



*Maria Montessori*

PRESCHOOL

Family HANDBOOK

# Maria Montessori Preschool

## Section 1: Vision, Mission, Purpose, and Values

### Our Vision

Each child is a confident leader who is authentic, innovative and caring.

### Our Mission

MMS sparks a child's natural curiosity and love of learning that will expand beyond the classroom and into the future.

### Our Purpose

MMS believes in providing a respectful, peaceful, and purposeful environment for everyone and believes in creating opportunities for students to:

- Express themselves authentically
- Discover their personal strengths, skills, and talents
- Recognize experiences they find meaningful

### Our Core Values

We believe

- It is all about the students
- In a community dedicated to delivering on its purpose
- In our Maria Montessori Preschool community (students, staff, alumni, families, and friends) being involved in contributing to the broader community and having a global perspective
- In providing a respectful, peaceful, and positive environment for everyone
- In creating opportunities for students to express themselves authentically, creatively, and to be leaders, innovators, and entrepreneurs, if they choose

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## Section 2: General Information

### Welcome

Welcome to the Maria Montessori Preschool (MMS) community. The MMS staff and Board of Governors look forward to an exciting year working with you and your child to facilitate a quality Montessori educational experience!

We value your input and participation in all the school's events and endeavors. If you have any questions upon reading this Family Handbook, please do not hesitate to contact the school at [jenh@montessorisaskatoon.ca](mailto:jenh@montessorisaskatoon.ca).

### The Montessori Philosophy

Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952) became the first woman to be granted a medical degree from the University of Rome. Her interest in education came from working with underprivileged children in Rome. Through experimentation and close observation of the children's responses, she began teaching them through the use of a variety of manipulative equipment. From her experiences and observations, Montessori concluded that given a carefully prepared environment, unique teaching materials and, a director/ess to guide the child, children become self-directed and independent in their lifelong quest for knowledge and learning. The prepared environment is the cornerstone of the Montessori Method. It invites exploration and leads the child naturally from the concrete to the abstract. The classroom director/ess is the link between the child and the environment. The Montessori motto is "help me to do it by myself".

### Montessori in the Home

It is inherent in the Montessori philosophy of education that there is a continuum between the home and the school. For a child to enjoy the full benefits of a Montessori education, the home environment should incorporate the Montessori philosophy. MMS will assist parents in self-education. The director/ess can answer your questions or refer you to resources that are helpful. The school also has parent education evenings during the year. These evenings are designed to give interested parents a chance to learn more about Montessori education and generally focus on one aspect of the philosophy or the materials.

### History and Mission Statement

Maria Montessori School was created in 1997 by a group of parents dedicated to the idea of Montessori education into the elementary years. Originally there were two groups of parents: one group started the Elementary Program, and the other group started the Casa program (Early Childhood Education). These two groups worked together to create a school where Montessori Education was available from the youngest preschool years through the elementary years, including Grade Eight.

Five years later, MMS staff and Board began having some concrete strategic planning discussions for Maria Montessori School. A facilitated retreat was held where staff and board members had an opportunity to think about what the school was all about and what future directions were possible. After many discussions and meetings, the school's mission statement was born.

In June of 2016, the MMS Elementary Program (grades 1 to 8) became part of the Saskatoon Public School Division. The MMS toddler and Casa programs remain private and tuition-based. In 2018 Maria Montessori School became licensed under the Ministry of Education Early Years Branch.

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## **Inclusivity**

MMS supports inclusivity and is committed to diversity in accordance with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code. MMS will not discriminate based on the “prohibited grounds: religion, creed, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, colour, ancestry, nationality, place or origin, race, or perceived race, receipt of public assistance, and gender identity.” *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, SS 1979, cS-24*

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## Section 3: Organizational Structure

Maria Montessori School is registered as a non-profit corporation and a charitable organization.

### **The Board of Governors**

MMS, like all non-profit corporations, is required to have a Board of Governors. This Board has the legal and financial responsibility for the operation of the school. The Board is responsible for long range goal setting and planning, financial integrity, communication with stakeholders, policy review and development. The Board is also responsible for internal Board education and development, evaluation of Board member performance Board nominations and fundraising.

The Board is comprised of current parent, parents of children formerly enrolled, and interested community members. According to *The Child Care Act 2014*, Section 10, the Board must be made up of predominantly current parent members, or parents of children who were enrolled within the last 12 months, so that parents can be part of decision making and voicing concerns and new ideas.

### **Volunteer Program**

Volunteer activities enrich and complement the Montessori experience with family and community support. The 8 volunteer hours are no longer a requirement for families enrolled in the Casa program, however, the hope is that families will still be involved in meetings, committees, educational events, etc., in order to be a contributing part of, and help grow, a full and robust MMS community. Our classrooms rely on parents to volunteer food items and their time during outings, parties, and special events. Without these contributions, these special occasions could not take place.

#### *How to get involved?*

By the end of September volunteer opportunities will be communicated to parents in email and sign-ups will be emailed. You can also call or email us with the area you are interested in participating in and we will guide you through the process. Our school relies on the generous support of our parent volunteers.

Volunteer activities enrich and complement the Montessori experience with family and community support, if you know someone in the community who may be able to contribute to the program, please advise the classroom Directress.

*Our school relies on the generous support of our parent volunteers. The extent to which you are involved is up to you, but we do encourage your interest and assistance.*

### **Criminal Record Check**

Note that volunteers are required to provide a Criminal Record Check including the vulnerable Sector Search. This can be obtained from the Saskatoon Police Service at no charge. Please visit the MMS office for a volunteer Criminal Record Check request letter.

