verification Form, 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 a presentation about the state of the school is shared with families.

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 a Full Member 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.

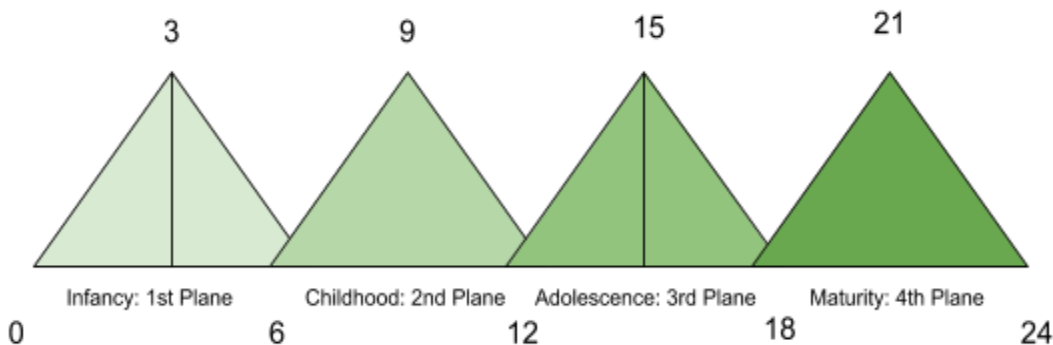
Your taxes or employment benefit plan may require our Employer Identification Number (EIN): **63-0504958**.

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 they are to be through their 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 families 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.

Montessori in the 21st Century. The American Montessori Society. 2003.

The Four Planes of Development



First Plane: Ages 0-6 “Early Childhood” and the Individual Creation of the Person

This stage is characterized by the young child’s “absorbent mind.” Children have a desire for physical independence (from “Help me to do it myself!” to “I can do it myself!”) and are interested in real activities with an intelligent purpose. Sensitive periods during this plane include: movement, language, small objects, toileting, order, music, grace and courtesy, senses, writing, reading, spatial relationships, and mathematics.

Second Plane: Ages 6-12 “Childhood” and the Construction of the Intelligence

Children in the second plane of development have a thirst for knowledge, love of imagination, fascination with fairness, and a desire for intellectual independence. This is the time for “cosmic education,” in which the child explores their place within the world and comes to appreciate the interconnectedness of all things. This is also the “bridge to abstraction”—the transition from concrete to abstract thinking. Children in this plane have a desire for intellectual independence. (“I can think it myself!”)

Third Plane: Ages 12-18 “Adolescence” and the Construction of the Social Self

Children in the third plane of development are characterized by self concern and self assessment. This is a sensitive period for both critical thinking and exploring social and moral values. Adolescents in this plane have a desire for emotional independence. (“I can stand on my own.”)

Fourth Plane: Ages 18-24 and Beyond “Adulthood” and the Construction of Self Understanding

The fourth plane of development is characterized by the construction of the spiritual self. Young adults are in the process of conscious discernment of right and wrong, seeking to discover their place within the world. Young adults in the plane have a desire for financial independence. (“I can get it myself.”)

Intense Change & Assimilation

Within each plane, the child undergoes a period of intense change, followed by a period of assimilation. This also holds true within each three-year cycle. For this reason, the third year in Montessori classrooms is sometimes known as the “leap year”. This is when students internalize all the various skills for which they have both directly and indirectly acquired during the earlier years. It is also the time when students become self-possessed learners, confident in their abilities. It’s when they emerge as leaders, eager to share their skills with their younger peers. Rising

second and third year students enter the classroom in the fall with newfound confidence and autonomy, ready to take on leadership roles and greater independence. Children who move up to the next level of their Montessori education thrill at the opportunity to embark upon new and exciting journeys.*

*Credit MSB, <https://msb.org/the-montessori-method/four-planes-of-development/>

FAMILY-TEACHER-CHILD PARTNERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

The Family

Lifetime Role Model

- Models patience, respectfulness, and peacefulness
- Promotes development of independence, responsibility and accountability of the child by modeling and reinforcing desired behaviors

The Child

Peer Role Model

- Respects self, others, and the environment
- Practices Grace and Courtesy
- Works toward independence
- Makes peace

The Teacher

Classroom Role Model

- Models patience, respectfulness, and peacefulness
- Promotes development of independence, responsibility, and accountability of the child modeling and reinforcing desired behaviors

Respecter of Montessori Professional

- Seeks to understand and embrace the Montessori philosophy and how things are done in the classroom
- Abides by the school's policies and guidelines
- Respects the teachers' expertise in the classroom
- Reads communications that are sent home and asks questions when needed for clarity

Montessori Child

- Loves to learn
- Comes to school prepared and with openness and a positive attitude
- Abides by the school's policies and guidelines
- Shares ideas & interests with others inside and outside the learning environment
- Demonstrates the desire to create quality work and strive for their full potential

Montessori Professional

- Works with the child in a manner consistent with the Montessori philosophy
- Abides by the school's policies and guidelines
- Continues professional development
- Provides opportunities for family education regarding Montessori philosophy and curriculum
- Shares information about academic and developmental progress in a timely manner

Instructional Supporter

- Reasonably adapts home environment and routines to support developing independence and responsibility

Creative, Eager Learner

- Seeks to learn and views mistakes as opportunities for learning
- Chooses intellectually useful and challenging

Instructional Designer, Facilitator, and Assessor

- Follows Montessori philosophy to provide each child with appropriate and challenging work
- Uses observation and

- 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 their 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

Volunteer and Society Member

- Volunteers time, energy, and resources to identified school/classroom needs
- Serves on or volunteers with at least one school committee, attends meetings, and provides support for committee projects
- Attends biannual Society Member Meetings
- Asks teachers, “How can I help?”
- Follows the lead of the classroom teacher when working in the classroom and respects the teacher’s classroom guidelines and processes

