

PARENT HANDBOOK 2008/2009

**The Montessori School of Sanford
152 Charlotte Avenue
Sanford, NC 27330**

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OUR MISSION

The Montessori School of Sanford exists to provide children with an environment in which they can be joyful, self-motivated and develop to their full potential.

The Montessori School of Sanford

- ✓ Provides an ever-moving and rich environment in the areas of language, math, sensorial awareness, practical life, geography, science, art, music and movement.
- ✓ Is dedicated to the promotion of a multicultural environment respectful of others' beliefs and traditions.
- ✓ Is aware that each child is an individual composed of a spiritual/emotional, physical and intellectual self.
- ✓ Believes that low student-teacher ratio is essential to meet the individual's needs.
- ✓ Is convinced that a positive educational environment encourages learning as a natural, fun and satisfying process.

The Montessori Philosophy incorporates the family and school. It is our goal to work as a team with the child, their family and staff to have a successful school experience. To achieve this goal we have set forth guidelines we ask each family to follow as they become a part of the experience.

As with everything in life we try to be flexible to meet needs as they occur. Therefore, communication is essential between the families and staff. The monthly board meeting, which is open for all parents as well as staff and board members, is just one method of communication used at the school. Parent/Teacher conferences are also held twice a year. News and upcoming events are published on the website. We welcome email correspondence as well.

If your family has special needs or concerns, please feel free to bring them to the attention of the board and staff. In most cases, we will try to accommodate those needs to the best of our abilities.

Please read the following information carefully. On the back page is a tear sheet for you to sign and return to the school. This handbook will be considered your contract with the school for the current school calendar year.

2008/2009 TUITION RATES

You may choose to pay monthly (July through May), Quarterly (July 1, October 1, January 3, April 1) or Yearly (July 1). If you choose to pay your tuition in full at the beginning of the year you will receive a 5% discount on tuition, reflected in the rate listed below. The discount does not apply to the materials fee included in all tuition rates.

Tuition payments are due within 30 days of the date on your statement. Students with tuition payments more than 90-days past-due will not be permitted to return to the classroom. The Board of Directors reserves the right to develop payment plans on a case by case basis.

The items not covered by the rates below are School Pictures, Scholastic Book Orders and Square One Art Projects for Extended Day and Elementary.

Under Three:

*Yearly \$5466.50	Quarterly \$1,430.00	11 Month \$520.00
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Preschool:

*Yearly \$5471.40	Quarterly \$1301.30	11 month \$473.00
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Extended Day – Lower Elementary:

*Yearly \$6324.45	Quarterly \$1644.50	11 month \$598.00
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Upper Elementary

*Yearly \$6438.63	Quarterly \$1673.10	11 month \$608.40
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*Sibling discounts of 5% per child will apply to Quarterly or Monthly payments only.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Before School Care

Drop-off between 7:00 a.m. and 7:45 a.m.

Flat fee of \$3 per day

After School Care – Monthly Rates

12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. or 3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

\$140 per month

12:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

\$180 per month

After School Care – Daily Rates

Pick-up by 4:30 p.m.*

Flat fee of \$10

Pick-up between 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

*Flat fee of \$20

*Fees apply after 3:30 p.m.

**Additional late fees of \$1 per minute apply after 5:30 p.m. (See School Hours section)

REGISTRATION

A registration fee of \$100 is required for each child. For new students the registration fee will be due at the time the application is submitted. This registration fee is non-refundable unless your child is not placed due to a problem on the part of the school. For returning children, registration fees are due by March 1st of the preceding year to guarantee your child's spot is held. All registration fees will be applied toward July tuition.

FACULTY & STAFF
Toddlers (2 year old classroom)

Cynthia Galyean, Lead Teacher
Ramona Green, Teacher's Asst.

