



WICHITA MONTESSORI  
SCHOOL

# **PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK**

*2020-2021*

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## **MISSION**

To provide a superior educational experience for primary and elementary aged children utilizing the Montessori methods of teaching and learning. It is our goal to address the intellectual, emotional, physical, and social growth of each child entrusted to our care. Wichita Montessori School seeks diversity in its enrollment, in the belief that a child benefits from interacting with children of various talents and backgrounds. The school's non-discriminatory policy ensures that boys and girls of any race, color, nationality, or religious preference may enroll in the school.

### **Intellectual:**

We seek to employ a challenging curriculum that strives to develop:

- A strong foundation in the basics utilizing Montessori materials whenever appropriate
- The ability to apply knowledge in order to solve problems
- Higher level thinking skills
- Strong study skills
- Creativity
- Responsibility for one's own work
- Learning the intrinsic value of working hard
- Knowledge of subject areas not traditionally introduced in primary and elementary school (geography, history, botany, zoology, and geology)
- An appreciation of and specific knowledge about art and music
- Familiarity with computers (elementary)
- Knowledge of a foreign languages (French and Spanish)
- Knowledge of and use of the library
- Joy of learning

### **Emotional**

We encourage:

- Honesty
- Independence

- Flexibility
- Creativity
- Respect for self, other children, and adults
- Responsibility
- Self-discipline
- Cooperation

### **Physical**

We encourage:

- Fitness
- Developmentally appropriate daily physical activity
- An attitude of enjoyment of physical activities

### **Social**

We encourage:

- Cooperation at home, in the classroom, and on the playground
- Respect for the rights of others and responsible use of freedom
- Conversation when conversation is appropriate
- Quiet when quiet is appropriate
- Good manners
- Eye contact when speaking to another
- “Grace and courtesy” in dealing with other people

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Wichita Montessori School is a private school founded upon the principles of Dr. Maria Montessori. All teachers are experienced, well-qualified, and believe in and have studied the teachings of Dr. Montessori. Our primary concern is for the children. We seek to provide a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment for each child.

Our staff members strive to exhibit positive attitudes each day. We expect the children to be well-behaved and to respect the rights of others in the classroom. We work very hard to teach these attitudes as well as to teach the appropriate subject matter to the children. We expect the children to follow the rules of the classroom which are consistently applied. Positive attitudes and good behaviors are the norm in our classrooms.

## **CURRICULUM**

The Montessori curriculum may be thought of as a spiral. Nothing is taught once and forgotten. Lessons are introduced early and reintroduced at increasing levels of sophistication. The outer limits are set only by humankind's knowledge and imagination, yet the core curriculum is carefully structured and monitored to ensure individual progress.

### **PRIMARY & KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM**

The Montessori approach recognizes that there are certain times in a child's growing-up when he or she is more responsive to certain learning experiences. We recognize that there are natural mental and physical "clocks", or sensitive periods in the growing child that make him or her more receptive to learning certain skills and subjects at various ages. Careful observation allows trained teachers to know when each child is ready for each new learning experience. Children are allowed and encouraged to proceed as far as their own desires, abilities and needs dictate. The child's emotional well-being is of paramount concern to the teacher in this dance of teaching and learning.

#### **Practical Life**

Daily living exercises such as pouring, folding, scrubbing, buttoning, and lacing help the child achieve self-confidence, independence, and motor control. Through concentration and completion of real tasks, which are sequenced to insure success, the child's inner discipline and organization abilities are developed, and self-confidence is enhanced.

## **Sensorial Training**

Visual, auditory, olfactory, and tactile sense discriminations are developed through the use of special Montessori materials such as the pink tower, the trinomial cube, the color tablets, and the sound cylinders. This education and refinement of the senses is an essential step in the child's intellectual development.

## **French and Spanish**

Children in primary and kindergarten are exposed to French, in regular weekly class, introducing them to a second language at a time that is described as a language-sensitive developmental period. Kindergarten students have weekly Spanish and French classes.

## **Language**

Growth of the child's vocabulary and an interest in the sound and rhythm of words are stimulated in every phase of classroom activity. Sandpaper letters allow him/her to feel, see, and say the alphabet. Phonics and a movable alphabet lead the child to reading. As the child is ready, he/she progresses further in reading through many oral exercises that train the ear. Manipulative reading materials and phonetic books are added when the child shows readiness. Fine-motor exercises prepare the hand for writing. Exercises with metal insets work specifically on hand strength and precision pencil control.