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## **Section 4: Application and Registration**

### **Application & Registration Process**

A child is fully registered only when the enrolment forms, as well as the application, are approved and completed and all fees are paid.

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## Section 5: Programs

### The Montessori Classroom

Since Montessori is a word in the public domain, it is possible for any individual or institution to claim to be Montessori. An authentic Montessori classroom must have the following basic characteristics at all levels:

1. **Atmosphere:** A classroom atmosphere which encourages social interaction for cooperative learning, peer teaching, and emotional development.
2. **Work-cycle:** A schedule which allows large blocks of time to problem-solve, to see connections in knowledge and to create new ideas.
3. **Prepared Environment:** A diverse set of Montessori materials, activities, and experiences which are designed to foster physical, intellectual, creative, social, and personal independence.
4. **Community:** A partnership established with the family. The family is considered an integral part of the individual's total development.
5. **Directresses:** Teachers and Early Childhood Educators trained in the Montessori philosophy and the methodology for the age level they are teaching, who have the ability and dedication to put the key concepts into practice.
6. **Mentor/Mentorship:** A multi-aged, multi-graded heterogeneous grouping of students.

### Stepping Stones - Our Toddler Program

The MMS Stepping Stones program has been carefully designed in response to a need that has been identified in our school community. MMS offers a full day programs for children aged 18 months to 3 years old. Children practice and acquire skills which ready them for the Casa program.

The program aims to provide a safe and nurturing environment where children can learn through a combination of open-ended and structured learning activities. With the guidance of our program director/ess, children are encouraged to discover their interests, actively explore and develop emotionally, intellectually, and socially. Our structured and relaxed environment contains developmentally appropriate activities that encourage language development, social awareness, problem-solving and self-help skills.

The program is based on the Montessori philosophy and principals which encourages the children to work towards independence and self-motivation. It also teaches appreciation and responsibility for the environment and a sense of cooperation and respect.

Children in this program are not required to toilet independently but should be in the process of potty-training. The staff will work with families to achieve independence in this self-care skill. This program also allows for naps should they be required.

### Casa – Our Early Childhood Program (Preschool/Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten)

The Casa program is for children 2 years 8 months to 5 years old. The multi-age grouping allows students to move from being assisted and mentored by older children in their first years, to being the leaders in their third year. The classroom is divided into four main areas: practical life, sensorial, language and

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mathematics, grace and courtesy, the cultural subjects of art, science, geography and biology are offered. Physical education and movement are important to increasing the child's strength, flexibility and coordination. Dr. Montessori observed that the child is highly motivated to learn certain things at specific times; these periods of great receptivity are identified as sensitive periods. These are periods of special sensitivity to order, the acquisition of language, mathematical concepts, and many others.

The Montessori prepared environment is stimulating and carefully planned to meet the individual needs of the child. The child will develop natural tendencies toward self-motivation, control, building relationships with others, mastery of their environment, and independence. This approach fosters feelings of curiosity, self-esteem, competence, joy, and accomplishment.

## **The Classroom Director/ess**

In the prepared Montessori environment, the classroom is arranged in a way that encourages the child to freely choose work with self-correcting materials. The adult in the classroom is a specially trained Montessori director/ess. The director/ess's role in the classroom is foremost to prepare and maintain the environment for the children, adapting it to their ever-changing needs as required. The classroom director/ess continually observes the children in their environment so that she/he can best accommodate their needs. The role of the director/ess is not that of a traditional teacher or early childhood educator. They are not there to merely teach. Instead, the director/ess is the link between the environment and the child. Once a child is introduced to the materials through a one-to-one presentation for each exercise, the child is then free to use their own innate potential to educate themselves using the senses they were born with. This frees the child to learn in a non-graded, non-competitive environment at their own pace without negative or judgmental pressure. The child learns for the sheer joy of it and not just to please a teacher or for external rewards.

## **Extended Care**

Extended care is available on a drop-in or prepaid monthly basis. Before school care is available from 7:30 to 8:45 am and after school care runs from 3:45 to 5:30 pm.

If you would like to use the after school care program on a drop-in basis, we ask that you use sign-up genius and also let your child's director/ess know in the morning on the days that you will require after care so that we can arrange for extra staff if numbers warrant.

Please indicate on your child's Agreement of Services form if you require extended care, the hours of care they will need, and that you wish to pay on a prepaid monthly basis.

For rates please consult the Fee Schedule at the end of the Handbook.

## **Saskatoon Public School District Elementary Program**

Enrolment in our Stepping Stones or Casa Programs does not guarantee acceptance into the SPSD Montessori Elementary Program, it is important that parents understand this.

### **\*Important note about the after school extended care program**

The after school extended care program **ends at 5:30 pm**, at which time Maria Montessori School closes for the day. It is essential that all children be picked up by this time.

**\$30.00 per half hour will be charged after 5:30 pm.**

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## Section 6: School Routines

### School Hours

Casa and Stepping Stones full day	9:00 am to 3:30 pm
Before school care	7:30 am to 8:45 am
After school care	3:45 pm to 5:30 pm

### Office Hours

The office is open from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm daily. If you require assistance please call 306-955-3852

### Safe Arrival & Pickup, Late Arrivals and Absences

It is important that you escort your child to the classroom door or to before care upon arrival. Children shall not be dropped off at the outer doors or in the hallway. Similarly, please meet your child at the classroom door or at after care at departure.

Being on time needs to be a priority for all families at MMS. A student entering the classroom once class is in session is disruptive to the students who have arrived on time.

If someone other than a family member or a regular caregiver is picking up your child, please let the director/ess know ahead of time.

