



## PARENT HANDBOOK

Preparing young minds to take on the world...one milestone at a time.

Your Montessori Pre-School



# **WELCOME**

## **TO**

### **MILESTONE MONTESSORI PARENT HANDBOOK**

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Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment

- Dr. Maria Montessori –



THE CANADIAN COUNCIL  
OF MONTESSORI ADMINISTRATORS  
LE CONSEIL CANADIEN DES ADMINISTRATEURS  
DES ÉCOLES MONTESSORI

# PROGRAM STATEMENT

Capable, competent, curious and rich in potential; this is how Milestone Montessori view children. We are committed to collaborating with children, their families and with educators to create high quality early learning and care environments that take a strength-based approach to learning and development where children, parents and educators are co-learners.

## How Does Learning Happen? and Montessori forms the Basis of our Program

Using the common framework articulated in *How Does Learning Happen?* and the pedagogy of *Dr. Maria Montessori*, Milestone Montessori strive to support the children to achieve the following **goals** and will meet the expectations for programs building on the four **foundations** for healthy growth and development:

Foundations	Goals for Children	Expectations for Programs
<b>Belonging</b>	Every child has a sense of belonging when he/she is connected to others and contributes to his/her world.	Cultivate respectful relations and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults and the world around them.
<b>Well-Being</b>	Every child is developing a sense of self and health and well-being.	Nurture children's healthy development and support their growing sense of self.
<b>Engagement</b>	Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with his/her senses, bodies and minds.	Provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration and learning.
<b>Expression</b>	Every child is a capable communicator who is able to express himself/herself in many ways.	Foster communication and expression in all forms.

## Our Overarching Strategies

Milestone Montessori have incorporated and embedded the Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) principles, along with Dr. Maria Montessori's pedagogy for sensitive periods of

early learning, to strengthen the quality of our programs and ensure high-quality experiences that promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of children.

Working collaboratively, Milestone Montessori will plan for and create positive early learning environments that:

**1) *Promote the health, safety and well-being of young children, families and educators.***

You will see:

- ❖ Photographs and names of all the staff posted, and all staff members have a name tag;
- ❖ Well organized environments, with lots of materials that are easily accessible to the children – the children don't have to ask for everything that they need;
- ❖ A process to sign your child in and out of the program, to ensure they are safely supervised;
- ❖ Healthy menus, following Canada's Food Guide developed by registered professionals with the Canadian Society Nutrition Management Certification;
- ❖ Appropriate substitution meals for medical, religious or dietary restrictions for children;
- ❖ Children and staff washing their hands frequently throughout the day to promote good hygiene and to prevent the spread of illness;
- ❖ Snacks are available to the children who arrive at our breakfast time and are set out for the children to serve themselves. Water is always available to the children throughout the day;
- ❖ At meal times, the educators sit with the children and there is lots of conversation;
- ❖ Children serve themselves and are encouraged but never forced to try new foods;
- ❖ Lots of opportunities for gross motor play; children are encouraged to use their entire bodies to explore the world;
- ❖ Positive language that emphasizes accomplishment and effort;
- ❖ The school is kept clean throughout the day, and is professionally cleaned on a nightly basis;
- ❖ Security systems are installed at each site, and all visitors are required to sign in and out of the centre;
- ❖ Based on current research related to children and screen time, instructional times where a computer or television will be used with relevant materials will be kept to a maximum of twice a month;

- ❖ All rooms following the adult to children ratios dictated by the Child Youth and Early Years act; and
- ❖ Educators follow the health and safety guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education and the Durham Region Health Department.

### Healthy Food and Active Play Make a Difference

Additionally, opportunities for rest and a balance between active and child directed play are strategies that will be implemented to support positive interactions and facilitate healthy development.

## **2) *Support positive and responsive interactions between educators, children and families.***

You will see:

- ❖ During the process to enroll your child at our school, the Curriculum Coordinator or Supervisor will provide you with a tour of the facility; introduce you and your child to the educators. They will also compile some information about your child's specific needs, likes and dislikes, and what comforts your child. This will allow staff to begin to build and understanding of your child's individual needs.
- ❖ Our Parent Handbook provides the operational details of our programs, hours of operations, fees and payment processes, and outlines our operational policies so families know what to expect when they choose our services.
- ❖ Educators who greet and welcome you and your child upon arrival at the school.
- ❖ Educators using calm voices and at the child's level for face-to-face interactions.
- ❖ Parents and educators talking together, sharing information and knowledge about each child.

### Strategies to Support and Strengthen Positive Interactions

Positive interactions are encouraged and supported by the development of enriched environments where all children belong and where there are a range of interesting, intriguing and developmentally appropriate activities options to engage children.

Educators are reflective practitioners whose knowledge and understanding of the individual children and child development supports positive behaviours on the part of

children, educators and families. The focus on the positive is a key component of our affirming approach.

Questions educators ask themselves:

- ❖ How do I **engage** with children in a way that builds on their strengths as opposed to identifying what they are doing “wrong”?
- ❖ Am I **learning** too? How do I respond when a child asks me something that I don't know? Do I redirect the child to something else or do I respond: “Let's find out together!”?
- ❖ Am I **moving away** from viewing play as just something children do and **moving towards** viewing play as intentional and inquiry based; a way for children to **express** themselves in multiple ways?
- ❖ Am I having fun? Is at least a part of each day filled with a **shared sense of joy** that is the wonder of new learning for me and the children with whom I engage? What are the clues that demonstrate that I am engaged and interested in what I am doing?