## **Mathematics**

Understanding is often a matter of seeing. Special Montessori equipment helps the child to see what "nothing" looks like as well as what 100 and 1,000 look like. All mathematical concepts are taught utilizing a solid base of concrete experience. The passage to abstraction is built step by step as the child is ready.

### **Artistic Materials and Expression**

Children are encouraged to express themselves with painting, paper cutting and design, drawing, and other media. Music classes offer experience in singing, rhythm, and theory providing avenues for expression and discovery.

### **Cultural Subjects**

Introductory work with the sciences and geography opens the door to the exciting cultural curriculum, which so engages the elementary Montessori student. Kindergarten students participate in a weekly Physical Science Lab class.

### **Physical Activities**

Physical development is promoted through structured activities and free-play as well as by the movement that is inherent in all areas of the Montessori program.

## **ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM**

### **Language Arts**

The child's early years of language development come to fruition in the elementary years. Instruction in basic reading and writing skills, oral language, and spelling is the focus of language, but it is woven into the fabric of the child's work in geography, math, and science as well. The study of parts of speech, sentence structure, reading analysis, poetry, drama, and creative writing all have the goal of helping children establish their humanity through the use of language.

## **Mathematics**

A wide variety of ingenious materials help the child progress to abstraction in basic arithmetic. Fractions, decimals, money, time, measurement, and plane and solid geometry are introduced as the child progresses through the curriculum. Daily practice and drill using standard worksheets are used in addition to the Montessori materials.

## **Geography, Geology and History**

The elementary curriculum attempts to develop a sense of historical time beginning with spans as short as the child's own life and extending through the age of the Earth. With increasing depth, children study the cultural life of other nations and the fundamental needs of all humankind. The study of geography helps to unify culture by showing how the physical configurations of the Earth contribute to the history of life. Functional geography shows the Earth in relation to the universe and the solar system. Physical geography includes the study of the seven continents, land and water forms, and the structure of the planet.

## **Zoology and Botany**

At the beginning of the child's Montessori education, botany and zoology are closely integrated in presentations about living/non-living and plant/animal classifications. Charts of the animal kingdom and the plant kingdom further explore the connections and differences between the two. The child will study the parts of plants, the shapes of leaves, basic anatomy, and the characteristics of vertebrates and invertebrates.

## **Science Lab**

Physical Science Lab classes are offered once a week for students in K-5<sup>th</sup> years. Hands-on lab experimentation is the best way to introduce students to scientific inquiry, the process of asking questions and conducting experiments. Through this method, students learn to understand the world

in which they live, the foundation for science education. Afterwards, directed discussions move the students to more abstract ideas related to their investigations.

### **Practical Life**

These experiences continue to be crucial in the development of the elementary child. Care of the person and of the environment are stressed. Now the child is concerned with the product as well as the process. Other experiences such as food preparation and table setting are often included.

### **Art and Music**

The curriculum in art and music encompasses appreciation (prints, books, DVDs, timelines, and trips to music and art events), theory, and hands-on work with various media (crayons, felt pens, watercolor, collage, printmaking, pottery, singing, rhythm instruments, and bells).

### **Computer and Keyboarding**

Beginning in 2nd year, students utilize computers for research and investigation. This is followed in 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> year students with expansion on these skills, including PowerPoint presentations. Keyboarding is offered to students in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> years, building critical 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The program emphasizes both accuracy and words per minute, and provides each student with individualized remediation and goals for success. Students in 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> years are also introduced to basic coding skills which help develop analytical skills, innovative thinking, and communication skills.

### **Character Education and Leadership**

As part of Grace and Courtesy, lessons in character education and leadership happen on a daily basis. Students build developmental assets, through specific lessons or real life situations. Social and emotional skills are learned and practiced, building a positive school-wide culture of character. Special leadership classes are held for 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> year students. Although there are natural leaders, every group requires both leaders and followers. With support, skills, and encouragement, all

children have potential leadership skills that can be developed and enhanced. Leadership is truly about being in control of one's life and making positive choices for self, others, and our world.

### Physical Activity

Our physical education program stresses the teaching of physical skills appropriate for each grade level. The instructor tries to individualize as much as possible with equipment given to every child or every two children. This provides the needed practice and repetition to improve gross motor skills.

### Foreign Language

Small group instruction in Spanish and French is taught weekly. Children tend to "absorb" a second language easily during this language sensitive period of development.