Children's House (Preschool & Extended Day Class Combined)

Linda Seiberling, Lead Teacher
Erin English, Teacher's Assistant
Linda Smith, Teacher's Assistant

Upper & Lower Elementary (Grades 1-6)

Linda Howell, Lead Teacher
Helen Bartfield, Lead Teacher

After School Director

Tomeka Overton

Office Assistant

Regina Nouredin

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

April Montgomery, *President, Finance*
Susan Keller, *Children's House Liaison*
Marissa Langford
Brian Mathis
Lisa Mathis, *Toddler Liaison*
Suzy Opalinski, *After School Care Liaison*
Audra Swartz, *Secretary, Lower Elementary Liaison*
Karen Walker, *Upper Elementary Liaison*

**Please feel free to contact any board member or staff member
to discuss your concerns or ideas.**

Monthly Board Meeting

As a parent-run school, we encourage all parents to consider becoming a board member or attending monthly board meetings which are held in the elementary class room on the third Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.

SCHOOL HOURS

Toddlers: 8:00 a.m. – noon

Pre-school: 8:00 a.m. – noon

Extended Day: 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m

Elementary: 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Before School Care: 7:00 a.m. – 7:45 a.m

After School Care: Noon – 5:30 p.m.

Intercession/Workday Care: 8:00 – 5:30

Summer Care: 8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m

As a courtesy to our parents, we offer both Before School Care and After School Care. Morning drop-off for all classes begins at 7:45 a.m. Students dropped-off prior to 7:45 a.m. will be placed in Before School Care at a rate of \$3 per morning. For students not on a monthly After School Care plan, fees apply after 3:30 p.m. A flat rate of \$10 is applied for pick-up by 4:30 p.m. and \$20 for pickup between 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

The school's closing time is 5:30 p.m. Please contact the After School Director if you should be late. An additional late fee of \$1.00 per minute after 5:30 will be assessed for late pick-up to compensate for over-time costs.

DROP-OFF & PICK-UP

Children's House students should be accompanied into the classroom or onto the playground (weather permitting) each morning. Dismissal is at noon for Children's House students. When the weather allows, children will go outside to play prior to dismissal and may be picked up from the play ground.

Parents are asked not to come in prior to dismissal as this adds to the confusion of preparing the children to go home. If you need to pick your child up early, please stop in the office and we will get your child from the classroom. Elementary and Extended Day children will be dismissed at 3:00 p.m.

PICK-UP PERMISSION

If someone other than a designated person is to pick up your child, please provide written notification and let that person know that they must present identification at pick-up.

SCHEDULE CONFLICTS

We encourage all students to arrive promptly for class. Late arrivals cause disruption to the class and lost educational time. Due to the Children's House program lasting a half day, if children are not able to come to school before 9:30 am, we ask that you do not bring them to school that day.

Please make every effort to inform your child's teacher if your child will be absent or leaving early for the day. 8:15 am is considered tardy for all students. Children leaving before 12:30 pm will be marked as leaving early.

Please notify the school or child's teacher in writing for early pick-up, appointments and absences whenever possible. Call the school with a detailed message when unplanned changes occur.

EMERGENCIES

Parents will be contacted immediately upon any emergency. Alternate names on the child's registration sheet will be contacted if we are unable to contact either parent. In the case of a life-threatening emergency, all appropriate emergency services will be contacted.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, we will follow the policy of the Lee County Schools for the first day. After the first day we will make our own decision regarding late opening or possible closure of the school. The decision will be broadcast on WRAL channel 5 and WTVD channel 11. Email notification will also be sent to you.

Information should also be on the school answering machine. In the event the school needs to be closed during the day for any reason, we will contact you by phone.

COMMUNICATION

Messages, Phone Calls and Emails

Parents can communicate with teachers between 7:45 a.m. and 8 a.m. or between 3:00 p.m. and 4 p.m. The After School Director can be reached from 11:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. The main office is staffed at rotating times Monday through Friday. You may call the office to leave a message for an instructor or staff member anytime. The answering machine is available after hours or when the phone cannot be answered in person.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Conferences are scheduled twice a year. Parents are required to attend both conferences. Other conferences may be scheduled during the school year if parents or teachers feel it is necessary.

Classroom Observation

Observation visits are encouraged; however, observation appointments must be scheduled ahead of time with your child's teacher or office staff.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

All Montessori School of Sanford students are considered to be in a probationary period for the first six weeks.