### Supporting Children to Manage their Behaviour

Children benefit socially, emotionally and physically from our positive approach.

Educators focus on helping the child understand their feelings and emotions and provide support to help children regulate their behaviour.

**The following are UNACCEPTABLE behaviour management strategies and are not permitted at any time under ANY circumstances.**

- ❖ Corporal punishment;
- ❖ Physical restraint of children;
- ❖ Harsh or degrading measures that may humiliate or undermine a child's self-respect and self-esteem;
- ❖ Depriving a child of basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing or bedding; and
- ❖ Confining a child by locking the exits of the centre or using a locked or lockable space to separate the child from other children;
- ❖ Inflicting any bodily harm on children including force feeding or drinking.

**3) *Encourage and enable children to interact and communicate in a myriad of ways with each other, with educators and within their communities.***

You will see:

- ❖ Many different ways for children to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings including:
    - Painting, drawing, modelling with clay, plasticine and other art and creative / sensory materials;
    - Telling or writing stories;
    - Singing;
    - Dancing;
    - Talking with educators;
    - Talking with other children;
    - Building with blocks and other building materials;
    - Conducting experiments;
    - Solving problems; and
    - Planned excursions outside of the centre site, to promote children's connection to their local community.
- 4) *Foster exploration and inquiry that is play based. Evidence from diverse fields of study tells us that when children are playing, they are learning.***

You will see:

- ❖ Children making sense of the world around them through interaction to gain knowledge.
- ❖ Play that is supported by caring adults in environments with materials, space and time that encourages complex thinking and aid children to gain essential skills.
- ❖ Interactive environments.
- ❖ Full of open-ended opportunities for play as learning.

These skills include: creative problem-solving, learning to get along with others, coping with challenges, overcoming obstacles, and learning to focus their attention. These are foundational activities that promote the development of literacy, numeracy and other important life skills.

**Supporting Healthy Development and Learning**

At Milestone Montessori each child's specific strengths, needs and developmental goals are individually identified. Educators set goals through individual lesson plans, inquiry play-based learning activities, and positive learning environments in which each child's learning and development is nurtured. Educators focus on children's social, emotional, physical, creative, and cognitive development in a holistic way. This approach will be strengthened by:

- ❖ Preparing the environment to foster learning and development;
- ❖ Building on the children's ideas, questions and theories as observed in play;
- ❖ A collaborative approach that incorporates discussion amongst team members about how to support deeper exploration;
- ❖ Inviting and engaging others in the continuing process of program development including parents, the children themselves and other community partners including but not limited to educators within the school system; and
- ❖ Asking children open-ended questions about what they are finding or exploring.

Children learn through exploration, play, and inquiry with the educators as co-learners. Educators have thoughtful conversations with children, which encourages them to interact and communicate in a positive way, and promotes their ability to self-regulate. We use children's portfolios, learning stories, pictures and other pedagogical documentation of children's activities on an ongoing basis to study, interpret, make visible, and help inform children's learning and development, as well as the overall program.

**5) *Provide both child initiated and adult supported experiences to foster development.***

You will see:

- ❖ Weekly program plans posted with a variety of educator activities that will be added to throughout the week as the children expand on the activities or move forward in new directions.
- ❖ The number of transitions during the day is limited; children do not spend a lot of time lining up or waiting for activities to take place.
- ❖ Times when the child takes the lead in planning the activity and times when the educator builds on observation to develop and implement activities that support each child to stretch his/her skills and abilities.



**6) *Provide many opportunities for a range of experiences that support each child's learning and development.***

You will see:

- ❖ Children actively engaged in activities, individually or in small groups;
- ❖ Children and staff are engaging, smiling, laughing and having fun; interacting and learning together;
- ❖ Educators asking open-ended questions;
- ❖ Educators observing and making documentation about children to build experiences;
- ❖ Educators discussing the documentation with the children; and
- ❖ A focus on learning through play with educators encouraging and supporting questions, answers and problem solving on the part of the children.

**7) *Incorporate a range of different experience modalities including indoor and outdoor play, active play, quiet play, rest and quiet time considering the individual needs of children.***

You will see:

- ❖ Well stocked Montessori shelves, toy shelves, and creative materials available to the children;
- ❖ Quiet comfortable spaces for reading or quiet individual activities or rest;
- ❖ Children engaged in a range of different activities throughout the day;
- ❖ Children taking the lead; actively shaping their learning development;
- ❖ Educators listen and learn from the children as much as the children listen and learn from the educators;
- ❖ Educators encouraging children to explore nature and their natural environments; and
- ❖ Quiet activities provided for children who do not require a nap during rest times.

**8) *Foster engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children.***

You will see:

- ❖ Educators seek out opportunities to talk with parents without ignoring the needs of the children;
- ❖ For infants and toddlers, daily information sheets will be completed by the educators for parents. For preschoolers, communication sheets will be completed weekly;
- ❖ Opportunities, both planned and informal for parents and educators to share ideas about how best to support each child;
- ❖ Portfolios for each child which are accessible to parents;
- ❖ Accident / incident reports completed if your child has an accident to provide you with information as required;
- ❖ Notes and reminders on social media posted as reminders for parents about upcoming activities, such as Parent Information nights, Parent guilds, conferences; and
- ❖ Newsletters for parents sharing information about our programs.

### Parents as Partners

Educators foster engagement and ongoing communications with families regarding the program and their children. We strive to build positive and responsive relationships with children and their families. We recognize and value each family for their unique strengths, perspectives and contributions to our program. Families are encouraged to participate in Milestone Montessori, as we are partners in supporting the development of healthy, happy, capable and competent children.

