

# Montessori Community School



## **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

2023-2024 Edition

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# Montessori Community School

## **Family Handbook**

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## **MONTESSORI COMMUNITY SCHOOL VISION STATEMENT**

We are a learning community of children and adults committed to excellence and optimal development of children's intellectual, social/emotional, physical, creative, and spiritual potential. Through an unparalleled Montessori education, children are well prepared to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and to contribute to the betterment of our world.

### **OUR MISSION**

Our purpose is to educate children two to twelve years old through a non-sectarian, Montessori program which nurtures a lifelong enthusiasm for learning, encourages a commitment to the community, and fosters a stewardship of the natural world.

### **CORE VALUES & GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

#### **Love of Learning.**

We are committed to the child-centered Montessori method of education where children are actively engaged, self-directed learners demonstrating critical thinking, scientific, cooperative, and problem-solving skills, and where the community of adults – teachers and parents – model these skills, engaging the children and one another in the same way.

#### **Excellence.**

We believe the truest form of excellence is being true to what you do and striving to do it to the best of your ability. We also recognize that our own excellence is enhanced when we support and encourage others' excellence.

#### **Respect.**

We believe respecting others means recognizing the individual spirit of every person, celebrating our differences and uniqueness, and encouraging freedom in the context of responsibility, self-discipline, and compassion. In this way, we recognize our interconnectedness and become stewards of our families, our community, and the world.

### **Notice of Non-Discriminatory Policy**

Montessori Community School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other school-administered programs.

## MCS STUDENT LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

Montessori Community School values and seeks to nurture in children:

### ***Development of the spirit*** by promoting:

- \* Caring and compassion
- \* Respect and honesty
- \* Independence, autonomy, and confidence
- \* Liberty with limits
- \* Self-direction, self-discipline, and personal responsibility
- \* Intrinsic motivation
- \* Ability to cope with changes
- \* Curiosity and wonder for life

### ***Academic preparedness*** by facilitating:

- \* Use of concrete experiences that lead to abstract thought
- \* Competency in reading, writing, and mathematics
- \* Physical development and healthful practices
- \* Effective communication skills
- \* Joy in learning
- \* An understanding of and appreciation for the natural world
- \* An appreciation of the commonalities and uniqueness of people and cultures
- \* An understanding of cycles and systems, and the interconnectedness of life
- \* Imaginative, creative, and critical thinking
- \* The process of abstract thought
- \* Goal-setting and problem-solving
- \* Appreciation of and participation in the arts

### ***Social responsibility*** by encouraging:

- \* Care for others and the environment
- \* Positive contribution to the community
- \* Peaceful solutions to conflict

## PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHOOL

The educational philosophy of Maria Montessori, M.D. is the basis for the school's programs. In *The Absorbent Mind*, Dr. Montessori wrote, "The most important period of life is . . . the period from birth to the age of six. For, that is the time when man's intelligence itself . . . is being formed."

Dr. Montessori believed that a truly educated individual continues learning long after the hours and years he spends in the classroom because he is motivated from within by a natural curiosity and love for knowledge. Therefore, the goal of early childhood education should be to cultivate the child's natural desire to learn.

In the Montessori classroom, this objective is approached in two ways. First, by empowering children to make choices among the classroom activities and secondly, by helping children to perfect all their natural tools for learning so that their ability will be at a maximum in future learning situations.

Dr. Montessori emphasized the importance of sensitive periods for early learning. These are transitory periods of intense fascination for learning a particular characteristic or skill, such as going up and down steps, putting things in order, counting, or reading. It is easier for the child to acquire a particular skill or characteristic during the corresponding sensitive periods than at any other time in his life. The Montessori classroom takes advantage of this fact by allowing the child freedom to select individual activities which correspond to his interests.

Montessori education is a unique cycle of learning designed to complement the child's sensitive periods and developmental stages. Children who acquire the basic skills of reading and arithmetic in this natural way have the advantage of beginning their education without drudgery, boredom, or discouragement. With opportunities to pursue their interests, they retain their enthusiasm for learning, which is the key to becoming a truly educated person.

The Montessori classroom promotes cooperation among children. Each child is encouraged to do their best and to help one another. Dr. Montessori believed that competition in education should be introduced only after the child has gained confidence in the use of the basic skills. "Never let a child risk failure," she wrote, "until he has a reasonable chance of success."

Children mature at different rates and their periods of readiness for academic subjects vary. Because interest is stimulated and the materials are at hand whenever a child is ready, some youngsters in a Montessori class begin to read and calculate at an early age. However, very early learning is not the norm, nor was it ever Dr. Montessori's objective. Her ideal was only that the learning experience should occur naturally and joyfully at the proper moment for each individual child. "It is true we cannot make a genius," Dr. Montessori wrote, "we can only give each individual the chance to fulfill his potential possibilities to become an independent, secure, and balanced human being."

The role of the adult in a Montessori school is to facilitate children's learning by carefully preparing a suitable learning environment and by modeling for children the values of independence, respect, responsibility, and joy in learning. (Source material from *A Parent's Guide to the Montessori Classroom*.)

## SCHOOL HISTORY

Montessori Community School was founded as Katrice Montessori School in 1972, on the grounds of the First Christian Church on Liholiho Street in Makiki. Started as a preschool to accommodate the special needs of Patricia Weber, a child with Down Syndrome, the school grew to include children from around the island with wide-ranging abilities and backgrounds. In 1982, the school name was changed to Montessori Community School to emphasize our vision of an educational experience that involves people and resources in the community as well as the community of children, parents, and teachers. The individual classrooms can be viewed as a model community of growing citizens.

The Elementary program originated with one Lower Elementary class (grades 1-3) which grew in numbers until the commitment to create an Upper Elementary class (grades 4-6) was made in 1981. In the fall of 1987, MCS expanded its programs again to meet the increasing demand for quality child care at the toddler ages with our first toddler class, consisting of eighteen-month-olds. Our growing programs found a home on our Nehoa Street campus, which opened in the spring of 1988.

In 1988, Montessori Community School was proud to have two of its teachers recognized by the Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children (HAEYC) for their outstanding accomplishments and abilities in their respective fields of teaching. Former MCS teacher Yvette Perreira Lewis was awarded the Excellence in Teaching Award in the Toddler Division. Jerry Mueller received the Excellence in Teaching Award at the Primary (grades 1-3) level, and retired in 2018.

In 1990, Susan Siebert, who had served as the Executive Director of MCS for 13 years, moved to the mainland. Patsy Tom, then the Assistant Director, took over the leadership role and served as Head of School for 27 years. Following Patsy's retirement in 2017, Marjie Carroll was appointed MCS Head of School.

In 1993, the informal network of parents was formally organized into the Parent Faculty Association (PFA). MCS is proud to be fully accredited by both HAIS (since 2001) and AMS (since 2008), and is also the first Montessori school on Oahu to be accredited by AMS. MCS celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary during the 2022-2023 school year.

Montessori Community School continues its search for its own permanent campus. The consolidation of our campuses in 1999 to the present site was a step towards that goal.

## **SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

Montessori Community School is a not-for-profit organization as defined under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and is governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board has a fiduciary responsibility to the school and holds in trust the school's future. It is also the guardian of the school's integrity or reputation within the community.

The Board selects the Head of School and delegates the administration of the school to the Head of School. In collaboration with the Head of School, the Board establishes the school's mission and general policies. The Board manages the school's assets and ensures there are sufficient resources to support the school's programs. Finally, the Board organizes and manages itself to fulfill its duties to the school. Members of the school community may nominate prospective candidates to the Board's Committee on Trustees. The Board elects its own members.

## **ACCREDITATIONS, MEMBERSHIPS, AND LICENSES**

Montessori Community School is fully accredited by the American Montessori Society (AMS) and the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), a member of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, and a member of the Hawaii Council of Private Schools (HCPS). In addition, the school is licensed by the Hawaii Department of Human Services (Two-Year-Old, Preschool, and Elementary After-School Care programs) and the HCPS (Elementary programs).

Montessori Community School is accredited with AMS nationally and works cooperatively with Chaminade University's Montessori Teacher Education Division in training AMS interns. We recognize teaching credentials from AMS and AMI (Association Montessori Internationale) as prerequisites to teach in our school as a Montessori teacher.

Our AMS accreditation signifies the highest standards in the profession. As an accredited school, we maintain AMS standards and abide by the Code of Ethics adopted by the AMS Board of Directors in October, 1969 and expanded in June, 1975.

"As American Montessori Society members, we pledge to conduct ourselves professionally and personally in ways that will reflect our respect for each other and for the children we serve. We will do whatever is within our talents and capacity to protect the rights of each child to have the freedom and opportunity to develop his full potential."



# American Montessori Society Code of Ethics

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The American Montessori Society (AMS) requires that all member schools and affiliated teacher education programs agree to comply with the AMS Code of Ethics. AMS relies on self-compliance of this Code.

We at the American Montessori Society hold ourselves to high ethical standards, and act in accordance to our commitment to build a more just and equitable world by adhering to the following principles. It is our hope and intention that the members of our organization, as advocates, ambassadors, and practitioners of the Montessori model of education, do the same.

## **Principle I: Commitment to Students & Their Families**

In fulfillment of the obligation to students and their families, AMS will:

- Share resources for protecting equitable access to all programs and services, regardless of each student's and family's race, color, culture, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, ancestry, national or ethnic origins, or any other classification protected by applicable law.
- Support practices that protect the physical health and psychological safety of each student and family.
- Encourage independent action in the pursuit of learning, community building, and social action.
- Honor professional commitments, and maintain obligations and contracts while neither soliciting nor involving students or their families in schemes for commercial gain.
- Keep in confidence information that has been secured in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

## **Principle II: Commitment to Staff & Colleagues**

In fulfillment of the obligation to staff and colleagues, AMS will:

- Protect equitable access to AMS employment, programs, services, and other opportunities regardless of each individual's race, color, culture, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, ancestry, national or ethnic origins, or any other classification protected by applicable law.
- Dedicate ourselves to recognizing, addressing, and eradicating all forms of racism and systemic oppression within our organization and programs.
- Represent one's own professional qualifications with clarity and true intent.
- Accept, offer, recommend, and assign professional positions and responsibilities on the basis of professional preparation and legal qualifications.
- Use honest, equitable, and effective methods of administering duties and conducting business.

### **Principle III: Commitment to the Montessori Movement**

In fulfillment of the obligation to the Montessori Movement, AMS will:

- Uphold and publicly support the greater vision of Dr. Maria Montessori through such initiatives as the development and promulgation of standards for affiliation of teacher education programs and accreditation of schools, the providing of professional development opportunities, and support of Montessori research and advocacy.
- Ensure that our work honors the core components of Montessori education: properly trained Montessori teachers, multi-age classrooms, the uninterrupted work period, the prepared environment, and child-directed work.

### **Principle IV: Commitment to the Public**

In fulfillment of the obligation to the public, AMS will:

- Share perspectives consistent with all of the items set forth in the principles above, when engaged in public discussion.
- Distinguish private views from the official position of the American Montessori Society when engaged in public discussion.

*Adopted by the American Montessori Society Board of Directors January 2022*

# **PROGRAMS**

## EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

### Two-Year-Old and Preschool & Kindergarten

It is important for parents to understand that the Montessori programs provide a unique cycle of learning. Both the Two-Year-Old and Preschool & Kindergarten classrooms are carefully equipped with a broad array of materials which help the child to discover knowledge and develop their independence. The five general areas of the classroom are: **Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Mathematics, and Cultural Studies.**

Children are allowed to choose activities based on their interest and ability. A child who acquires the basic skills of reading and arithmetic in this natural way has the advantage of beginning their education without drudgery, boredom, or discouragement. By pursuing their individual interest in a Montessori classroom, the child gains an early enthusiasm for learning, which is the key to becoming an educated person. While independence is the main focus, children are also part of the community, and through their daily interactions with others, they learn what is required to be part of a group.

