

Healdsburg Montessori Parent Handbook

THE MONTESSORI PROGRAM

Our program is based on the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, a noted Italian educator and physician (1870-1952), who revolutionized early childhood education by advocating that children be allowed the freedom to explore and develop their own creative potential through a wealth of self-teaching educational materials. A large portion of the educational materials in the Montessori classroom today were developed, by Maria Montessori, nearly 100 years ago. These include hands-on mathematical and language activities and manipulatives that develop the child's sensory perceptions and refine their sense of awareness, and variety of activities that promote the student's independence and self-reliance.

THE PARENTS' ROLE

At Healdsburg Montessori we recognize the importance of a positive partnership between families and school. That partnership means active support by parents of school policies and procedures. We recognize that effective partnerships have these characteristics in common: open communication, mutual respect and a commitment to working together with a shared vision to develop the full potential of the child.

Parents are invited to participate in our program in a variety of ways. You may volunteer to do a special art project, or activity (music, theatre or dance) with the children. We invite parents to come in and share a special interest or skill they may have. We also welcome and encourage parents to share cultural traditions throughout the year in alignment with our study of the various continents of the world. There may be times where we are not able to allow visitors in to our school such as during a pandemic.

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

The Montessori classroom operates on the principle of freedom within limits. The ground rules guide the children to self-discipline and are based on courtesy, safety, respect for self and others, respect for the materials and the for overall environment of the classroom.

Children are free to work at their own pace with materials they have chosen, either alone or in small groups. The aim is to encourage active, self-directed learning and to strike a balance of individual mastery and small group collaboration, within the whole group community.

PEACE EDUCATION AND DISCIPLINE

Adults in the classroom model a positive, caring attitude at all times. When problems arise with one or more children, the adult will encourage the child or children to talk about it and find solutions peacefully. If one child hurts another, the first child may be momentarily removed from the situation, while the adults check to see that the hurt child is all right. Then the adult will return to the first child and discuss the problem(s) and look for a more appropriate solution.

Sometimes young children do not have the words to express their feelings, and this frustration is often what leads to conflict. We teach children to solve their conflicts at the Peace Table. Here the child who is holding the Peace Flower is able to speak uninterrupted about what he/she is feeling while the other child patiently listens, then the Peace Flower is passed to the other student and he/she is given the opportunity to express his/her feelings. Often teachers will role-play with the children to give them the skills needed to speak about feelings.

If a child repeatedly does not respond to discipline used at school, the parent will be contacted and asked to come in for a conference. Parents and school will collaborate to devise a consistent discipline plan for use at home and in school.

SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Items Needed Before the First Day of School:

- Photos - 3 passport size or wallet size photos of your child (New students only).
- Slippers - a pair of easy to put on slippers or in-door shoes with a **waterproof** sole ("Croc" type shoes work really well). Please no "**character**" slippers (this includes animal slippers).
- Clothes - an extra set of clothing in a Ziploc (labeled) bag that will be placed in their box in the bathroom. Please provide a few pairs of underwear if your child is prone to having accidents.
- Nap - child size pillow, child size blanket, fitted standard crib sheet and large pillowcase to transport items

(only for children who nap in the afternoon).

- Forms - students file must be complete with application forms, tuition agreements, medical forms and emergency contact information and signed parent handbook agreement.
- Emergency kit - 1 water bottle, 1 granola bar, 1 **mylar** (solar) blanket, emergency contact numbers, all in a Ziploc bag with your child's name.

Clothing:

We want to foster your child's independence and initiative in all aspects while they are at school. We ask that children come to school dressed in clothing that they can put on and take off independently of an adult's assistance. Belts, overalls, suspenders, etc. are not recommended. **We ask that all jewelry (with the exception of pierced ears), sunglasses and other accessories, stay home. Hats are fine to wear to school.**

As a part of teaching independence, the children will change from their "outdoor" shoes to "indoor shoes" when we are in the classroom. For this reason, we REQUIRE that all children wear Velcro or slip-on type shoes to school. The process of getting children to independently put on their own shoes is a vital opportunity for growth. Unless your child can tie their own shoelaces, please do not send your child in lace-up shoes.

