



*Wisdom*



*Knowledge*



*Peace*

# MONTESSORI SCHOOL *of* ROME

## Parent/Student Handbook

*“The environment must be rich in motives which lend interest to activity and invite the child to conduct his own experiences.”*

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Welcome to the Montessori School of Rome (MSOR). This handbook states our school's policies and should answer many of your routine questions. Please let us know if you have any further questions, special situations, or suggestions. Your feedback is always appreciated.

## **Philosophy and Mission**

Founded in 1980 by Roger and Swarna Kumar, the Montessori School of Rome is regarded as a model Montessori School. Our school has earned its reputation for excellence by successfully educating children using the Montessori educational philosophy. MSOR is a non-denominational, co-educational, independent day school serving students from age 18 months to 9th grade. Children are admitted to the Montessori School of Rome without regard to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

The Montessori educational philosophy acknowledges that each child is endowed with a unique set of abilities and potential. The aim of a Montessori education is to develop these abilities so that the child becomes an independent, competent, responsible, and caring adult. The Montessori view of learning affirms creativity, collaboration, and negotiation. It is a process of self-construction.

This comprehensive educational technique was developed between 1900 and 1910 by Dr. Maria Montessori, Italy's first female physician. The Montessori Method is based on the developmental and psychological needs of each individual child. The Montessori approach is acknowledged to be an outstanding educational program and has spread to every continent on the globe.

*This handbook reviews the basic policies of our school. It is meant to be comprehensive, but cannot cover all situations that might arise at school. The administration reserves the right to make changes or additions as necessary to maintain a safe, educational environment for our students and staff.*

## **Prohibited Items:**

Please note this important addendum to our Handbook. There are no weapons allowed on the Montessori School of Rome campuses or properties or at any school events.

## **I. School Programs**

Children can be enrolled in the following programs: Toddler Program (18 months - 3 years), Primary Program (3-6 years), Lower Elementary Program (6-9 years, 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> graders), Upper Elementary Program (9-12 years, 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> graders) and the Adolescent Program (7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> graders). Primary and Elementary programs comprise three years, each. For a child to benefit from the Primary and Elementary programs, he or she should be enrolled for the entire 3-year cycle.

## **II. School Hours/Procedures**

The school is open and the staff is on duty from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. **Please note that the pickup times are now ten minutes. Please pick up your child within 10 minutes of their class dismissal time.** Children remaining in the pickup area after 10 minutes will be sent to Late Stay.

### ***Toddler Class Times:***

Early Drop-Off:	7:00 - 8:00 a.m.	MUST BE REGISTERED
Drop-Off:	8:15 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Dismissal: 2:15 - 2:25 p.m.

### ***Primary Class Times:***

Early Drop-Off:	7:00 - 8:00 a.m.	MUST BE REGISTERED
Drop-Off:	8:00 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.	Dismissal: 2:25 - 2:45 p.m.

### ***Lower Elementary Class Times:***

Early Drop-Off:	7:00 - 7:45 a.m.	MUST BE REGISTERED
Drop-Off:	7:45 a.m. - 7:55 a.m.	Dismissal: 3:00 - 3:10 p.m.

### ***Upper Elementary Class Times:***

Early Drop-Off:	7:00 - 7:45 a.m.	MUST BE REGISTERED
Drop-Off:	7:35 a.m. - 7:45 a.m.	Dismissal: 3:00 - 3:10 p.m.

**Elementary, Adolescent, or Secondary Students entering class after 8:00 a.m. are considered tardy.**

It is critical for your child to be present and ready to begin work when class begins for your child's benefit, the benefit of his or her classmates, and respect for the teacher. Please see Section IV (Attendance) for further details.

## ***A. Morning Drop Off***

### ***1. Toddler/Primary***

Children enrolled in the 7:00-7:45am Early Care program should be dropped off at the Elementary Hallway door and will be greeted by the faculty/staff member on duty. Children who arrive early will be gathered by their teachers and brought to their classrooms at 7:45 a.m. During the scheduled arrival window, a staff member will be present at the door. You are encouraged to drop your children off with these morning helpers during this time by using the "drive-through" drop off lanes (2 lanes closest to the school). If there is not a staff member or safety patrol helper present at the door, you are required to park and bring your child into the building (please see Subsection F "Parking" below). After 8:30, please bring your child to the office so that the secretary/administrator may accompany your child into class. Finally, anytime you choose to park and get out of your car, please **DO NOT PARK** in the drop-off lane or block other parents' cars.

For those in toddler and primary classes, you must sign in and sign out your child on the sheets located in the front porch area or in the front lobby. These sheets are a state requirement.

3<sup>rd</sup> year primary students are encouraged to walk in by themselves to build independence and develop self-confidence.

**Toddler and Primary students who arrive after 8:30 need to check in with the office, and the office staff will take their child to their classroom. Toddler and Primary line times begin at 8:30. Please be at school during your scheduled drop-off time so that your child does not miss this important line time. Your child will then have time to settle in before 8:30 line time.**

**Students who arrive at school after 9:00 a.m. must have a doctor's excuse.**

We want your child to have every lesson and experience of the morning work cycle. Please understand these rules for timeliness are for the benefit of your child.