**It is important that students be picked up on time.** Children can become anxious waiting to be picked up, and the classroom director/ess needs after school time for cleanup and preparations for the next day.

### Sign-in/Out and Attendance Signatures

When dropping off and picking up students a parent, guardian, or caregiver **must** sign each child out with times and initials on the provided Ministry of Education, Early Learning and Child Care Programs, form outside each classroom. We ask that you sign your child in at their classroom before dropping them off in before care.

Parents, guardians, or caregivers must sign the month end attendance summary sheet at the end of each month.

### Authorization for Releasing a Child

Children can only be released to parents, guardians, or caregivers, and those named in their student file. Any changes must be submitted by parent in writing, or directly to the Directress, (or Head of School) prior to date. A note brought by a person coming to pick up a child is not acceptable.

### Parking

Street parking is available during drop off and pick up times. Please note the parking restrictions as the area surrounding the school is a residential permitted parking area. **DO NOT** park in the north or south parking lots as these are paid reserved parking spaces for employees. **DO NOT** park in front of walkways or fire hydrants or in areas designated as bus parking. Please do not park in the accessible parking spot across the street from the school. City of Saskatoon Parking Enforcement is in the area often and will not hesitate to ticket vehicles if parked inappropriately.

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## **Attendance**

For safety reasons, please advise your child's director/ess by email if your child will be late or absent. Your child's director/ess will provide you with the classroom email address.

## **Clothing**

All students need indoor running shoes that do not mark the floors. Students need to have a change of clothes at the school in case of accidents. Please be sure that your child's name is clearly marked on the inside of all items.

Please send your child with weather appropriate clothing, as all students go outside daily unless the weather is very wet or cold. This includes hats and sunscreen for hot weather; boots, snow pants, mittens, hats, and jackets for cold weather; and raincoats and boots for wet weather. Inadequate outdoor clothing creates discomfort for both the child and the supervisor. Students are expected to be outdoors at recess. If you feel that your child is not well enough to take part in outdoor play we ask that you keep them at home.

## **Lunches, Snacks, and Meal Program**

Starting in 2018/19 all students will be provided with well rounded, healthful, and age appropriate lunches and snacks at school in accordance with the Canadian Food Guide and food preparation standards of the Health Region. Menus will be posted outside of the MMS office and emailed to families each week. Children will be assisted with eating when necessary, and in keeping with the Montessori Philosophy, are also encouraged to feed themselves independently.

If you are bringing any food to school, for a birthday or special event, please make sure that the food does not contain any peanuts or nut products, and that you supply the Directress with ingredients.

## **Field Trips**

During the year, the students take field trips to enrich their learning experiences. All field trips will be announced in advance and a consent forms will be placed in a child's cubby one week prior to the event. This form must be signed for your child to participate. The classroom director/ess may ask for volunteers with supervision of field trips.

## **Birthday Celebrations**

Birthdays may be celebrated in the classrooms in a birthday ellipse (to be explained by the child's director/ess) with the family of the birthday child present, if possible. Please see your child's director/ess for specific procedures in his/her classroom. Parents may bring a treat for the class if first speak to their child's directress, and they provide an ingredient list.

## **Scholastic Books**

Each month, Scholastic flyers will be available from which families may purchase books. With every book purchased, we earn valuable credits, which we can use to purchase other books or school materials for our classrooms. Orders can be returned to your child's Director/ess or ordered online by the due date indicated on the flyer.

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## Section 7: Communication

### Messages and Phone Calls

General Inquiries: Phone 306-955-3852

If office personnel are unavailable, please leave a message and your call will be returned.

Government of Saskatchewan Community Consultant Ministry of Education, Early Years Branch

Gail Slawinski: Phone 306-933-6375 Email: gail.slawinski@gov.sk.ca

### Parent/School Communication

To have effective communication between the parent and the school, it is necessary to have both informal daily communication and regular conferences and reports. The MMS administrative staff invites your questions or comments. If you have a quick question, the administrative staff is available to speak with you on short notice. If you need more time, please make an appointment in person or via email.

### Parent/Teacher Communication

Communication between director/ess and parents is essential. Because we are working as a community to create a secure, nurturing environment for the child's development, we have much to offer one another through frequent and honest communication. Methods of communication include written notes via the classroom communication book, email, Seesaw, and phone calls.

Your job as a parent is to be an advocate for your child. Therefore, it is important to address any concerns you may have to the teacher. Be assured that your concerns will be honored. It is inevitable that misunderstandings, mistakes, and conflicts will occur from time to time. When this happens, let us know as soon as possible. Your suggestions and input are of great value to us.

### Dealing with Change

Please contact your director/ess at any time if you have any concerns with your child's school experience or transition to MMS. The director/ess will keep you informed of any changes in the school environment that may affect your child. If a significant change occurs in your home, please inform the school. All information will remain confidential.

### Emergency and Other Contact Information

Upon enrolment families were required to provide an alternate/emergency contact. This is a policy essential to maintaining a safe school environment for your child.

Please keep all contact information up to date. This includes home numbers, work numbers and cell numbers for you and your secondary contacts, the number for your child's physician, and the names of those persons to whom your child may be released are critical. This information must be kept up to date as your child will not be released to anyone other than those persons as stated by you in writing.

### Newsletter, Notice Boards & Seesaw

MMS Staff make every effort to keep parents informed of activities and events taking place at the school. Each month, the Head of School sends out a Newsletter. You will find information about special events to come and that have taken place, classroom highlights, and special and pertinent information.

Each classroom has its own notice board outside the door. Families will also receive informational emails. Please remember to check these methods of communication daily and ensure the school has a current email address for your family.

