

COMMUNITY MONTESSORI SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

MISSION STATEMENT

Community Montessori School has served the Lexington community since 1970. Community Montessori is a non sectarian school and welcomes children of every race, color, or national origin. The school maintains the highest standards of academic excellence and dedication to the individual needs of children. The principles of Dr. Maria Montessori provide the framework for program development in all areas. The school holds the total development of the child as our foremost consideration. The school is approved by the Kentucky State Department of Education as well as the Association Montessori Internationale. The school accepts students pre-school through 8th grade.

Since you will be referring to this directory, please keep it in a handy place and make corrections throughout the year.

SCHOOL HOURS:

Primary:	8:15 A.M. -11:35 A.M.
Primary extended day:	Session continues until 3:00 P .M. Monday - Friday
Elementary:	8:15 A.M. -3:00 P .M
	Arrival will start at 8:15 A.M. for Primary and Elementary Levels

Exceptions to these hours are orientation and conference days (see school calendar and orientation schedule).

We urge you to arrive no later than 8:30 A.M. for Primary and Elementary levels, since group presentations and activities usually begin at that time.

TRANSPORTATION :

SAFETY RULES FOR ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL:

Students should be let out of cars at the three unloading areas marked on the sidewalk by yellow stripes at the front entrance. No student, Primary or Elementary Level, may leave their cars and walk through the carpool traffic in the driveway. The assistants will load and unload Primary Level students. Only Elementary Level students may be dropped off at the end of the sidewalk on Crestwood Drive.

ARRIVAL- WALKERS:

All students, Primary and Elementary level, can enter school at 8:15 A.M. Assistants will be available to assist all students from their cars. The unloading of Primary and Elementary level students may begin when the assistants are outside at the end of the sidewalk. If you arrive before the assistants appear, please just stay in line until arrival begins. Any parent that needs to come inside must find a parking space. Once arrival begins we must keep the line moving. Early arrivers that use the before school program should be walked around to the gym by their drivers -7:20 A.M. -8:15 A.M.

DISMISSAL - WALKERS:

Elementary Level students may be picked up at the end of our sidewalk (Crestwood Drive) if there is a valid reason. We request a letter stating this reason be given to the school office. For safety's sake we discourage using this situation. This is a heavy traffic time, therefore, any student not picked up by 3:10 p.m. will return to the building with the supervisor on duty. You must be on time - 3:00 p.m. if you are using this method of pick-up.

Do not use neighbor's driveway to turn around.

Park only in parking areas during arrival and dismissal times. Park only on the blacktop - please do not pull onto the grass.

Please line your cars down Crestwood Drive from Greenbriar Road. Do not line up cars from Jesselin Drive -blocking Albany Road!

During arrival and dismissal times - you need to make a left hand turn into our driveway. Please do not turn right in front of cars that have lined up to make that left hand turn.

WE ARE ALL IN A HURRY -BUT PLEASE LET'S ALL BE CAREFUL!

CARPOOL INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Parents are responsible for forming their own carpools. If you need help finding a carpool, call the school office.
2. Only the parent or authorized carpool driver may pick up a child unless a note is sent with the child in the morning.
3. Students may not arrange after-school visits or other changes in dismissal by phone during the school day. These matters are to be arranged at home.
4. Primary and Elementary Level students can arrive at 8:15 A.M. We urge strict observance of our rule for arrival time. Early arrivers will be sent to the Before School program. No supervision can be provided by the staff before 8:15 A.M. The Montessori morning classroom preparation time is vital for the teachers and we must not infringe upon the time they have set aside for this purpose. There are jobs that must be completed before the students enter the classrooms.
5. Please pick up your students promptly. Dismissal starts at 11:35 A.M. for Primary and ends at 11:55 A.M. Primary extended day program and Elementary dismissal starts at 3:00 P.M.
6. If you are arriving early for the Primary Level 11:35 A.M. dismissal and you want to exit your car to watch the playground, please remember **to turn off your engines**. We want to eliminate as much pollution as possible while the students are outside. Also, a little hint for those parents who have students in the front classroom (the one with the courtyard by the driveway), you need to park back along the playground fence if you arrive early. Once your child sees you waiting in the car, their work is over for the day. Our goal is to disrupt the classroom work time as little as possible.
7. **We will not begin dismissal until all parents are in their cars. Small siblings and parents who walk, need to be on sidewalk and out of our grass circle, standing near staff cars on gravel not near intercom.**