### ***2. Elementary***

Children enrolled in the 7:00-8:00am Early Care program should be dropped off at the Elementary Hallway door and will be greeted by the faculty/staff member on duty. Between 7:45 and 7:55 a staff member or safety patrol helper will assist in unloading vehicles. Children arriving during early drop off are asked to bring a book to read or other work to do while waiting in the designated area for the classrooms to open. All elementary students should arrive on campus by 7:55 a.m.

**B. Nap Time/Afternoon class**

All toddlers and first year primary students will nap on mats in the afternoon. Second year primary students will have a rest period in their classroom, also on a mat. Third year primary students no longer have a designated rest or nap time in the afternoon.

The school will provide mats. The school also provides a nylon laundry bag to store your child's nap roll in daily. However, all families must provide their own nap roll. The nap roll is in the form of a one-piece quilted mat with an attached blanket and pillow. This is not a sleeping bag. The nap roll should be labeled and will be sent home each Friday in the nylon laundry bag for laundering. Please make sure it is returned on Mondays.

**C. Afternoon Pick-up**

**1. Toddler/Primary**

In the afternoon the toddlers will be ready for dismissal from their classrooms. Ms. Ginny's class will dismiss at Gate #2 and Ms. Shannon's class will dismiss at the elementary hallway door. The primary students will be ready to be picked up in the front lobby during the scheduled dismissal time. Children will be escorted to their cars by a Guide. If you choose to come in to the school, please follow the parking rules as described below.

Toddler students with a sibling in the primary program **OR** primary students with a sibling in the elementary program may remain at school until their sibling is dismissed (2:30 and 3:15 respectively) at no additional charge. Any toddlers with siblings in an elementary program are not provided this benefit. These students should be enrolled in the late stay program if the parents require a 3:15 pick-up time.

**2. Elementary**

In the afternoon, the children will be ready for dismissal at 3:00 p.m. and should be picked up by 3:10 p.m. Children will be escorted to their cars by a Guide. If you choose to come in to the school, please follow the parking rules described below.

*\*\*\*Children who are not picked up during regular dismissal times will be sent to the Extended Day Program (Late Stay) and charged the "Drop In" rate (space permitting). Children will not be allowed to remain at the door unsupervised to wait for their parents.\*\*\**

If someone else is picking up your child, please make sure ahead of time that their name is on your "approved pick-up list", and that you leave a note on the day that your child will be picked up by someone else. This is **ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT** if this person is new to picking up or rarely picks up your child. Please tell the person that ID will be required. If no note is left, we will call you to confirm the change, even if the person is on your "approved" list. When someone regularly picks up your child, besides either parent, a note is not required each time as long as our staff knows what the schedule will be.

**D. Extended Day Program**

Staff members will supervise children in the Extended Day Program from dismissal time until 5:30 p.m. Parents should register for this program during open house or on the first

day of school. Space is very limited and registration is necessary to allow the school to plan for adequate supervision of children during after school hours.

Fees for regular late stay services must be paid with tuition at the beginning of each month.

**NOTE:** Elementary Homework Lab is a service offered in conjunction with Extended Day Program. If your child is enrolled in Late Stay and paying for Late Stay, then your child's teachers offer homework assistance and guidance until 3:50 each day. At 3:50, we clean up and prepare for outside play time beginning at 4:00 (weather permitting). There is no additional charge for this assistance for those enrolled in and paying for Extended Day.

***E. Occasional Extended Day (Drop-In)***

Extremely limited space is available each day for children who are not registered for the Extended Day Program. These available slots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Please call the school at least one hour before your child's regular dismissal time (or as soon as you would like to reserve a space) to see if there is space available in the Extended Day Program. Parents will be billed at the end of each month for this service.

In the event that a child should attend a school sponsored, after school extra-curricular activity, beginning after normal pick-up hours, there will be no Extended Day charges for that child. However, **children who remain at school while siblings participate in extracurricular activities will be sent to the Extended Day Program, and parents will be charged accordingly.**

***F. Parking***

For the safety of all children and yourself, please follow these parking rules. The two lanes closest to the entrance of the main building and the lane closest to the road **cannot** be blocked at any time. The two lanes closest to the school are for loading and unloading only. Parents should remain in their vehicles while the staff members and/or safety patrol helpers assist children entering and exiting vehicles. This is critical for main drop-off and pick-up lines to move without undue delay. The lane closest to the road is for through traffic only.

If you need to exit your vehicle, you must use approved parking spaces. You may park in the upper lot (near the Upper Elementary building and playground) or in the lot near the main building. The area between the drop-off lanes and the through traffic lane can be used for temporary loading and unloading. However, please use a marked space for any extended parking.

**III. Fees and Obligations**

All tuition and extended day charges are due on the first and late on the fifth day of each month. While the office will try to send an account reminder home at the end of each month to remind you of upcoming tuition and fees due, you are obligated to make your payments even if you do not receive this notice. Extended day statements for drop-in students will be sent home at the end of month and are payable with the following month's tuition. **Any payments made after the 5<sup>th</sup> will have a \$50.00 late charge added.** See the current fee schedule for the current late charge fee. No child may attend school in the following month

if tuition and extended day charges are not paid in full by the 30<sup>th</sup> of the current month. Special situations should be brought to the attention of the directress or administrator.