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Each class has a Seesaw account. The Director/ess can use this for informal and/or timely communication, pictures, news, and reminders. The Seesaw app can be downloaded for iPhone or Android. You will be sent an invitation to join your child's class at the beginning of the school year.

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## Section 8: General Policies and Procedures

### Parental Access to Policies

Parents will be given this Family Handbook on a yearly basis. It will be sent out electronically in August. A paper copy will be kept in the MMS offices along with a copy of *The Childcare Regulations, 2015*, *The Childcare Act, 2014*, and the MMS Policies and Procedures Manual. Parents can have access to these at any time the school is open.

### Student Classroom Placement

The Head of School and Directresses work together on classroom placement each spring. A number of factors are considered during this process:

- Needs of the child
- Balance of the various age groups
- Balance of boys/girls in each age group
- Consideration of personalities for returning students

*Multi-age classrooms develop and deepen relationships over time which fosters collaboration, cooperation, role modeling, mentoring and allows long term goal development.*

### Returning Students

Returning students typically remain with the same Director/ess throughout their years in the Casa program. When children spend multiple years in the same classroom, they develop a deep bond with the Directress as well as with their classmates. In turn, the Directress gets to know your child well, and studies the correct strategies to motivate and challenge your child to his/her fullest potential.

The multi-age classroom offers each student a chance to be a leader. Every student, whether outgoing or not, is given the opportunity to lead. This is a wonderful experience that will serve your child the rest of his or her life.

The continued relationship also allows the student to effortlessly flow back into their classroom after 2-months summer holiday. The student will not experience the anxiety of a new teacher/classroom during their Casa years.

Unfortunately, there are sometimes events that do not allow for the 3-year Casa cycle such as maternity leave, new staff, expansion, balancing of the classrooms, etc. MMS staff will do their best to provide a warm and comfortable classroom environment for all children.

MMS will consider requests for reallocating a child to another Casa classroom only if special conditions need to be considered for the child. As outlined above, the staff need to consider many variables when doing class placements to ensure the environment is conducive to learning for every student.

### Students Cubbies/General Areas

Please leave a change of clothes in your child's cubby or coat area. Indoor shoes are also to be kept in their cubbies or coat area. Check your child's area often to replace clothes, completed work, school notices, etc... It is your responsibility to keep your child's cubby clean and free of debris. We ask that no perishables be kept within this area. It is also your responsibility to keep your child's coat/shoe area tidy. Shoes and coats are not to be left at school when your child is not in attendance. We are not responsible for lost/stolen items that are left behind. If you are missing items, please check the Lost and Found.

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## **Toddler Essentials**

Parents are to provide MMS with diapers or pull-ups for your child. We do not supply these items. Your child's Teacher will send a reminder home when we are running low on these items. Please check your child's cubby area for these updates and refresh the supply as soon as possible.

## **Toilet Training**

Your child is working towards independence each day. It is an important part of his/her young life to learn to use the toilet. We ask that Parents and Teachers work together to help your child accomplish this goal. Your child will be offered the opportunity to use the toilet on a very regular basis, and we ask that you do the same at home. Please speak to your child's Teacher during this process, understanding what has taken place at home or at school can often help to understand toileting patterns and strategies for your child.

## **School Photography**

From time to time MMS will take pictures of your child at work in the classroom, during celebrations and outings, or any other time. We will use these pictures to post at the school for the enjoyment of your family and your child. These pictures may also be used in our advertisement and/or multi-media. A photo consent form will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. Please indicate if you do not wish to have your child's picture taken.

## **The School Calendar**

Please refer to the School Calendar for all scheduled Holidays, Special Events, etc. MMS follows the Saskatoon Public School District Calendar for the Montessori program. Please be advised that in some cases dates may be changed. You will be informed of any changes in the School Calendar prior to the specified date. There are reminders of special dates in the monthly newsletter. A Poll and Plan will take place prior to school breaks asking what families will be needing care on those dates. We ask that you indicate which dates you need care and the hours so that proper staffing is in place. For families requiring care on those dates' day camps will be held.

## **Smoking Policy**

Smoking is not permitted on the school premises, or in the outdoor play area. We ask that each Parent/Guardian adhere to this rule.

## **Accident and Incident Policy and Procedures**

*All staff are required to take First Aid and CPR training and keep their certificates up-to-date while employed at MMS. Your child's safety is the first priority for MMS. Accidents and Incidents are taken seriously.*

- **An accident is defined as an event or occurrence that results in injury.**
- **An incident is defined as an event or occurrence that had the potential to result in injury.**

### *Reporting Procedure:*

1. A Minor Injury or Unusual Occurrences Report is completed by member of staff who witnessed the event.
2. A copy is completed for each individual involved.
3. Reports include:
  - a. only include student name for which parent will sign
  - b. the name of any other child(ren) must remain confidential

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- c. detail(s) of time (when it happened), how it happened, and where the incident occurred,
  - d. name of supervisor completing report & date
  - e. Head of School signature & date
4. If an occurrence has not been witnessed, the staff member will do their best to gain information from the child(ren) involved if possible, or others that were present at the time of the accident/incident.
  5. The staff member will discuss the incident/accident with the parent or caregiver and the report will be signed by the parent or caregiver. The Director/ess will work with the children and families involved to resolve any further issues/behaviour.
  6. In a case where this might not be possible, the staff member may be required to attempt contact the parent or caregiver by telephone or email.
  7. Once completed and checked, all Minor Injury or Unusual Occurrences Reports remain in the child's file in the MMS office and a copy will be provided to each children's family involved in the incident/accident.
  8. Following each accident or incident, the Director/ess will meet with the Head of School to discuss lessons learned and accident/ incident prevention.