VOLUNTEER TIME

The Montessori School of Sanford is a parent/board run school, therefore, each family is asked to volunteer 20 hours a year to help in some capacity of the school operations. There are many different areas in which you may volunteer. All teachers along with the office staff have suggestions and needs and will be glad to share ways you may help. It is the parent's responsibility to log their volunteer time in the green notebook at the front desk. Each spring, hours served will be posted in order for you to make sure you have met your family commitment.

Children's House parent volunteers that work in the classroom must have a current TB test on file.

FUND RAISERS

The Montessori School of Sanford offers several opportunities each year for the school and parents to benefit from fund raising.

CLOTHING

Comfortable play clothing and safe, low heeled shoes are suggested. To encourage independence, easy-to-manage clothing is appreciated by all. Each child's cubby should have a labeled, complete set of clothing that is suitable for the seasonal weather. All rain coats, hats, shoes, coats and boots should also be labeled.

SHOES

In order to keep the educational environment as quiet as possible on hardwood floors, the school suggests students wear Crocks, slippers, moccasins, ballet shoes or other quiet shoes when indoors. Shoes are changed before and after outside play times.

BIRTHDAYS

The Children's House students may bring in a special snack to celebrate their birthday and parents are welcome to share this special time. Please choose a healthy snack with a minimum of sugars and dyes. Please confirm all arrangements with your child's teacher beforehand.

FIELD TRIPS

Parents will be notified prior to the field trip. The appropriate permissions slips will be sent home for your approval. Children will travel to all field trips by either parent-driven cars or by walking. In the past the Children's House students have required a parent chaperone.

MEAL TIMES

Lunch

Lunch time is at approximately noon for Extended Day, Aftercare and Elementary students. Please clearly label your child's lunch box with his/her name. Lunch should be simple and nutritious. Because of children's sensitivity to sugar and food dyes, carbonated drinks, candy or chocolate are not permitted. Due to lack of refrigeration for the Elementary classroom, Elementary students' lunches should be packed with a cold pack. Please do not send lunches with your child if he/she leaves at noon each day. See the hand out sent to you upon enrollment.

Snack

A healthy snack is provided each day for all children. The cost is already included in the tuition.

REST PERIOD

As required by state law, The Montessori School of Sanford provides a rest period for all children 3 years of age and under. This rest period is from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. everyday.

TOYS

Children may not bring toys to the classroom as it distracts from the learning environment that we strive to maintain. Books, educational material or nature items are welcome. Please clearly mark all books with your child's name. Children's House students will have the opportunity to bring in show-and-tell items throughout the year.

HEALTH POLICY

Please provide your child's immunization record, Physical (for Extended Day and Pre-School) and Medical records by the first day of school.

NO MEDICATION will be administered at the school. If your child needs medication, prescription or nonprescription, a parent or guardian must come to the school to administer the medication. We will administer medicine in the following circumstances:

- Allergic Reaction (like an EpiPen)
- Asthma (inhalers, nebulizers, etc. as needed)
- Diabetics (insulin shots, etc.)

First Aid

Care will be administered for minor emergencies and appropriate emergency services will be contacted in the event of a major emergency. Prescription and nonprescription drugs may not be sent to the school. This includes Chap Stick, cough drops, sun screen, aspirin, ibuprofen, or acetaminophen, or anything labeled "keep out of reach of children." We do not have a nurse or medic on staff; therefore we are not allowed to administer any medications to your child except in the circumstance of allergic, asthma, or diabetic related emergencies.

Sick Days

Please do not send your child to school if they are experiencing the following symptoms:

- ✓ Fever
- ✓ Rash
- ✓ Cough
- ✓ Discolored or profuse amounts of mucus from the nose
- ✓ Conjunctivitis/pink eye or any kind of yellow discharge from the eyes
- ✓ Diarrhea
- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Severe sore throat
- ✓ Chicken Pox sores that are not scabbed over
- ✓ Stomachache
- ✓ Ringworm
- ✓ Head Lice
- ✓ If your child exhibits symptoms that need more care than the provider is able to give as it will interfere with the educational process of the classroom.