The success of the child in school is dependent upon a number of factors, including the child themselves. The relationship between the parent, school, and child is of prime importance. Parents are the child's primary role models, and our faculty and staff provide support to the family. Confusion for the child is minimized when the school and family work together.

In *The Absorbent Mind*, Maria Montessori wrote, "The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six. For that is the time when man's intelligence itself, his greatest implement, is being formed. But not only his intelligence, the full totality of his psychic powers. . . at no other age has the child greater need of an intelligent help, and any obstacle that impedes his creative work will lessen the chance he has of achieving perfection."

Dr. Montessori believed that competition in education should be introduced only after the child has gained confidence in the use of basic skills. "Never let a child risk failure," she wrote, "until he has a reasonable chance of success." Since each child works individually with the materials, he relies only on his own previous work and his progress is not compared to the achievements of other youngsters.

It is a well-established fact that young children mature at very different rates and their periods of readiness for academic subjects vary a great deal. Because interest is stimulated and the materials are at hand whenever a child is ready, some youngsters in a Montessori class begin to read and calculate at an unusually early age. However, very early learning is not the norm, nor was it ever Dr. Montessori's objective. Her ideal was only that the learning experience should occur naturally and joyfully at the proper moment for each individual child. "It is true we cannot make a genius," Dr. Montessori once wrote. "We can only give each individual the chance to fulfill his potential to become an independent, secure, and balanced human being."

## **TWO-YEAR-OLD PROGRAM**

### **GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

- Provide children with a safe environment for physical movement, exploration, and discovery, while encouraging curiosity.
- Promote healthy social development.
- Promote the child's trust by providing an orderly and predictable environment, as well as caregivers that understand and cherish the children in their care.
- Provide activities and opportunities which foster the development of order, concentration, coordination, and independence ("OCCI").
- Assist children in acquiring language.

### **THE SEPARATION PROCESS**

The Separation Process is an important element in the family's successful transition from home or sitter to the group care environment. We recognize that both the child and parents need time to establish trust in the environment and caregivers. Each child will respond differently to the adventure of "going to school," so the teaching staff is trained to observe and facilitate the process. The purpose of the separation procedure is to allow the child to develop a sense of trust in the new environment. The separation schedule is staggered and tailored to the child's unique temperament and past experiences and, therefore, may be longer or shorter than the average week, depending upon the individual child.

On the first day of their scheduled separation, the child will join the class as early as 8:30 a.m. for just a half day. As the child gains trust and comfort in the environment, their time in the classroom is lengthened. We ask parents to plan their schedules so that they can be available to their child during this time.

## **CHECKLIST FOR THE FIRST FULL DAY OF SCHOOL**

### **Two-Year-Old Program**

#### **Forms**

See the section on **ENROLLMENT** for required paperwork.

#### **Personal Articles**

At this age, children often need a change of clothes. Supplies that will be needed include extra underwear or training pants, an extra set of clothing, plastic bags, disposable diapers and wipes, etc. for those who need them. Please **clearly label all personal items** with your child's name.

#### **Clothing**

Children should wear comfortable clothing in which they can safely work and play without fear of getting dirty or messy. Clothing should be easy for the child to remove independently. Overalls, snug elastic waistbands, tights or leggings, tight snaps, etc. can be difficult for young children to remove by themselves and can impede the process of developing toileting independence. Children should not wear clothing which contradicts the values of Montessori education. Footwear is required daily for safety, but high heels can present a safety hazard and should not be worn to school.

Please label both slippers, both shoes, jackets, sweaters, and all other personal items.

#### **Snacks and Lunch**

Children bring their own lunch, or may order lunch through the contracted catering company. Please see the section on **FOOD** for helpful hints. **Be sure the child's name is labeled visibly on the lunch box or bag, food containers, and beverage bottle.**

Children should bring a water bottle daily.

Soda, gum, and candy are not permitted in school and should not be included in lunches or snacks.

Sharing of food from lunches and snacks is not permitted for sanitary reasons, and because some children have allergies to certain foods.

Snacks provided by the school follow nutrition guidelines set by the Department of Human Services. A morning snack is provided for the children, and an afternoon snack is provided for children who remain after 2:30 p.m. The snack includes fruit or vegetables, whole grain products, and dairy products, such as milk or cheese. Children with identified allergies to dairy products will be offered water as an alternative.

Children are encouraged to feed themselves and to consume as much of their lunch as they wish. Children eat their snacks and lunches seated at a table so as to incorporate grace and courtesy into the activity, as well as to safeguard against choking.

### Bedding

Children need a blanket, beach towel, or some kind of clean covering to lie upon. Be sure it is labeled with the child's name and placed in a plastic bag for hygienic purposes. Parents are asked to take all bedding home each Friday for laundering in hot water.

### Naps

Following lunch, the children have a rest period. The length of nap time varies with each child's individual needs. Children who are unable to sleep may do quiet activities after resting.

Children may bring a special nap time object, e.g. a small stuffed animal or blanket. Please be sure it is labeled.

### Toileting

Toilet learning is a collaborative effort involving the child, the teachers, and the parents. Usually when a child remains dry for an hour or two, indicates to an adult that he or she is wet or soiled, shows an interest in using the toilet, or is willing to sit on the toilet or to use training pants, the child is ready for toilet learning.

Once toileting has begun, it is expected that the process will be supported at home as well as in school. Close communication between parents and teachers is encouraged.

Children who are going through toilet learning for the first time, as well as others not completely independent, should bring a sufficient amount of training pants and plastic bags. Training pants should be loose enough for the child to be able to manage by him- or herself.

All children are diapered or toileted before and after their naps, as well as throughout the day.

**NOTE:** State health regulations restrict the staff from rinsing or washing soiled underpants. The regulations were enacted to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. It is essential that soiled clothing be taken home daily for laundering. Also, only disposable diapers are used in our school.

### Accidents

Teachers supervise the children closely and work to safeguard the environment. Even so, it is normal for children to have accidents. Toddler-aged children are in the process of developing their gross motor coordination and are often unsteady. In addition, toddlers are impulsive and are just beginning to learn to use words as a substitute for biting or hitting when angry.

When a child is injured, first aid is administered by the staff and an Accident Report form, which describes the injury and treatment, is completed by a teacher and sent home. A copy of the Accident Report is kept on file in the office. The staff treats minor injuries, such as cuts and scrapes, by cleansing with soap and water and applying a bandage. In case of a serious accident, the parents will be notified and the teachers will refer to the child's Medical Information and Emergency Contacts list for instructions. **It is, therefore, essential that the MCS Office has accurate and current information on each child.** The majority of our staff members have successfully completed certified First Aid and Child CPR courses.

Please refer to the **HEALTH & SAFETY** section on **Accidents** for school policies regarding serious injuries.

## **CHECKLIST FOR EVERY DAY**

### **Two-Year-Old Program**

1. **Prompt arrival.** Arrive at school on time! For the Two-Year-Old program, families should arrive no later than 8:30 a.m., to establish and maintain a regular schedule. Predictable routines help children feel secure and can aid in their adjustment.
2. **Acknowledgment of arrival.** When dropping off your child, make certain that the supervising staff member in attendance is informed of your child's arrival.
3. **Absences.** When absence is necessary, parents should inform the school by calling the school office by 8:30 a.m.
4. **Dismissal & pick-up authorization.** Check out with the supervising teacher at pick-up time. Children will be released only to their parents or legal guardians, or those so authorized by the child's parents or legal guardians. Authorization to release a child can only be given by the child's parents or legal guardians. If the person picking up your child is unfamiliar to our staff, we will require government-issued photo identification (such as a driver's license or state I.D.) for verification before releasing your child.
5. **Dismissal time routines.** Please pick up your child promptly at dismissal time. The very young child gains security through being picked up at the same time every day.

When picking up your child, we ask that you leave with your child promptly and not linger. When children remain with their parents on the playground after their dismissal time, it creates a confusing situation for the teachers who are supervising the playground or classroom and makes it difficult for After-School Care teachers to close the program at 5:30 p.m. If you remain on the playground with your child after the pick-up time, you will be assessed the occasional care fee.

6. **After-School Care.** After-School Care is available until 5:30 p.m. with prior enrollment. Different activities and a snack are provided for the children who remain later in the day. MCS is licensed by the State of Hawaii to enroll children 2 years of age and under 7 years of age for a maximum enrollment of 126 in our preschool after-school care program.

**NOTE: School closes at 5:30 p.m. and children should be picked up promptly by the time the After-School Care programs end.** A late fee will be assessed and billed directly through FACTS by the Business Office. The late fee is to encourage families to pick up their children on time. Repeated late pick-up or failure to pay late charges may result in the termination of after-school care services to the family. Please refer to the Financial Information, included in the acceptance packet, for specific fees involved.

7. **Occasional care.** Limited occasional care is available for children in the 2:30 program in emergency situations and should not be used on a regular basis. Arrangements for occasional care must be made with the school office. Occasional child care rates will be assessed through FACTS.
8. **Secure gates.** When you enter or exit the playground, be absolutely certain that all gates are secured with the gate latches! We don't want any children to slip into the parking lot. Only adults should open and close all gate latches.



9. **Drive with caution.** Please drive slowly (5 mph or less) and carefully through our parking lot, keeping the drive-through lane unobstructed, and entering and exiting only through designated points. (See Campus Map)
10. **Parking lot safety.** When parking, turn off the vehicle's engine, remove the keys from the ignition, and lock all doors. Safety is our priority. Always accompany your child to or from the car to the gate. Do not leave children (e.g. younger siblings) unattended in the car.
11. **Personal articles.** Make sure your child does not bring toys, candy, gum, money, balloons, jewelry, purses or wallets, articles of value, or dangerous articles onto the school grounds. We have many interesting materials and constructive activities in school. If your child feels he or she has a book, special item, or something of interest to share, discuss this with the teacher before bringing it into the classroom. Children at the ages represented in the Two-Year-Old Program are not developmentally ready for sharing their possessions with others.
12. **Pets and animals.** Pets and other animals may not be brought onto the playgrounds. The exception is certified Service Animals. Certified Service Animals must be leashed at all times while on campus.
13. **Lost and Found.** Check the "Lost and Found" regularly for missing items.
14. **Check mail folders.** Check your child's mail folder daily for communications from the office or teacher, accident reports, child's work, or other information.
15. **Discussing concerns with teachers.** Regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences are held throughout the year, but if a concern regarding your child arises, please schedule a mutually convenient time to meet with the teacher. It is important that such discussions be held at a time when everyone's full attention is possible. Lengthy conversations at morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times distract teachers from their primary responsibility of supervising the children.

# PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Montessori curriculum provides the child with concrete experiences and information about his world. The child is allowed to progress through the curriculum at his or her own pace and interest level. The Preschool & Kindergarten program (for children ages 3-6 years) addresses the whole child – their intellectual, social and emotional, and physical development. Activities are provided which foster the development of order, concentration, coordination, and independence (“OCCI”). The Preschool & Kindergarten program introduces the three-year mixed-age cycle that is found in every program through the elementary program level.