A strong, respectful and equitable relationship with parents is the key to our ability to fully engage as co-learners with the children and with their families. To this end, we seek out opportunities to engage parents in a way that meets their needs and builds on strengths while respecting the challenges that face young families including: long commutes, time pressures and the busyness inherent in raising a family. Strategies include but are not limited to:

- ❖ An “open door” policy that welcomes parents to drop off and pick up at the times that work best for their family within the hours that the centre is open allowing them to drop-in to observe whenever convenient for the parent;
- ❖ Informal discussions on a daily basis;
- ❖ Posted documentation of activities, interactions and engagement;

- ❖ Sharing resources and materials about community supports and activities,
- ❖ Inviting parent participation in the development of curriculum; to share cultural and family experiences;
- ❖ Inviting and encouraging parents to participate directly in the day to day activities of the centre;
- ❖ Social and open house activities;
- ❖ Annual questionnaires; and
- ❖ Suggestion boxes

Key ideas and messages we share with parents:

- ❖ Our program integrates **Dr. Montessori's pedagogy** with a **play and inquiry based approach** because research tells us that this is the way children learn best. A play based program provides the kinds of opportunities that children need to be fully **engaged** and to learn how to **express** themselves many different ways. Our Montessori approach encourages **independence** amongst the children themselves and also a sense of **structure** to their surroundings. We will be sharing our learning with and about your children in many different ways.
- ❖ What do you think that it is important that I know about your child to support his/her **well-being**?
- ❖ These are our **goals for your children** and this is what we will be doing with your child to support the achievement of these goals (Program expectations).
- ❖ How can we support your **engagement** with our program so that you feel that you **belong**? What works for you, your schedule and your family?

**9) *Actively engage with community partners and provide opportunities for the children and families to develop close connections with a range of community supports.***

You will see:

- ❖ Parents are welcomed at any time and are encouraged to drop in when and if they have time to do so;
- ❖ Community partners and agencies such as Grandview, Durham Behavioral Management Services, etc. will form collaborations with parents and our staff members to provide the necessary support for children to develop individual support plans;

- ❖ Planned excursions to community services and programs such as the local library, grocery stores and other neighbourhood locations; and
- ❖ Use of community partners as a resource and support to families, children and staff.

**10) *Strengthen the capacity of educators to collaborate effectively with children, families and their colleagues through the provision of ongoing opportunities for continuous professional learning.***

You will see:

- ❖ Staff encouraged and supported to attend professional development;
- ❖ Montessori teachers are all certified by recognized institutions that are accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE);
- ❖ Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE's) are required by their membership in the College of Early Childhood Educators to commit to their own ongoing professional learning;
- ❖ New ideas and strategies to support children's development introduced throughout the program;
- ❖ Materials and research shared with parents.

**Continuous Professional Learning for Educators**

Milestone Montessori's environment supports educators, and others who interact with children, to continually self-reflect, have discussions, foster ongoing collaboration, and engage in continuous professional learning, in order to provide the best possible learning environment for children. Staff are provided with many mandatory health and safety related training sessions, such as Standard First Aid and Infant Child CPR; Occupational Health and Safety training, and WHIMIS. In addition,

- ❖ Staff are encouraged to participate in up to three personal professional learning opportunities each year, based on their annual Feedback and Development learning goals;
- ❖ Staff have scheduled planning time;
- ❖ Staff meet together to share ideas and information and to develop programs;

- ❖ Staff are encouraged and supported to participate on Divisional and/or Departmental Committees as well as community networks or committees;
- ❖ Staff are encouraged to participate in community learning opportunities through Capacity Building and the Durham Region Child Care Forum; and
- ❖ RECEs are encouraged to participate in the College of Early Childhood Educators Continuous Professional Learning Program.

**11) *Use different methods to document and review the experiences of the children and the educators in order to:***

- ❖ Provide an ongoing record of development;
- ❖ Provide tools to enable educators to reflect on the impact of their activities and strategies; and
- ❖ Provide a visual and oral record that enables parents to review and explore the developmental trajectory of their child.

You will see:

- ❖ Documentation posted on the walls that tells and shows you what the children are doing;
- ❖ Different methods of recording observations about what the children are accomplishing.

### **A Commitment to Continuous Improvement**

All new staff, students and volunteers are required to review the program statement prior to interaction with the children in our school, and any time the program statement is updated. All staff are required to review the program statement on an annual basis. This will be accomplished at a yearend all staff team meeting which provides an opportunity to reflect on the successes and challenges of the past year and to set goals for the upcoming year.

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# MILESTONE MONTESSORI PARENT HANDBOOK

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Our goals for each individual child are to:

- Create a safe and enriched environment that fosters learning as its own reward
- Exemplify good manners, mutual respect and care of the environment
- Facilitate each child's development toward his or her full potential
- Enable children to make their own decisions, thereby promoting self-discipline, independence and leadership skills
- Teach and model appropriate methods of conflict resolution and redirection
- Promote awareness and acceptance of cultural differences
- Encourage children to participate in class activities according to each one's interest and abilities

## Administrative Policies and Procedures

### Admission

Milestone Montessori (MM) is opened to children aged 0 weeks to 6 years of age, including a full day CASA program, and a before & after care program. Milestone Montessori accepts children with disabilities on a case-by-case basis according to our ability to fully meet the child's specific needs.

### Application and Enrollment Process

MM requires your completed enrollment package along with a \$250.00 enrollment fee per child, the first month's tuition and 50% of the last month's tuition. All fees and deposits are non-refundable and the tuition deposit is used towards the child's first and half of last month's tuition respectively.