Please remember that all children share germs easily. Although we follow several hand washing procedures and watch children to make sure they cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze, colds and flu are easily spread through young children. Upon being sent home with any of the above symptoms, your child will be required to stay out for 24 hours and be fever-free unless you have a Doctor's note indicating that your child is not contagious.

WITHDRAWAL

When withdrawing a child from MSOS, you must give the Board President a two-week written notice.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

It is the policy of the MSOS to provide a means whereby parents can freely discuss problems concerning their child's well-being with the teachers and Board President, and provide a procedure to insure that concerns are considered. The procedure is as follows:

1. Parent shall discuss concerns with the child's teacher.
2. If not satisfied that there has been a change, discuss concerns with the Board Liaison.
3. If the complaint is not satisfied with in 5 working days of talking with the Board Liaison the parent shall request in writing for a hearing to be presented to a subcommittee of the Board of Directors within 10 working days.

No deviation shall be made from this procedure without prior approval of the Board President.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT

As child care providers, we are legally bound to report any suspected abuse or neglect. Before reporting any suspected inappropriate activity we will gather all necessary information and assess the situation. We will then act accordingly in the best interests of the child.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES ON DISCIPLINE

Actions that impair a child's ability to function or the emotional well being of a child at school are unacceptable. Conduct by anyone from or in the school setting which constitutes harassment or discrimination or is inconsistent with the Montessori Goals for Social and Academic behavior.

1. The Child in the Classroom

- a. The child is given freedom to choose work, form friendships and set his/her own pace.
- b. Expectations are made known at the beginning of the child's participation in the classroom:
 - Child is expected to respect all persons and everything in the school environment.
 - Child is expected to adhere to rules and guidelines as stated by the teachers.

2. The Teacher in the Classroom

- a. Examples set forth by the teacher(s) and assistant(s) are positive, consistent, and straightforward.
- b. The teacher is responsible for clearly outlining ground rules and expected behavior.
- c. The teacher deals with all children justly, gently and fairly in an effort to help them develop and maintain self-esteem and inner discipline.

3. Discipline in the Classroom

- a. Discipline should come from within the child.
- b. Teachers guide children to develop the skills to settle their own disputes.
- c. Teacher intervention and action are required when the child shows an inability to behave in an appropriate manner.
- d. Failure to adhere to behavioral expectations has direct and consistent consequences. When teacher intervention and action are required they are handled in the following ways:

Procedure

1. Teacher observes behavior.
2. Teacher redirects child and/or discusses behavior of concern with child toward goal of having child recognize acceptable choices. (This is done appropriately for the age of the child.)
3. If undesirable behavior persists, the teacher states the problem and asks that it cease. (This ensures that the child understands which behavior is unacceptable.)
4. If a child appears to be unable to establish self-control, or as a logical consequence for disrupting an activity, the teacher will remove child from participating in the activity or situation. This will vary depending on the age of the child. For example, a young child may be told to follow the teacher for a period of time. A child may be asked to stop a work in progress or to put some materials away. A child may be directed to work in a certain area of the classroom, or to work alone. An elementary aged child may be given time to reflect on the situation. This may be done in writing and then in a conference with the teacher.

- A child who is unable to change behavior will be taken to the Office and asked to sit and reflect on the behavior that brought about this consequence. For primary aged children, the teacher should check in with the child after approximately five minutes to determine whether or not the child is ready to return to the classroom. For older children, the office needs to be informed as to when the child should return to the class.
- If a child repeatedly exhibits behavioral disruptions or violations of class rules and school policies, the Teacher should meet with the Board Liaison. A meeting should be set up between the Parents, Teacher and Board Liaison (and child if deemed appropriate) to discuss behaviors and determine action plans (with schedule for implementation).
- A behavioral action plan may include the consequences of calling a parent to come and take the child home, for the remainder of the school day, if the child cannot follow the terms of the plan drawn up between parents and school staff.
- If the child repeats a harmful behavior three times during the day or in the case of a serious behavioral disruption, where the school does not feel that it is safe to keep the child at school, the parents will be called to pick up their child. **A meeting between parents, teacher and Board Liaison will be required before the child returns to school. Continued aggression may result in a request that the parents withdraw from the program.**

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR POSSIBLE PROFESSIONAL EVALUATION OF A CHILD (Children's House and Toddler Classroom)

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that children who frequently exhibit behaviors that interfere with their ability to benefit from and appropriately participate in classroom activities are identified and considered for possible professional evaluation, program modification and for continued enrollment at Montessori School of Sanford.