Effective Communicator

- Has an open, honest, respectful

work

- Pursues and develops their own interests
- Takes responsibility for their own education

Community Member

- Participates in the care of the indoor and outdoor classroom
- Guides and seeks/accepts guidance from other children as well as adults
- Demonstrates empathy and compassion
- Works non-violently to prevent and resolve conflict
- Acts as a responsible and contributing member of a greater community (family, class, school, neighborhood, city, country, world)

Effective Communicator

- Talks with and listens

assessment to meet the needs of each child

- Seeks input from family, child, and colleagues to maximize child’s learning potential
- Nurtures the child to reach their full potential
- Fosters each child’s independence in daily classroom activities and work
- Expects the child to take responsibility for their own education
- Prepares the child for any school environment after Upper Elementary graduation or the end of the 3 year cycle

Classroom Architect, Builder and Guardian

- Prepares and maintains an authentic Montessori learning environment
- Balances the needs of the child and classroom community
- Provides boundaries and choices and respects the child’s need for freedom within limits
- Participates in the life of the school community beyond the classroom

Effective Communicator

- Has an open, honest,

dialogue with teachers and child

- Partners with teacher and child in problem solving to improve the educational experience for the child

to teachers and families openly, honestly, and respectfully

- Self-advocates
- Partners with teachers and families in problem solving

respectful dialogue with the family and child

- Partners with family 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 their 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 their 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 their 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

ADMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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

1. **Visit our campus:** To initiate the enrollment process, families must contact the MSH office 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, the application for enrollment will be emailed to you. Within 48 hours of receipt of the application, a payable online invoice will be sent to the email address provided. If you are applying to the waiting pool, your child's name will be added once the application and fee are received. The completed application and fee are required for all children 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 loaned to you to read throughout the admission process to be returned at the scheduled family meeting. You may choose to purchase the book from the school for \$10.00.
4. **Request student records/transcripts and immunization record:** If your child is currently attending another school, please request their records to be sent to the Montessori School of Huntsville ATTN: Admission 15975 Chaney Thompson Rd. Huntsville, AL 35803. All children must have a current, original immunization record on file to participate in the trial visit. No copies will be accepted. An Alabama Immunization Record or Religious Exemption *must* be on file for your child's first day of school. Delays in submission of this document will postpone the start date for your child and tuition will not be prorated for days missed.
5. **Child Interview:** A trial visit will be scheduled for all prospective children 3 years of age and up, provided the application for enrollment is received during the academic school year, October-April. Trial visits will not be scheduled May-September. Toddlers are not required to participate in a trial visit. These visits vary in length according to your child's intended program.
6. **Trial Visit:** A trial visit will be scheduled for all children 3 years of age and up. Toddlers are not required to participate in a trial visit. These visits vary in length according to your child's intended program.
7. **Family Interview:** A family interview will be scheduled by our admission team for all prospective families. Student success at MSH is dependent on an open partnership among children, families, and MSH teachers and administrators. The family interview is a step in building that partnership. We value this opportunity to get to know you as well as your child during the admission 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. Families will return the copy of *Follow the Child* loaned to them during the admission process at the family interview.

8. **Notification of enrollment status:** Assuming that families, 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 the waiting pool for the intended program.
9. **Completion of Admission Documents and Enrollment Agreement:** Admission paperwork will be sent to the email address provided via Transparent Classroom, our online record keeping system. The enrollment contract is emailed via AdboeSign. All admission and financial documents must be completed in full and signed before admittance will be granted. A \$300 supply fee is due on March 1, 2019 or at the time of enrollment if enrollment occurs after March 1.

Enrollment in MSH is renewed annually, with the student records updated and fees required each year. The reenrollment period begins in January for the coming school year. Currently enrolled families have until February 28 to secure their place for the next year before enrollment is opened to the community at large in March.

¹ All incoming and bridging children will complete a six-week trial period before full-acceptance to the program is granted.

Trial Period and Phasing-In

All incoming and bridging children must complete a six-week trial period, beginning on the child's first day in the new program. The trial period ensures that each child is developmentally ready for their intended program. Should a concern arise during the trial period, a conference will be scheduled between the teachers, administration, and family to address any concerns and develop a plan to assist the child in their transition into the new environment. The family/teacher partnership is essential to each child's success in the classroom.

An adjustment period is expected for all newly enrolled children. All toddler and primary children (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 children. Good communication between you and your child's teacher will smooth the transition. **Please note that morning and afternoon extended day are not available for all toddler and "new-to-MSH" primary children during the phasing-in week.**

WAITING POOL

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 pool and availability of age-related space.

If the class is full, your child's name will be placed in the waiting pool upon receipt of the Application Fee. Once a spot becomes available the family will be notified, and you will be given three business days to respond before we move to the next family.

If the spot offered is accepted, the family will have one week to complete a contract and pay all applicable fees.

SCHOOL POLICIES

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Operating hours for the 2019-2020 academic year are as follows:

CTR 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

HC 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Children who are enrolled in the Morning Care (MC) program at CTR or HC may arrive at MSH any time after opening, 7:30 a.m.

With the exception of children enrolled in the morning care program, children should arrive during the following windows:

Toddler and Primary 8:30-8:45 a.m.

Elementary 7:30-8:15 a.m.

Children arriving at the CTR Campus after 8:15a.m. (Elementary) and 8:45 a.m. (Toddler and Primary) must be escorted to class by a staff member. Sign-in sheets will be located in the front office between 8:45 and 11:00 a.m.

With the exception of children enrolled in Afternoon Enrichment and Extended Day, children should be picked up during the following windows:

Toddler Half Day 12:30-12:45 a.m.

Toddler Full Day 2:30-4:00 p.m.

Primary Half Day 12:30-12:45 p.m.

Primary School Day 2:30-2:45 p.m.