According to the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA), the following completed documents must be on file at MM on or before your child's first day of school:

- Enrollment form
- Parental contract
- Immunization Record
- Medication information and consent form (if applicable)
- Asthma medication information and consent from (if applicable)
- Anaphylaxis alert and emergency plan (if applicable)
- Diaper cream authorization (if applicable)
- Sunscreen authorization (if applicable)

It is the responsibility of the parents to keep all information updated with the necessary telephone, email, mailing addresses and new information pertinent to their child's wellbeing. In the event that these documents are not on file on your child's first day of school, your child will NOT be allowed to attend MM until such documents are submitted. During the time that these documents are not present, you will be liable for the tuition fees until said forms are in MM's system with no refunds.

## Tuition

The annual tuition is based on the program your child is enrolled in. The annual tuition may be paid as a onetime payment or divided into ten (10) monthly installments. Families choosing to pay the annual tuition in full, on or before the first day of school that academic year will receive a discount as well; after the first day of school, onetime payments will not be accepted for that academic year nor will discounts apply thereafter. The first tuition installment is due at the time of enrollment, if you enroll after the first business day of the month; the tuition will NOT be prorated. Once enrolled in MM, you are liable for the full amount of the school year's tuition ending inclusively in the next June. Any cancellation of enrollment as a result of withdrawal, your child or family being disruptive or violating the school rules and regulations, or otherwise, the 50% of the last month's tuition will not be refunded whilst the unused post-dated cheques will be returned. You will also be liable for the rest of that calendar month's tuition as well. Monthly receipts will be emailed to you and it is your responsibility to alert MM any changes to your email address. Monthly installments are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month unless otherwise discussed directly with the director.

## Holidays

MM will be closed on the following statutory holidays:

- |                  |                    |                 |
|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| - New Year's Day | - Family Day       | - Good Friday   |
| - Victoria Day   | - Canada Day       | - Civic Day     |
| - Labour Day     | - Thanksgiving Day | - Christmas Day |
| - Boxing Day     |                    |                 |

In addition, MM will also be closed **for 2 weeks during the Winter Holidays** (usually the last week of December and the first week of January), **March Break** (usually the second week of March) and also the **week before Labour Day**. A survey will be provided at least a month in advance to determine whether number of children will require care during those weeks of closure for a separate cost; however, if attendance does not support this, then MM will remain closed throughout these weeks. It is the parents' responsibility to be mindful of this as it will be reminded by the staff and also newsletters that are emailed out every month.

## Extra Supervision

MM understands that sometimes parents need additional time to reach the school beyond their contracted hours. Unfortunately, MM also needs to provide its staff with overtime pay as well during these extra supervision hours. MM will apply the rate of extra supervision pass 6:00pm at **\$5.00 per minute**. These hours will be billed on a weekly basis and must be cleared the Friday of that week. As

stated in the parental contract included in the Enrollment package, **if the child is not picked up by 7:00pm** upon no communication with MM, MM will contact the police and Children's Aid Society.

### **Regular Day Program – 9:00am – 4:00pm**

Students enrolled in the "Regular Day" program, which entails a schedule from 9:00am to 4:00pm, are not to drop off their children before 8:45am and to pick them up before 4:15pm. This allows MM to schedule their staff members efficiently and if these timelines are not followed, an automatic charge will be billed toward that student's account.

### **Late Payment Charge**

A \$45 per week late fee will be applied to the child's account received **after the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month** if no arrangements have been made with the director. If the tuition is more than 30 days late, the child will not be able to continue his/her schooling at MM until all payments are up to date.

### **Returned Cheque / NSF Fee**

A \$50 fee will be charged for all returned or NSF cheques.

### **Withdrawals**

MM requires a written verification to confirm that a student is to withdraw from MM 14 days prior to the withdrawal date. You will be liable for the tuition for the remainder of the calendar month and you **will not receive the 50% of the last month's tuition** paid in the beginning of the school year.

### **Schedule Changes**

Unfortunately, MM cannot allow decreases in schedules if there is a waiting list for that classroom. MM will always take full time scheduled students over part-time students to ensure that the school and staffing requirements can be sustained. You are responsible to commit to the original schedule that your child's enrollment schedule was accepted.

### **Waiting List Policy**

Under the CCEYA, MM will **NOT** take any fees (deposits, registration fees, etc.) for your child to be placed on our waiting list. The only time that you will be charged is if your child has a guaranteed spot with MM upon being contacted by MM. The waiting list can be discussed with the receptionist at the reception area, and the receptionist will contact the next qualifying family on the waiting list shall a spot become available.

The waiting list will be prioritized first by scheduling; this means that MM has the right to prioritize offering spots available to families who will be attending MM on a full time basis. Upon scheduling, the waiting list will also record down the exact date a family has been placed on said list. Families who have been placed on the waiting list who qualify and are on the list the longest will be called first. Upon calling the family to inform them of a spot available, they have 2 business days to submit their registration fee and enrollment package before it is considered that they give up their spot. In the case where a family does not respond to MM via any communication, it is considered that they give up their spot.

## **Transitional Period**

Once your child is enrolled and starts to attend MM, there may be a period of transitional time. Your child may take time to adapt to his/her environment and this is normal to observe. It may take a couple of days, weeks or months for your child to fully transition. During this period of time, parents are still liable for tuition. Parents are welcomed to stay on school premises for as long as they feel they need to but are not permitted to be in the classroom with the child, as this will make the transition more difficult and drawn out for your child and other children.