**MMS employees take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the safety of children, families, staff, or volunteers. Employees use their best judgement in the case of emergency situation, including contacting emergency resources as necessary.**

## **No Pickup**

If a child is not picked from Casa or Stepping Stones by 3:45 pm, and no arrangement has been made by the parents, the child will be placed in after care and the family will be charged accordingly.

If a child is not picked up from after care by 6:00 pm staff will attempt to contact the parents and/or emergency contacts. If staff are unsuccessful, or if the parents or emergency contacts are unable to pick up the child, the child will be brought to the Crisis Nursery.

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## **Abuse Prevention Policy**

The MMS Board of Governors recognize that our employees are our most valuable asset. Any abuse or mistreatment of our employees will be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly.

### *Workplace Violence & Harassment:*

- may be directed at anyone and come from anyone
- can be subtle or overt
- creates mistrust and /or fear
- devalues or humiliates the individual
- includes unsolicited or unwelcome conduct, comments, or gestures
- may be a single event or involve several incidents
- may involve the abuse of authority or position
- may involve relations among co-workers (example: gossip)

### *Personal Harassment:*

- verbal abuse or threats (yelling)
- unwelcome jokes or taunting (example: age, marital status, ethnic origin, religion)
- any display of pornographic, racist, offensive, or derogatory pictures
- practical jokes causing awkwardness or embarrassment
- unnecessary physical contact (example: touching, patting, pinching, grabbing)
- physical assault

### *Sexual Harassment:*

- Unwanted sexual advances
- Unwanted requests for sexual favors
- Unwanted physical conduct of a sexual nature
- Submissions to or rejection of such conduct is linked to one's employment status

## **Reporting Abuse:**

MMS Employees and parents are encouraged to report any behaviors that fall within the above categories. Concerns must be brought to the attention of the Head of School.

## **Abuse Protocol – Duty to Report**

The Child and Family Services Act (Section 12, Subsection 1 and 4) states that every person who has reasonable suspicion to believe that a child may be in need of protection shall report the information to a child protection worker, Ministry of Social Services or FNCFS Agency or a police officer, and that every police officer who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child may be in need of protection shall immediately report the information to a child protection worker. The Emergency Protection of Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act (Section 4, Subsection 1) makes it mandatory for every person who has reasonable suspicion to believe that a child (under the age of 18 years) has been or is likely to be subjected to sexual abuse to report the information to a child protection worker or police officer. The duty to report applies in spite of any claim of confidentiality or professional privilege (e.g., priest, religious clergy, etc.) other than solicitor/client privilege or Crown privilege. During regular business hours (Monday to Friday 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.) contact your local Ministry of Social Services or FNCFS Agency child protection intake and/or local police to report suspicions or disclosures of child abuse.

If at any time you are unsure or have questions/concerns please speak someone you trust and report it. If you witness child abuse, STOP what you are doing, GET HELP have someone watch the children, CALL the Police, and WRITE a report of what you have witnessed. NEVER share the information you provided in reports with other staff members as they may be called on by the Police, CHILD PROTECTIVE

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SERVICES, or other governmental authorities and your interpretations or suggestions could taint their personal perceptions of the situation.

## **Ministry of Social Services Child Protection Line:**

Saskatoon (Centre) 1-800-274-8297

Reports after regular business hours or on statutory holidays can be made to afterhours crisis services or local police. (Contact information for local police can be found on the inside page of your local telephone directory or by conducting a web search on mysask411.com).

## **Grievances**

Parents are welcome to discuss any issues/concerns with their child's care directly with the classroom Director/ess.

If the issue cannot be resolved with the assistance of the classroom Director/ess, the classroom Director/ess will bring the issue to the attention of the Head of School who will communicate with the parents and, if required, arrange a meeting with the classroom Director/ess and the parents. Together they will work toward creating a plan to resolve the issue in a manner that is agreeable to both the classroom Director/ess and to the parents.

## **Discipline and Behaviour Expectations**

The MMS 's discipline policy is based upon respect and responsibility for actions. It is in place to assist in making the school a safe and productive environment. The policy is based upon communication, issue management, and problem solving.

If a problem arises among more than one student, all those involved will have an opportunity to relate what happened and discuss the situation.

When a child engages in individual behaviour that is inappropriate, natural and logical consequences are used to assist the child in his/her learning regarding what is acceptable behaviour in the school community and in the larger community. Positive alternatives may be suggested to learn strategies for peaceful conflict resolution.

To further promote a peaceful school environment, we focus on the three R's: Relationships, Respect and Responsibility. We have made a school noon hour plan that reflects the three R's and if a child receives three warnings in one week regarding disrespect, parents will be contacted and for one lunch period, other lunch arrangements must be made.

Under no circumstances will corporal punishment, physical, emotional, or verbal abuse, denial of necessities, isolation, or inappropriate restraints be tolerated by a staff person or volunteer. All discipline at MMS is positive in so far that it teaches students respect, kindness, and grace, through reason, dialogue, and example.

## **Emergencies and Building Evacuation Procedure**

Please make sure that all of your contact numbers are available on the registration form and if there are any changes, let the Administrative Coordinator know as soon as possible. In the event of an emergency, the school will try to contact the parents. If the parents are unavailable, the emergency contact listed on the registration form will be contacted. If these people cannot be reached and the student needs medical attention, the school will contact the child's doctor or secure emergency services as necessary.

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In the event of an emergency evacuation of the school, the students will move to the Infinity Credit Union, 902 7 ave N.

## Fire Drills

Several times throughout the school year, we practice fire safety by conducting random fire drills.