HMS is a "**character-free**" school. We do not allow characters from television, movies, books and other forms of media on clothing and apparel (including underwear, socks, tattoos and bandages), lunchboxes, and slippers. If your child comes to school wearing an item of clothing displaying a character (Disney princess, Hello Kitty, superhero, Dora the Explorer, Bob the Builder, etc.) we will assist them in changing to a character-free item from their extra-clothing kit or turn it inside out.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures:

We request the cooperation of all parents in helping us to respect the drop off and pick up policies. The parking lot can get crowded at times, so we ask parents to respect one another and make drop offs and picks ups as quickly as they can.

Sign-In and Sign-Out Procedure:

- It is crucial that all parents remember to sign their child in and out (legibly) of school every day, it is required by the California licensing department. A violation of this could result in a fine for the school. There will be a sign in area outside of our school, with a sign in sheet for each classroom. We will notify parents ahead of time of their child's group name, we have Classroom A and Classroom B. By signing the attendance sheet, you are authorizing HMS each day to care for your child and agreeing to our **Wellness Policy**, which is outlined below in our Illness section. It is also a way for our teachers to track attendance should we have an emergency at school. We will be monitoring this requirement and will notify you if it is not being done properly for your child. There may also be times that we (HMS staff) may sign your child in or out for the day per California licensing for example if it is raining or we have a long line of families waiting.

Drop-off policy:

- At this time, we are not allowing parents into our lobby, parents will sign their child in outside of the school in a designated area and wait for a staff member to give the okay on their child's temperature check before leaving. Another staff member will guide the child inside the building to the assigned classroom.
- **Drop off time is between 8:30am -9:00am – all children need to be at school by 9:00am. The next scheduled drop off time is 11:00am. We ask that you ring our doorbell for assistance.**
- Parents are requested to see to it that their child arrives on time. It is important that your child arrive on time to have the full benefit of the Montessori environment. If you anticipate your child will have some challenges separating from you, please arrive at 8:30am so that the teachers have the time to help your child engage in an activity or play with their peers before we begin our day at 9:00am.

In case of absence these procedures MUST be followed:

1. A call to the school office or email to inform the school of the child's absence should be made as soon as possible and the reason for the absence. Please leave a message if necessary.
2. Please notify us in an advance by email to inform us of any planned absences and/or vacation.

Pick up policy:

Please pick up your children promptly. If your child's pick-up time is 3:30pm you must pick up your child prior to

3:30pm - between 3:15 and 3:30pm. Please do not wait until the last moment to arrive. If your child is picked up late, a fee of \$1.00 per minute will be billed until the child is picked up. If you are going to be late to pick up your child, always call the school office so that we may be informed. Occasionally you may wish to arrange for someone other than yourself to pick up your child from school. We ask your cooperation in ensuring a smooth pick-up of your child when this occurs. Please follow the guidelines below in these scenarios:

- Notifying the staff in writing that a different person will be picking up your child, via email.
- Have authorized person be prepared to show a picture I.D. if the teachers have not met the individual before.

Communications:

The more accurately informed we are about your child, the better we can care for him/her. Please inform us of any changes at home in the child's life that may have an effect at school.

- Read all signs and notes posted.
- Thoroughly read the monthly newsletter.
- Do not rely on verbal messages. Email the office of any special instructions, such as a change in your child's pick-up arrangements or diet via email to the office.
- Update administration with new email address, phone numbers and address changes if applicable, so that we can contact you more easily.
- Feel free to call/email the school about any concerns you may have. We value open communication with all parents and welcome any suggestions you may have.

Parent/Teacher Conferences:

We hold conferences twice a year, one for new students and one for returning students. Conferences give parents and staff an opportunity to discuss the child's social, physical, emotional and cognitive development. Both parents are welcome to attend. Informal meetings can be arranged throughout the year if there is a particular issue a parent would like to discuss with one of the teachers.

Tuition:

Tuition is due on the first of every month. Statements will be emailed to each parent on the 28th of each month – it will include any additional fees such as late fees or drop in hours. You may mail your checks to the school or place your checks in the tuition box. **Tuition is broken down into 10 installments – each installment is due at the 1st of each month.** Any change to your contracted schedule requires a 30-day written notice.

SNACK/LUNCH

Snack:

A sign-up sheet will be posted monthly in our sign in/out area outside for those parents who wish to participate in our snack program.