Enrollment commitment contracts are for the full school year. Because we are a small school working on a limited budget, we rely on these commitments as we determine teacher salaries, maintenance and improvements, and other budget items. The parent or guardian accepts full financial responsibility for the entire annual fee regardless of actual attendance. Please see your enrollment contract for details of this commitment.

#### **IV. Attendance**

The school calendar has been carefully planned to provide a balance between instructional days and vacation time. It is requested that all MSOR families adhere to the published school calendar in making plans for the year. For your child to make the best possible academic progress during the school year, every effort must be made to avoid frequent absences from school.

Unless you have a doctor's excuse, no student may attend school on a day when they will not arrive before 9:30 a.m.

##### ***A. Absences for Toddler and Primary Programs:***

Parents should avoid extended or frequent absences. Please notify the school if a child is ill or there is a planned absence. A physician's note should accompany the child for any extended illness.

**Children in the last year of the primary program** would be considered kindergarteners at a traditional school (i.e. "school-aged"), and therefore must adhere to more strict attendance rules. The State of Georgia's Compulsory Attendance Law requires students to attend 180 full-length days. **School hours are 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Children are considered tardy at 8:30 am.**

##### ***B. Absences and Attendance for Elementary Students***

We firmly believe that regular school attendance is essential for a child's educational progress. The State of Georgia's Compulsory Attendance Law requires students to attend 180 full-length days. **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HOURS ARE 8:00AM – 3:15 PM. STUDENTS ARE CONSIDERED TARDY IF NOT IN THE CLASSROOM AT 8:00 AM.**

- The school and the home have a joint obligation to fulfill the requirements of the Compulsory Attendance Law for all school-aged children. Please contact the school if your child must miss class.
- Excused absences include absences for the following reasons:
  1. Personal illness, especially when attendance at school endangers a student's health or the health of others. A doctor's note is not automatically required, but might be requested depending on the type or length of illness.
  2. Serious illness or death in the student's immediate family.
  3. A court order or order by a government official requiring an absence.
  4. A religious holiday.

5. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to the student's health or safety.
  6. Other reasons at the discretion of the administration.
- Any elementary or third-year primary student returning to school after an absence must bring a written statement from the parent or guardian explaining the absence. Any make-up work required by the teacher must also be completed. Lack of a written statement or an unacceptable reason will result in an unexcused absence. The administration makes all final decisions regarding whether an absence is excused or unexcused.
  - Any elementary or third year primary student who accumulates over **24 days of absences jeopardizes credit for the year.**
  - **Three tardies are equivalent of one unexcused absence.**

We strongly discourage unexcused absences and tardiness among our Elementary School students. Therefore, the following penalties will apply:

- Two unexcused absences and/or 6 tardies – parents will be contacted.
- Four unexcused absences and/or 12 tardies – a conference with parents to discuss the child's absenteeism/tardiness.
- Six unexcused absences and/or 18 tardies – a parent conference with the teacher and administrator for resolution.

### *C. Tardiness*

Please make every effort to have children in the classroom before work time. **If a child arrives after class has begun, a parent must sign the child in at the main office.** The office staff will take the child into class. It is often easier for a staff member, rather than a parent, to take a child into the classroom without a disturbance. This will minimize the interruption of class work. If a child arrives to school after 9:30, they must have a doctor's excuse.

### *D. Medical Appointments, Early Dismissal, etc.*

When possible, please try to schedule medical, dental, and other appointments during non-school hours, to minimize the disruption of classroom time. If you need to remove your child from class before the regular dismissal time (for a medical appointment for example), please sign your child out at the front desk. For a scheduled appointment, please notify your child's teacher as to the time that your child will need to leave (and possibly return) that day.

## **V. School Calendar**

The administration determines the academic calendar year well in advance of the new school year. Dates for school-wide events are tentatively set by the administration and teachers prior to the beginning of the school year. While every attempt is made to follow this calendar as published, changes inevitably occur. When they do, parents will be notified as soon as possible. Please visit the school's website, <http://msor.org>, for the current year's calendar and any changes or updates.

## **VI. Behavior Code**

"To let the child do as he pleases when he has not yet developed any power of control is to betray the idea of freedom." – Maria Montessori

There is no doubt we all agree that our children are our most valuable gifts. Through nurturing and sensitivity, we hope to prepare them to function as social assets rather than as social liabilities. Let this be reflected in consistent methods of discipline used both in the home and at school.

Students and their parents are expected to willingly support the philosophy of the school and to adhere to the school's standards of behavior. Although few students are involved in any disciplinary difficulties, the following discussion of our behavior code is necessary for clarity and guidance.

At the Montessori School of Rome, it is important that the child clearly understands our rules and the possible consequences of violating those rules. Our approach is to lead the child towards self-discipline. The Montessori School addresses the need to affect change towards positive behavior through lesson planning and teaching. We try to avoid spending unnecessary time responding to behavior problems. Montessori also said "The undisciplined child enters into discipline by working in the company of others; not by being told he is naughty." Discipline should be primarily a learning experience, and less a punitive experience, when done appropriately. In fact, it is our experience that children want to follow rules if an adult clearly defines them, and then invites the child to assume responsibility for his or her behavior, which includes accepting the consequences of poor behavior. We assume students intend to do their best in all areas of school life and find that the students strive to meet these expectations.