Elementary 2:45-3:00 p.m.

Children enrolled in Afternoon Enrichment (AE) must be picked up no later than 4:00pm for Toddler and Primary and 4:30pm for Elementary.

Extended Day (EXD) is offered at CTR only, 4:00-5:30 for Primary children; 4:30-5:30 for Elementary children. Extended Day is not offered for toddler children at CTR. Children enrolled in this program must be picked up no later than 5:30pm.

All families will receive a key fob to permit building access during drop off and pickup windows only. Families arriving or leaving outside of scheduled times will be permitted access by a staff member. At the CTR campus, you will need to check in and receive a visitor's badge at the Front Office. Additional or replacement key fobs will be available for purchase.

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 conference by emailing your child's teacher at

firstname@montessorihuntsville.org. The teacher may not be able to speak with you at that time based on the number of children 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. For immediate assistance, you may call CTR 256-881-3790, HC 256-534-6469, or email the MSH Administrative Team at office@montessorihuntsville.org and your message will be shared with your child's teacher.

Children are only allowed to leave the MSH building with a parent/guardian or other adult for whom we have written authorization from you. A parent/guardian 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. Families 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 an administrator.

We take campus safety and security very seriously. To contribute to a safe learning environment, we ask that all adults who are not employees of MSH be under the supervision of MSH staff with the exception of our regular arrival and dismissal windows. Parents who arrive prior to the assigned pick-up window should wait outside or in the front office before going to their child's classroom. Children who have been signed out for the day are not permitted to remain on the playgrounds or in the classrooms. Upon signing your child out, you must gather their belongings and exit the school facilities.

The CTR driveway is one-way. You enter from the south. The speed limit in the CTR driveway is 5mph. Please be mindful of the speed limits on Chaney Thompson and Miller Lane. 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 children should hold the hand of an adult in the school parking lot.

SIGN-IN/OUT

All children must be signed in and out every day. Sign-in sheets provide us with a record of each child's attendance, required by our licensing organization. After 8:45am at the CTR campus, parents/guardians 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 Sign In/Out Sheets are found just outside 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.

LUNCHESES, SNACKS, AND OTHER FOOD-RELATED POLICIES

MSH will provide a daily morning snack for all children. Children who attend afternoon programs will be provided a second snack. Classroom snack menus will be planned in advanced and posted for families to review; though items may vary depending on availability. Snacks will include a variety of foods and consist of at least two of the following food groups--protein, e.g. cheese, yogurt, hummus, sunbutter--we do not serve meat to children, fruit/vegetable, and/or carbohydrate, e.g. crackers, toast, pretzels, pita. Water is available at meal times and throughout the day. Children with food allergies may bring snacks from home that meet their nutritional needs. Snacks should be kept in the child’s lunchbox.

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 their lunch each day, even if you doubt that your child will eat it all. Letting your child help plan their 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, bags, and lunch containers 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, catered meals are available daily for purchase at the CTR campus. The daily menu is set for the year and substitutions or special orders are not allowed. Catered lunches are not available at HC Monday through Thursday. However, should a child at HC forget their lunch, a lunch will be provided consisting of a fruit/vegetable, protein, and carbohydrate and your child’s account will be charged accordingly. Pizza is

available for purchase on Fridays at CTR and Wednesdays at HC. Lunch orders will be invoiced to your MSH account at the rate of \$4.99 each day.

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.

On certain occasions, families may wish to bring a special snack to share with their child's classroom. In compliance with our health department licensing, only foods from approved sources, i.e. commercial foods or those cooked or prepared in licensed/permitted kitchens, are allowed to be served at our school. Foods must be in original packaging and unopened. Food prepared in a licensed kitchen and brought to school is subject to time/temperature rules for food safety. If you intend to bring food prepared in a local restaurant/licensed kitchen, you must notify the school administration in advance to make arrangements and discuss food safety precautions required for storage and transportation. Fresh fruits and vegetables may be brought to school and cut/prepared in the school kitchen. Foods prepared or cooked at home are not considered an approved source for classroom sharing.

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 who stay for Afternoon Enrichment begin preparing for nap around 12:30 and Primary around 1:00. These times are subject to change depending on the needs of the children and staffing. This period lasts until 3:00. To avoid disrupting nap time, we ask that you pick up your child by 12:30 or after 3:00 p.m. Primary children who no longer need a nap will have a rest period of 45 minutes. Quiet activities are allowed during the rest period.

MSH provides cots and sheets for napping and resting children, but each child needs to bring a small (crib-size) blanket 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 families sign up to wash sheets on the weekend, with credit of one hour being earned toward your Community Service requirement.

ENRICHMENT AND EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS

MSH offers limited Morning Care (MC), Afternoon Enrichment (AE), and Extended Day (EXD) to families needing care before or after the Montessori school day. Due to limited availability in each program, annual enrollment is required to participate. Occasional or drop-in care is not offered. If your family has an emergency, and you need support past your child's normal hours, but within the school's operating hours, contact the Head of School immediately to see if care can be arranged for that day.

Full time MC, AE, or EXD is paid monthly with tuition and is considered late if unpaid by the first working day following the 5th of the month. Removal from MC, AE, or EXD programs is subject to the 180 day notice of withdrawal policy.

When picking up your child from afternoon programs, we ask that you do not engage teachers in lengthy conversations. Teachers who are actively supervising children, i.e. they are considered as part of the state-mandated teacher:child ratios, are not able to engage in conversations longer than quick, general updates. If needed, you may set up a conference time with your child's lead teacher to discuss any concerns. To reach the administrative staff, email office@montessorihuntsville.org or call the front office; 256-881-3790 CTR and 256-534-6469 HC. Should you need immediate assistance during operating hours and the administrative offices are closed, you may contact the Head of School, 256-812-1761.