The program strives to foster and facilitate the development of patterns of behavior that will serve as the foundation for future learning. These include:

- **Intrinsic motivation:** The child is working and learning through his/her own choices and direction.
- **Independence in work:** Each child enjoys “working” and selects one task at a time tirelessly and independently.
- **Completed work cycles:** Whatever activity is initiated by the child is carried out to its natural end, signified by the return of the material to its proper space.
- **Respect:** The child respects the work of others and does not interrupt or attempt to make it their own. Materials are returned in a manner showing respect for the environment as well as for the child who will use it next. The child is kind to him- or herself and to others, and works cooperatively with the group.
- **Responsibility:** The child takes responsibility for his or her behavior with the materials. If he or she spills, for example, the child will independently remedy the problem. The child also takes responsibility for words and actions towards him- or herself and others. For example, he or she knows that it is his or her choice to be kind or hurtful, and each choice brings certain consequences.

## PHASE-IN PROGRAM

Montessori Community School has been successful in making the first days of school more comfortable by employing the Phase-In Program. This procedure staggers the first day of school for different groups of students over a period of several days.

On the first day of school, the returning and kindergarten children will be with the teachers. They will receive personal attention and reminders of how the Montessori program works. On the second day, another group of the oldest new students will join the first and receive similar personal attention and direction. The days will progress with the daily addition of groups of new students. By the time the youngest children enter the program, the others will be comfortably adjusted and will be setting examples for the young ones, who will also be receiving individual attention from the staff.

The Phase-In begins with the first day of the academic school year. Families will be notified of the specific starting date prior to the start of the school year. For some working parents, it may be inconvenient to follow the phase-in plan, but making child care arrangements will certainly be to the child’s benefit. Our intention is to make the transition to school as pleasant and smooth as possible.

## **CHECKLIST FOR THE FIRST FULL DAY OF SCHOOL**

### **Preschool & Kindergarten Programs**

#### **Forms**

See the section on **ENROLLMENT** for required paperwork.

#### **Preparation for School**

These suggestions are offered to help you in preparing your child for their first day at school. When a child begins their Montessori experience, it is a big step in their young life, and they need the interest and support of their family. It is best to talk about the beginning of school only a day or two before the actual date. Explain the situation briefly and calmly. Talking about specific activities could lead to disappointments, so speak in general terms.

On your child's first day, when you arrive at the classroom entrance, offer a friendly good-bye and leave your child in the care of the teacher. The teachers will comfort a disappointed or tearful student. It works best for the child if the parents do not linger. It is not unusual for parents whose child is coming to school for the first time to also be feeling anxiety. We encourage you to share your feelings and concerns with the teachers.

Do not be discouraged if your child does not relate many specifics about their school experience. Usually the child has been working with many different activities throughout the day, and specific recall can be difficult. Another thing to keep in mind is that we are concerned with process rather than product, so that much of what a child has accomplished is being internalized and will prepare them for the elementary years. You will notice that your child may bring home very few papers and other "product" evidence of their school work. Please be patient as your child gradually reveals newly-acquired skills and knowledge.

#### **Personal Articles**

Children in the Preschool program should bring an extra set of labeled clothing to school in a resealable zip-top plastic bag. In the case of an accident, the soiled clothes will be sent home that day, and the child will wear their set of extra clothes. Parents should take soiled clothing home that day. Please return the next day with another set of clean clothing in a clean plastic bag.

**NOTE:** State health regulations restrict the staff from rinsing or washing soiled underpants. The regulations were enacted to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. It is therefore essential that soiled clothing be taken home that day for laundering.

### Clothing

Children should wear comfortable clothing in which they can safely work and play without fear of getting dirty or messy. Clothing should be easy for the child to remove independently. Overalls, snug elastic waistbands, tights or leggings, tight snaps, etc. can be difficult for young children to remove by themselves and can make trips to the bathroom a problem. Children should not wear clothing which contradicts the values of Montessori education, such as t-shirts with violent themes. Footwear is required daily for safety, but high heels can present a safety hazard and should not be worn to school.

Please label both slippers, both shoes, jackets, sweaters, and all other personal items.

### Snacks and Lunch

Children must bring their own lunch, or may order lunch through the contracted catering company. Please see the section on **FOOD** for helpful hints. **Be sure your child's name is labeled visibly on the lunch box or bag, food containers, and beverage bottle.** Due to the number of children in the programs, refrigeration and reheating is not available for lunch.

Children should bring a water bottle daily.

Soda, gum, and candy are not permitted in school and should not be included in lunches or snacks.

Sharing of food from lunches and snacks is not permitted for sanitary reasons, and because some children have allergies to certain foods.

Snacks provided by the school follow nutrition guidelines set by the Department of Human Services. A morning snack is provided for the children, and an afternoon snack is provided for children who remain after 2:30 p.m. The snack includes fruit or vegetables, whole grain products, and dairy products, such as milk or cheese. Children with identified allergies to dairy products will be offered water as an alternative.

### Bedding

All children will have a rest time after lunch. They should bring a blanket or beach towel, or some kind of clean covering to lie upon. Be sure it is labeled and placed in a plastic bag for hygienic purposes. Parents are asked to take all bedding home each Friday for laundering in hot water.

### Naps

Following lunch, the children have a rest period. The length of nap time varies with each child's individual needs. Children who are unable to sleep may do quiet activities after resting. The Kindergarten children rest and then begin their afternoon Kindergarten program.

## **CHECKLIST FOR EVERY DAY**

### **Preschool & Kindergarten Program**

1. **Prompt arrival.** Arrive at school on time! The Preschool & Kindergarten programs begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. each day. Children who come late miss being greeted by the teachers and the opening lesson at 8:30 a.m. Predictable routines help children feel secure and can aid in their adjustment. The concentration of their classmates is interrupted when someone arrives late.
2. **Acknowledgment of arrival.** When dropping off your child, make certain that the supervising staff member in attendance is informed of your child's arrival.
3. **Absences.** When absence is necessary, parents should inform the school by calling the office by 8:30 a.m.
4. **Dismissal & pick-up authorization.** Check out with the supervising teacher at pick-up time. Children will be released only to their parents, legal guardians, or those so authorized by the child's parents or legal guardians. Authorization to release a child can only be given by the child's parents or legal guardians. If the person picking up your child is unfamiliar to our staff, we will require government-issued photo identification (such as a driver's license or state I.D.) for verification before releasing your child.
5. **Dismissal time routines.** Please pick up your child promptly at dismissal time. The very young child gains security through being picked up at the same time every day.

When picking up your child, we ask that you leave with your child promptly and not linger. When children remain with their parents on the playground after their dismissal time, it creates a confusing situation for the teachers who are supervising the playground or classroom and makes it difficult for After-School Care teachers to close the program at 5:30 p.m. If you remain on the playground with your child after the pick-up time, you will be assessed the occasional care fee.

6. **After-School Care.** After-School Care is available until 5:30 p.m. with prior enrollment. Different activities and a snack are provided for the children who remain later in the day. MCS is licensed by the State of Hawaii to enroll children 2 years of age and under 7 years of age for a maximum enrollment of 126 in our preschool after-school care program.

**NOTE: School closes at 5:30 p.m. and children should be picked up promptly by the time the After-School Care programs end.** A late fee will be assessed and billed directly through FACTS by the Business Office. The late fee is to encourage families to pick up their children on time. Repeated late pick-up or failure to pay late charges may result in the termination of after-school care services to the family. Please refer to the Financial Information, included in the acceptance packet, for specific fees involved.

7. **Occasional care.** Limited occasional care is available for children in the 2:30 program in emergency situations and should not be used on a regular basis. Arrangements for occasional care must be made with the school office. Occasional child care rates will be assessed through FACTS.

8. **Secure gates.** When you enter or exit the playground, be absolutely certain that all gates are secured with the gate latches! We don't want any children to slip into the parking lot. Only adults should open and close all gate latches.
9. **Drive with caution.** Please drive slowly (5 mph or less) and carefully through our parking lot, keeping the drive-through lane unobstructed, and entering and exiting only through designated points. (See Campus Map)
10. **Parking lot safety.** When parking, turn off the vehicle's engine, remove the keys from the ignition, and lock all doors. Safety is our priority. Always accompany your child to or from the car to the gate. Do not leave children (e.g. younger siblings) unattended in the car.
11. **Personal articles.** Make sure your child does not bring toys, candy, gum, money, balloons, jewelry, purses or wallets, articles of value, or dangerous articles onto the school grounds. We have many interesting materials and constructive activities in school. If your child feels he or she has a book, tape, or something of interest to share, discuss this with the teacher before bringing it into the classroom.
12. **Pets and animals.** Pets and other animals may not be brought onto the playgrounds. The exception is certified Service Animals. Certified Service Animals must be leashed at all times while on campus.
13. **Lost and Found.** Check the "Lost and Found" regularly for missing items.
14. **Check mail folders.** Check your child's mail folder daily for communications from the office or teacher, accident reports, child's work, or other information.
15. **Discussing concerns with teachers.** Regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences are held throughout the year, but if a concern regarding your child arises, please schedule a mutually convenient time to meet with the teacher. It is important that such discussions be held at a time when everyone's full attention is possible. Lengthy conversations at morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times distract teachers from their primary responsibility of supervising the children.

## **ELEMENTARY PROGRAMS**

### **Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary**

Montessori elementary classrooms continue the mixed-age groupings as seen in the Early Education Programs. Students in grades 1, 2, and 3 form the Lower Elementary classes, while grades 4, 5, and 6 form the Upper Elementary class. Over the span of the six years, the goal of the Montessori elementary teachers is to assist the student in learning as much as possible about the cultures, inventions, and knowledge developed and acquired by human beings since humans first appeared on earth, as well as prehistory and current issues facing humans. The scope of information integrated into the curriculum units includes math, geometry, language arts, history, geography, cultural studies, botany, zoology, geology, physics, anatomy, health and nutrition, and environmental studies, as well as music, art, and physical education.

In contrast to the preschool child, the elementary student is a more conscious and intentional learner. Building on the wealth of information internalized during the preschool years, the elementary student is eager to relate new facts with prior information. The ongoing process of mastering the “3 Rs,” i.e. reading, writing, and arithmetic, enables students to discover the why, how, and wherefore about their world and to express themselves clearly.

Students take an active responsibility for their learning by organizing their work, choosing research projects and essay themes, creating their own vocabulary lists, engaging in peer teaching, and being accountable for the completion of assignments. They learn strategies to seek out answers and problem-solve creatively. In a classroom where learning is open-ended and the needs of the whole community are emphasized, students develop initiative, self-direction, and self-discipline.

Within the classroom, the students and teachers form a social unit. They share a responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment and atmosphere in which each person can thrive intellectually, emotionally, and physically. Students make choices and are accountable for the consequences of their decisions. As students develop inner controls over their behavior, they also engage in conflict resolution and creative problem-solving with their peers. We encourage students to consider the viewpoints of others, to accommodate, to assert, to negotiate, and to work together toward common goals. They learn what it means to be a member of a pluralistic and democratic society.