## **ALL-SCHOOL POLICIES**

### **ATTENDANCE**

#### **Arrival and Dismissal**

The school building opens at 8:00 am. Students must be in their respective classrooms at 8:15 am. Students have between 8:00 am and 8:15 am to have supplies out and ready to start the day. The morning primary class dismisses from 11:35 am until 11:45 am and extended-day through elementary classes dismiss from 3:05 pm until 3:15 pm. For the convenience of those parents who must be at work by 8:00 am, we offer **before school care for Elementary-age children only**. Before school care begins at 7:30 am and it is based on availability, so please pre-arrange this through our office.

Detailed arrival and dismissal procedures are mentioned in our "Reopening Handbook." All parents should stay in their cars unless their child needs assistance with their seat belts. Parents who are

punctual for pick-up and drop-off will follow the flow of WMS cars. Late arrivers should also wait in their car and are expected to call the office to notify them of their arrival time. This year parents will not be given an access code to enter the building, as they have in past years. Please do not come into the school building to pick up your child.

We will bring your child to your car. All parents will be provided with a sign of their child's name, to be placed in a visual spot while they are pulling up for pick-up or drop-off. **Please leave your sign in the window until your child is delivered to you.** Cars without signs slow the dismissal procedure, and it is our goal to facilitate safety and efficiency in our dismissal line.

### **Tardiness**

When children arrive late for school it is a disruption to the entire class. We expect children to be ready to start school by 8:15 am. This means arriving as close to 8:00 am as possible, giving time to put things away and feel ready by 8:15 am. Your child needs to feel in control when he/she enters the building. Knowing he/she is late makes a difficult start to the day. Being punctual is an important life skill. We want to help them learn this at an early age.

### **Absence**

When a student is ill, the parent should notify the office by 9 am. Homework for elementary children who are absent may be picked up any time after 12:00 noon, if a request is made by 9:00 am. **Absences for haircuts, lessons, shopping, out-of-town guests, and vacations are strongly discouraged.**

### **Early Release**

Parents should notify the office or send a note with their child if there is any reason that a student needs to leave school early. Whenever possible, parents should schedule appointments for their children during non-school hours. The parent is asked to ring the bell of the school entrance door to the foyer and their child will be brought to them. Parents will not be allowed to enter the facility.

## **AFTER SCHOOL CARE & LATE PICK-UP**

Our afternoon dismissal is from 3:05 pm until 3:15 pm. Panther Care, which is operated by The Independent School provides after school care for Elementary students starting at 3:30 pm. Children are supervised by our staff until 3:30 pm in the gym or playground at The Independent School. Pre-enrollment is required to attend Panther Care. We take the children from our building and see that they are safely turned over to the PC team.

For Primary and Kindergarten students, WMS After School Program is available. ASP is run from our building and provides care for WMS and TIS Primary and Kindergarten students from 3:15 am to 5:45 pm. There is no enrollment fee for WMS families.

**If your child is picked up late frequently we will ask that you enroll them in PC. If they are in Primary or Kindergarten they will automatically be placed in ASP.**

## **BANNED ITEMS**

Students should not bring toys, cell phones (except if needed for specific reasons, confirmed by WMS Administration), electronic games, smart watches, cameras, anything that might be construed as a weapon, valuable items, or any other such items to school.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

We rejoice with you on the day of your child's birth. Students may provide a birthday treat to their class on that day. Pre-packed items are ideal or individual treats from professional bakeries as they follow health department guidelines. For all ages, keep it simple and nutritional. Please provide napkins if you choose to send edible treats. We prefer no drinks for birthday treats. Birthday party invitations are ONLY permitted if the entire class is invited. Names and addresses may be obtained from the student directory.

For children in Primary, we ask that you send a paragraph about your child's memorable events or highlights of each year to date. We will read these to the class as we honor the child.

## **CLASS PARTIES**

We will have three seasonal class parties for all students, a fall party, winter party and Valentine party. We ask that children do not wear Halloween costumes for the fall party. Class parties will be very simple. Generally, parents who sign up will bring in party supplies and treats. The office will contact one of the volunteers prior to the party to set the date and time. We are still working on the details of how parent volunteers can contribute this year due to COVID-19. More information will be released as we approach the first class party.

## **CORRECTION AND GRADING POLICIES**

All 1st year through 5th year students are expected to correct their work to 100%. Each paper should come home error free. The exception to this policy might be in the area of creative writing.

## **DISCIPLINE**

We want to guarantee your child and all the students in our classroom an excellent learning environment. We believe that all our students can behave appropriately in the classroom and on the playground. Each teaching team will advise the children and the parents of the consequences of misbehavior. We have very few discipline problems in our school, but we do deal with misbehavior when it occurs.