CARE FOR SEASONAL BREAKS

Care for seasonal breaks, i.e. Fall, Winter, and Spring Breaks, is only offered at CTR. The HC campus is closed for all seasonal breaks. Refer to the school calendar for corresponding dates. We must have a minimum of 3 children enrolled to offer seasonal break care in any program. We will open up registration to MSH families 4-6 weeks before the first day of the break.

Catered lunches will not be offered during seasonal breaks.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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 families. One of the most valuable life skills a child can learn is taking responsibility to arrive 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 children and begin their morning routines.

SCHOOL SCHEDULE:

- 7:30 - 8:15 a.m. Elementary Drop off and Morning Recess
- 8:15 a.m. Children arriving after 8:15 are tardy and must report to the office and be escorted to class.
- 8:30 - 8:45 a.m. Primary drop off
- 8:30 - 8:45 a.m. Toddler drop off
- CTR Sign in sheets are returned to the office at 8:45 a.m. to order lunch. Primary/Toddlers arriving after 8:45 a.m. at the CTR campus must sign in at the office and be escorted to class at the CTR campus. HC key fob access is restricted between 8:45 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Families who arrive late or need to pick up early will need to be let into the building by an MSH staff member.

Regular and prompt attendance is required for continued enrollment in all programs and may be used in determining an offer for re-enrollment for the following school year.

EXCESSIVE TARDY/ABSENCE PROCEDURES FOR ELEMENTARY CHILDREN:

- 3rd tardy/unexcused absence - Phone call from teacher to parent/guardian to check in
- 5th tardy/unexcused absence - Partnership Meeting with parent/guardian, teacher, and Head of School to discuss challenges or difficulties with prompt/regular attendance, possible solutions, and desired outcomes
- 3 unexcused tardies will be the equivalent of an unexcused absence

When children miss school, they miss the opportunity to learn in a prepared environment. When children arrive late, it has a negative impact on their own learning and disrupts the flow of the day for other children who are engaged in the work cycle. If a child arrives after the work period is complete, an absence will be counted. It is essential that children attend school every day they are healthy. Absences may be excused for personal illness with a parent/guardian excuse up to ten absences. After ten parent/guardian-excused absences, a doctor's note will be required to excuse an absence for health reasons and a

conference scheduled with the teacher to support your child's learning. 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 or Assistant Head of School and with a completed [Pre-arranged Student Absence Form](#). Parent/guardian must submit the Prearranged Absence Form no less than ninety days (90) before the planned absence. A conference will be scheduled with the HOS or AHOS, teacher, parent, and child to evaluate the educational opportunity, academic expectations, and outcomes required. As always, we encourage frequent, open communication between home and school to provide the highest quality of education to your child.

DISCIPLINE IN THE MONTESSORI ENVIRONMENT

In a Montessori environment, discipline is recognized as inner work that is developed and refined through knowledge and skill-building rather than through punishment or coercion. The word discipline is derived from the latin *discipulus* meaning learner and *discere* meaning learn. The prepared Montessori environment, classroom culture, and academic lessons cultivate inner discipline in children by promoting a sense of autonomy, belonging, and purpose. At times, however, children need additional support to meet classroom expectations or build skills needed for self-regulation.

Montessori pedagogy fosters an education for peace. Children in Montessori classrooms learn to care for their individual needs while recognizing the needs of others. In addition to setting expectations for how to treat one another in the classroom, children learn a set of shared values within the classroom community. At every level, children learn lessons in "grace and courtesy," prosocial skills, and conflict resolution. Each of these lessons is an opportunity to develop skills for inner discipline and peace. When a child struggles to learn a particular skill or to meet classroom expectations, additional lessons may be required. Children who demonstrate a potential pattern of challenging or disruptive behavior, or who demonstrate a need for academic intervention, will be referred to a Child Study Team (CST) to design a proactive intervention strategy to support targeted skill development and a Parent Meeting will be scheduled. A Child Study may include recommendations for outside services including but not limited to Occupational Therapy (OT), Applied Behavioral Analysis Therapy (ABA), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, or screening/evaluation for learning differences or disorders, as well as a request to have information from the service provider or screening/evaluation shared with the team to improve intervention strategies. Outside consultation may be requested with the costs incurred by the family.

A collaborative and supportive partnership is the best method for supporting children who demonstrate challenging behavior or who require academic intervention and should include the child, the family, teachers, and administrators. Families are expected to participate in conferences, as requested, and to provide outside support as determined by the Child Study Team.

A NOTE ON TEASING, PEER CONFLICT AND BULLYING

MSH is committed to each child’s success in learning within a caring and responsive environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our school works to ensure that all children have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Classroom rules and expectations are developed to support positive peer interactions. “Grace and courtesy” lessons, prosocial skill development, and conflict resolution are taught regularly as part of the school curriculum and our commitment to educating the whole child. Adults model expectations to reinforce their value. Children are taught the importance of respect and dignity for themselves and others within their community as well as respect and care for the learning environment.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is a willful, conscious desire to hurt, frighten, or threaten. Bullying is usually a series of repeated, intentionally cruel incidents, or threat of harm, that involve the same children, *in the same bully/victim roles*. It involves an imbalance of power, either real or perceived. It can be physical or verbal and can include intimidation, inappropriate gestures or touching, and social exclusion. Due to the willful and conscious nature of bullying, Primary children are not typically developmentally capable of carrying out bullying and are more often involved in normal peer conflict.

What is the difference between bullying and other types of peer conflict?

The chart below illustrates some differences between bullying, teasing, and peer conflicts.