## GOALS OF THE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

We are committed to the Montessori approach to learning. Our goals are for each child to learn:

- **To study independently in a program of individualized instruction.**  
Individualized instruction does not mean one-on-one instruction. Some lessons occur in small groups. Each child receives individual attention from the teacher from the on-going evaluations of his work. The child gains guidance and direction in this personal time with the teacher. The teacher determines what needs to be done in more depth or what additional work should follow.
- **To work cooperatively with others in a multi-age setting that develops a community spirit.**  
Children are free to work in groups of their own choosing for special projects or to accomplish their regular daily work. They practice problem-solving methods within their small groups. They become effective community members.
- **To think abstractly and to use his imagination through a variety of approaches and open-ended exploration.**  
The imagination develops intensely in the elementary child. “To strike the imagination” is to get the child’s interest. It leads to work, which leads to imagining, which leads to abstract thinking.
- **To master concepts through work with three-dimensional materials which put abstract ideas into concrete form.**  
The Montessori materials assist the child in reaching abstraction. Spatial time lines, pictorial zoology, fractional insets, and botany charts are a few of the many materials designed to move the child toward abstract thinking. They are a means to an end.
- **To apply the “basics” in order to answer the why, the how, and the wherefore within his world.**  
The “3 Rs” serve as tools enabling the child to move forward and pursue a wider curriculum. Math and language skills progress on an on-going basis, with the child practicing math problems and language arts lessons as developmentally appropriate. The student uses basic skills to reach more deeply into other studies in Montessori’s cultural curriculum. Math is used to determine the distance between two cities on a map, or to weigh specimens collected for studies in geology. Language arts skills come together as a child conducts research and reports on how the earth was formed, or how people live in another country, or which plants belong to the heliconia family. Children see how music (rhythm, notation, etc.) relates to mathematics. They develop an understanding of cycles and systems and the interconnectedness of life.



- **To be self-disciplined and self-directed.**

The Montessori approach aids the child in developing the ability to master his or her own thoughts and actions to gain control over one's own being. The emphasis is on inner discipline. The child learns to take responsibility for his or her behavior, to make good choices, to work responsibly and independently, and how to set goals.

- **To solve problems creatively.**

The world is experiencing an accelerated rate of change. The education of the future must prepare students to cope with changes and to find solutions through means other than traditional educational methods and advice from experts. Imaginative, creative, critical thinkers contribute to the community at large.

Montessori children learn to look to many sources for their answers. They research different points of view. They look toward the community for possible solutions. They learn to adapt to change, and recognize their potential for shaping their own lives.

*“Education should no longer be mostly imparting knowledge, but must take a new path, seeking the release of human potentialities. The teacher . . . works in the service of the complete human being, able to exercise in freedom a self-disciplined will and judgment, unperverted by prejudice and undistorted by fear.”*

-- Dr. Maria Montessori

## ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM

### I. Language Arts (Lower Elementary program)

Reading: *Phonemic awareness; phonics; sight words; word attack; comprehension; vocabulary; fluency; poetry*

Writing: *Mechanics; process of writing; exposure to different types of writing*

Grammar: *Parts of speech; parts of a sentence*

Spelling

Handwriting

Literature

Dictionary skills

### Language Arts (Upper Elementary program)

Reading: *Comprehension; vocabulary*

Writing: *Writing techniques and structure; basic editing; exposure to different genres of writing; mechanics*

Grammar: *Advanced parts of speech; advanced parts of a sentence*

Oral Communication: *Public speaking; personal expression*

Spelling

Handwriting

Literature

Drama

Latin and Greek word roots

### II. Mathematics (Lower Elementary program)

Whole number operations: *addition, subtraction, multiplication, division*

Recognition and writing of symbols

Recognition of quantity

Place Value

Memorization of facts

Word Problems

Fractions

Plane Geometry

Passage to decanomial

Life skills: *Telling time; knowledge of money; measurement; estimation*

### Mathematics (Upper Elementary program)

Whole number operations: *addition, subtraction, multiplication, division*

Memorization of facts

Word problems; group problem-solving

Fractions

Decimals

Signed numbers

Ratio & proportion

**Mathematics (Upper Elementary program) (continued)**

Square roots; cube roots  
Squaring and cubing sequences  
Pre-algebra  
Plane geometry; surface area and volume  
Passage to decanomial  
Powers of numbers  
Graphing  
Life skills: Measurement; knowledge of money

**III. Cultural Curriculum (Lower Elementary program)**

History: *Study of the universe; timeline of life*  
Concept of time: *Clocks; calendars; personal timeline*  
Five kingdoms of life  
Fundamental needs of people  
Earth science  
Science: *Experiments supporting various themes (e.g. DNA and genetics, etc.); physical science*  
Geography: *Physical; political; biomes*  
Zoology: *External parts; vital functions; classification of invertebrates and vertebrates*  
Botany: *External parts; vital functions; classification*  
Peace education

**Cultural Curriculum (Upper Elementary program)**

History: *Ancient civilizations; early humans; U.S. history*  
Fundamental needs of people  
Study of systems and relationships with scientific principles  
Science: *Human body; zoology; botany; physical science; chemistry; simple machines; astronomy; weather; earth studies-geology*  
Geography: *Physical and political geography*  
Peace education

**IV. Personal and Social Development**

Goal-setting  
Time management  
Personal responsibility  
Peaceful conflict resolution  
Problem-solving  
Cooperative learning  
Care of the natural world and the environment; responsibility to the community; multi-cultural awareness and appreciation

**V. Physical Education**

Development and maintenance of physical fitness and good sportsmanship  
Awareness and management of the body  
Acquisition of useful physical skills, safety skills, and personal fitness habits  
Enjoyment of wholesome recreation

## **V. Physical Education (cont'd.)**

**Lower Elementary program:** Non-competitive skill-building games, leading to participation in sports

**Upper Elementary program:** Skills incorporated into non-competitive organized games and physical fitness

## **VI. Health**

General hygiene, nutrition, physical maintenance

## **VII. Music**

Performing/reading music; creating music; listening to, describing, and valuing music

## **VIII. Art**

**Lower Elementary program:** Appreciation of the arts; imaginative, creative, and critical thinking; an understanding and appreciation for the natural world

**Upper Elementary program:** Exposure to a variety of media and mediums through an open lab, experimentation set-up

## **IX. Hawaiian Studies**

Lower and Upper Elementary program: The curriculum focuses on the culture, history, and language of the Hawaiian people, as well as the geography and natural environment of the Hawaiian islands.

## **X. Computer Science and Coding**

**Lower Elementary Program:** All students are introduced to coding with hands-on exploration of basic programming concepts using block-based visual programming applications on iPad. Students are also introduced to robotics with Wonder Workshop's Dot Robot.

**Upper Elementary Program:** All students are introduced to core concepts of computer science, such as the binary language, the inner workings of a computer, current technology terms, companies, and leaders and their impact on society.

**4th year students:** Introduction to computers using Microsoft Surface Pro computers; Microsoft Windows; Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Continued coding and robotics with Wonder Workshop's Dot robot and code.org resources

**5th year students:** Use of Apple computers with MacBook Air laptops; Pages, Keynote, and Numbers. Reinforcement of coding and robotics fundamentals using Wonder Workshop's Dash robot and code.org resources.

**6th year students:** Tablet computing using Apple iPad, with emphasis on research, communication, project design, and presentation. Reinforcement of fundamental coding concepts using real Swift code on the iPad. Robotics and team building with Lego EV3 Mindstorms.

## **XI. Campouts**

Development and implementation of practical life skills, independence, personal responsibilities, and an appreciation for the natural world.

## **CHECKLIST FOR THE FIRST FULL DAY OF SCHOOL**

### **Elementary Programs**

1. **Forms.** See the section on **ENROLLMENT** for required paperwork.
2. **School supplies.** The comprehensive fee, paid with the first installment of tuition, covers most of the normal classroom supplies that your child will need for the school year. These items, such as pencils, pens, paper, notebooks, glue, compass, etc., will be provided by the school. A lightweight backpack (labeled with the child's name) is essential for keeping students' projects, homework folders, and sharing items all in one place. Backpacks and lunches are stored in bins on the Lower and Upper Elementary shelves.

## **CHECKLIST FOR EVERY DAY**

### **Elementary Programs**

1. **Prompt arrival/tardiness.** Elementary programs begin promptly at **8:00 a.m.** each day. Children who arrive after 8:00 a.m. must report to the office, with a parent or accompanying adult. Children who arrive late miss important lessons and communications, and are disruptive to classroom routines.
2. **Morning supervision.** Supervision for children is not provided prior to 7:30 a.m. Parents (or accompanying adults) who arrive before 7:30 a.m. to drop off their child should stay with their child for safety until the arrival of the teacher on duty.
3. **Acknowledgment of arrival.** When dropping off your child, make certain that the supervising staff member in attendance is informed of your child's arrival.
4. **Absences.** When absence is necessary, parents should inform the school by calling the office by 8:30 a.m.
5. **Dismissal & pick-up authorization.** Check out with the supervising teacher at the 2:30 p.m. pick-up time and if your child joins the elementary after-school program, be sure that a supervising staff member signs out your child on the attendance sheet. Children will be released only to their parents, legal guardians, or those so authorized by the child's parents or legal guardians. Authorization to release a child can only be given by the child's parents or legal guardians. If the person picking up your child is unfamiliar to our staff, we will require government-issued photo identification (such as a driver's license or state I.D.) for verification before releasing your child.

Elementary students who will be walking or taking the bus home must give the office a written note with the parent or legal guardian's signature authorizing the student to leave campus on their own at dismissal time.

6. **Dismissal time routines.** Please pick up your child promptly at dismissal time.

When picking up your child, we ask that you leave with your child promptly and not linger. When children remain with their parents on the playground after their dismissal time, it creates a confusing situation for the teachers who are supervising the playground or classroom and makes it difficult for After-School Care teachers to close the program at 5:30 p.m. If you remain on the playground with your child after the pick-up time, you will be assessed the occasional care fee.

7. **After-School Care.** After-School Care is available until 5:30 p.m. with prior enrollment. Different activities and a snack are provided for the children who remain later in the day. MCS is licensed by the State of Hawaii to enroll children 5 years 6 months of age and under 13 years of age for a maximum enrollment of 80 in our elementary after-school care program.

**NOTE: School closes at 5:30 p.m. and children should be picked up promptly by the time the After-School Care programs end.** A late fee will be assessed and billed directly through FACTS by the Business Office. The late fee is to encourage families to pick up their children on time. Repeated late pick-up or failure to pay late charges may result in the termination of after-school care services to the family. Please refer to the Financial Information, included in the acceptance packet, for specific fees involved.

8. **Occasional care.** Limited occasional care is available for children in the 2:30 program in emergency situations and should not be used on a regular basis. Arrangements for occasional care must be made with the school office. Occasional child care rates will be assessed through FACTS.
9. **Lunch.** Children must bring their own lunch, or may order lunch through the contracted catering company. Refrigeration is not available. Sodas, candy, and gum should not be included in lunches or snacks. See the section on **FOOD** for additional information. Children should bring a water bottle daily.
10. **Snack.** Elementary students should bring a nutritious morning snack, such as fresh fruit, vegetables, or whole grains, which help support students' bodies and minds as they work through the morning. MCS strongly encourages healthful snacks. A snack is provided to children who remain in the Elementary After-School Care program.
11. **Closed shoes.** Closed shoes, such as athletic shoes, are required daily for safety. Fully enclosed athletic shoes are required for P.E. and field trips.
12. **Backpack or book bag.** Please label your child's backpack, as the styles are often very similar.
13. **Personal articles.** Articles that can distract students from the business of learning, articles of value, or dangerous articles should not be brought to school. Cell phones and wi-fi enabled smart watches should be turned off during the school day. Check with the teacher prior to bringing in an item if you are unsure.