Procedure

1. If a Teacher notes behaviors that indicate developmental or psychological challenges or observes behaviors that significantly disrupt classroom functioning and peer interaction, and consequently question the child's ability to successfully participate in the program, s(he) will report these concerns to the Board Liaison.
 - a. The Board Liaison will observe the child in the classroom and in other situations of concern.
 - b. The Teacher(s) will document examples of behavior that are concerning.
 - c. An acceptable time-frame will be set (by the Board Liaison in consultation with the Teacher) for observation and documentation.
2. At any time a request a consultation by an outside professional to observe and report on classroom interactions, and to recommend a course of action to ameliorate a perceived classroom problem. Parent consent is not required prior to classroom observation, provided the consultant does not interact with any particular child.
3. The School will contact the parent(s) and together will set goals and strategies for change within the child's school experience. Support for these strategies from parents at home will also be discussed.
 - a. If that child's behavior jeopardizes the welfare of the child or his/her classmates or staff members, a referral to a appropriate professional may be requested in a conference with the Parents.
 - b. An acceptable timetable will be set for regular review of the child's progress toward the outlined goals, and of the implementation of agreed upon strategies at school and at home. These reviews will include the School and Parents and may include the Child.
 - c. The Child may be present at any meetings if deemed appropriate.
4. Parents should be assured that the School wishes to keep a child in the program, if possible. We are committed to working with parents and outside professional support to facilitate the child's progress. At the same time, it is important for parents to work with the school, trusting that the teacher and all other staff have the children's welfare as a priority.
5. Teachers need to know about a child's participation in treatment with an outside professional.

Teachers may wish to contact a professional treating a child for suggestions or information regarding management of specific problems in the classroom. Release forms must be signed by a parent before any such exchange of information can take place.

6. MSOS reserves the right to require a child's withdrawal from school if his/her problem behaviors adversely affect classmates or the staff, and/or if parent(s) refuse to work in cooperation with the School regarding recommendations and goals for the child.
7. Bringing any weapon or dangerous material into the school, or threatening to harm a staff person or other student is strictly prohibited. Violations of these prohibitions will result in immediate suspension, a meeting between the Head of School, Head of School, Parents and Child and possible termination of the Child's enrollment by the school.

EVALUATIONS FOR TRANSITIONS

Because the development of a child is unique to that child, we believe that developmental characteristics such as cognitive, social, emotional and physical traits are a better predictor of a child's success in the Montessori environment than chronological age alone. Therefore we consider *ranges of ages* more appropriate. The ultimate goal is to best serve every individual child. The following guidelines are just that, general considerations that guide our decisions, not set-in-stone policies. Many other components come into play: child's temperament, maturity of the child, psychological and physical development, as well as parenting style and family dynamics. Human development does not follow a linear, regular progression. Therefore, we strive to follow every child and accommodate each individual based on our assessment of where that child is at that particular time.

Toddler Program:

When considering a child for the Toddler program we will be considering the child's ability to walk erect, to navigate a group of 11 other children, to separate from parents or caregiver and to attach to the adults in our environment.

Children's House:

When considering transitioning a child from Toddler House to Children's House, we take in consideration many factors. In the spirit of following the child, the guidelines provided below are just that, guidelines and not policies. In addition, each child being a unique individual, our guiding principle will always be "Are *this* child's needs met in his/her current environment?"

The existing class dynamic and the transitioning child's personality are carefully considered. A dialogue between the Toddler House and Children House teachers takes place to evaluate the best possible match for that child and the existing classrooms.