## **New Parent Orientation**

It is very important that new parents get to meet with their child's teacher before or shortly after enrollment. This gives parents a chance to discuss any concerns or special needs with the teacher and allows the teacher to explain how his/her classroom works. A checklist of required things to bring for your child's first day at school can be acquired through the receptionist. Any scheduling of meetings can be arranged via MM's supervisor.

## **Inclement Weather Policy**

Closings and delays will be posted on the MM's Facebook page and communicated through e-mail by 5:30am that morning. If MM needs to close early due to extreme conditions, there will also be postings on MM's Facebook page and communicated through e-mail as well. There are no refunds of tuition due to weather related closings.

## **Before and After School Programs**

In the event that the school is closed for the day, the before and after care programs will also be unavailable. In the case where the school closes early due to bad weather conditions, the school will remain open until every child is picked up; MM may require parents to pick-up their child when necessary.

## **Instructional Time**

As stated in our Program Statement (located at the front of this document), we offer an "open door" policy for families which allows determines that parents can drop off their children in the morning at a convenient time that works for your family the most. However, we do recommend that all children should be dropped off latest by 9:00am to receive maximum exposure and benefits to MM's Montessori mornings.

## **Absences and Vacations**

Please call or email the school in the event that your child will not be attending school that day. In the event that your child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease it is of vital importance that you inform the school immediately.

Unfortunately, MM cannot prorate tuition fees based on vacations; as the spot will have to be held until the child returns and MM cannot temporarily replace that spot. All vacations are recommended to be taken during the summer months to minimize the disruption to the child's schooling.

## Early Pick Up

Please let MM know if you need to pick up your child before his/her typical time of departure; this will allow the teacher to have your child prepared to leave and cause limited disruption in the classroom.

## Signing In and Out

Parents or guardians are required to sign their children in and out through the sign-in system every day. This is a regulation under the CCEYA that is in the best interest of your child's safety. In the event that a staff member escorts your child into the school, the staff member will sign your child in.

## Pick Up Authorization

In the event that parents need a friend or relative to pick up their child, said person must be on the authorized pick up list in MM's system for safety reasons. Photo identification is required for anyone who is picking up a child upon a parent's request. MM will also require an authorization ahead of time to allow this. If MM cannot confirm the arrangements, we will not release the child. No child will be released to a taxi, if a child is not picked up for any reason and the emergency contacts cannot be contacted, the police and Children's Aid Society will be notified.

## Field Trips

Field trips are an important and educational part of our curriculum. Children who are not permitted to attend field trips for any reasons must stay at home on the day of the field trip. We will notify parents of any field trips involving transportation a minimum of one week in advance. MM staff will always carry emergency contact information, first-aid kits and children's medication (if applicable) on field trips. Employees will also carry their cell phones for emergencies.

## Supervision of Students and Volunteers

From time to time, MM may receive additional assistance from student interns and volunteers. All personnel working alongside the children must adhere to MM's Student and Volunteer policy as detailed:

- No child will be supervised by a person less than 18 years of age
- No student interns or volunteers is permitted to be alone with a child at anytime
- No student interns or volunteers are counted as staffing ratios of the school

## Moving Classes

Within MM, each classroom is licensed by the Ministry of Education for their capacity and the age group that the room can allow. This has direct influence towards the staff-to-children ratio in each room and cannot be compromised at any time for the safety for the children and staff members. When a child reaches a certain age, they are to move up to the "next level"; however, there are also few criteria in which they may stay a shorter or longer time within their classroom. If at any time there are questions or concerns regarding a child's progression within the school, an appointment should be set up with the lead teacher of the room and the supervisor of MM.

Due to the Ministry of Education's licensing for MM and to minimize disruption to the classrooms, MM cannot relocate a child to a different classroom unless approved by the director.

## School Policies and Guidelines

### Prohibited Practices

In accordance with the CCEYA Ontario Regulation 137/15 section 48, MM will not permit a child receiving care at a child care facility to be the recipient of:

- Corporal punishment of the child;
- Physical restraint of the child;
- Confining a child by locking exits or using a locked or lockable space to separate the child from other children;
- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding;
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

### Uniforms

Once the application for a child has been processed and all payments are cleared, a child will be provided with a uniform to wear throughout their time in school at MM. The cost of the uniform is included within the Enhancement Charge that is mandatory for all students. Additional uniforms can be purchased from the reception area, please advise a member of the admin team to check for pricing and availability. The purpose of the uniform is to present uniformity within MM – upon occurrences where a child does not come in with a uniform more than three times a month, the admin team has the right to provide a child with said piece of clothing and their student account will be charged accordingly.

### Indoor and Outdoor Shoes

Each child at MM is required to have a pair of shoes for indoors and another pair for outdoors. This maintains a peaceful and clean environment for MM and also provides a sense of hygiene for the students as well. The staff at MM will also follow this policy to provide a sense of discipline. Students will wear their outdoor shoes and if weather permits, winter boots, whenever they go outside. All shoes should be labelled and will be placed in the student's cubby. For safety reasons, MM does not allow crocs or flip-flops indoors or outdoors.

### Clothing and Supplies

Please prepare 2 or 3 sets of weather appropriate spare clothes for your child as accidents do happen. Make sure all clothing is labelled with your child's name and routinely check your child's cubby to replace any items of clothing that may be needed. MM does not provide diapers, wipes, diaper cream, sunscreen, insect repellent or any kind of medication as all of these items must come from home. When said items are running low or about to expire, parents will be notified to replenish.