- We request that parents bring snack prepared and ready to be served. Fruits and vegetables need to be washed and sliced. Snacks need to arrive by 8:45am. However, afternoon snack can arrive by 1:00 pm.
- Please provide enough snack for 40 children, for both morning and afternoon. A healthy snack would be wheat crackers and orange slices, or cheese sticks, and pretzels, etc.
- Please help us by providing nutritious foods and bring **two** food groups each snack period - such as dairy (cheese), and a vegetable (carrots, cucumbers, etc.), or fruit (small oranges, strawberries, grapes, etc.) and a healthy carbohydrate (such as whole wheat crackers, vegetable/fruit based mini muffin, small bagel, etc.). We prefer not to have snack items that require utensils or a cup or individual packaging.
- We have a **NO NUT Snack Policy**. It is very important that parents check the labels of muffins, crackers etc. **We cannot serve snack with any nuts (this includes peanuts and all tree nuts) or nut-based products (oil, milk, butters, etc.). We may have children with severe allergies to these foods.**
- If your child has specific food allergies, please make sure the school administration is well informed about your child's specific needs.

Lunch:

Lunch is a quiet, social time when good manners and polite conversation are encouraged. Education on good nutritional habit is a part of the curriculum. Please pack a nutritious lunch for your child avoiding non-nutritious and over-processed foods. Please refrain from sending candy, gummies, chocolate, cookies, chocolate spreads such as Nutella and other non-nutritious food in lunch boxes such as flavored gelatin, fruit sauces with added sugar and yogurts with added sugar. We also do not allow sodas, chocolate milk or juices. If we feel an item does not meet our nutritious guidelines, we will place the item back in the child's lunch box and offer a healthier

option. While we do not serve foods with nuts for our group snack, it is fine for parents to pack foods such as peanut butter sandwiches and nuts in their own child's lunch. We regret that we are unable to heat lunches up in the microwave or add hot water to foods. The teachers must be with the children and not in the kitchen. All lunch containers, thermoses and lunch boxes should be clearly labeled. Healdsburg Montessori's mission is to guide students in becoming responsible and community-focused individuals, which includes a commitment to teaching sustainable "green" strategies for keeping our homes, our school, and our world healthy. As a part of our Green Commitment, PLEASE help us by adopting the following NO-WASTE lunch guidelines:

- Use lunch boxes instead of paper or plastic bags. Please choose child friendly lunchboxes, it is important that your child be able to open/close and repack their own lunchboxes.
- Pack lunches in reusable containers INSTEAD of Ziploc bags, foil, wax paper, or clear wrap. Please choose containers that your child can open and close without assistance.
- Pack cloth napkins and reusable silverware.
- Bring water in a thermos or other reusable containers-please label.

Naps and Rest Time (12:30-2:30pm):

Following lunch there is an opportunity for the younger children who stay for a full or extended day, to nap or rest.

Nap items must be labeled and provided from home. Parents are responsible for laundering these items regularly. Items will be placed in the hallway when it is your child's laundry day. A parent must be available to pick-up a child personally or send a sitter to pick-up if the child is being disruptive during naptime. If we call for you to pick-up your child, someone must be able to pick them up in a timely manner.

Children enrolled in the nap program do not have to sleep, but they must remain lying on their cots quietly so that other children can rest. Children that are unable to adhere to the nap room guidelines (described in full in the Nap Contract) may be excused from the nap room program.

Mysterious Objects?

Many of our classroom materials consist of small attractive objects that are appealing to children. We use these objects for identifying initial sounds in language or as counters in mathematics. If you find any "mysterious objects" in your child's possession, please return them to school.

Field Trips:

We do not anticipate many field-trips this school year, especially during the first semester other than utilizing our front yard or taking a nature walk around the school grounds.

Birthdays:

We celebrate birthdays with a traditional Montessori Sun Ceremony. During the Sun Ceremony the child walks around a candle, which represents the sun. Each trip around the "sun" represents one year of life. As the child circles the "sun," the teacher says something special about events that occurred in the child's life during that year. We require parents to request a sun ceremony for their child. Parents may attend. We also encourage families to provide a photograph of your child for each age.

- You are welcome to sign up for snack on the day of your child's birthday or sun ceremony. Please keep it nutritious and follow our regular snack policy guidelines.
- Birthdays at school are not intended as the child's primary celebration, so please no party favors, balloons, etc.
- Any birthday invitations or birthday gift thank you cards should be mailed to the family home to avoid hurt feelings.
- Please DO NOT send birthday presents to school for other children.