PICKING UP STUDENTS OTHER THAN REGULAR DISMISSAL TIMES:

We urge you to be aware that the 3 hour work cycle is very important in the Montessori classroom. It is disruptive if your child leaves early. Do your best to keep this at a minimum. Of course we realize there are doctor appointments, etc. We ask that you send a note to the teacher in the morning if your child has to leave early. The teacher can better plan lessons for your child and special celebrations that happen in the classroom if they know ahead of time your child will not be present.

Please come to the office and request that your child be brought from the classroom or playground for dismissal. The students are familiar with the office personnel and the classroom will not be disturbed. **Students are never to be dismissed from the playground for safety reasons. Also for safety reasons, no one should enter a classroom without first checking in with the office.**

ILLNESS:

Please do not send a student to school with any symptoms of illness as she/he cannot do her or his best work and may transmit sickness. Parents should notify the school if a student is absent more than three days for any illness. In case of a contagious disease, please notify the school immediately so other parents can be alerted.

ABSENCE:

Parents are requested to notify the teacher or Administrator if a student is, or will be, absent more than three days for any reason, including illness. Notify the office if one or both parents are going to be away from the child for any period of time.

EMERGENCY AND/OR UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES: (i.e. no power, no heat, etc.) All children will be dismissed as soon as the parents can be notified. Provisions will be made by the staff for any children whose parents cannot be contacted. Safety measures will be taken in case of tornado or severe storm warnings. In the event of any disaster:

- No student will be dismissed from school unless a parent (or individual designated by a parent) comes for him/her. (*Student Release Form must be signed by parent and returned to school to be filed.*)
- No student will be allowed to leave with another person, even a relative or baby-sitter, unless we have written permission to that effect or that particular person is listed on the student's emergency Student Release Form. With this in mind, if your student's emergency information is not up to date, please contact our office with the new information.
- All parents or designated parties who come for students must have them signed out at the office, the temporary Student Release Station, or the Command Post. (School office or Rector Hayden building.)
- The school staff is prepared to care for your student in times of critical situations. If parents are not able to reach the school, students will be cared for by qualified staff that will be in communication with various local emergency services. Parents are requested to assist in the following ways:
 - Please do not call the school - we must have the lines open for emergency calls.
 - Following an earthquake or other emergency, do not immediately drive to the school - streets and access to/from school may be cluttered with debris. The school route and street entrance areas must remain clear for emergency vehicles.
 - Listen to your radio. As soon as we can communicate with the media we will let you know information and directions. Our secondary pick up site (if school has to be evacuated) is Rector Hayden office on Nicholasville Road.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD:

The first eight weeks of class is considered an adjustment period for all new children. Should a child have difficulty, the teacher will work closely with the parents during this trial period. If, after that time, it is felt that the child is not ready to continue, the parents will be notified, and the tuition will be refunded for the balance of the year.

CLOTHING:

Students should wear comfortable clothes to school so that they can participate fully in all activities.

1. All clothing which students remove at school must be labeled. Gloves and mittens should be waterproof.
2. Style should be simple enough for child to dress him/herself.
3. Sleeves should be the kind that a child can easily push up him/herself.
4. Clothes should not inhibit movement. Much work is done on the floor. Very full dresses or those with ruffles should be avoided.
5. A student should not be inhibited by worrying about a "mess" on clothing. "Good" clothes should not be worn at school
6. Sneakers are appropriate.
7. NO BOOTS, please, except for rain and snow boots which can be removed. Name should be on both boots.
8. Please dress your student for the weather! All students go outdoors daily unless specifically excused from recess.

TOYS AND EQUIPMENT:

Toys are not to be brought to school. Instead, encourage your student to bring objects for nature study, books (labeled with name), educational items or meaningful mementos which may be shared with all. Pictures and objects of geographical importance are welcome (i.e., a doll dressed in a foreign costume).