If, despite appropriate classroom and teacher management, a child has persistent behavioral difficulties, the age of the student and his/her overall school record will influence the action taken in any disciplinary situation. In all cases, the school reserves the right to judge the seriousness of any behavior.

A child who consistently misbehaves in Late Stay/After School Care may be suspended from attending.

### ***A. Toddler/Primary***

For toddler and primary students, teachers will first correct misbehavior by redirecting the child and helping the child understand what is and is not appropriate. If necessary, students are requested to go to the "thinking chair" if they require separation from their classmates or loss of in-school privileges. The "thinking chair" time is one minute per year of age. If that is not successful, the child will be sent to the office. Corporal punishment is never used. If a child has repeated behavior problems, the teacher will discuss the situation with the parents and administrator. The "thinking chair" time period is equivalent to one minute per year of the child's age.

Sometimes, actions adversely affect the children in our community. Biting is one of these actions. If biting becomes excessive (10 bites or more), the following actions will be taken:

- 1) Parent/Teacher Meeting
- 2) Administration/Parent meeting
- 3) Headmistress/Parent meeting
- 4) Dismissal from school

### ***B. Elementary***

For elementary students, minor offenses are usually handled by the teacher through appropriate redirection or counseling of the student. Recurring behavior problems are handled with a combination of (1) in-school loss of privileges, (2) staying after school/community service, (3) communication with parents, and (4) administrator involvement.

#### ***1. Possible Consequences for Unacceptable Behavior***

Unruly conduct in the classroom may lead to assigned seating or isolation from the group.

- Playground problems may lead to temporary suspension of activities.
- Fighting may lead to staying after school/community service.
- Unruly conduct on the YMCA bus may lead to a temporary suspension or permanent expulsion from the bus, which carries students to and from physical education services.

Serious offenses result in a conference with the parents, teacher, and administrator. All parties should agree upon disciplinary action. The parents may carry out some disciplinary action, such as a loss of home privileges. A letter of "disciplinary action" may be placed in the student's file.

#### ***2. Chronic Behavior Problems***

Chronic or unusual behavior problems may be beyond a child's control and will be referred to the administrator. If appropriate, the parents may be asked to seek outside help through the student's private physician, local community groups, and/or certain social service agencies. Parents are asked to share any recommendations from these outside services with the administrator and teacher. The school will do whatever is possible to meet the special needs of children working with professionals.

**Major violations, or failure to respond to repeated warnings, may result in suspension or dismissal of the student.**

## **VII. Dress Code**

The purpose of the dress code is to ensure that clothes do not become a distraction for the students, and allow the children to appreciate each other for who they are instead of how they dress. ***All clothing worn in the classroom, including coats or jackets, must meet the dress code.***

**A. *General Guidelines***

- Dress should be moderate and not provide a distraction to the learning process.
- Students are expected to be well groomed (including clean and combed hair) and appropriately dressed while on campus and while representing the school off campus (for example, on field trips, for which specific dress guidelines will be given depending on the nature of the field trip).
- Clothing must be neat, clean, and in good repair.
  - It is important that shoes be comfortable, practical, and in good repair
- Modesty shorts must be worn under dresses and skirts.

**B. *Prohibited Items***

- Shoes without backs (i.e. slip-on, clogs). For safety reasons, shoes must be tied or closed.
- Blinking lights or characters on shoes. They are distracting to students.
- Nail polish and make-up.
- Hats indoors.
- Flip-flops, sandals, boots, or Crocs— (only sneakers are allowed).
- Extremely oversized or tight clothing.
- Shirts with characters or super heroes/heroines. We emphasize reality based learning; through years of experience, we have discovered that clothing with characters/super heroes/heroines is a distraction. If a child wears a shirt to school with a character, we turn the shirt inside out to eliminate the distraction.
- Any clothing which causes a disruption or aggressive behavior.
- Sweatpants or athletic shorts (except for PE time at the YMCA).

**C. *Toddler/Primary***

- **For toddlers, we do not use Pull-Ups (disposable training pants) at our school.** If your child is working on or is new to potty-training, please send him/her to school in real underpants or panties. Please provide a few extra pairs of underwear, along with additional clothing (including socks) in case of accidents. In the toddler classes, please bring diapers. We provide wipes.
- **Gym shoes (sneakers) are required** for stability and safety reasons for all students. We prefer Velcro if at all possible. The pea gravel used on the playground is difficult to walk in without sneakers. Your child will not be comfortable in sandals, boots, or other types of footwear.
- Toddler/Primary students are asked not to wear jewelry for safety reasons. Necklaces can pose a strangulation hazard; rings and bracelets can be both distractions and potential hazards.
- A child learning to tell time may wear an analog watch provided it does not become a distraction, e.g. he or she plays with it.
- Although we do wear aprons for some of our work involving water, paint, food, etc., accidents still happen and we would recommend that you do not have your child wear his/her most expensive or favorite “good” clothes. We ask that all children bring an extra set of clothes (socks, too) with his/her name marked on them. This way, if your child needs a change of clothing, it is available.