Parents are also asked to bring in their child's bed sheets and pillows for nap time at MM. The reason for this is so that children will feel a sense of belonging as well. These will be used by your child only and need to be brought home at the end of the week to be laundered. Upon being soiled, MM will provide a substitute while the dirty items are to be brought home to be laundered and brought back the next day.

Parents MUST supply MM with the diapers and wipes that they prefer their child to be using at the school. In the event where the supplies have run out, MM will provide an external third-party brand for emergency purposes. When supplies are low, teachers will inform parents to refresh the stock level; in the event where MM has to provide for the child more than 4 times a month, and extra \$50 will be added to their account. This applies to diapers, wipes, sunscreen lotion and any other accessories that children may require during their stay at MM.

## **Potty Training**

At MM, our staff will be working alongside parents to potty train their children when both the staff and the parents agree that it is time to do so. Here are some signs that our staff look for to determine the best time for a child to be trained on the potty:

### **Physical Signs**

- Is coordinated enough to walk, and even run, steadily
- Urinates a fair amount at one time
- Has regular, well-formed bowel movements at relatively predictable times
- Has “dry” periods of at least two hours or during naps, which shows that his/her bladder muscles are developed enough to hold urine

### **Behavioral Signs**

- Can sit down quietly in one position for 2-5 minutes at a time
- Can pull his/her pants up and down
- Dislikes the feeling of wearing a wet or dirty diaper
- Shows interest in others’ bathroom habits
- Gives a physical or verbal sign when he’s having a bowel movement (e.g. grunting, squatting, or tell you, etc.)
- Demonstrates a desire for independence
- Takes pride in his/her accomplishments
- Isn’t resistant to learn to use the toilet
- Is in a generally cooperative stage, not a negative or contrary one

### **Cognitive Signs**

- Understands the physical signals that mean he/she has to go and can tell you before it happens or even hold it until he/she has time to get to the potty
- Can follow simple instructions, such as “sit down”
- Can understand the value of putting things where they belong
- Has words for urine and stool

At MM, students should be showing these signs by the time they are in the Pre Casa age group; if a child enrolls into MM at Pre Casa and does not exhibit these signs, teachers will assist alongside their parents to achieve this as priority. MM only accepts students into the Casa classroom who are fully independent using the toilet with minimal accidents on a regular routine.

## Items from Home

MM does not permit children to bring their toys, gum, candy, money or any other possessions from home into the school unless the item is related to the curriculum in the classroom and that the teacher has given advanced permission. Any prohibited items will be removed from the classroom and taken to the child's cubby. MM is not responsible for the lost of any outside items.

Should anything from the school go home with your child, please return it as soon as possible. Something as small as a bead could mean an incomplete lesson in your child's class. If school tools or materials is broken or misplaced by a child, their parents or guardians may be asked to fix replace the material or tool depending on the circumstances (e.g. if the child breaks something on purpose, etc.).

## Lost and Found

There is a lost and found box located at the front of the school. If your child has lost an item of clothing or bed sheet, etc. Please check with the classroom teacher first and then check the lost and found box. If you still cannot find the lost item, please notify the receptionist and MM will attempt to find it for you.

## Snacks

MM provides a morning and afternoon snack each day. MM do allow parents to bring in occasional snacks for special occasions such as birthdays, holiday treats, etc. Please keep in mind of the nut-free and pork-free policy that MM holds.

## Lunch

MM provides lunch to all children enrolled. These lunches are offered from a third-party caterer which follows the guidelines of CCEYA and the Canada's Food Guide. This caterer offers dietary restrictions for those children who need this option at no extra cost. Candy, cookies, chocolate, etc. Is not allowed to replace meals and MM only serves milk or water with lunches and snacks.

MM provides homo milk by default for the age group of toddlers and under, unless with a written authorization for them to drink 2% milk instead. All age groups above toddlers are served 2% milk by default unless with a written authorization for them to drink homo milk instead. Rice milk or lactose milk will also be served to those children who require this as well.

## Outdoor Play

MM will take the children outside for a portion of the day, each day, except in extreme inclement weather as mandated by the CCEYA. Please make sure that your child has the appropriate clothing on for the weather as MM will not be able to provide substitutes. If a child is not well enough to play outside for whatever reason (eg. Illness), then he/she should not come to school. Staff will not be able to sit inside with children while the rest of the class is outside due to provincial mandated ratios under the CCEYA.

## Television / Screen Time

On occasion, the classes may watch materials from a DVD or the Internet related to the curriculum. This may only happen twice a month and for a maximum period of 30 minutes (unless the allotted time was requested to be a movie from the staff, in which case the Supervisor will allow an exception). In the



event that the child's class is having a "movie day", the teacher should notify parents with the title of the movie and the day it will be viewed. During these times, the children will have the same supervision as they would have during regular class time.

## **Discipline at School**

In MM's Montessori classrooms, the first lessons taught are lessons of grace and courtesy and these concepts remain integrated throughout our curriculum as well. When a child learns to respect others and his/her environment, they gain self-esteem and confidence and a feeling of self-worth. Our staff leads by example and treat the children and the environment with respect. Children learn not to disturb other children while they are working and to respect the classroom, as it is their own and to take care of it, to preserve the quality of the materials and look of the classroom. We ask that parents do the same.

When there is an altercation or incident between the children, they are encouraged to discuss it and resolve the situation themselves. Each classroom has an area within the classroom we refer to as the "Peace Table"; this area provides the child to regulate their own emotions while not being excluded from their peers. If they are not able to resolve it or if the situation calls for a teacher's intervention, then the teacher should mediate and discuss the incident with the children involved. If unacceptable behaviour persists or becomes unmanageable, the parents are typically brought in to discuss the best way to resolve the issue.