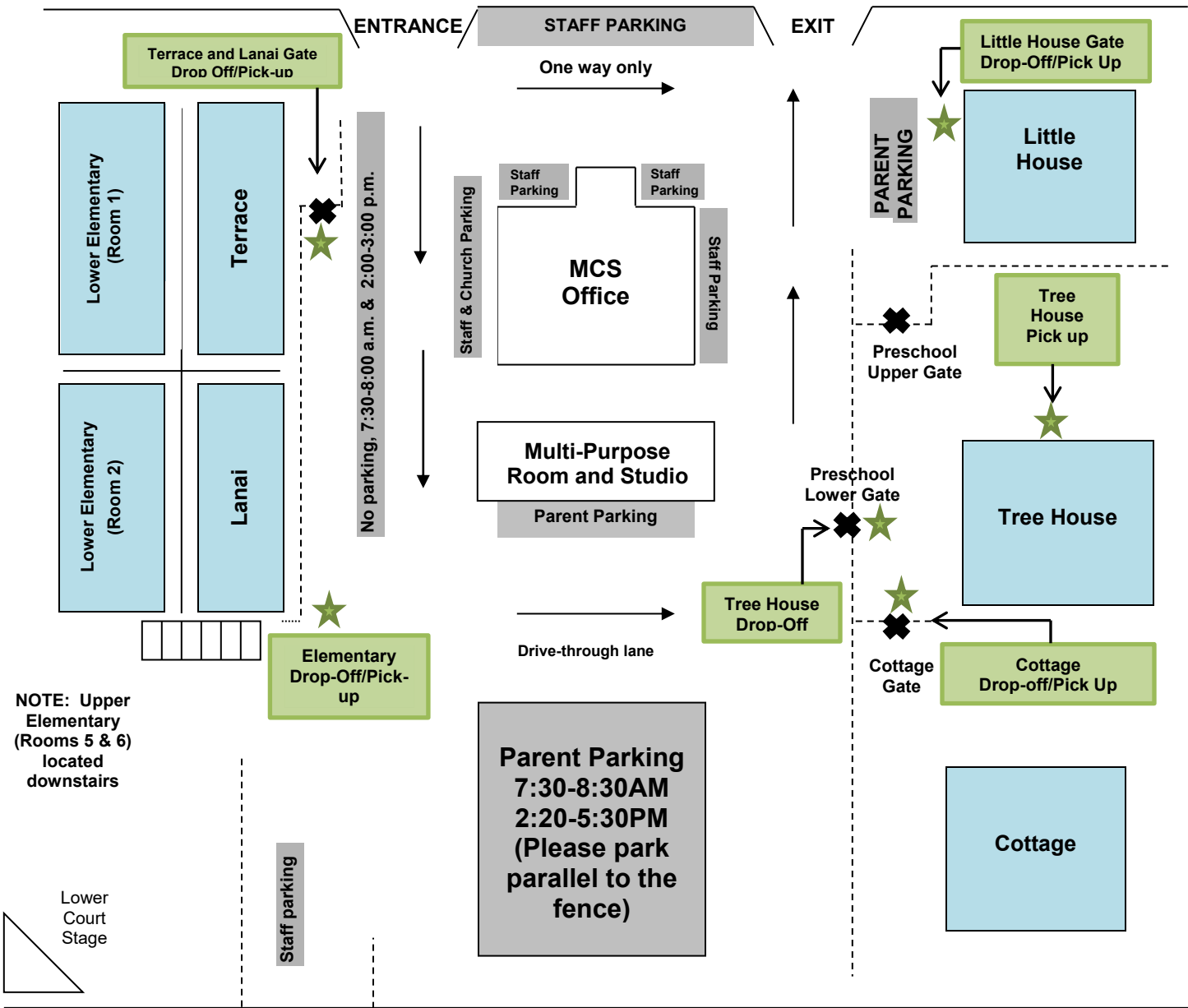
14. **Clothing and Grooming.** Students attending MCS should wear clothing that is comfortable, clean, and appropriate for an early childhood and elementary school. Because our instructional programs include active engagement and play, students must wear clothing that allows them to move, run, jump, and play. Elementary students must wear closed-toe shoes on a daily basis. A student's appearance, including dress and grooming, must not disrupt the educational environment, create safety concerns, nor create a distraction. Students should wear an MCS school t-shirt on field trips.
15. **Drive with caution.** Please drive slowly (5 mph or less) and carefully through our parking lot, keeping the drive-through lane unobstructed, and entering and exiting only through designated points. (See Campus Map.)
16. **Parking lot safety.** When parking, turn off the vehicle's engine, remove the keys from the ignition, and lock all doors. Safety is our priority. Always accompany your child to or from the vehicle to the gate. Do not leave children (e.g. younger siblings) unattended in the vehicle.
17. **Pets and animals.** Pets and other animals may not be brought onto the playgrounds. The exception is certified Service Animals. Certified Service Animals must be leashed at all times while on campus.
18. **Secure gates.** When you enter or exit through any campus gate, be absolutely certain that the gate is secured with the gate latch! We don't want any of the preschool children to slip into the parking lot. Preschool-aged children are not allowed to open and close gate latches.
19. **Checking mail folders.** Elementary students are responsible for checking their mail folders daily for homework, student's work, communication from the office or teacher, accident reports, or other information, and taking these items home to their parents.
20. **Discussing concerns with teachers.** Regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences are held throughout the year, but if a concern regarding your child arises, please schedule a mutually convenient time to meet with the teacher. It is important that such discussions be held at a time when everyone's full attention is possible. Lengthy conversations at morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times distract teachers from their primary responsibility of supervising the children.

**SCHOOL  
POLICIES, PROCEDURES,  
AND PRACTICES**



# Campus Map

← NEHOA STREET →  
 (Street parking on Nehoa Street is available on the makai side from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.,  
 and on the mauka side from 8:30 a.m. in the designated parking zones.)



NOTE: Upper Elementary (Rooms 5 & 6) located downstairs

Lower Court Stage

## CAMPUS SAFETY

1. **DRIVE SLOWLY**, 5 mph or less, following designated traffic flow pattern.
2. Enter and exit the campus with caution. Watch for pedestrians, both on and off campus.
3. Please be sure to always **turn off your car's engine** and remove the keys from the ignition.
4. Children should walk close to adults while on the parking lot.
5. Secure your vehicle. Roll up your windows, **lock your doors**, and remove valuables or keep them out of plain sight in your vehicle.
6. Do not leave infants or younger siblings unattended in your vehicle, even for one minute.
7. Only adults may open gates. Be sure to latch ALL gates securely behind you.
8. Be sure a supervising staff member knows that your child has arrived on campus in the morning and is leaving the campus in the afternoon.
9. Please leave the area closest to the planter box open as a drive-through lane, 7:30-8:00 a.m., during the morning drop-off time.
10. If you need to stay on campus for any reason, please park alongside the Multi-Purpose Room, or somewhere on campus where you are not obstructing other cars. Field trip chaperones must park off-campus.

## ENROLLMENT

Upon acceptance into the school, a tuition deposit or tuition payment is due. Payment is necessary to hold the space for the student. Information regarding our financial policies is enclosed with the acceptance letter and is available through the Business Office.

### **Requirements for All New Students**

New students entering MCS must supply the following prior to the first day of school:

1. Current Student and Family information in FACTS, Montessori Community School's secure school management system..
2. Pupil's Health Form (Form 14). See section on **Health Requirements** for more information.
3. A copy of the student's birth certificate or passport. Souvenir hospital certificates are not acceptable official documents.
4. A signed Enrollment Packet (provided by MCS).
5. Student's Certificate of Release for elementary students transferring from another local elementary school, and any prior school records.

### **Requirements for All Continuing Students**

Continuing MCS students must supply the following prior to the first day of school:

1. Updated Student and Family Information in FACTS.
2. Updated health information on the Pupil's Health Form (Form 14), as required by the State Department of Health. See section on Health Requirements for more information.
3. A signed Enrollment Packet, completed annually (provided by MCS).

## HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

For all students ***new to Montessori Community School***, the following health requirements must be documented and turned in to the school's office prior to your child's first day of school. The information should be documented on a "Student Health Record" (Form 14), which can be obtained from your child's physician or on the Family Portal in FACTS.

### I. TUBERCULOSIS CLEARANCE

A negative Tuberculosis (TB) Clearance is required for all students new to Montessori Community School. The clearance must be performed by a U.S. licensed health practitioner (MD, DO, APRN, or PA) **on or after the student's first birthday (12 months of age or older), and must consist of one of the following acceptable clearance methods:**

- a) Negative Risk Assessment, using the Hawaii Risk Assessment form.
  - b) Negative TB test (TB Mantoux skin test for any age **or** QuantiFERON Gold-in-Tube (QFT-GIT)/ T-SPOT blood test for 2 years and older).
  - c) Positive TB test **and** negative chest x-ray.
- Parents who do not want skin tests for children under 5 years of age need a physician's letter stating the skin test is medically contraindicated.
  - No exemptions to the TB clearance requirement are allowed.
  - **Without a tuberculosis clearance, children are not permitted to start school.**

### II. HEALTH RECORDS (Form 14 and DHS Form 908)

- All new students must submit a current record of all health requirements (Form 14) prior to enrollment.
- These requirements must include (in English) records of a physical examination (completed within one year prior to Hawaii school entry), updated immunizations, and a record of a negative tuberculosis test.
- All Two-Year-Olds and Preschool & Kindergarten students new to MCS must also submit the completed DHS Form 908.
- Blank copies of these forms are available on the Family Portal in FACTS. The Form 14 is also available through your (Hawaii) physician's office.

### III. PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

- Must be completed within one year prior to first entrance into school in Hawaii.
- Must be performed by a U.S. licensed practitioner (MD, DO, APRN, or PA).

#### IV. IMMUNIZATIONS

### REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS

#### Two-Year-Old & Preschool

DTaP, DTP = 4 doses

Polio = 3 doses

MMR = 1 dose

Hep A = 2 doses

Hep B = 3 doses

Hib = 3-4\* doses

PCV = 4 doses

Varicella = 1 dose

*Documented history of varicella by a U.S. licensed practitioner (MD, DO, APRN, or PA) may be substituted.*

#### Kindergarten through Grade 6

DTaP, DTP = 5 doses

Polio = 4 doses

MMR = 2 doses

Hep A = 2 doses

Hep B = 3 doses

Varicella = 2 doses

*Documented history of varicella by a U.S. licensed practitioner (MD, DO, APRN, or PA) may be substituted.*

*All immunizations must meet the minimum ages and intervals between vaccine doses as required by Hawaii Administrative Rules, Title 11, Department of Health; Chapter 157, Examination and Immunization.*

#### V. PROVISIONAL ATTENDANCE

- A student who does not have evidence of all of the required immunizations, or documentation of a physical examination, may attend school, **provisionally**, upon submitting written evidence from the doctor or doctor's office stating that the student is in the process of receiving the required immunizations or physical examination.
- The provisional attendance period shall be no longer than three calendar months after the date of provisional attendance to a school.

#### VI. NOTICE OF EXCLUSION

If a student does not complete the required immunizations or examination within three months of the date of provisional attendance, the school shall notify the parent by dated, written notice of exclusion that the student will be excluded from the school beginning thirty calendar days after the date of the notice.

### **Continued Enrollment**

All current MCS students are expected to confirm their continued enrollment at MCS annually by:

- \* Submitting a signed Enrollment Packet;
- \* Paying all required fees;
- \* Completing all required forms;
- \* Meeting all deadlines.

Failure to submit the Enrollment Packet in a timely manner may jeopardize the student's opportunity to continue in the school. Re-enrollment contracts are distributed to MCS students in February.