Pets, large or small, may be brought to school after making arrangements with the teacher.

Flowers should be brought as often as possible, as the students enjoy arranging them.

No equipment or apparatus* may be removed from the classroom. The exception is books, which the students may borrow with the understanding they be returned.

- * If a piece of the pink tower or of a map shows up in your student's pocket, don't make an issue of it with your student. ...simply return it to the office. Young students are often fascinated with these objects and sometimes tuck them away as treasures in their coats, along with rocks, hickory nuts, leaves, etc.

SNACKS, LUNCH, and TREATS: NO PEANUT OR TREE NUT PRODUCTS!

It is our goal to have the main CMS classroom building peanut/nut free at all times. Those products will not be allowed for snack time, lunchtime, or special treats. Peanut/nut products will not be used for snacks in the after school program. Please read, very important: No items containing nuts or nut products - please be extra careful of nutrition labels when sending in snacks or birthday treats - **DOUBLE CHECK PLEASE**

Lunches:

Primary extended day children and Elementary Level must bring their own lunches, including beverage, on Monday through Friday. Please do not send soda. Please be very cautious if you send in fast food lunches. For instance, we cannot have any Chick-fil-A at the school because they use peanut oil.

Snacks:

Primary -Nutritious snacks are provided for Primary morning classes. Each family will be asked to contribute this snack on a regular, rotation schedule. The Health Department recommends packaged food, fresh fruits and vegetables. Unsealed meats and dairy products are discouraged. We prefer nutritious, non-sugary snacks, even for Birthday treats. We discourage sending raisins for snacks. No peanut butter or peanuts please.

Suggested Snacks:

Apples	Bananas
Hard boiled eggs	Celery
Dried fruit (no raisins please)	Carrot sticks
Orange wedges	Pieces of cheese (natural, not American)
Grapes	Fish shaped crackers

*No cookies or cakes or candies - Cakes, cookies, etc. are for special birthday celebrations
If you have questions, call the school office for suggestions.*

Remember: No items containing peanuts or tree nuts- i.e. peanut butter

On **ALL** items, look at label for "May have been prepared in a facility that also processes peanuts" – we will not be able to use these items.

Birthday treat suggestions:

The Primary Level students enjoy birthday snacks; however we would like to make the following suggestions to make it even more pleasant for them:

Classroom Birthday celebration treats must be prearranged with the teacher.

Please remember that we have birthday treats almost daily so it is doubly important that the birthday treat be easy to distribute (cup cakes, cookies, etc.), be nutritious and as sugar free as possible.

We discourage treats such as lollipops, suckers, candy canes, etc.

Make the cupcakes or treats all the same. Same color icing, etc.

No rings or picks or objects on top (mostly for safety issues but also because they want one just like their buddy has)

The students tend to throw away the cupcakes that have thick colored icing. There is bitterness in the food coloring. Vanilla or chocolate would be best.....

We suggest that in honor of your student's birthday, a book, cd, planting or school furnishing makes a lasting contribution to your child's classroom.

All of the above would be very much appreciated. Thank you so much for understanding. Call the office if you have any questions.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES:

Leaving out someone is very hurtful to the uninvited student and we really are teaching kindness, sensitivity and inclusiveness of others along with other manners. For instance, if your student is inviting "the girls" then all of the girls of her age and peer group need to be invited. Our goal is to have some clear delineation of groups that are being invited. I.e. if first grade girls are invited, then do not invite only one second grade girl. If there are any questions about this just call the school administrator. We really do want parents to understand why we do the things we do!!!! Birthday party invitations may not be handed out at school. Please mail them.

PARENT - TEACHER CONFERENCES:

Conferences will be scheduled twice a year. At other times, please contact the teacher if you wish to discuss any matter regarding the classroom or your student. We do not talk about a student in his or her presence, so please call to make an appointment which is not immediately before or after school. We encourage you to ask for conferences whenever you feel a need. Classroom assistants have been instructed not to speak with parents concerning students for consistency. Please talk to a teacher and/or an administrator. There will be no communication by e-mail concerning a student.