MM reserves the right to suspend, expel and/or refuse school services to a child if behavioural patterns are exhibited that the school is not capable of handling. Examples include, but are not limited to hitting, biting, pinching, punching, kicking, and the destruction of property.

Upon these incidents occurring, parents will be informed in writing regarding:

- Parent / Teacher / Supervisor Conference is required
- Suspension for two weeks (no tuition or fees refunded)
- Sending a child home for the day and starts a 30 day probation period
- Expulsion of enrollment at MM

MM reserves the right to dismiss any family that is delinquent in tuition or fees or disruptive to the school in any way. Such families will not have their last month's tuition fees returned to them.

## **Child Abuse and Neglect**

MM staff is required to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to the Children's Aid Society under Ontario Law.

## **Medical Information**

### **First Aid and CPR**

As mandated in the CCEYA, all MM staff is required to be First Aid and CPR trained and certified. Each class keeps first aid supplies in their emergency backpacks, which are taken on fieldtrips and to the playground. There are also first aid supplies stored in the reception area as well. If a child is injured, the

abrasion will be cleaned thoroughly, and an incident/accident report will be generated. At any time where a child receives a head injury, parents will be contacted immediately.

## Illness

If families suspect or are aware that your child is sick, please do not bring him/her to school.

Communicable diseases spread fast amongst groups of children and bringing in sick children may lead to an outbreak. Should a child show symptoms of illness 24 hours prior to their scheduled attendance at school, they need to stay home. If symptoms occur at school, the child is to be isolated while parents are contacted immediately; the child must be picked up at this time. The child must be fever free, without the aid of any medication, for 24 hours before they can return to MM; in the case of an outbreak, the grace period is extended to 48 hours.

## Preventing the Spread of Disease at School

The following guidelines have been established in order to help prevent the spread of diseases at school. Students will not be allowed to attend MM if they have any of the following:

- A temperature of 37.78 °C (100°F) or higher. The child must be fever free for 24 hours, without the aid of any medication, before returning to MM.
- Recurrent vomiting or diarrhea. The child must not have vomited nor had diarrhea for 24 before returning to MM.
- Conjunctivitis (Pink eye)
  - Bacterial: Can return to MM 24 hours after first treatment of medication.
  - Viral: Can return to MM with a letter of physician stating the child does not have bacterial conjunctivitis. In either case the child must be well enough to participate in daily school activities.
- Head lice: can return to MM after first treatment and no live visible lice are seen.
- Nose and Eye drainage: thick mucus or pus draining from the nose or eye.
- Respiratory symptoms: difficulty breathing or rapid breathing, severe coughing, croup-y or whooping cough and if the child cannot lie down comfortably due to continuous cough.
- Sore throat: sore throat with swollen neck glands and fever. The child can return when they are fever free for 24 hours without the aid of any medication and their swollen glands have gone down.
- Rashes-Redness, blotchy rashes of the skin: the child can return to MM once a physician confirms that the rash is non-contagious. Parent are required to inform MM within 24 hours or the next business day after their child or any member of their family has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, as defined by the Durham Health Department.
- If your child is on antibiotics he/she must stay home for the first 24 hours after the first dosage of antibiotics. MM requests that the antibiotics be administered during non-school hours; however we do understand that is not always possible. Upon request, Early Childhood Educators (ECE) can administer medicine to your child at school given that these requirements are met:
  - A completed medication authorization form.
  - All medication must accompany a physician note that clearly states the child's name, dosage and administration time.

- All medicines must be in their original packaging with the pharmacy label affixed, including the name of the child, name of medication, dosage, and time to be administered.
- Medication must be given to the staff; no child may keep medication in their bags, backpacks or cubbies. All medications are required to be locked away and out of the children's reach at all times.
- Please send the proper device(s) needed to administer the medication to the child.
- All medication must not be expired.
- All known allergies must be reported to the administration team at the time of enrollment. Should your child develop any allergies, MM must be notified immediately. MM is a nut-free facility and does not allow any nut products to be served at the school.
- Should an Epi-Pen be needed for a child's allergies, a completed Anaphylaxis form must be completed and the Epi-Pen must be stored in a sealed container given to the staff. The family must also instruct the Supervisor as to how to treat the specific child and provide authorization that the supervisor teaches the remaining staff members.

## **Emergency Procedures**

### **Procedures**

In the event that there is a serious illness/injury, 9-1-1 will be called immediately and the school will contact the parents via telephone using the contact information provided. If parents cannot be reached, listed emergency contacts will be contacted via telephone using the contact information provided. If we cannot reach the emergency contacts, the school will contact your child's physician MM has on file via telephone using the contact information provided. It is essential that families keep these contacts updated at all times.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

In the interest of keeping children and staff as safe as possible, MM has developed safety plans in case of any sorts of emergency. In the event of an emergency, local authorities and parents will be contacted via telephone as soon as possible. Please know that the children are our priority and MM will do any and everything possible to ensure their safety while in our care.

Here are some possible scenarios should we encounter any emergency situations.

### **Early Dismissal and Closure**

In the event where the school has to close early due to external factors, the director will evaluate the emergency and decide if there is sufficient time to call parents and have them pick up their children early. In this event, children will remain in their classrooms until their families arrive.

### **Fire Evacuation**

If there is an emergency of any kind that requires the building to be evacuated but does not require the children and staff to leave the school grounds, MM will respond to such a case as we do for a fire. The alarm will be sounded and the children and staff will exit as they have practiced in monthly fire drills.