The age of a child is looked at carefully. Knowing that the optimal age to enter Children's House is *around* the age of three, we want to support this ideal start time.

When a child is no longer connecting to the materials of the Toddler House environment, this triggers the question of "Is this child having his/her needs met?" When an environment no longer meets the needs of children, there is a notable shift in their level of engagement in work.

We consider the child's social and emotional needs and abilities. Is the child ready to be part of a larger social group? Is the child able to follow directions?

Independence in a child's work is an important factor. Can the child accomplish age-appropriate tasks on his own, without requiring adult intervention, guidance or assistance along the way?

Independence in toileting is another factor. One of our Children's House requirements is for children to be toilet trained.

When a child reaches a stage where she would benefit from more advanced cognitive and social stimulations and would be able to feel comfortable in a larger group of 23-25 children, then we consider that child ready to transition to the Children's House environment.

For most children, this is a three-year program. For some children, depending on the rate of development, acquisition of reading, writing and math skills, depending on social and emotional development, it might be necessary to stay for a fourth year in Children's House. This allows for a deeper consolidation of cognitive as well as social-emotional skills which will benefit the child at the elementary level. Again, the age is only one factor; parenting style and child's temperament are also pieces of the puzzle. Our goal is to see a child successful in the classroom environment. Allowing a child to solidify skills and knowledge in a less pressured environment is a gift whose benefits will be life-long.

Applicants to Children's House will be asked to meet with one of our teachers for a short visit in the classroom environment outside of school hours. Parents will be encouraged to separate from their child. A child older than three or four years old at the time of the interview will be asked to come spend a longer time while the classroom is in session. Prior to the interview, parents are asked to come and observe the classroom in session and to meet with the administrative staff responsible for admissions.

Extended Day:

It is recommended to start Extended Day around the age of 5. Again independence in a child's work is an important factor. Can the child accomplish age-appropriate tasks on his own, without requiring adult intervention, guidance or assistance along the way? Is the child ready for a more in-depth reading, writing, and math program away from the morning Children's House program. A child may begin Extended Day under the age of 5 as determined by the teacher(s), however the Extended Day program will then become a two-year program for those children.

Lower Elementary:

It is recommended to start Lower Elementary between the age of 6 and 7 years. A child must have a level of maturity that is needed to be truly successful and to have a positive experience in Lower Elementary.

A child's overall maturity, work ethic, self-motivation and self-direction, ability to work in groups, ability to concentrate and take risks, ability to work and concentrate for longer periods of time are all elements to consider when looking at a child's readiness for Lower Elementary.

This is a three-year program for most students. Other students benefit from a fourth year in Lower Elementary depending on their overall maturity or/and rate of cognitive development.

It is preferable to enter Lower Elementary with prior Montessori experience. Ideally a child should have completed a full cycle in the Children's House environment. However, depending on the child's personality, learning style and social-emotional maturity, Lower Elementary might be a good match. Many of our current students have made a successful transition from public or other private schools to the Montessori environment.

An applicant coming from a different school than MSOS will be asked to come spend a day in the classroom after parents have a chance to observe the classroom in session and after having a dialogue with the classroom teacher to give background information on the student.

Upper Elementary:

Upper Elementary is best suited for children 9 years and older. A child's overall maturity, work ethic, self-motivation and self-direction, ability to work in groups, ability to concentrate and take risks, ability to work and concentrate for longer periods of time, are all elements to consider when looking at a child's readiness for Upper Elementary.

An applicant coming from a different school than MSOS will be asked to come spend a day in the classroom after parents have a chance to observe the classroom in session and after having a dialogue with the classroom teacher to give background information on the student.

Thank you for taking the time to review the policies and procedures of the Montessori School of Sanford. We value your children and your contributions to the school and look forward to fostering a true love of learning in every student. Please sign below and make any suggestions or comments you would like to make. As a parent/board run school we desire open communication and effective implementation of the best ideas for the betterment of our organization.

My signature below acknowledges that I have read the parent handbook and accept the policies and procedures therein.

(Parent Signature)

(Date)