#### ***D. Elementary***

- Shirts for girls should be fashioned for girls and tucked in when appropriate. Sleeveless and wide tank top shirts are allowed. However, tank tops with narrow straps, spaghetti straps, low-cut necklines and shirts that bare the back (including halter tops and dresses) are not acceptable school attire. The length of the top should be enough to prevent the midriff from showing when the arms are raised.
- **Gym shoes (sneakers) are required** for stability and safety reasons for all students.
- Makeup is not appropriate for Elementary or Adolescent students.
- Hair must be kept away from eyes. Boys must also wear their hair at a length above collared shirts.
- Large, dangling earrings and other items of jewelry (such as dangling bracelets, etc.) are distracting to the student who is wearing the items, to other students, and to teachers. These items should remain at home.
- The length of shorts or skirts should be modest and not cause undue attention. If there is concern an item may be too short, then it should not be worn. Please go by fingertip length. If your shorts or skirt is higher than the length of your fingertips, please do not wear them to school.

At appropriate times and at various grade levels, other specific guidelines may be given. We are not attempting to discourage individual tastes and individuality or dictate every clothing situation. We also realize that styles in clothes vary from year to year. Our goal remains to maintain and strengthen our learning environment. In addition, we encourage your support in instilling in our children a sense of pride in how they look – not in wearing the latest fashions or the most expensive clothes, but rather in being well groomed and appropriately dressed. When children dress sloppily or carelessly, their behavior often reflects these same attributes. Dress is one facet of overall respect and self-confidence. *In borderline situations, the faculty and administration will make decisions regarding appropriateness of clothing and will enforce the dress code.*

Adolescent/Secondary Dress Code is in the Adolescent/Secondary Handbook.

#### ***E. Field Trip Dress Requirements***

All students are required to have a MSOR school shirt and khaki pants and/or shorts for field trips. Students may not be permitted to attend an activity without the appropriate shirt or pants. In order to keep the shirts uniform from one year to the next, we have registered our logo with Land's End (1-800-469-2222). The school shirt is the black polo, in either mesh fabric or interlock fabric, and either short or long-sleeved. You need only choose which fabric type, sleeve length, and size, and then call Land's End. Give them the Preferred School Number (9000-6902-2) and logo number (0761535K). Information may also be found at [www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com). Generally, the school will make a bulk order at the beginning of each school year.

## VIII. Food

The Montessori School of Rome does not provide lunch. A nutritious lunch should be prepared and sent to school with the student. A nutritious lunch includes foods from the four basic food groups, and milk or 100% fruit juices. Each child is required to have a vegetable, fruit, protein, and grain/bread. Chips, desserts, items with high sugar content, and other similar items should be sent sparingly and will be allowed to be eaten after the main course of food items. Even though we are a school, we follow the Bright From the Start licensing requirements for a Day Care Center, and they require toddler and primary lunches to have the basic food groups represented. \*\*\* Bright From the Start mandates that no child in Toddler or Primary may have the following foods sent for lunch or snack:

- Popcorn
- Peanuts
- Fish with bones
- Raw carrots in any form
- Hot dogs in any form
- Grapes in any form
- Cheese cubes in any form
- Any other food that is of similar shape and size of the trachea/windpipe

Even if you cut these items in quarters or very small pieces, Bright From the Start, our licensing agency, states these items are not allowed at school for children under the age of 6.

**Foods that are NOT allowed at school include carbonated beverages, fast foods, and candy (including chocolate).**

### *A. Primary/Toddler*

#### *1. Snacks*

A nutritious snack will be provided to the toddler and primary students each day, and will include milk. Bright from the Start (BFTS) state regulations require that if your child cannot have milk, you must either provide a note from a medical professional explaining this, or a note stating your desire that your child not have milk for religious or cultural reasons. You must also provide an alternative beverage or dairy item.

#### *2. Lunch*

For toddler and primary students, milk is provided by the school. Please see above information on milk in the “snacks” section. If your child cannot have milk, you must provide an alternative beverage or alternative dairy source. Please label all parts of your child's lunch box and any items that are to be warmed up. If part of a student's lunch requires refrigeration, please provide a freezer pack or place only that part of the lunch in the refrigerator for that classroom (either in the kitchen or in the closet on the long hall). Children are asked to take home any substantial amounts of uneaten food which will help you determine the correct quantities to send. While it may be unpleasant to see unused food in the lunchbox at the end of the day, by sending the food home, you will be able to decide on the correct amounts and types of foods to send.

**Special information regarding toddler lunches.** Please make sure all food items sent for toddler lunches are pre-cut into bite-size pieces (smaller than a marble). While our staff makes every effort to make sure the food the children are given is safe, there is not time for them to cut multiple food items for all the children at every mealtime. Please do not send “sippy cups” – toddlers are developmentally past this stage. If you are using this style of cup for car travel or at home we recommend you consider cups with pop-up straws. The straw can also aid in oral motor development.

### ***B. Elementary***

Please label all parts of your child's lunch box and any items that are to be warmed up. If part of a student's lunch requires refrigeration, we ask that you place a freezer pack in the lunch box or have the child place those food items in the elementary refrigerator prior to class. We will teach your child to use the microwave to warm his/her lunch, if needed. Children are asked to take home substantial amounts of uneaten food. This will help you determine the correct quantities to send.