- The alarm is a special bell which will ring continuously in the event of a fire or drill.
- When the bell rings continuously, all classes will dismiss into designated areas and remain in their groups.
- The director/ess will ensure the classroom is empty and close the doors.
- The director/ess and students will proceed outside to a designated area where they will take attendance, and notify the administrator.
- Students and teachers will remain in the designated area until informed that they may return to class.

## Inclement Weather

During the day students go outside to play along with staff supervisors, unless it is very cold (-25°C), very hot (+35 C), very wet, or there is an air quality warning in effect from Environment Canada. If the children need to stay inside due to weather an indoor space will be used.

## Allergy Alert

Please be aware that we have students in our school that have severe peanut/nut allergies; as such, our school is peanut and nut aware. **If your child has allergies, please contact us as soon as possible to discuss the allergy and develop an emergency care plan. Emergency care plans should be reviewed and updated at least annually.**

## Student Health and Communicable Diseases

The Public Health Act Requires that “children who are suffering from communicable diseases be excluded from school.” (Section 84)

Please do not send your child to school with any known illnesses or communicable diseases. The Staff of MMS reserve the right to send your child home if it is observed that the child is ill upon arrival. We also ask that you have your child seen by a doctor before returning to school after contracting: Red Measles, Scarlet Fever, Mumps, Chicken Pox, Infectious Jaundice, Whooping Cough, Infectious Hepatitis, German Measles, and Strep/Sore Throat. The Health Unit will be notified of all Communicable Diseases as required, and if there is more than one case, a notice will be set out for parents by the Head of School. We will however, keep the identity of the ill child/children confidential.

If your child is on antibiotics, you MUST keep them home for 24 hours after initial dose. If your child becomes ill with a fever at home, we require that you keep them home 48 hours (or 2 days) after the initial normal temperature reading. This ensures that your child does not spread illness within the school.

You will be notified if your child becomes ill at school. We require that you or a person on the contact list be available to pick your child up, so we can contain and stop the spread of illnesses to any other children or Staff members. Your child will be made comfortable until your arrival at the school.

For information on COVID-19 please see the last section of the Handbook.

## Medication

If your child requires medication, please confer with your doctor and, if possible, obtain medication that can be administered at home. If your child is on antibiotics, and also taking another medication you must

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provide a doctor's note giving permission to mix prescriptions. If it is necessary that your child have a medication administered during school hours, the Medication Form must be completed. The Medication Form must be completed for each medication to be administered and is only valid for said medication. This medicine will be stored in a locked box, either in the classroom or kitchen, until needed. Emergency medicine (e.g., epi-pens or inhalers) are stored in classrooms for easy access. These are not locked up.

Medications must be delivered to your child's director/ess in the original container, labeled with the child's name, a date, dosage directions for administration, the physician's name, and pharmacy name. The school will administer the medication only as stated on the label instructions, or as amended in writing by the child's physician.

Follow these guidelines to allow school staff to dispense over-the-counter medications:

- The child must fall within the correct age range written on the label instructions of over-the-counter medication, or else we must receive a doctor's written instructions stating the amount and dosage schedule.
- We cannot give medication "as needed" without prior detailed written instructions from a parent at the time of administration.
- Parents must give written notification when a child is to stop taking a medication.
- Parents must provide dispensers for medication.

## **Life Threatening Allergic Reaction**

Please complete a *Student Allergy Information form* (available from your child's director/ess) and provide emergency medications.

**To ensure the child's safety should we have to await emergency medical services, we require your child to have 2 current epi-pens at school. Parents are responsible for ensuring the pack is labelled, complete and pens have not expired.**

*To assist a child we must provide him with an environment which will enable him to develop freely.*

~ Maria Montessori

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## When to Keep Your Child at Home - How Sick is Too Sick?

Children should stay home if they do not feel well enough to participate in school activities or require more care than the teachers and staff can give and still care for the other children.

Below are some guidelines that may help you determine whether your child should stay home from school:

Symptoms	Should your child stay home?
Diarrhea – frequent, loose or watery stools compared to child’s normal ones that are not caused by food or medicine	Yes – if child looks or acts sick, has a fever, is vomiting or the diarrhea overflows the diaper or toilet
Fever – above 38°C (100° F)	Yes – when a child also has a rash, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, behavioural changes, stiff neck, difficulty breathing, etc.
“Flu-like” symptoms - fever with cough or sore throat, tiredness, body aches, vomiting, diarrhea	Yes – 24 hours after fever is gone without medication that reduces fever
Coughing – children with asthma may go to school with a written health care plan	Yes – if severe, uncontrolled coughing or sneezing, rapid or difficulty breathing
Mild Respiratory or Cold Symptoms – stuffy nose with clear drainage, mild sneezing, mild coughing	
Vomiting – more than once in 24 hours	Yes – until vomiting stops for a 24 hour period (watch for dehydration)

Common Childhood Illnesses: When is it safe to attend school?	
Illness	Should your child stay home?
Chicken Pox	Yes - until blisters have dried and crusted
Cold Sores	Not required
Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	Yes – until seen by a physician and on antibiotics for 24 hours
Fifth Disease	Not required
Hand Foot and Mouth Disease (Coxsackie Virus)	Not required – unless child has mouth sores, is drooling and is not able to take part in regular activities
Head Lice or Scabies	Yes – until treated
Hepatitis A	Yes – for 7 days after onset of illness and until able to participate in regular activities
Impetigo	Yes – until scabs are completely scabbed over and for 24 hours after starting antibiotics
Measles, Mumps, Rubella (German Measles), Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Yes - Until physician indicates child is no longer infectious (requires doctor’s note)
Ring Worm	Yes – until treatment has been initiated