Friendly Teasing	Hurtful Teasing	Peer Conflict	Bullying
Equal power	Unequal power	Equal power	Imbalance of power
Neutral	Occurs occasionally	Occurs occasionally	Occurs repeatedly, or has the potential to be repeated over time
Purpose is to be playful	Purpose is to upset	Unintentional	Intentional and serious
Funny to all involved parties	Excludes; not funny to all involved parties	Effort to resolve through withdrawal from conflict or	Seeks to gain power; perpetrator of bullying

		negotiations; relationship is valued between parties	behavior shows no remorse; no effort to resolve; target is vulnerable
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Responsibilities of Stakeholders and Instructions for Reporting Incidents

Children, parents, and teachers who have reasonable grounds to believe that bullying is taking place must share their concerns with the teacher. Your child’s teacher should be your first point of contact for reporting peer conflict or concerns. Each instance of peer conflict will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, by staff who are committed to building a deep understanding of each child. Staff will respond with appropriate intervention as needed and keep families informed of any major conflicts/incidents. Likewise, families should continue to keep their teachers informed, as children may be comfortable sharing more at home.

Family Roles and Responsibilities for Supporting Positive Behavior at School

Modeling

Children observe and imitate the behavioral responses that are used by the significant adults in their environment. Families who are respectful and kind to others, especially their own children, are likely to see that same behavior develop in their children. However, it is important to recognize that children are developing their social skills at their own pace and some may struggle even with the best adult models in their lives. 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, demonstrate empathy, manage anger, and practice forgiveness can help a child build successful relationships. Social stories are a wonderful way to explore various scenarios and responses with your child and can help to develop flexible thinking and problem solving skills.

Reinforcement

Montessori philosophy does not advocate external rewards for desired behavior or punishments for undesirable behavior, as this tends to reduce intrinsic motivation. However, acknowledging when your child practices skills that uphold community values is always important and will help shape a child’s behavior far better than criticism.

Teaching Values

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 children and families and the needs of the school population as a whole.

CONTRACTING MSH STAFF FOR BABYSITTING, TRANSPORTATION, OR OTHER 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 children, families, and staff members and ensures the highest level of professionalism and integrity in the family-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 every day, except during extreme or inclement weather. 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 ideal for outdoor play. 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, plaids, 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 child's midriff. Elementary age children 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 child's teacher(s) shall provide the family and children 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 child'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, 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 \$15. 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. We do not allow children to give away their things to other children. Such exchanges should take place away from school.

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.

HOMEWORK

“Homework is intended to support children and their development. This can sometimes mean familiar homework like regular practice on memory work, such as basic math tables. It should also mean expanding the creative and integrative work that the children do from the classroom to the wider world. In this sense ‘homework’ is any activity that augments and amplifies the curiosity and exploration of the child. Homework in this broader sense includes many activities in which children may participate with their families and peers, such as scouting, campfire, shell/rock collecting, working in community shelters, reading aloud, and sports, etc.

“Generally, homework should fall into two classes. It might be work in which some additional repetition and practice will aid in gaining fluency. The other sort can be work or activities that cannot be done in the school setting.

“The Montessori classroom is rich in reading, language and mathematics activities. Children cannot bring the Montessori materials home. Therefore, Montessori homework aims to extend the classroom work into the home environment, while involving the parents and possibly other family members.

“It is believed that the primary merits of homework are the establishment of a healthy work habit outside the formal classroom environment and fostering each child’s innate desire to learn, to know and to be an active participant in their family and culture. It is a vital, living link between the classroom and home environments and a catalyst to growing into a member of world culture. As such, it allows all of us a window into the child’s world of learning.

“Montessorians are strongly committed to meeting the needs of all children. In all of our interactions, we seek to develop the child’s commitment to work in a manner that is both creative and independent. We can see homework as a child-initiated activity in collaboration with their families and teacher-guides.”

Dorer, Michael. “Montessori Homework.” *Tomorrow’s Child*, January 2016, p.17.

To read the rest of this article or others like it, subscribe to *Tomorrow’s Child* online, <https://www.montessori.org/mfa/>

LOST AND FOUND

A Lost and Found collection area is maintained at each campus, usually in the administrative offices. 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. In compliance with our health department licensing, only foods from approved sources, i.e. commercial foods or those cooked or prepared in licensed/permitted kitchens, are allowed to be served at our school. Foods must be in original packaging and unopened. Food prepared in a licensed kitchen and brought to school is subject to time/temperature rules for food safety. If you intend to bring food prepared in a local restaurant, you must notify the school administration in advance to make arrangements and discuss food safety precautions needed for storage and transportation. Fresh fruits and vegetables may be brought to school and cut/prepared in the school kitchen. Foods prepared or cooked at home are not considered an approved source.

Elementary children celebrating their birthday at school 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.

ESPECIALLY FOR TODDLER FAMILIES

PHASE-IN

All children 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 day available for toddler children 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 family member 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 children 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 they will master these skills and concepts before the child is ready. We introduce toilet learning in the same way. The Toddler environment is structured to emphasize developing 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. It is critical that you do not discourage your child from toilet learning and follow the recommendations given to you by your child's teachers.

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 FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS

Families are required to perform 15 hours of service each year (20 hours for multiple children). This requirement is prorated for midyear enrollments. 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, they benefit from the countless hours other MSH families have contributed each year through volunteer efforts.

You may choose from a variety of jobs that can be done either at the school or at home. **School Committees are an excellent way to focus your volunteer efforts in a meaningful way. Family members 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 children) 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. Payment for hours not fulfilled by May 1 are due June 1 and subject to late payment penalties if unpaid by June 5.

MSH families should document their hours using the Community Hours Binder located at their respective campus. Binders are located by 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 goods purchased to receive credit for community service hours.