## **IX. Birthdays**

Birthdays are special occasions at MSOR. Students will have their birthdays recognized by their teacher. Other celebrations are at the teacher’s discretion, and will be reviewed at the beginning of the year.

If you would like to collaborate with the other families of children celebrating in your child’s birthday month, birthday lunches are scheduled for the last Friday of each month.

We encourage the donation of a book to the MSOR library in honor of your child’s birthday each year. Your child’s teacher will read the book to the class and recognize that it is being donated to the library in honor of their birthday. A non-fiction title is well received by all and complements the Montessori curriculum. Please ask if you would like a list of suggested titles.

We ask that parents DO NOT distribute invitations for private birthday parties at school, unless the **whole** class is invited. Please send a few extra invitations to be used for the inevitable lost invitation.

**The following are birthday treats that are allowed at MSOR:** small cupcakes with minimal frosting, muffins with cream cheese frosting, all natural juice popsicles, ice cream and small sugar cookies.

**The following foods are not allowed at MSOR:** all forms of candy, items containing chocolate, and carbonated beverages.

## **X. Health, Safety, and Illness**

### ***A. Health and Safety***

Parents should inform the school before classes begin of any medical condition(s) that might have an impact on school behavior or performance. Examples include but are not limited to epilepsy, allergies, diabetes, heart conditions, and poor vision or hearing.

Accidents are unavoidable, although we do our best to prevent them from happening. When they occur, a teacher will send a note home discussing the incident. If a student requires additional care, either from parents or a doctor, the parents will be called and informed of the situation. Please ensure that all phone numbers for doctors, parents, and emergency contacts are accurate. Finally, the possibility of a serious injury does exist. If deemed necessary, MSOR will call for an ambulance to Floyd Hospital even before contacting parents.

We encourage all students to wear sunscreen in the early fall and spring months. However, we must ask that you apply this to your child before you bring them to school in the morning. It is not practical for the teachers to apply it to all the children before going outside at recess. If your child stays for extended day, you may send sunscreen for the extended day teachers to reapply. Please see the following section on medication forms regarding sunscreen.

### ***1. Medications***

The Montessori School of Rome does not supply any medicine, including aspirin, Tylenol, etc. Only medicine accompanied by a signed Medication Authorization Form (obtained from the office) will be administered to students. Medication Authorization Forms should be left in the office with the medication. The office staff will make sure the form and medications are brought to the child's teacher. Parents are responsible for taking home a child's medicine at the end of the school day. Medication forms are good for 2 weeks for acute illnesses or chronic daily medications. At the end of the two weeks, any remaining medication must be brought home, or a new form completed. Medication forms for chronic "as needed" medicines (for example for migraine headaches) are good for one month, but must be accompanied initially by a doctor's note. If the medication is needed longer than one month, a new form must be completed each month. Finally, chronic emergency medications (like an Epi-pen) only require a form at the beginning of the school year.

Please note that any prescription medication must be brought to the school in its original container, and the prescription number must be written on the medical authorization form.

DHR considers all over-the-counter medications and creams to be medications. Any oral medications must follow the rules above. Topical creams, including lip balm, sunscreen, diaper ointment and bug wipes (no sprays and preferably DEET free) must also have a form filled out when they are first brought to school, although the form is good throughout the school year. Please remember that the child can use these items only under the supervision of the teacher.

**NO MEDICINE OF ANY TYPE SHOULD BE LEFT IN A CLASSROOM, LUNCH BOX, OR CLASSROOM CUBBY.**

### ***B. Illness***

As a parent, it is important that you are aware of both the symptoms which would prompt the school to call you to come and get your child, and the illnesses for which you should not bring your child to school.

If your child has any of the following illnesses or symptoms please do not bring him or her to school, **unless he or she is no longer contagious (according to your child's physician)**, and **MOST IMPORTANTLY** is feeling well and will be able to participate in class:

- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Influenza
- Conjunctivitis (“pink eye”)
- Strep throat
- Pneumonia
- Fever greater than 101 at any time in the last 24 hours **\*(please see below)**
- Severe cough
- Skin infection (such as impetigo)

The above list is not all-inclusive. If you feel your child is ill, even with “just a cold”, please do not bring him or her to school if you think he or she will not be able to participate in class.

Additionally, we cannot allow children to stay inside during recess, as supervision is required outside on the playground. If your child is too sick to be outside when dressed in proper attire, he or she is probably too sick to be at school. If you have special instructions regarding what your child should wear or do when outside, please write a note regarding that to the teacher.

If your child is observed to have any of the following symptoms by one of the teachers, you will be called to get your child from school. **\*Your child must remain out of school for at least 24 hours AFTER the symptoms have passed and when deemed well WITHOUT the use of medication. Your child MUST ALSO BE well (without medication) for at least 24 hours prior to returning to school, i.e.: if a student is sent home with a fever on Tuesday they cannot return to school until Thursday.** This is to ensure the health and welfare of all students and staff.

- Fever of 101
- Influenza
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Severe coughing
- Difficulty breathing
- Pinkeye
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Unusual rash
- Severe itching
- Severe headache or stiff neck
- Lethargy

This list is also not all-inclusive. If a teacher observes that a child is not feeling well, she may at her discretion, ask that the child be taken home, even without any of the above symptoms if she feels that the child would be more appropriately cared for at home. If you are notified that your child is sick, you are expected to come and get them within an hour. If you do not, the school might be required to call the next person on your emergency list.