Emergency Form:

Parents are asked to contact the office immediately if an address or telephone number on the emergency form changes. Please keep in mind that if your child was to have an accident and the information on your emergency form is incorrect, we have no way to contact you.

Natural Disaster School Closure:

There may be days that we would need to close the school due to pandemics, extreme weather conditions or other such natural disasters. The school will email all families to notify you as soon as possible if we feel the school is not safe for the children or if the roads are closed near the school. There will be no make-up days or refunds for days that we must close the school.

Emergency Evacuation:

If for some reason we would need to evacuate the school building, our relocation area is the Healdsburg City Building, located at **401 Grove Street**. We will notify you via email and that would be the best way to contact us.

Lost and Found:

Misplaced items will be placed in the lost and found box in the lobby (under the table). On Mondays and Fridays, we will place the lost and found box on our front porch if you are missing an item. We will donate any unclaimed items at the end of each month.

Illnesses:

If a child has a bad cold with a runny nose or cough and comes to school, the chances of a large number of children contracting the cold are obviously greatly increased. The children move freely throughout the environment. Germs have the potential to spread quickly, even with increased cleaning and disinfecting. With your cooperation, we can establish a healthier environment for ALL the children. Please follow our wellness policy below and keep your child home if your child has any of the following symptoms, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or rash.

We may require a note from your child's doctor due to a sprained ankle or broken bone to insure it is safe for them to return to school and for us to be informed of any restrictions.

If a parent needs us to provide a service for their child such as monitoring a medical condition that does not involve medication, we will need to have an individual Incidental Medical Service Plan for the child as well as written instructions from the parent or doctor or training that will be placed in the child's file.

Medications:

- Prescription medication will be administered only with a medical consent form (LIC 9221) signed by the parent. Please ask management for the form if needed.
- Prescription medication must be in the original prescription bottle and all medication to be given during school hours must be labeled with the child's name.
- Over the counter medications will be administered only if the medication is in its original container and a consent form must be filled out (LIC 9221) by a parent or guardian. Over the counter medications also require a doctor's note with the information as follows: duration the child will be taking the medication, start date, stop date, amount to be administered, and a time schedule of when the medication is to be administered. The note must be on the prescribing doctor's letterhead with a phone number, doctor signature and an office stamp.
- All medication is to be brought directly to the office by an adult. We must store all medication in a locked cabinet. It is not acceptable to send it in a child's lunchbox, backpack etc. No medication will be administered without a signed medication form. Please ask someone in the office for the form.
- If a child takes medication daily, it is the responsibility of the parent to make sure that there is enough medication in the office. The school is not responsible for medicine that has run out.
- **Please do not send any vitamins or any other medications in your child's lunchbox.**

CORONAVIRUS SYMPTOMS

A student, parent/caregiver or staff member should not come to school and continue to monitor health if they have any of the following symptoms:

[Coronavirus symptoms](#) include, but are not limited to:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

EVERY day, you are agreeing to our wellness policy either verbally or with your signature.

HMS Wellness Policy:

- **The child has not had a fever for the last 48 hours.**
- **The child has not had a cough or respiratory symptoms in the last 48 hours.**
- **The child is generally well, without other signs or symptoms of illness (rash, diarrhea, vomiting, etc.).**
- **No one in the home has been quarantined, exhibiting symptoms, exposed or tested positive for Covid-19.**
- **School has been notified if the child or household member has an appointment for a Covid-19 test.**
- **You have notified administration if the child has travelled via public transportation or stayed at a hotel or resort.**

If you cannot confirm the answer is yes to each item your child will need to go home until they are symptom free for 48 hours and we have given the clearance for the child to be at school. A Covid-19 test may be required to return to school.

Please note: If we believe that your child is not feeling well, we will call you to pick him/her up. As required by State regulations - if your child has had any symptoms of illness, such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, a rash, or a fever (100.4 degrees or higher) he/she may not return to school until they are free from these symptoms for 48 hours without the use of medications. If your child is on antibiotics, he/she must be on them for 24 hours before returning to school. **It is particularly important that you inform the school immediately if your child has contacted any communicable diseases such as Covid-19 so that we may pass that information on to the other parents.**

We may require a note from your child's physician in order for them to return to school to confirm that they are no longer contagious, expand our symptom free period to 72 hours or require a Covid-19 negative test result to insure it is safe for them to be in our environment. If a child or household member test positive for Covid-19, the child may return to school when their quarantine period is over and are symptom free which we may ask for a note from the doctor to confirm they are no longer contagious.