The following activities have a specific assigned value:

- Laundry - 1 hour
- Society Meeting - 1 hour per family
- Chicken Care - 1 hour

SCHOOL COMMITTEES

MSH Committees give families the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to their child's school experience while supporting our school mission. Families may choose to join a school 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 families 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/guardians of currently-enrolled children in good financial standing 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

Effective communication is critical to maintain a welcoming, open partnership with you and your child. Please observe the following channels of communication. Drop off and pick up times are not appropriate times to engage teachers in conversations. Their primary duty is to be with the children, giving them their undivided attention. Email is the best way to reach your child's teachers. Teachers check their email daily during school hours, but around class times, and will respond to emails within 24 business hours. If you need immediate assistance or need to relay a message to your child's teacher for that specific day, please stop by the administrative office at your campus, call the office (CTR 256-881-3790; HC 256-534-6469), or email office@montessorihuntsville.org (this email address will reach administrative staff at both campuses).

Conferences may be scheduled with the Head of School during operating hours 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Please give 24 hours notice when possible to schedule a conference with the Head of School outside of normal office hours, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at CTR and 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

School records may be requested in writing with a minimum of 30 days advance notice.

RIGHTS TO VISIT MSH CAMPUSES

Custodial parents and guardians may visit the MSH campus that their child attends any time during school operating hours. To maintain best practices for safety and security, all visiting parents must check in at the office outside of regular drop-off and pick-up windows. Visiting family members will receive a badge that lets MSH staff know that you have checked in.

During hours of care, you have the right to visit and observe your child. Classroom observations must be arranged in advance with your child's teacher. If the class is engaged in a work cycle or special lesson, you may take your child from the class to visit with him/her. Inform your child's lead teacher, or the Head of School if needed, if you have concerns regarding your child's experience in the classroom. Prompt, open communication is key to addressing concerns.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Observations must be scheduled in advance through your child's teacher. You are required to read and sign the MSH Observation Guidelines prior to the 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. It is important to note that many children act differently when a family member is observing, so an observation should be viewed as a window into the workings of the whole classroom community, rather than an opportunity to see exactly how your child works under regular circumstances.

Each classroom will schedule family observations in the spring semester. Because adult visitors are especially distracting for primary and toddler children, teachers will compile several video observations to share with you each spring. This allows you to experience an authentic view of the work in the classroom. Please note that these observations are meant to provide a view into the functioning of the classroom community as a whole and may not necessarily give as in-depth a look at an individual child's work; attending Sharing Programs provides a better view into the work of the individual child. Video observations will be available to view on school-approved technology on campus only and will not be shared digitally with parents/guardians.

Elementary families will be invited to sit in the classroom for observations.

There are also two "Sharing Programs" during the school year, when your child brings you to school to show you what they have been learning. These immediately precede 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 children.

TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences are scheduled twice a year, in fall and spring, to discuss your child's progress. Progress reports will be shared with you prior to conferences.

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 they deserve by refraining from talking about them in their presence. Your child's teacher will do the same. Remember that the teacher may have obligations that prevent her from spending more than a quick 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. The administrative team from both campuses can be reached using office@montessorihuntsville.org.

WEBSITE

The MSH website www.montessorihuntsville.org is a good place to review the Family 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.

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!

TRANSPARENT CLASSROOM

We use Transparent Classroom as our online record keeping tool. Applications for enrollment, registration forms, child information, and academic records are maintained through Transparent Classroom. Your child's quarterly progress reports will be shared via TC. TC enables you to view the Montessori curriculum for your child's current program and access descriptions of lessons to help you understand or formulate questions for your child's teacher regarding your child's progress.

FAMILY EDUCATION

Family education an important aspect of our partnership agreement. We will provide opportunities throughout the school year to learn more about Montessori philosophy, child development, and current research that supports education and parenting practices. We have a Family Lending Library at the CTR campus that is available for all MSH families. If you are interested in available titles, contact the MSH administrative team. We are

happy to share lists of our favorite books, what we are currently reading, as well as scholarship, magazine articles, and videos of interest.

All families will be required to participate in Classroom Orientation annually and new families will be invited to a New Family Orientation in June, July, or January. Families who have not attended Experience Montessori, our Curriculum overview, will be invited to attend in September or January.

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, CONCERNS, AND STAKEHOLDER SURVEYS

We welcome any suggestions you have regarding MSH and its operation. Throughout the school year, you will receive short surveys regarding your experience at MSH. Your participation is valued and appreciated. Please help us make our school the best it can be.

If you have a concern about a classroom occurrence, please discuss it first with your child's teacher. Concerns regarding MSH faculty or school operations should be addressed to the Head of School. Concerns regarding the Head of School or school governance should be addressed to the Board of Directors Chairperson, Kit Fry, chair@montessorihuntsville.org.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

YEAR ROUND OUTDOOR PLAY

Many of the developmental tasks that children must achieve—exploring, risk-taking, fine and gross motor development and the absorption of vast amounts of basic knowledge—can be most effectively learned through outdoor play. For this reason, children at MSH will play outdoors every day, with the exception of truly inclement weather. Even on cold or wet days, children will be given brief opportunities for access to the outdoors. Proper attire is a must. If a child does not have the clothing necessary, you may be called to bring this clothing to school.

Pediatrician Kenneth Ginsburg of the AAP, described the importance of outdoor play for children:

“Play in an outdoor, natural environment allows children to explore both their world and their own minds.... Nature places virtually no bounds on the imagination and engages all of the senses. For all children, this setting allows for the full blossoming of creativity, curiosity, and the associated developmental advances.”

INJURIES AT SCHOOL

If a child receives a minor injury at school, we will provide appropriate care. We will notify you if your child sustains an injury to the head, an injury that bleeds, an insect/animal bite or sting, or sustains a fall from playground equipment. The staff member will report what occurred (whether observed by a teacher or self-reported by the child), observable physical characteristics of the injury, first aid administered, if applicable, and observable emotional state of the child. You may choose to pick up your child to seek medical guidance or treatment based on this report. A written report of the injury will be kept on file at the school. A member of our school staff will contact you within 24 hours of the injury to inquire whether emergency or physician's care was needed in response to the injury. Please notify us immediately if you seek emergency or physician's services following an injury at school.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

MSH is committed to training all staff, including substitutes, in Pediatric CPR and First Aid. At least one staff member with current certification will be on campus during operating hours when children are present.