## **DRESS CODE**

Wichita Montessori School has a dress code to provide guidelines for students' appearance. Adhering to these guidelines helps to maintain a learning environment that is academically and behaviorally productive, as well as to minimize distractions and focus students' attention on their

work. Parents and students are expected to use good judgement in choosing school clothes. A general statement regarding dress code is that the students' dress is proper, clean, and neat in appearance, reflecting the importance of school.

Clothes for Primary and Kindergarten children need to be comfortable, easy care, self-managed, and fitting for outdoor activities. Please see that your child is appropriately dressed for weather conditions.

There will be occasions when children will need to wear formal attire, WMS spirit, or unique clothes for special days during the year. A specific notification will be sent home for these events.

Wichita Montessori students are expected to adhere to these guidelines on a daily basis. The school has the right to decide if clothing is inappropriate, and parents will be notified.

Examples of inappropriate school clothing:

Flip-flops

Shorts, skirts, or dresses (shorter than mid-thigh length)

Inappropriate screen prints

Spaghetti strapped shirts or clothes too revealing

Hats and caps (inside the building)

Clothing too tight or too sloppy

Distractible or valuable jewelry

Shoes that light-up

Shoes with wheels

## **FEES**

Consumable and school supply fees are charged for each student at the time of registration. The consumable fee is used towards workbooks, subscriptions, yearbook, and textbook replacements. This fee will also cover virtual field trips and special guest speakers for Elementary students. The school supply fee is used towards all materials needed such as binders, folders, markers, scissors,

crayons, paper and pencils, etc. This fee will also cover items provided in our take-home kits for distance learning.

## FIELD TRIPS

In-person field trips are suspended for the time being. We will implement virtual field trips and special guests for Elementary students.

## FINANCIAL POLICY

The annual tuition is composed of a \$500.00 registration fee with the balance divided into ten equal payments. For new students, the enrollment fee is due upon acceptance by the school. For returning students, this fee is paid with their commitment for the upcoming school year. This fee reserves a position for the child. The ten equal payments are due May 1, then August 1 through April 1. Monthly tuition is due on the first of the month, and is considered late after the tenth of the month. If an account is more than 30 days in arrears, the student may be excluded from class until payment is received. A student's records will not be released unless all financial accounts are settled.

Our refund policy is as follows:

1. \$250 of the registration fee is non-refundable.
2. The balance of the registration fee and tuition paid is refundable if the office is notified, in writing, prior to June 15.
3. After June 15, the registration fee and the May 1 payment are each non-refundable.
4. If a family moves out of the area during the school year, the registration fee and consumable fees are non-refundable. The balance of the tuition is prorated based on the number of months the student has attended school.

## HOMEWORK

Children in the Primary classes will not have homework. Kindergarten children will occasionally have homework. Elementary children will always have a spelling list to study and math facts to learn

which should be practiced daily. Unfinished work or additional homework assignments may be sent home at the elementary level. Each child will have a Homework Folder which should be returned with the completed work the following school day unless otherwise instructed. We ask that students use folders, and not backpacks, EXCEPT students in Upper Elementary, or those who stay for after school care.

If your child forgets his/her homework, all extra privileges are suspended until it is finished. Homework is the child's responsibility. Please, do not bring forgotten homework to school for your child.

## **LIBRARY**

Use of the Independent School library WILL NOT be available to our students this school year. We are providing our own little WMS library and have quite a selection, which has been growing all summer. Library books will sit for at least 72 hours before being checked back out.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Please put your child's name on all personal items. We want to keep lost items to a minimum. Periodically, all unclaimed items will be donated to a charitable group.

## **LUNCH**

The Independent School is NOT offering hot lunches until further notice, so WMS will not have that option for our students. Pizza lunch has also been suspended until further.

All students are asked to bring lunch from home. We ask that each child bring a paper towel or a napkin to put food on, a napkin for keeping hands and faces clean, and the needed utensils. WE ARE UNABLE TO PROVIDE EATING UTENSILS. Please try to send non-perishable items that do not require heating, as we do not offer microwave service for students. To keep lunches healthy, children may not bring soda pop, sugary drinks, candy, or chips in their lunches. Milk may be purchased through

TIS for the school year. As mentioned in our Reopening Handbook, we are encouraging parents to send their child's lunch in disposable lunch bags. If parents prefer sending a lunch box or thermos we ask that they are disinfected daily. Students will be eating lunch at their desks.

## **MEDICAL INFORMATION**

All students are required by Kansas State law to have health forms on file in the school office. For students ages 3 to 6 years, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment form is required. For children ages 5 years and above, the Kansas Certificate of Immunization is required. Children who are 5 and 6 require both the KDHE and KCI form.