We realize that sometimes a child is not visibly ill when he or she is brought to school and that some mornings the only signs of illness you might see before your child is dropped off is a slight runny nose. However, it is for the health of your child as well as the health of his or her classmates, that we would ask that your child be picked up if he or she is sick. **We understand how inconvenient this might be, especially for those who work outside the home, but again we must stress the importance of safeguarding the health of everyone.**

If your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease (see the list posted in the lobby), please notify the school. We are required to notify other parents of any disease exposures. Your child will not be mentioned by name, to preserve confidentiality.

## **XI. Immunization Regulations**

The State of Georgia requires all children to have a Certificate of Immunization before being admitted into school. A child entering any school in Georgia for the first time (at any age up to 19 years) must be age-appropriately immunized with all of the required vaccines. We also must have an Eye, Ear, and Dental Certificate for any child over 5 years of age. Your child's physician or the Health Department can provide these certificates for you as well as the most current required vaccines. MSOR is required to have these on file in the office on or before the first day of school. Parents who choose not to immunize their children for religious or medical reasons must provide a notarized "Affidavit of Religious Conflict with Immunization Requirements" form or "Affidavit of Medical Contraindication to Immunization" form. We cannot allow your child to attend MSOR without the appropriate certificate(s) or forms.

If there is a case of a vaccine preventable disease at school, it is possible that unimmunized children will be asked to remain home from school during the duration of the outbreak.

## **XII. Field Trips**

### **A. Toddler/Primary**

Students in both the toddler and primary programs will go on "outings" during the year. We meet at the location of the outing.

For Toddler and Primary field trips, each toddler must have a parent or family member or person designated by the parent or guardian to accompany the toddler on the field trip.

For the 3<sup>rd</sup> year Primary field trip, typically held in May of each year, each 3<sup>rd</sup> year Primary student (the "kindergarten" class) must have a parent or family member or person designated by the parent or guardian to accompany them on the trip.

Younger or older siblings are not allowed to travel on field trips. This is for the benefit of both the students and the siblings. Chaperones must be able to devote their undivided attention to the students in their group.

We also strictly follow state laws regarding car seat use. The state requires that all children UNDER age 8 ride in car seats or booster seats. A child must ride in his or her OWN car seat on a field trip, even in someone else's car. If a car seat is not left for a child on a planned field trip day, the child will be unable to attend the field trip.

After the outing, if you want to sign your child into school, you may do so by bringing your child to school and signing them in at that time.

### ***B. Elementary***

The elementary classes will take several field trips during the school year. Permission slips are sent out in advance and must be returned prior to the field trip. Some trips require small fees; please pay these fees prior to the trip date. During most school years, there will also be at least one long-distance field trip, requiring bus rental. These trips are considered a part of the educational curriculum and are required. If a parent chooses for their child **NOT** to go, the family will still be responsible for the transportation cost of the trip.

Educational field trips are a wonderful way for children to enrich their classroom lessons. All trips are chaperoned by the teacher, teacher's aide, and parent volunteers. All persons transporting students must hold a valid driver's license and current auto insurance.

Field trip days are regular school days. Students need to meet at school first for attendance to be taken and to review last minute information. Any exceptions need to be approved by the administrator.

We know that we could not make trips without our parent drivers. However, we sometimes have more drivers volunteer than we need. If this happens, we will ask those parents to drive that can carry the most children so that we can minimize the number of cars needed. We'll let you know if we will **NOT** need you to drive.

At the conclusion of a trip, all drivers need to return to the school with the same students they brought on the trip. We cannot allow students to leave a trip and not return to school out of liability concerns, and to ensure sure that all children are appropriately transported. Additionally, the children still have class time and work expected of them after field trips. Any exceptions need to be approved by the directress.

Younger or older siblings are not allowed to travel on field trips. This is for the benefit of both the students and the siblings. Chaperones must be able to devote all of their attention to the students in their group.

## **XIII. Lost and Found**

***Parents are asked to label all items of clothing to ensure all Lost and Found items are returned to the proper student. Parents are asked to periodically check the Lost and***

***Found Box. This is so important as we often have jackets, gloves, etc. which are alike, and without labels, we have no way to identify the owner.***

Parents and students are asked to put found items into the Lost and Found box in the main building, and to look there first when items are missing.

Many of the items in our classrooms are small and easily taken home by the children by mistake. If your child brings home a piece of classroom equipment, please return it as soon as possible. The equipment is expensive and difficult to replace.

#### **XIV. Homework**

Parents should help their child establish a homework routine. Parents can help students get started by making certain there is a quiet, well-lit place for the child to study, and then by reading directions together or discussing writing assignments. However, parents should avoid becoming too involved. Students need to learn to "self-start" work, work through material slowly, and work with considerable effort.

The teacher will send home a written notice defining homework requirements during the first few weeks of school. Please make sure that you and your child understand the teacher's requirements. Parents should check all homework with the student to ensure that the student's work meets or exceeds the teacher's expectations.