Unless otherwise discussed with the child's teacher, children remain in the same classroom throughout their three-year cycle (i.e. Preschool & Kindergarten; Lower Elementary grades 1-3; and Upper Elementary, grades 4-6).

Students progressing from one program to another, i.e. Two-Year-Old to Preschool, Preschool to Kindergarten, or Kindergarten to Elementary, are accepted based on the recommendation of their teacher. Parents are apprised of their children's progress through regularly-scheduled parent-teacher conferences. Parents' failure to respond to conference requests may jeopardize the continued enrollment of their child.

At MCS, we believe that children succeed when the values espoused by the school are shared by the child's family. It is the school's expectation that parents or legal guardians will attend conferences with their child's teachers and work together to provide the optimum conditions for their child's educational benefit.

All continuing students must update their immunizations as required by the State of Hawaii's Department of Health.

Parents must meet any outstanding financial obligations to the school prior to re-enrollment.

On those rare occasions when the professional staff believes a child's best interests are not served by continuing in the school, MCS reserves the right to terminate enrollment. When such a situation arises, the school works closely with families in resolving the situation.

### **Custodial Arrangements**

MCS acknowledges that parents or legal guardians have certain legal rights, and therefore both parents or legal guardians have access to the minor child. MCS will share information with both parents or legal guardians as permitted by law.

We recognize that some families may have specific child custody or other legal custodial arrangements. In order for MCS to comply with the arrangements, we require a copy of the court order that pertains to the custody of the child. For parents who are working through a process of establishing child custody, any parental requests must be accompanied by a court order authorizing such arrangements.

The court order will be kept in the child's file in the school office so that the school can honor the arrangements. Parents are expected to notify the school of any changes.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Children are expected to be kind and respectful to themselves, to others, and to the physical environment. Children are also expected to take responsibility for their actions and to cooperate with their teachers and school personnel.

### **Unsatisfactory Conduct**

When a child engages in dangerous or very disruptive behavior, the teacher may decide to remove the child from the classroom and have the child remain in the school office or other supervised designated area. If the behavior continues, the child may be suspended from school and the period of suspension may vary from one to several days.

When the behavior is persistent and endangers the safety of the child or others, the child may be dismissed from the school. A “probationary” period may be warranted before a dismissal occurs.

Parents will be informed of their child’s removal from the classroom and suspension from school. It is expected that parents will work cooperatively with the school to help change and improve the child’s behavior. In the event that the school and family do not share the same priorities or values, and it is in the best interest of all concerned, the school administration may decide to terminate enrollment.

Knowing the ages of the children we work with, our response to inappropriate behavior takes into consideration the developmental stage of the child. However, the school reserves the right to dismiss a child if, in our professional opinion, a reasonable level of safety cannot be maintained.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF ADULTS**

Montessori Community School is dedicated to establishing a relationship with every family based on trust and respect, guided by the principles of the Montessori approach to education. As a school, we are committed to providing an educational environment where our students have the opportunity to develop their intellectual, social/emotional, physical, creative, and spiritual potential.

**Failure by parents to comply with any of the school's policies and procedures articulated in the Family Handbook or in other published materials may be deemed cause for the withdrawal of their child from the school.**

### **Parent Involvement**

There are many opportunities for parent involvement in the school. Parents find a number of benefits by participating in their child's school, such as social networking with other parents and staff, learning more about what their child does while at school, and gaining a greater understanding of the Montessori philosophy. The Parent-Faculty Association (PFA) provides direct support to classrooms and teachers, to the parents of the school, and to the Development Office in the organization and management of the fundraising activities of the school. Membership in the PFA is automatically included with the Comprehensive Fee, and covers the entire family. Opportunities for parent participation are publicized through the various communication outlets of the school. Family events are designed to develop parent camaraderie.

### **Parent Conduct**

In Montessori philosophy, the adult is considered a role model to children. We therefore expect that parents and/or legal guardians will follow the school's policies and procedures, and to behave in a manner consistent with Montessori values of peace and harmony in written, spoken, and in physical form that demonstrates support and respect of the school and its mission, as well as the community of students, families, and staff. We expect that families will read and follow the precepts and guidelines of the Family Handbook so that their child may take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered by the school.

On behalf of their children, parents are encouraged to:

- ❖ Participate in celebrations, events, and programs so that they and their child will develop strong bonds with their peers in the community and create lasting memories

- ❖ Do their best to make contributions to the community by volunteering their time and talent through the PFA or other school activities several times per year
- ❖ Attend all Parent-Teacher Conferences as regularly scheduled
- ❖ Take advantage of Parent Education opportunities to learn more about the Montessori approach and MCS' educational program
- ❖ Stay informed by reading the Family Handbook, school newsletters, emails, and other school correspondence
- ❖ Be positive in their speech and actions on and off campus to support MCS, including in their online/digital presence
- ❖ Contact the school administration or their child's classroom teacher to seek clarification when questions arise about school policies and practices

### **Physical Safety & Weapons**

Montessori Community School (MCS) will not tolerate, in any form (physical, verbal, or otherwise), intimidation, harassment, violence, or threats of violence (whether by an employee, student, family member, visitor, vendor, or other third party) that are directed towards any employee, student, family member, visitor, vendor, or other third party and that relate to those named individuals' presence at or affiliation with MCS. In addition, MCS prohibits the possession of any firearm, knife (that is not necessary for the performance of job duties), or other weapon while on MCS property. Any violation of these policies may result in the offending individual being barred from campus and/or the appropriate authorities contacted. If you believe there has been a violation of these policies, please promptly notify the Head of School.

### **Resolving Disagreements**

When disagreements occur, it is expected that all adults involved will discuss matters in a reasonable manner. Abusive and/or threatening language or behavior between adults, parents, family members, or staff, is unacceptable and may result in the offending adult being barred from campus and/or the appropriate authorities contacted.



When conflicts occur, effort will be made to resolve differences. However, if the differences are determined by the school administration to be irreconcilable, the school may terminate services to the child and the family during the school year, or choose not to re-enroll the child for the upcoming school year.

### **Smoking, Alcohol, Illicit Drugs, or Illicit Substances**

Smoking of tobacco or other substances, including e-cigarettes, drinking or possessing alcohol, or the use or possession of illicit drugs or other illicit substances are prohibited on the school campus and at any school event, whether on or off campus. The exception is when alcohol is offered by the school at off-campus, adults-only events, such as the Montessori Magic Auction fundraiser.

### **Campus Safety**

Our primary concern is the safety of our children and other adults. Licensed drivers who do not drive with caution on campus may be prohibited from driving onto the campus.

### **Mandated Reporting Law**

The school is mandated by State law to report any suspected situations of child abuse or neglect. When the school has reason to believe there is evidence of abuse or neglect, or has reason to believe that abuse or neglect will occur in the reasonably foreseeable future, the matter will be reported to the State Child Welfare Services.

## ABSENCES

When absence is necessary, parents should inform the school by calling the office by 8:30 a.m. Every effort should be made to schedule medical appointments and other commitments outside of school time.

A doctor's note may be required for students to return to school following an absence due to contagious illness.

Parents are expected to schedule family vacations during school breaks. Since extended absences can seriously disrupt instruction and the learning process, parents should consult the child's teacher as to any effects an extended absence may have on the child's progress. Parents should understand that teachers will not be held responsible for loss of student learning opportunities caused by extended absences of choice.

## TARDINESS

The school opens at 7:30 a.m. For their safety, unsupervised children are not permitted on campus prior to 7:30 a.m. If a child is unavoidably delayed and arrives after the class is in session, parents must bring their child to the office for check-in.

- **Elementary students** start school promptly at **8:00 a.m. and should arrive no later than 8:00 a.m.**
- The **Two-Year-Old** and **Preschool & Kindergarten** programs begin at **8:30 a.m.**, and children in these early education programs should arrive no later than **8:30 a.m.**

**Repeated tardiness jeopardizes a child's ability to do well in school.** When children arrive late, they miss important information given by the teacher at the beginning of the day and miss the group time that is important in helping them feel part of the group.

## END OF SCHOOL DAY

Children are released only to their parent(s) or legal guardian(s). Permission for others to pick up a child can be given by the parent or legal guardians through written authorization to the office through FACTS. In the event that someone other than those listed as an Authorized Pickup in FACTS will be picking up a child, the parent or legal guardian should give written authorization or call the office with authorization. The office reserves the right to confirm phoned-in authorization by returning the parent's call.

If the person picking up your child is unfamiliar to our staff, we will require government-issued photo identification (such as a driver's license or state I.D.) for verification before releasing your child.

**NOTE:** Even if you are having another Montessori Community School student's parent or staff member pick up your child, you must notify the office to that effect.

Dismissal time varies for the different programs. Dismissal time in the Early Education programs is 2:30 p.m., with the after-school care program ending at 5:30 p.m.

Elementary students are dismissed at 2:30 p.m., with the after-school care program ending at 5:30 p.m. Students may not remain on campus unsupervised after the 2:30 p.m. dismissal time.

Elementary students who will be walking or taking the bus home must give the office a written note with the parent or legal guardian's signature authorizing the student to leave campus on their own at dismissal time. Students may not remain on campus unsupervised after the 2:30 p.m. dismissal time.

After-School Care is available until 5:30 p.m. with prior enrollment. Different activities and a snack are provided for the children who remain later in the day. MCS is licensed by the State of Hawaii to enroll children 2 years of age and under 7 years of age for a maximum enrollment of 126 in our preschool after-school care program, and children 5 years 6 months of age and under 13 years of age for a maximum enrollment of 80 in our elementary after-school care program.

Limited occasional care is available for children in the 2:30 program in emergency situations and should not be used on a regular basis. Arrangements for occasional care must be made with the school office. Occasional child care rates will be assessed through FACTS.

**School closes at 5:30 p.m. and children should be picked up promptly by the time the after-school care programs end.** A late fee will be assessed and billed directly through FACTS by the Business Office. The late fee is to encourage families to pick up their children on time. Repeated late pick-up or failure to pay late charges may result in the termination of after-school care services to your family. Please refer to the Financial Information, included in the acceptance packet, for specific fees involved.

## HEALTH & SAFETY

### Illness & Communicable Disease

The health of all children is of prime importance to us. It is known that children in group care settings have an increased risk of infectious illnesses. We encourage frequent handwashing during the day, which has been shown to limit the risk of the spread of illness in similar settings. Please safeguard your child and others by keeping them home if signs of illness are present.

If your child is ill and will be absent from school, please call the school office at (808) 522-0244 by 8:30 a.m.

#### Children must be kept home for the following reasons:

- **FEVER.** A temperature above 100.4° F within the previous 24 hours. Children may return to school when they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, and if any accompanying symptoms are significantly improving.
- **COVID-19.** Children who arrive at school with symptoms of illness, especially symptoms of COVID-19, will be sent home. While COVID-19 presents many symptoms, particular attention should be paid to the primary symptoms of concern, including fever over 100.4°F, persistent cough, shortness of breath, or gastrointestinal distress. (Please refer to the section on **COVID-19**, below, for further details.)
- **VOMITING AND/OR DIARRHEA.** Children must stay home until free from these conditions for 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea. Children who experience vomiting episodes that occur 2 or more times in the previous 24 hours must stay home until the vomiting is resolved. For children in diapers, diarrhea is defined as a loose bowel movement not contained by the diaper. For children not in diapers, diarrhea is defined as stool frequency two or more stools greater than the child's normal stool frequency that is not caused by a change in diet.
- **DISEASE.** Any diagnosable illness, disease, or condition which requires exclusion as per the Department of Health guidelines, such as measles, mumps, chicken pox, whooping cough, COVID-19, etc.
- **CONTAGIOUS CONDITIONS.** Colds, influenza (flu), strep throat, croup, runny nose or congestion unrelated to allergies, unexplained rashes, skin infections, eye infections, head lice, etc. Children must stay home until the condition has significantly improved. A doctor's note verifying the successful resolution of the condition may be required to be presented to the school office in order for the student to return to school.