HEMSI emergency personnel will be called if we suspect serious injury. If it is determined that the child needs emergency treatment, they will be transported, at your expense, to the hospital that you indicated on the Child's Preadmission Record. The staff person accompanying the child will take a copy of the Emergency Treatment Authorization while another staff member attempts to contact you.

ILLNESS

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 shared 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**
- **undiagnosed rash with fever**
- **sore throat with a fever**

In addition children should be kept at home if:

- illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in classroom activities or outdoors, such as congestion or cough that causes extreme discomfort. Families may be asked to pick up children from school who are unable to participate in activities due to uncomfortable symptoms, whether or not they are determined to be contagious.
- 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 other families and reduce the likelihood of an outbreak. We will only share that a confirmed case has been reported. No information will be shared that could identify your child. Certain illnesses must be reported to the Alabama Department of Public Health to prevent serious outbreak.**

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. Certain illnesses require specific exclusion periods to prevent outbreak. 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 a [Parent Authorization](#) for Administering Medication (downloadable from our website). You must include specific information regarding what conditions require administration of the medication, exact dosage, e.g.

5mL or dime-sized amount, and the frequency, e.g. every four hours or 30 minutes prior to sun exposure. You must also note the time it was last given at home.

MSH will not administer the ‘lollipop’ type of cough medicine. It is important to remember that we cannot diagnose your child. You, the parent/guardian, 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.

All medications, including but not limited to prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, sunscreen, insect sprays, medicated chapstick, must be in their original container and labeled with the child’s name. 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 families. Medications not picked up by the last day of the school year will be disposed of.

A Medication Authorization Form is valid for no more than seven days and should be used only for medications that are needed during a short period of time. A [Physician’s Authorization](#) to Continuously Administer Medication Form (available in the office or website) may accompany the Medication Authorization Form and is valid for one full year. This form is required to maintain medications on campus throughout the school year such as EPI pens, sunscreen, insect repellent, allergy/emergency medications, topical creams such as lip balm, anti-itch, or diaper rash ointments.

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.

SCHOOL ALLERGY POLICY

The Montessori School of Huntsville (MSH) has implemented the policy below. While every effort will be made to follow these guidelines to minimize the risk of potential contact with known 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 severe or life-threatening 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 with required medication forms

2. It is the duty of parents/guardians of a minor child to inform the school in writing of a severe or life-threatening allergy and to obtain the Allergy Emergency Health Care Plan with a physician's signature.
3. If a class has a child with a severe or life-threatening allergy, families of other children in the class will be notified, if necessary, about specific products that are not allowed to be brought into the classroom.
4. All MSH classrooms and campuses are tree nut and peanut free.
5. Children will continue the policy of washing their hands thoroughly before and after lunch.
6. All classes will continue to educate children on allergies and not sharing food with their classmates.
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 OR TOBACCO USE ANYWHERE ON MSH CAMPUSES

According to our licensing requirements, MSH is a tobacco-free facility. Smoking or tobacco usage, including e-cigarettes and vaping devices, is prohibited on the MSH grounds. Any person using these products on school grounds will be asked to leave immediately.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

In most circumstances, MSH follows the Huntsville City School system when closing for emergencies. MSH will notify staff and families of school closings via email, text messaging, and/or voice messaging alerts. Please do not attempt to pick your child up *during* a Madison County tornado warning. During a tornado warning, children at CTR will be moved to the reinforced hallway in the main building. Children at HC will be moved to the toddler bathroom and connecting storage room. These two rooms have no outside windows and are centrally located within the building.

EMERGENCY PLANS

The architect and the Emergency Management Agency have identified the reinforced hallway at CTR the back hallway between classrooms at HC as the designated storm shelter. 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 monthly 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, families will be contacted immediately to pick up their children. **Families must pick up by the stated dismissal time or late charges will occur at a rate of \$5 per minute. If school is closing due to an emergency or other**

crisis, ALL adults will be asked to present a photo id before any child will be released.

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 families will be contacted as soon as possible.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All MSH employees, approved volunteers, and board members are required by law to report to the local Department of Human Resources any incidents of suspected child abuse or neglect. The Department of Human Resources is tasked with investigating all reports of suspected abuse or neglect. Our staff and approved volunteers receive training annually in identifying and reporting abuse.

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. All MSH children benefit from the generosity of parents, grandparents, faculty, staff, alumni/ae, former parents, corporations, and friends whose faithful support through gift giving helps further our mission to prepare children for a life of purpose, integrity, and academic accomplishment.

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 bridge the gap between tuition income and the true cost of a quality Montessori education. Faithful giving to this fund has supported financial aid, school technology, facility upkeep and improvements, and teacher/staff continuing education. The Annual Fund is the most effective avenue of giving to the school, and we hope every family 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. We 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 receiving grants from foundations and government organizations by demonstrating 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-\$1,000 annually by adding a \$20 to \$100 donation to their monthly tuition disbursement. We are grateful for all contributions to the Annual Fund. Our generous community of donors support quality Montessori education in our community while keeping annual tuition rates as low as possible.

The Montessori Families Endowment Fund

In 2018, Dr. Robert & Nenita Fry generously seeded our first endowment, the Montessori Families Endowment Fund. We are so grateful to them for their incredible generosity and commitment to scholarship through this long-term investment.

The Fund is managed by the [Community Foundation of Greater Huntsville](#) and donations from anyone can be made through our secure [Bloomerang donation form](#) by selecting the endowment from the drop-down menu. Donations are tax-deductible and the principle is protected per the policies of the community foundation. Thank you for considering joining Dr. Robert Fry and Nenita Fry as long-term supporters of the Montessori mission through a donation to this fund. Our small community of Montessori families are the most generous and enthusiastic in Huntsville. Thank you for being one of them.