Common Childhood Illnesses: When is it safe to attend school?	
Illness	Should your child stay home?
Roseola	Yes – until physician indicates child is no longer infectious
RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)	Should be discussed with physician. Staying home is recommended when a child is not well enough to take part in usual activities and/or is experiencing acute respiratory symptoms (note *RSV spreads quickly through classrooms)
Strep Throat	Yes – for 24 hours after starting antibiotics and child is able to participate in usual activities
Yeast Infections	Not required – follow good handwashing and hygiene practices

**Remember, the best way to prevent the spread of infections is through good hand washing.**

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## Section 9: Academic Policies

### Classroom Observations

Parents are welcome, and encouraged, to observe our classrooms. An observation can be arranged in advance with our staff. When you visit the classroom, you will be provided with an observation area where you can sit quietly and observe the classroom at work. In order to view the classroom in its normal routine, we would ask that you not interact with students as this disrupts their concentration and the work cycle.

If, as you observe, you find that you have questions, please feel free to arrange a meeting with the director/ess via the classroom communication book to discuss them.

Please understand that the director/ess's responsibility during school is to the students. When you have finished your observation, please slip quietly out of the classroom. If you have questions, you can set up a meeting with the director/ess via the communication book, which you will find outside the classroom.

### Student Evaluation

Two official parent/teacher conferences are scheduled during the year to discuss your child's progress. Parents or teachers may request additional conferences to discuss concerns regarding your child's development, behavior or other issues. We are always happy to talk with you about your child.

Written assessments are provided twice per year in January and June. Student reporting conferences are held in November and March each year.

### Privacy of Student Records

A cumulative folder containing records of progress is kept for all students. These records are confidential and are kept secure from unauthorized access.

Officials of the Ministry of Education may have the right to review student files without the parents' or guardians' permission. However, with a written court order, other government officials may inspect the contents of a student's file without the permission of the student or parent/guardian. In such a case, the school will inform the student and their family in writing that such an inspection has been requested or made.

A copy of the student's file may be sent to an outside professional, such as a psychologist or educational diagnostician, if requested in writing by the parent(s), guardian(s), or student if he/she has attained the age of majority, with notation of pertinent papers to be sent.

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## Section 10: Financial Policies

### Tuition Fees

When you commit to MMS, you are responsible for the whole year's tuition. Parents should fully understand their financial obligation for tuition. Please see our Withdrawal & Refund Policy below for more information.

Tuition and Before and After Care is payable one school month in advance beginning on June 1<sup>st</sup> and may be paid in one installment dated June 1st, two installments dated June 1st and January 1st or 10 installments dated June 1st and then each month from September 1st to May 1st inclusive.

Post-dated cheques, a Pre-Authorized Debit or Credit Card Agreement must be submitted upon enrolment.

### Subsidies

Families are encouraged to apply for Saskatchewan Child Care Subsidies on a scale based on income. The amount of a subsidy is calculated based on income and location in Saskatchewan. Information on subsidies can be found online: <http://publications.gov.sk.ca/documents/17/76138-CDC8-factsheet.pdf>  
The application forms are available at the office and through the Head of School.

### Extended Care Fees

Before and/or after school care is charged one month in advance, like tuition. Families using the before and/or after school care program on a per use basis are invoiced at the end of each month and payment is due within 30 days of the invoice date. Payment may be made by cash or cheque at the MMS office or by e-transfer to [mms.admin@montessorisaskatoon.ca](mailto:mms.admin@montessorisaskatoon.ca).

If payment has not been made at the end of the 30-day period, your credit card will be charged for the amount owing.

### Late Fees and NSF Cheques

MMS charges a late fee of 2% per month (24% per year) assessed on any late fees.  
MMS charges a fee of \$25.00 for each NSF cheque.

### After Care Late Pick Up Fee:

A late pick up fee of \$30 per half hour (or any part thereof)  
per child will apply to children picked up after 5:30 pm

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## Withdrawal and Refunds

The refund policy is as follows:

- Once fees are paid for the month, they are non-refundable.
- Withdrawal from the program: One month's written notice is required in order to receive a refund of tuition fees. Notice must be received by the last day of the month and the notice period will be effective starting the first day of the next month.
- Notice must be received by the last day of the month and the notice period will be effective starting the first day of the next month.
- When notice is properly given, tuition fees for the months following the notice period will be refunded.
- There are no refunds or reductions in tuition for illness, family holidays or vacations.
- On the occasion that a family feels the program is not a good fit for their child, the tuition for the months following the month in which the determination is made will be refunded. The child may return at a later date as determined by the director/ess and the family.
- In the case of a child who is withdrawn and never attends the program, one month's written notice must be given. When notice is properly given, tuition fees for the months following the notice period will be returned. **Note that the materials fee is non-refundable.**

\*The terms "refunded" and "non-refundable" apply to both lump sum payments and post-dated cheques.

## Tax Receipts

Tax Receipts will be issued no later than the end of February each year. If you have any questions regarding your tax receipt please email [mms.admin@montessorisaskatoon.ca](mailto:mms.admin@montessorisaskatoon.ca)

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## Section 11: Temporary Changes due to COVID 19

### Guidelines for General Operation

- Staff and parents must encourage and practice physical distancing within, and outside of the school. We also encourage the use of masks worn by parents and caregivers while in the building.
- Typically, teachers shake your child's hand in greeting in the morning and at the end of the day, but this year we encourage physically distant greetings such as 'air fives' and waves.
- We plan for reduced contact activities such as shadow tag and, where possible, avoiding activities that require clustering around a particular item or small area.
- Wherever possible, physical distancing will be maintained, even within the same group. We will incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between children and staff.
- Parents and caregivers should only bring personal comfort items (e.g. stuffed animals) if they are clean and can be laundered at the end of each day.
- Label all personal items with the child's name to discourage accidental sharing.
- Where possible, we will use telephone or video conferencing to meet with staff and parents.
- We are looking at creative ways to continue having monthly community meetings, some ideas include zoom meetings, or monthly webinars. More details to come.