If your child is having difficulty with his/her homework, please discuss this with the teacher promptly. The teacher may send parents a written note discussing homework that needs some improvement. If the teacher has serious concerns, she will contact you directly.

#### **XV. Testing**

Elementary students in the 2nd through 9th grade will take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). This test is held in the spring of each school year. Montessori School of Rome administers the ITBS as a courtesy to our parents. The ITBS is not indicative of the Montessori curriculum, nor is it an accurate assessment of student's abilities and capabilities beyond the format and content of the test.

#### **XVI. Items Brought to School**

Children like to bring personal belongings to school. Please encourage only items of interest to all, such as books, pictures, and objects relating to foreign culture, science, or nature. Any items acquired from nature should be placed in a sealed bag or container. Your child's teacher will inform you of any specific classroom rules regarding this.

All MSOR classrooms have pocket-sized items such as rocks, shells, and important didactic materials. These items are very expensive and can take several weeks to replace. If a child happens to come home with any of these items, please see that they get returned to school promptly.

**A. Cell Phones/iPods / Other Electronic Devices:**

Students are not allowed to bring cell phones to school. If the parents need their child to have a cell phone for an after school activity away from school, prior approval must be sought. In any event, **cell phones may not be used during school hours or during after school program and must be turned off from arrival on campus to departure.**

**I Pods, electronic games and other electronic devices are not allowed on campus. These items, if brought to school, will be confiscated and held at the office for a period of time to be determined by the administrator.**

Students are **NOT** allowed to have laptop computers at the school. **PLEASE NOTE:** The school cannot assume any liability or responsibility for loss of damage to the student's computer.

## **XVII. Parent Communication, Conferences and Suggestions**

We will do our best to keep parents informed about our school and programs throughout the year. There is a monthly newsletter, usually sent home on the first Tuesday of the month, which includes articles from each classroom. Teachers will send a weekly email as well. Teachers will respond to emails within 24 hours, and if that is not your experience, please notify the administrator at [office@msor.org](mailto:office@msor.org). Teachers will respond to notes and phone calls on a daily basis. Correspondence will also occur through the teacher's page on the website. Please check the website regularly for updates and class information. Additionally, please be certain that MSOR has a current e-mail address for you that you check regularly. The office and/or the teacher will send information, especially last minute changes to your email prior to posting it on the website and Facebook.

Communication with the office/administrator: Please use email at [office@msor.org](mailto:office@msor.org) first for communication. If you do not receive a response when needed, please call the office phone at 706-232-7744.

**Private parent/teacher conferences are held twice a year**, in the fall and spring of the school year. These conferences formally address your child's progress in the Montessori program. **Attendance at parent/teacher conference is MANDATORY AND STRONGLY ENCOURAGED of both parents and/or appropriate guardians.** In addition, parents are welcome to consult the teacher or directress regarding their child's academic achievements or other issues during the school year. It is best to arrange these meetings ahead of time. Written notes, or appointments for a telephone conversation or meeting, provide the best opportunities for clear, uninterrupted communications. Please email the office at [office@msor.org](mailto:office@msor.org) to set up a telephone discussion or meeting with your child's teacher. Montessori philosophy encourages respect for the child. In keeping with this, please do not address the teacher regarding your child's performance in his/her presence.

We are continually looking for ways to improve our school. Please remember that all suggestions for MSOR are welcome! We also need to hear about any concerns you may have regarding your child, the class, or school as a whole. We value your feedback and will maintain confidentiality of any concerns. Please email or call the office with any concerns before they become a big issue.

### **XVIII. Parent Volunteers and Classroom Visitation**

Parents are asked to volunteer for many tasks throughout the course of the school year. Volunteers help the school keep costs, and therefore tuition, down. At the beginning of the year, parents are offered the chance to volunteer for specific classroom duties and needs. For example, each classroom has “class parent(s)” who regularly give of their time. They will need help during for the big events of the year. Other parents volunteer for field trips, library work, secretarial assistance, repairing of materials, gardening, and many other activities.

While we welcome parent volunteers, we do ask that all parent work in the classroom be discussed ahead of time with the teacher. It is disruptive to the students and teachers to have parents or visitors arrive unannounced in the classroom; therefore we ask that you do not plan to walk into rooms without prior agreement. Of course, you are always welcome to observe through the observation windows, and the teachers are happy to accommodate requests to visit (at any time after the first six weeks of school) as long as they are planned.

Additionally, all parent volunteers must undergo a background check to be kept on file in the Office. If you wish to volunteer in any capacity on campus, a background check will be required with no exceptions.

All parents and visitors are asked to sign in and out at the front desk at any time they are on campus, except during drop-off and pick-up times.

### **XIX. Emergency School Closing**

When inclement weather occurs, the administrator will announce any changes in school hours. An email or text will be sent via the school wide email system. On the internet, look for postings on the MSOR Facebook page, the school's website, and [www.hometownheadlines.com](http://www.hometownheadlines.com). Decisions are usually made by 6:45 a.m. Also, please be sure to monitor your email as we will send alerts and information about the school to your email addresses.

MSOR conducts monthly fire drills. Severe weather drills and lockdown procedure drills are conducted twice a year. The fire drills and severe weather drills are filed with the state's online registration site.