**CHRONIC ALLERGIES.** Children under the care of a physician for chronic allergies must present a written statement from the physician specifically stating the nature of the child's condition and that the condition is not contagious.

**MEDICATION.** Please speak with your child’s teacher or the office if medication needs to be administered during school hours. Parents must complete a **Medication Release Form** (available from the teacher or the office) and include it with the medicine. Medications must be sent in the original, labeled container.

**NEVER** send medication, either prescription or over-the-counter, with a child to keep in his lunch box, cubby, or backpack. This presents a serious danger to your own child and others. All medication, non-prescription as well as prescription, should be given to the teacher upon arrival. This includes, but is not limited to hand sanitizers, sunscreen, and cough lozenges.

**HEAD LICE.** A common problem among school children is head lice. While the head lice, or “ukus,” do not themselves spread disease, the itching they induce causes the child to scratch, and may result in infections at the scalp sites. In some cases, children may develop swollen glands in the neck and/or under the arms.

Consequently, if a child is discovered to have head lice, parents will be called to immediately pick up their child, and must take no longer than one hour to pick up their child. Children and all affected family members must be treated with a medically-approved head lice treatment and MCS students may not return to school until the application of the head lice treatment, in accordance with Department of Health guidelines. (Copies of the guidelines are available in the school office.) All family members should also be checked and treated as necessary.

In addition to the medically-approved head lice treatment, nits (eggs) must be combed out and removed from the affected child and other family members on a daily basis, until there are no nits present. The medically-approved treatment must be repeated one week after the initial treatment (or as directed on the package). In one week, there will be a follow-up head check. At that time, any child who had previously been treated must be free from lice and their nits.

Failure to take appropriate measures may result in the child’s suspension from school until the situation is resolved to the school’s satisfaction.

### **General Health Guidelines**

- Parental cooperation with school policies regarding illness is absolutely essential for the well-being of the children and proper functioning of the school.
- **Contagious diseases must be reported to the office immediately.** This way we can notify the other families whose children have been exposed so they can be on the alert for symptoms. **Parents are asked to disclose any information regarding infections and/or communicable diseases which their child has had or been exposed to and are not reflected on the Form 14. This information will be treated in a confidential manner.** MCS cannot disclose medical information on any child without written permission from that child’s parent or guardian.
- Children who are ill must stay home from school and will be sent home if they become ill at school, particularly if they have COVID-19 symptoms. Children who become ill during the school day will be isolated and kept comfortable. Parents will be called to immediately pick up their child, and must take no longer than one hour to pick up their sick child. If you are unavailable during the day, we will contact the people whose names you have supplied to the office through FACTS.

- Children who arrive at school with symptoms of illness will be sent home.
- Should any child exhibit a rash, discharge from the eyes or ears, vomiting, or any other unusual condition, we will contact the child’s parents and recommend they seek the advice of their physician or a medical professional. A doctor’s statement verifying diagnosis of the child’s condition may be required, at the discretion of the staff.
- Upon returning to school following an illness, the school (at the discretion of the staff) may require a statement from a licensed medical professional (MD, DO, APRN, or PA) verifying that the child is healthy and non-contagious. A doctor’s note may be required for students to return to school following an absence due to contagious illness or condition.

### **COVID-19 Policies (updated 6/30/2023)**

Montessori Community School’s policies in response to COVID-19 continue to change as guidance from governmental agencies, including the Hawaii Department of Health (HDOH), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the Hawaii Department of Human Services (DHS) is updated. The widespread availability of COVID-19 vaccines, high levels of vaccination and immunity, increased access to testing, and effective treatments have significantly reduced the risk of severe COVID-19. The HDOH’s updated COVID-19 Guidance for K-12 schools is aligned with the CDC’s Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools.

**It is important to note that MCS’ COVID-19 guidelines and policies are subject to change in order to follow current governmental guidance. Parents will be notified of any changes.**

#### **I. Students who test positive for COVID-19 AND have COVID-19 symptoms:**

- Must isolate for 5 days, regardless of vaccination status. “Day 1” is the first full day after symptoms appear or the date of the positive test result.
- May return to school on Day 6 if they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** symptoms are significantly improving.
- Must wear a well-fitted mask around others indoors from Day 6 to Day 10 of illness after completing home isolation.
- If the child has a fever or is not yet improving, they must remain in isolation until the above conditions are true.

#### **II. Students who test positive for COVID-19 but DO NOT have COVID-19 symptoms:**

- Must isolate for 5 days, regardless of vaccination status. “Day 1” is the first full day after symptoms appear or the date of the positive test result.
- May return to school on Day 6 if symptoms do not develop.
- Must wear a well-fitted mask around others indoors from Day 6 to Day 10 of illness after completing home isolation.

**III. Students who are sick with symptoms of COVID-19 but have tested negative for COVID-19 or do not yet have test results, regardless of vaccination status:**

- May return to school if they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** symptoms are significantly improving.
- If the child has a fever or is sick with COVID-19 symptoms and the negative test was from a home test, they must continue to isolate and test again after 24 to 48 hours.

**IV. Students who have been exposed to a person with COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status:**

- If there are NO symptoms, students may return to school immediately.
- Children must wear a well-fitted mask around others while indoors for 10 full days
- Watch for symptoms. COVID-19 can develop up to 10 days after exposure.
- If symptoms start, isolate immediately.
  - Test and stay home until the result is known.
  - If positive, follow isolation protocol.
- Test on Day 6 even if there are no symptoms.
  - If positive, follow isolation protocol.
  - If negative, continue to wear a mask indoors through day 10.

**V. Additional COVID-19 guidance:**

- Parents or legal guardians should consult with their physician to consider COVID-19 vaccination for their child.
- While COVID-19 presents many symptoms, particular attention should be paid to the primary symptoms of concern, including fever over 100.4°F, persistent cough, shortness of breath, or intestinal distress.

## Food Allergies

MCS makes every effort to ensure that students eat healthfully and safely, and is attentive to the needs of children identified as having a food allergy. Our policy is to support students with food allergies through education of our staff and classroom communities, and to protect students from ingesting foods that are dangerous to their health. We provide our staff with training in what symptoms to look for in a child and how to respond in case of an allergic reaction and medical emergency, including the use of an epinephrine auto-injector, or ‘Epi-pen.’

MCS follows the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the classroom, cafeteria, transportation, school events, and physical education. MCS is not a “nut-free” environment. In classrooms where children have been identified as having food allergies, teachers will avoid the use of identified allergens in class projects, parties, holidays and celebrations, arts, crafts, science experiments, cooking, snacks, or rewards.

In classrooms and in the elementary cafeteria, students that have been identified as having a food allergy will be provided a designated allergy-friendly table. A child with a food allergy should sit at that table and any other student or adult may join the child so long as their food does not contain the allergen. In this way, the child will not be isolated from other children in the vicinity. Each day, the table will be made clean and washed with fresh paper towels or cloths that have not been used on other surfaces.

Students should wash hands before or after eating food so as not to contaminate shared materials in the classroom or cafeteria.

Special care will be taken while on field trips to ensure that children with food allergies are provided a safe space to eat while still in the company of others, based on the practice identified above.

In all cases, teachers must ensure rapid access to an Epi-pen in case of a food allergy emergency, so we ask that parents supply two Epi-pens to the school if it has been prescribed for their child.

Please see the CDC guidelines for further information. **Children with allergies are required to complete the Allergy, Asthma, and Medical Condition Information form in FACTS.**



## **Accidents**

When a child is injured, first aid is administered by the staff and an Accident Report form, which describes the injury and treatment, is completed by a teacher and sent home. A copy of the Accident Report is kept on file in the office. The staff treats minor injuries, such as cuts and scrapes, by cleansing with soap and water and applying a bandage.

In the event of a serious injury, the staff will contact a parent, or the designated alternate on the Emergency Form. If deemed necessary by the staff, the school will call 911 for assistance and arrange for ambulance transportation. The hospital nearest to MCS is Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children. However, the Emergency Medical Technicians of the ambulance team will make the decision about the nearest available hospital emergency room to which the child will be transported. The school will contact the parents (or authorized alternate) to inform them of the location of the emergency room at which to meet the ambulance. A school staff member may accompany the child in the ambulance, unless prohibited by the medical professionals. If school personnel are not permitted to accompany the child in the ambulance, a staff member may follow to meet the child at the emergency room.

Staff members who have successfully completed certified First Aid and Child CPR courses are present on campus at all times.

## **Personal Safety**

Objects which pose a potential danger to the child or others are prohibited from school. If there is a question about the appropriateness of a specific item a child wishes to bring to school, check with the teacher first. Failure to cooperate with the school may lead to suspension or dismissal from the school.

## **Inclusive Restroom Accessibility**

All MCS students are entitled to utilize the restroom facilities that correspond to their sincere gender identity. Students who prefer to access single-person, gender-neutral restrooms will have the option of using the closest single-person, gender-neutral restroom, such as in the main office, Cottage, Tree House, or Little House classrooms. Students will determine which restroom they feel most comfortable using, and no student will be compelled to use the gender-neutral restroom.

## **Insurance Coverage**

MCS carries general liability insurance, as required by State of Hawaii regulations.

## **Emergency Plans**

It is important that all families are aware of the emergency procedures which Montessori Community School will initiate if an emergency situation arises. Of major importance is parental awareness and cooperation.

In the event of a school-wide emergency situation, such as a school closure or lockdown, the school will keep parents informed through various channels, as appropriate, including emails, text messaging, phone calls, and notifications to the media.

During an emergency situation, the Head of School will be in charge. In the absence of the Head of School, a delegated administrator will assume the responsibility. The staff will remain with the children until the situation is sufficiently stable.

**Campus Emergency** – Should there be a threat to the safety or security of the students and staff on campus, the school has a plan of action and will initiate those steps to keep everyone safe. The students and staff will be kept secured indoors. If deemed necessary, the school will go into lockdown, and the police will inform the school when it is safe for the lockdown to be over.

**Fire** - Fire escape routes are posted in each classroom, and fire extinguishers are present in every occupied room throughout the campus. Fire evacuation drills are held regularly. Children leave in an orderly fashion under teacher supervision to the basketball court at the back of the campus. In the event that our facility is not habitable, our off-campus evacuation sites include neighboring Catholic Charities and Roosevelt High School.

**Tsunami** – Montessori Community School is not in a tsunami evacuation zone, so we do not have to evacuate. The following procedures have been adopted in the event of a Tsunami Warning:

- a) If a warning is issued while we are in session, we will remain with the children until they can be safely picked up.
- b) If a warning is issued before our day normally begins, classes will be canceled and the school will be closed.

**Hurricane/Tropical Storm** – Hurricane or Tropical Storm **Watches** are issued by the National Weather Service 48 hours prior to the arrival of storm effects. Hurricane or Tropical Storm **Warnings** are issued when one of these storms will affect Oahu in 36 hours or less.

When a **Watch** is issued, we will monitor the storm and make decisions to cancel school if the Watch is upgraded to a Warning. The timing of closure will generally coincide with the end of the normal school day. In the case of evacuation, our off-campus evacuation sites include neighboring Catholic Charities and Roosevelt High School. In the event of a **Warning** issued for Oahu, the school will close.