Kathy O'Reilly Memorial Scholarship Fund

The Kathy O'Reilly Memorial Scholarship Fund was created in memory of Kathy O'Reilly, former teacher, administrator and board member, who passed away in December 2009 after a battle with cancer. Kathy was at the heart and soul of MSH for 23 years. She is remembered for her delight in working with children, her compassion for those in need, and a lifelong commitment to peace education.

The scholarship fund is designed to benefit children from families with limited financial means 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

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 matching programs available through your company.

Memorials and Honoraria

Each school year, gifts are received to honor a special person, memorialize a loved one, or celebrate special events such as birthdays and graduations. MSH administration will notify 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

Gifts of tangible property or professional services may be designated by an individual donor for a special one-time project or purpose not included in the operating budget of the school. Although gifts-in-kind do not count toward the Annual Fund, their value may be tax-deductible and is always greatly appreciated by MSH.

No Cost to You Fundraising

[There are simple options for contributing to our school with your purchases.](#)

Fundraising and Special Events

Every effort is made to keep fundraising and family solicitations to a minimum. All school-related groups and individuals must obtain written approval from the Head of School 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 children in which children would be selling items or soliciting contributions, pledges, or orders from people that are unfamiliar to them. Adults may support school fundraisers by sharing fundraising information with relatives, family friends, neighbors, etc.

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 children also pay an Application Fee when they enroll for the coming year. A \$300 supply fee is due by May 1 for all children who have enrolled prior to that date; for children enrolling after May 1 but before the start of the school year, the supply fee is due immediately upon acceptance into the school. For children enrolling after January 1 of the current school year, the supply fee will be reduced to \$150. All fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

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 tuition remains the same during the months of October (Fall Break), November (Thanksgiving Break), December (Winter Break), March (Spring Break) and May (school year's end), where there are fewer regular school days.

If a family wishes to guarantee an open spot in a classroom for their child for a midyear enrollment, tuition will be billed beginning in August. We offer very few midyear enrollments for 18-20 month old toddler students beginning in January. Families of young toddlers may apply for these spots in advance and begin paying tuition in January of the enrollment year.

If a family is offered enrollment midyear, tuition will be billed in the month that they accept the enrollment. Tuition will not be prorated for children starting in the middle of the month.

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 (Elementary only), 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 child. Statements are sent five calendar days before the first of the month. Any questions or concerns regarding your statement should be directed to the Head of School 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 or account changes.

Requests must be made in writing.

A \$25 fee will be assessed for all returned ACH transactions and a \$20 late fee will be applied to your account. Accounts that remain unpaid following the tenth of the month will incur a penalty equal to 10% of the unpaid balance.

- **Credit Card**

MSH will accept payment via credit card, subject to a 3.5% processing fee.

A \$25 fee will be assessed for all returned credit card transactions and a \$20 late fee will be applied to your account. Accounts that remain unpaid following the tenth of the month will incur a penalty equal to 10% of the unpaid balance.

OTHER FEES AND CHARGES

LUNCHESES

Lunch may be ordered for \$4.99 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 email office@montessorihuntsville.org before 8:30 a.m. if your child will arrive after 9:00 a.m. or is carpooling 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.

OTHER FEES

Tote Bags - \$15

MSH Shirts - \$15

Replacement or Extra Fobs - \$10

CHARGES FOR LATE PICK UP

To ensure appropriate staff to child ratios as well as quality programming in our afternoon extended day programs, we ask that you make every effort to pick your child up by their stated times. We are unable to accommodate drop-in or occasional care in our toddler and primary extended day programs. Families who need regular care past their child’s dismissal time should sign up for the annual extended day program.

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. Children not picked up by their stated pick up times, will be billed at a rate of \$10.00 per hour.

Children who are not picked up by the stated closing time -- 5:30 p.m. CTR, 4:00 p.m. HC--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 to the adjusted dismissal time 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 family’s account is in arrears, the child may be prohibited from ordering lunches through our catered service or charging and elective charges to their account. No records of any kind, including report cards and test scores, will be released on behalf of any child whose account is in arrears. The Head of School, after conferring with parents whose

accounts are in arrears, may prohibit the child 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 child 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 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 child or family who enrolls at MSH.

Referral rebates are not applied until a referred child 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 child 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 child re-enrolling at MSH after an absence of 2 or more years. There is no limit to the number of children 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 children 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 children, 6-year cycle for elementary children. 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 school year.

A family who wishes to withdraw from MSH must give written notice of intent to withdraw at least 180 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 **six** months of tuition. A signed enrollment contract for the upcoming school year is due in April. Notices of intent to withdraw received between May 1 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 six months tuition, i.e. August - January.

DISMISSAL FROM MSH

MSH has the right to dismiss a child if the staff believes that they are not ready for the school program and the family is unwilling to provide support and/or services as requested by a school Student Support Team, or for other reasons including but not limited to academic, behavioral or financial concerns. MSH reserves the right to dismiss a child if it is determined that the child poses a significant risk to the safety and wellbeing of MSH children and staff.

The HOS has the right to waive the early withdrawal policy for children 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.

CONTACT INFORMATION

HEAD OF SCHOOL: Jennifer Stark

jennifer@montessorihuntsville.org

256-881-3790 CTR

256-534-6469 HC

256-812-1761 Cell

MSH SCHOOL BOARD CHAIR

chair@montessorihuntsville.org

WEBSITE:

www.montessorihuntsville.org

FAX:

(256) 881-3188

APPENDICES

[Pre-arranged Absence Form](#)

[Physicians Medication Authorization Form](#)

[Parent Medication Authorization Form](#)

[Primary Celebration of Life Form](#)

[No Cost to You Fundraising](#)