### Drop Off and Pickup Guidelines

- Your child's temperature will be checked by a staff member when you drop them off.
- MMS families will use the main front entrance doors to enter City Park Collegiate, and use the middle front doors, located in front of the large white rock in the front of the building, to exit. Families of the City Park Montessori program will be using a different entrance and exit. If your children are attending both programs you are welcome to use the MMS entrance and exit.
- Parents, and caregivers, that enter the facility should maintain physical distance from staff and other children and be reminded to practice diligent hand hygiene. Sanitizing stations will be located at the school's entrance, and by each classroom.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers will be placed in locations that cannot be accessed by young children, as alcohol-based hand sanitizers are not generally recommended for use by young children. We ask that you keep sanitizers out of your child's reach after using.
- This school year parents will not need to sign their child in and out, instead the staff of MMS will be doing this. Parents will still need to sign the monthly attendance.
- Parents picking up children from more than one group will not be allowed to intermingle with children in the groups.
- Recreational travel requiring vehicles, such as field trips, are not permitted at this time.
- Neighbourhood walks are permitted as long as they are limited to a single group, with physical distancing maintained from members of the public. We will not be able to use neighbourhood parks at this time.
- Stepping Stones children will continue to be dropped off at the outdoor play space, weather permitting. A hand washing station will be set up at the playground entrance.

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- Currently the before and aftercare programs will be held in the classroom your child attends, so that classroom groups are not combined. If you are needing drop in before or aftercare we ask that you provide us with 24 hours notice so that we can ensure proper staffing is in place.

## Guidelines for Illness in Care

- Children who are ill are not permitted to attend our program. Staff will remind parents and guardians of this at drop off to confirm that the child does not have symptoms of COVID-19. We ask that you notify us if your child has taken any medication that may affect their temperature before attending our program.
- Some of the more commonly reported symptoms include:
  - new or worsening cough
  - shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - temperature equal to or over 38°C
  - feeling feverish
  - chills
  - fatigue or weakness
  - muscle or body aches
  - new loss of smell or taste
  - headache
  - gastrointestinal symptoms (abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting)
  - feeling very unwell
  - children have been more commonly reported to have abdominal symptoms, and skin changes or rashes.
- All parents, guardians, children, and staff who are under mandatory self isolation must not attend the child care facility. Instead, they must stay home and self-isolate. Children can return to care once they are cleared by public health.
- Parents and caregivers must assess their children daily for symptoms of the common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other infectious respiratory diseases before sending them to child care.
- If you are unsure if you or your child should self-isolate, please use the online Saskatchewan COVID-19 self-assessment tool or contact HealthLine 811 prior to attending MMS.
- If a child develops symptoms while at MMS, they will be isolated from other children in the office, and the parent or guardian will be notified to pick up the child immediately. Any areas they had contact with will be cleaned and disinfected.
- Non-essential visitors to facilities are not permitted at this time. Parents or guardians, essential services, and persons supporting a child in care (e.g. referring professionals, inspectors, etc.) are permitted. I am waiting on confirmation from the Ministry in regards to Picture Day this year.
- Proper and frequent hand hygiene by staff and children is a vital component in preventing the transmission of illnesses.
- All staff will self-monitor for symptoms at the beginning and end of their day, and use the online Saskatchewan COVID-19 self-assessment tool.
- If employees go home sick, their group areas and any areas they had contact with will be cleaned and disinfected.

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## Cleaning and Sanitation Guidelines

- Frequent cleaning and disinfection will be taking place throughout the day to prevent spread of the virus.
- The staff at MMS will maintain a cleaning schedule and will be adequately assigned and trained for additional cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection required for COVID-19 transmission mitigation.
- MMS staff will increase cleaning and disinfection of commonly contacted areas. Common touch areas include those accessed by children, parents and/or employees. Examples of common touch surfaces include table tops, light switches, telephones (including personal cell phones), door knobs, sink taps, toilet handles, kitchen counter tops, gates, hand rails, hand sanitizer bottles/dispensers, classroom materials, and sleep cots/mats.
- All items (bedding, toys, etc.) used by children that day will be removed from the classroom and disinfected, or disinfected in place.
- We are using cleaners and disinfectants that are approved by Health Canada (DIN).
- All food contact surfaces are disinfected with a product safe for food surfaces and immediately rinsed following disinfection.
- Washrooms will be cleaned and disinfected with increased frequency, always well stocked with liquid soap and paper towels, and warm running water is available.
- Diapering stations will be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- Garbage bins will be emptied frequently.
- Some classroom items that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected will be temporarily removed.
- Disposable gloves will be worn when cleaning blood or body fluids (e.g. runny nose, vomit, stool, urine).
- Gloves must be changed after every interaction and when changing tasks. Hand hygiene must be performed between every glove change (hand sanitizer or hand washing with soap and water).
- Other than the above situations, glove use is not required nor recommended.
- Cots will be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- There will be no self-serve or family-style meal service. Meals will be served in individual portions to each child by a designated staff member. Meal prep activities will be not be in use in the classroom for the time being.
- Food provided by the family will be stored with the child's belongings. Food from home must not be shared with other children.
- Where possible, children will practice physical distancing while eating.
- While in the classroom children can sit independently and distanced from each other.