For the well being of the child and other children in the class, students are sent home if they have a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or above.

Ailments such as diabetes, epilepsy, asthma and allergies are some of the conditions that should be noted on health records and discussed with the child's teacher. Parents are required to report to the office all cases of communicable diseases, such as strep throat, measles, chicken pox.

Students who have contracted chicken pox must remain at home until all pox have scabbed-over. Students with strep throat or scarlet fever must be on medication at least 24 hours, and be fever-free (without fever-reducing medication) before returning to school. Pinkeye requires that the child be excluded until there is no discharge from the eye. Do not send your child to school if they have a fever, are vomiting or have diarrhea. PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE FOR GUIDANCE ON WHEN YOUR CHILD CAN RETURN TO SCHOOL. A child found with head lice will be sent home immediately. The child must be treated before re-admittance to school. Children will be re-examined before admission to the classroom and may be sent home if nits are found in the child's hair. Parents will be notified if there are cases of communicable diseases or of head lice in their child's class.

When it is necessary for a student to take medicine during school hours, the school is happy to cooperate with the family physician and the parents if the following requirements are met:

1. The medicines must be retained by a school staff member.
2. We must have signed consent from the parents before administering medication to students.

NOTE: Please refer to our Reopening Handbook for our COVID-19 guidelines.

## **MESSAGES**

We are happy to deliver a message to your child during the school day, should the need arise. Teachers can be reached during school hours. If the teacher is in class when you call, she will return your call at her earliest opportunity. We do appreciate your calls during school hours, but if an emergency arises feel free to call at any time.

## **PARENTS' GROUP**

We have an active Parents Group in our school. All parents are invited to attend meetings, stay informed through our newsletter, and to get involved at any level that seems appropriate.

## **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Two parent-teacher conferences are scheduled during the school year, one in the fall and one in the spring. The fall conference will most likely be held via Zoom. More information will be sent regarding spring conferences.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS**

For elementary students, periodic performance assessments are sent home every nine weeks. Not to be confused with Grade Cards, Progress Reports are indicators of classroom performance, attention, behavior, and mastery of subject matter. Effective use of Progress Reports involves noting change in your child's assessments over a period of time.

## RECESS

It is our expectation that each child will participate in outdoor recess. If for some reason, a child should not go out to recess, the child must have a note signed by the parent. Usually, a child too ill to go out to recess should not be in school. Children should come to school prepared to go outside, even when it is cold. We follow the National Weather Service Wind Chill Chart before going outside.

## SCHOOL CLOSING

Should hazardous conditions necessitate the closing or the delayed opening of school, an announcement to that effect will ordinarily be made between 6:00 am and 7:30 am on local news stations. Please note: If school is closed, all extracurricular activities and meetings are canceled.

## SECURITY MEASURES

We must take a strict attitude toward releasing children into the care of adults other than the child's custodial parent(s). Children will be released to a person other than the custodial parent under the following conditions:

1. The parent has signed a standing authorization for that person to pick up the child on a regular basis.
2. A signed note is sent to the school giving permission for another person to pick up your child. Be as specific as possible, (name, phone number, car description)
3. A call to the school MAY NOT be sufficient, if the caller's identity cannot be authenticated.

**It is never our desire to inconvenience anyone, but we will not release your child unless one of the previous options is observed.**

## SECURITY SYSTEM

Our foyer doors will be locked all day, however office hours are from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm daily during school days. The doors are locked and are secured by a buzz-in system. This year families

will not be issued a code that will unlock the door. If you have permission to enter the school building it will be necessary to ring the bell and be admitted by our office. Upon entrance all guests will have their temperature checked, answer screening questions and be logged into our visitor book.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

Parents of students have the right to inspect and review any directly related official school records. This may include, but not be limited to, grades, scores on standardized tests, and health data. Unless there is a legal mandate, the school may not release this information to any outside individual, agency, or organization without the written consent of the parent.

## **TELEPHONE**

The office telephone is for school business. Students may not call home for forgotten lunches, homework, or books. Students may not call home to arrange social activities. In the event a child forgets his/her lunch the school does keep bread, peanut butter, and milk on hand.

## **TESTING**

Students in the 3rd through 5th year elementary classes take the Stanford Achievement Test in the spring. Results of the test are sent to the parents by the end of the school year.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

We recognize volunteering as a perfect way for parents to help their children's school and to give special attention to their school-age child. This year volunteering will look different as we are trying to limit the number of adults entering the facility. More information on the options for volunteering will be shared through our newsletter. Suggestions are welcome and appreciated.