OBSERVATION:

The opening of a class for observations will be announced in the CMS Newsletter. **It would benefit the class if observations would begin in November and be completed by Spring Break.** Anyone wanting to observe may make an appointment with the secretary in the school office. Suggested observation time is 8:45 a.m. However, we will accommodate parents as late as 9:30 a.m.

TUITION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS – TUITION POLICY:

Your account will be reported as delinquent to your school if any payment is refused by your bank and a fee of \$30.00 will be assessed by TMS. If this happens, please call the CMS office manager as soon as possible to make arrangements to bring your account up to date. The following steps will be taken in handling delinquent accounts:

1. The CMS, Inc. Board Treasurer or the school office manager will notify parents of delinquent accounts.
2. A follow-up meeting with the treasurer and the Board President will be arranged as necessary.
3. If the above steps are insufficient to remedy the situation, there will be a referral to initiate legal actions.

ASBESTOS-FREE STATUS: Both federal and state regulations require us to retain an asbestos management plan and to notify parents and employees annually that it is always available in the office for their review. Community Montessori was declared asbestos free in 1993, but we continue to retain all records of previous asbestos related efforts and documentation. As required by law there is a trained designated person available at the school, in the event that you may have any questions or concerns that may relate to our asbestos management plan file.

PARENT PARTICIPATION:

Please - no unsupervised children in the classrooms when parents are working at school. The classrooms contain expensive Montessori materials that are not easily replaced. A child may not have been introduced to the proper use of certain materials. Children must be supervised at all times in classrooms with materials.

Community Montessori School is a non-profit organization of parents trying to provide high quality education on a reasonable budget. We request that each family do a share of the work involved in the operation of our school. All parents will be called upon for committee work, preparation of materials, and/or classroom projects during the year. **ALL PARENTS ARE EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR ONE MAJOR FUND RAISER “CELEBRATION FOR EDUCATION”.** The teachers may request that parents share information about their jobs, hobbies, and interests with their classes. We look forward to knowing each of you better in this way.

GOING OUT:

Montessori refers to “field trip” as “Going Out”. The trips outside the school environment have a very specific purpose in the Montessori program. The “Going Out” starts with the Extended Day students. We do not take out 3 and 4 year olds on trips in other people’s cars, etc.

The “Going Out” for the Extended Day students is preparation for the trips that will begin in the Lower and Upper Elementary programs. We do not look upon these excursions as simply “fun outings”. Our goal is to have proper supervision without a great number of adults. We want the students to understand that there is the expectation of using the grace and courtesy lessons that have been taught in the classroom.

We want them to have this opportunity to go beyond the classroom without their parents. We will use our Transportation Committee and their Montessori teachers to drive the students on these outings. The use of cell phones is highly discouraged when driving students on field trips.

The Lower and Upper Elementary teachers will inform you more fully of our “Going Out” program at their level.

Car Seat Policy is available in the CMS School Office.

PARENT INFORMATION:

A small collection of books and pamphlets on Montessori, early education and childhood is available in the school library for use by our parents. We welcome the addition of items you have found interesting, and hope you will come and browse through the ones already there.

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION:

Concerns about students -Teacher first and/or Administrator

Operation of School – Administrator or Board of Directors

Committee Work - Committee Chairman

Administrator always available for comments or discussions - don’t hesitate.

CMS BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM - PHONE 333-0020:

The Before School Program operates daily from 7:20 -8:15 a.m. for students 5-12 years of age.

The After School Program operates daily from 3:20 -6:00 p.m. Students may be asked to sign up for specific special classes; however, this can be a drop-in program for extended day through sixth year students.

Every student not picked up by 3:30 p.m. at the main building, will be sent to the After School Program.

After School late charge policy:

Families will be assessed \$3.00 per child if they fail to pick up children by 6:10 p.m. If later than 7:00 p.m. there will be an additional \$3.00 fee per child. This late charge will be added to your regular billing. The exception to this policy will be the occasional emergency **(in which case we would expect a phone call).**