**Earthquake** – Should an earthquake of significant magnitude occur on Oahu, our school could be damaged. If it has been determined that our buildings are damaged, we will evacuate to a nearby open area or a safe off-campus site. Our off-campus evacuation sites include neighboring Catholic Charities and Roosevelt High School.

**Flooding** – Our school is not located in an identified flooding zone. However, if water begins to rise around our facilities, or in the event we are advised to evacuate, we will immediately move the children to higher ground. If we must evacuate to an off-campus site, our off-campus evacuation sites include neighboring Catholic Charities and Roosevelt High School.

In summary, please be assured that we will take good care of your children during any emergency or disaster. Several suggestions are appropriate:

- a) **A good rule of thumb for closures:** If it is announced over radio or television that all public schools on Oahu are closing, we will also, in all likelihood, be closing. Under no circumstance, however, will we close until all children have been picked up by their parents or authorized designee.
- b) It is essential that you **establish individual and family plans** for tsunami, hurricane, earthquake, and flooding. These plans should identify what preparatory actions should be taken for each hazard. They should include acquainting yourselves with shelter locations and how you will travel to them if evacuation advisories are issued, what you plan to do if the family is separated, what type of survival supplies you will need, etc.

Such preparedness information can be obtained from the following agencies:

- Department of Emergency Management: <http://www.honolulu.gov/dem.html>  
Phone: (808) 723-8960
- Hawaii Emergency Management Agency: <http://dod.hawaii.gov/hiema/>  
(formerly Hawaii Civil Defense Agency) Phone: (808) 733-4300
- FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency): <http://www.fema.gov>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Official Coronavirus  
Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- State of Hawaii Department of Health – COVID-19: <https://hawaiiicovid19.com>

## COMMUNICATION

We cannot over-emphasize the importance of open communication between parents and staff. Communication between parents and teachers occurs through regular classroom newsletters, Goal-Setting and Parent-Teacher Conferences, progress reports, email, and telephone. The best way to communicate is through face to face communication when problems occur. Changes in your child's life (e.g. house guests, new baby, parent(s) out of town, a move to a new home, separation of parents, a death in the family, etc.) can be very unsettling. If we are aware of the situation, we can be more responsive to a child's needs and understanding of behaviors which may arise at school. We can administer an extra dose of TLC (tender, loving care).

Sometimes children may voice concerns over something that happened at school, such as a broken friendship, misunderstanding, or altercation. If your child seems unusually bothered by an event, or if you have questions regarding what occurred, please discuss it with your child's teacher. The teacher will follow up with the situation at school. **Parents should not speak directly with the other child or children involved in the incident.** Please refrain from contacting the child's parents, and allow the appropriate school officials to mediate the situation with the children.

"Grapevines" can distort information and create misunderstanding. Seemingly trivial things can build up, so please do not hesitate to talk directly with the teacher or administration if something is troubling you. Likewise, if out-of-the-ordinary circumstances occur at the school, the teacher will communicate this to the parents. We welcome the opportunity to talk with you.

### Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents are expected to attend Parent-Teacher Conferences and are invited to sign up for conference times during each of these assessment periods.

**Two-Year-Old** parents are offered three scheduled opportunities to meet with their child's teacher: a preliminary meeting prior to the child's first day of school (mandatory), a mid-year conference, and a final conference before the end of the school year.

**Preschool & Kindergarten** parents also have three scheduled opportunities to meet with their child's teacher: a goal-setting meeting for new students at the beginning of the year, a mid-year conference, and a final conference before the end of the school year. Written reports are given to parents at the mid-year and final conferences.

**Elementary** parents have three scheduled opportunities to meet with their child's teacher. Written progress reports are distributed in the fall and at the end of the school year.

In addition, each of the elementary classes conducts goal-setting conferences in September for students new to the Lower and upper Elementary programs. This meeting includes the parent(s), child, and teacher. These initial meetings have proven to be very helpful in assisting the students in setting realistic goals for the school year.

Close communication between parents and teachers is strongly encouraged. Additional conferences may be arranged by teachers or parents as the need arises.

Repeated failure by parents or legal guardians to respond to conference requests may jeopardize their child's continued enrollment in school.

### **The School Office**

Messages regarding illness, a change in a child's schedule, appointments with administrators, messages for teachers, changes of family information, etc. are received through the office. When a child is out of school, please notify the office. Please notify us immediately of any changes of address, phone number, and/or transportation arrangements in FACTS.

### **The Telephone**

So as not to interrupt the children and teachers, please do not call directly to the classrooms or return calls from the school using the caller I.D. number shown on your phone (classroom phone numbers are unlisted). Call the office at **(808) 522-0244** and your message will be relayed at an appropriate time in the program schedule. Emergency messages will be delivered immediately.

The voice mail system may be on whenever the office staff is unavailable to answer the telephone. Please do leave a message, as the office voicemail is checked at frequent intervals for messages.

After the office is closed at 3:30 p.m., the answering machine will be on and checked for emergency calls to the after-school programs before the close of the school day. Leave a message on the answering machine and your message will be relayed to the after-school programs as necessary. All other messages will be returned the following business day.

### **Social Media & Photographs**

The school operates several social media accounts where photographs of students at school or at school events may be posted with permission from parents or legal guardians. If interested, parents are encouraged to be active participants in Montessori Community School's online presence. However, parents are advised not to post images of children who are not their own on their personal social media accounts.

### **Disclosure of Information**

The school cannot disclose information pertaining to an individual child or parents/legal guardians of the child, to persons other than the school staff unless the parents or legal guardians of the child provide written permission for the disclosure of information, or as required by law. MCS will not disclose medical information on any child without written permission from that child's parent or legal guardian.

## **FOOD**

### **Snacks**

Our approach to the snack program attempts to balance the varying nutritional preferences of our school community by taking a moderate position on sugary treats and encouraging fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains.

When families prepare snacks to be shared among the child's classmates, as during birthday, holiday, or other celebrations, the snacks provided should be nutritious. Frosted cakes, frosted cookies, candies, or other highly sugared snacks cannot be served in school. The teachers will request that such items be returned home. We hope you will understand that our intent is to support good eating habits for the children.

When bringing in a snack to share with the class, please keep these guidelines in mind:

- \* Check with your child's teacher first for allergies
- \* The snack should be unfrosted
- \* The treat does not have to be elaborate
- \* No popcorn at the Two-Year-Old and Preschool & Kindergarten level

Elementary children should bring their own healthful morning snacks.

Children with allergies or special dietary restrictions may bring their own snacks.

### **Home Lunches**

Soda, gum, and candy are not permitted in school and should not be included in lunches or snacks. Sharing of food from lunches and snacks is not permitted for sanitary reasons, and because some children have allergies to certain foods. Refrigeration is not available for Preschool & Kindergarten and Elementary home lunches.

## **ATTIRE**

### **Clothing and Grooming**

Students attending MCS should wear clothing that is comfortable, clean, and appropriate for an early childhood and elementary school. Because our instructional program includes active engagement and play, students must wear clothing that allows them to move, run, jump, and play. Elementary students must wear closed-toe shoes on a daily basis. A student's appearance, including dress and grooming, must not disrupt the educational environment, create safety concerns, nor create a distraction. Students may dress in accordance with their sincere gender identity and gender expression, provided such clothing does not violate the school's clothing and grooming policies.

Children should not wear clothing which contradicts the values of Montessori education, such as t-shirts with violent themes. Footwear is required daily for safety, but high heels can present a safety hazard and should not be worn to school. Students must wear the blue MCS school t-shirt on field trips.

## **CELEBRATIONS & SPECIAL DAYS**

### **Birthdays**

It is a tradition at MCS to commemorate the child's birthday with the addition of a book to the classroom library. The teachers have a selection of books which support the curriculum. If the parent and child choose to donate a book to the classroom library from the teacher's collection, a statement for the cost of the book is presented to the parent after the book is selected. The new addition to the class library is inscribed with the child's name and the occasion being celebrated; Elementary children design their own book plate.

**CELEBRATIONS.** Each program celebrates the child's birthday in its own special way. The Two-Year-Olds have a very simple commemoration, usually with parents bringing in a special snack to share with the class. In the Preschool & Kindergarten and Lower Elementary programs, the "Sun Ceremony" helps children gain a sense of their personal history, growth, and accomplishments by recalling the special events of each year of the child's life. The Upper Elementary program celebrates the student's birthday by featuring and recognizing the child's unique personality, history, and special accomplishments.

Please consult with your child's teacher for an appropriate birthday snack, if desired.

**PRIVATE PARTY INVITATIONS.** Traditional birthday celebrations should take place outside of school. Invitations to private birthday parties may not be distributed at school unless every child in the class is invited. It can really hurt children's feelings when some classmates are invited to a party and others are not. If only a few are invited, please mail the invitations directly to the child's home rather than through the school.

The Parent Directory in FACTS provides a listing of names and addresses of the families who have given their permission to include the information in the Parent Directory in each child's class. The Parent Directories are made available early in the school year and are to be used for school-related purposes only. Please do not use them for business or other solicitations.

### **Gifts and Goody Bags**

Favors and small gifts including, but not limited to, pencils, stickers, or goody bags for birthdays and holidays should be reserved for private celebrations at home. Please do not bring such items to school.

### **Balloons**

No balloons, inflated or uninflated, are allowed at school. Latex balloons present a choking hazard to children and therefore are prohibited from school, along with any other object which poses a potential danger to the child or others.

### **Holidays**

There will be class discussion and some degree of celebration of most of the traditional holidays. Parents may consult with the teacher if they have a special cultural occasion that they would like to share with the class.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are used to increase children's awareness of their world. Permission from the child's parent or legal guardian to attend field trips must be indicated before the child starts school. The Two-Year-Old and After-School Care Programs do not go on off-campus field trips.

Children need to wear closed shoes and the blue MCS t-shirt on field trips. Field trip transportation is provided by hired school buses. The blue MCS "field trip" t-shirt is available for purchase in the school office during office hours.

Class letters provide information on upcoming field trips, including the destination, date, and time of each scheduled field trip. Please make sure that your child arrives promptly each day. On field trip days, children must arrive at school on time to leave with their class on the hired school bus. For accountability and legal reasons during field trips, children must depart and return with their class. Late arrivals are not permitted to meet the class at the field trip destination and may not join the field trip in progress.

#### **Field Trips: *Preschool & Kindergarten Program***

In the Preschool & Kindergarten program, parents are often invited to accompany the class as chaperones, but prior discussion with the head teacher is necessary, as there may be limitations regarding the number of accompanying adults allowed. Parents who serve as chaperones are expected to help supervise the group and should also be in good health. Siblings who are not members of that class are not permitted on field trips.

#### **Field Trips: *Elementary Program***

In addition to field trips, the elementary children go on camping trips and neighbor island trips. These activities generate much enthusiasm and offer excellent learning opportunities for our students. In order to promote elementary students' growing independence, parents do not accompany the elementary classes on field trips or camp-outs.

### **Transportation**

MCS provides transportation for preschool children only for field trips. Field trip transportation is provided by hired school buses. MCS does not transport children to or from school; parents provide the transportation for their children.

### **Supporting MCS**

Most successful independent schools rely on fundraisers to broaden their base of income as a strategy of controlling tuition increases. With an expanded income base, we can offer better compensation to attract high-quality teachers while moderating tuition costs to our families.

Our goal is to provide families with a variety of opportunities to support the school. Participation in school fundraisers by staff, children, and parents is voluntary, but encouraged.