### **Fire Drills**

Each month, MM will practice fire drills with all the students in the school. Each classroom has its emergency evacuation exists posted. Fire drills are crucial to the safety of the children, and the staff. Once the alarm is sounded, students walk quietly to the door and are led outside by a staff member. Each room's staff will carry their class binders which include vital information such as contact information, allergy forms, first aid kits and medication.

### **Crisis/Weather Lockdown**

If the director determines that there is a risk to the children's safety by removing them from the building, the children will be moved to away from windows to safe areas within the school. The access to the building is always controlled in order to maintain a safe environment. There are three types of emergency lockdown response:

1. Crisis Lockdown – Nuclear/Biological/Chemical
2. Weather Lockdown – Tornado/Hurricane
3. Preventive Lockdown – External threats that are not listed above

In any types of lockdowns listed above, 9-1-1 will be contacted immediately. No staff, parents or students are to enter or exit the building until the appropriate authorization from the authorities have given permission. The management team will also be contacting the families via the telephone using the contact information provided as well in this case.

### **Inclement or Dangerously Hot Weather**

As mandated by the CCEYA, children will be taken outside for a portion of the day, each day. Unless there are circumstances where there is thunder, lightning, rain, ice, temperatures are hotter than 32 °C or colder than -20°C. Milestone Montessori will also factor in elements such as wind-chill when looking at temperatures.

### **Accidents and Incidents**

Accident and incident reports will be completed each time a child has an accident, no matter how minor the accident may appear. Parents are required to read, sign, and return these reports to the school. Sometimes accidents occur that are not minor and may require more attention; in these cases, the supervisor is informed immediately and will determine the severity of the injury. Parents will be contacted via telephone using the contact information provided and notified as to the possibility for medical treatment and emergency aid may be called. It is also Milestone Montessori's policy to contact parents via telephone using the contact information provided, at anytime there is an injury to the head.

Incident reports are completed by staff when a child's behaviour is questionable or out of the ordinary. Parents are required to read, sign and return this report to the school. Sometimes a conference may be needed to discuss the behaviour and a copy of these reports will be kept on the student's file.

## Communications

### Parent/Teacher Communications

Teachers are expected to check their emails once a day, throughout the week and not expected to check during the weekends. If a student's family would like to obtain this email, please contact the teacher directly. Any emails to be sent over the weekend should be sent to [info@milestonemontessori.ca](mailto:info@milestonemontessori.ca).

It is important to recognize that it is a strict policy at MM that employees do not work for MM families; past or present in any capacity, including "summer work" while employed at MM. Failure to abide to this policy is considered causing disruption to the school and can result in the dismissal of the employee and the family from MM.

### Family/Administration Communications

All families, existing or potential at MM are welcome to contact the administration team by phone, fax, and email or in person. The inquiries such as general questions, billing, waiting list etc., should be directed to [info@milestonemontessori.ca](mailto:info@milestonemontessori.ca). This email is checked several times during each day and even on the weekends.

For policy or school contract inquiries, families can contact the school via phone, fax, email and in person. All emails of this nature should be directed to the director [ray.n@milestonemontessori.ca](mailto:ray.n@milestonemontessori.ca). If deemed appropriate, the director would forward these inquiries to the appropriate department.

Every month, the administration team will also send out Monthly Newsletters to the parents. These newsletters provide an overview of the month upcoming and also special occasions or closures (if applicable). Please ensure that the email address that have been provided to MM with is up to date and allow the receptionist to know if emails are not coming through.

### Parent Involvement

MM encourages parents to be involved with the school and their children's learning process. MM welcomes parents, who would like to learn more about the Montessori pedagogy of teaching and its materials. Throughout the school year, MM hosts various events and workshops where parents and extended family members are invited to join us in this discussion.

Throughout the school year, MM provides different field trips for the students. Many of these field trips allows MM to seek parent volunteers to tag along and enjoy the learning process together. Signups for these field trips are placed at the receptionist desk and due to capacity reasons, are on a first come first serve basis.

### Report Cards/Parent-Teacher Conferences

Report cards are sent out three times a year. The report card will entail the progress of the student during the reporting period; and Parent-Teacher Conferences will be arranged at that time as well. MM will not hold a conference in front of a student so please organize care for the student ahead of time. For specific dates of when report cards are sent out and the period for MM's staff to hold conferences, please refer to the calendar.

All families are welcome to schedule additional conferences anytime during the year; please see the student's teachers to set up a mutually convenient time.

## **Parent Guild**

With enough interest, MM will host parent guild meetings every other month. The purpose of these meetings will solely be focused towards discussing what the school can do as a whole to ensure that students are receiving the best education at MM. Signup sheets will be available accordingly at the reception desk. Care will not be provided for during these sessions so please arrange care ahead of time.

Please do understand that MM will try to fulfill what parents request as much as possibly to MM's limits and that whatever topic of discussion during these meetings is not a promise as to what will happen immediately or the near future.

## **Parent Issues and Concerns Policy and Procedures**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, the child care licensee and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.

### **Definitions**

*Licensee:* The individual or agency licensed by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of each child care centre it operates (i.e. the operator).

*Staff:* Individual employed by the licensee (e.g. program room staff).

### **Policy**

#### **General**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in MM and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by the Supervisor and Director and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within 1 business day. The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

## **Confidentiality**

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

## **Conduct**

Our centre maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor and/or licensee.

## **Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child**

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the [local Children's Aid Society](#) (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information, visit

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidthereportingabuse/index.aspx>