PROTOCOLS FOR COVID-19 OUTBREAK (OR SUSPECTED OUTBREAK) AT HMS:

HMS will implement the necessary processes and protocols if and when an outbreak occurs, in accordance with CDPH guidelines.

If a student or staff member of HMS is ill and/or demonstrates any of the symptoms of Covid-19, they should contact the school and remain home and continue to monitor symptoms. If symptoms worsen, they should contact their medical provider and possibly be tested for Covid-19.

Students or staff who develop symptoms of Covid-19 while at school will be isolated from the community (adults will go home while students will stay in an isolated room until they can be picked up). To the greatest extent possible, the privacy of the staff or student will be protected. Persons who become ill with Covid-19 will only be identified to authorized personnel, in accordance with current law, in order to prevent the further spread of the illness. Families and staff at the school will be notified if a positive case of Covid-19 has occurred at the school.

Staff and students who are ill should remain home and not return to school until:

10 days have passed since symptoms first began

AND

48 hours have passed without a fever and without the help of fever-reducing medication

AND

other symptoms of Covid-19 are improving: some symptoms of Covid-19 can linger for weeks or months.

We must be notified when a student or member of a student's household is going to take a Covid-19 test. If a student, or family member of a student living in their home tests positive for Covid-19, they should immediately report this to the school in order for further action. If a positive case of COVID-19 is reported to the school, the following will occur:

Students and teachers will stay home for a minimum of 72 hours, up to 14 days, depending on guidance from local County Health Officer.

HMS, in partnership with the County Health Officer will investigate the Covid-19 illness and determine if any work-related factors could have contributed to risk of infection. The protocols will be updated as needed to prevent further cases.

WHO NEEDS TO QUARANTINE?

People who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19—excluding people who have had COVID-19 within the past 3 months, should remain apart from the community at large for 14 days.

People who have tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to quarantine or get tested again for up to 3 months as long as they do not develop symptoms again.

People who develop symptoms again within 3 months of their first bout of COVID-19 may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.

What counts as close contact:

- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes.
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19.
- You had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them).
- You shared eating or drinking utensils.
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you.

See CDC recommendations for "When to Quarantine":

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.htm>

Additional HMS Covid-19 Health and Safety Guidelines:

- Screening
 - Parents will agree to our wellness policy and guidelines **daily**. This agreement will be either verbal or written at drop off.
 - Parents will remain outside at drop off and pick up times.
 - Students are required to complete a temperature check before entering school each day.
 - Students with a temperature of 100.4°F or higher will be sent home.
 - Students who present cold or flu like symptoms will be sent home.
 - Students with a fever will be required to stay home for 48 hours or longer and may be required to provide a doctor's release form or negative Covid-19 test.
 - Additional temperature checks may be done later in the day.

- Facial Covering
 - Students are required to arrive at school wearing a mask.
 - Children will be encouraged to wear a mask indoors during circle and work time.
 - Teachers will be wearing masks throughout the day, with the exception of eating and distancing outdoors.
 - Parents and visitors to the school must wear a mask indoors.

- Hygiene
 - Students will use hand sanitizer upon arrival each day.
 - Excellent hand washing will be emphasized and occur throughout the day and before eating snack and lunch.
 - Students will use a personal, reusable water bottle (should bring from home and be labeled). Disposable cups will be used for drinking water inside the classrooms.
 - Doors will remain open where practical to reduce touching.

- Air Filtration
 - Alen-Breath Smart 45i air purifiers for large rooms have been installed in both classrooms.
 - Windows and doors will remain open where possible to maximize outdoor air flow.

- Home Support
 - Parent partnership and cooperation will be key to our success.
 - We ask that families adhere to guidelines set out by the county and CDC.

Acknowledgement of receipt and understanding

It is required that **BOTH** parents/guardians read our handbook and **BOTH** sign this acknowledgement, please return page 9 to us via email or in person.

We acknowledge that we have received **the 2021/2022 Healdsburg Montessori Parent Handbook** and that we have both read and understand all of the policies.

In regards to Covid-19, we will inform HMS immediately if anyone in our household(s) have covid-19 symptoms, exposure or has scheduled a Covid-19 test.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Please Print your Name

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Please Print your Name

Date

Please Print Child's Name