

WICHITA MONTESSORI SCHOOL PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

MISSION

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

Intellectual

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

- a strong foundation in the basics utilizing Montessori materials whenever appropriate
- the ability to apply knowledge in order to solve problems
- higher level thinking skills
- strong study skills
- creativity
- responsibility for one's own work
- learning the intrinsic value of working hard
- knowledge of subject areas not traditionally introduced in primary and elementary school (geography, history, botany, zoology)
- an appreciation of and specific knowledge about art and music
- familiarity with computers (elementary)
- knowledge of a foreign language (Spanish)
- knowledge of and use of the library
- joy of learning

Physical

We encourage:

- fitness
- developmentally appropriate daily physical activity
- an attitude of enjoyment of physical activities
- participation in organized and free play activities

Emotional

We encourage:

- honesty
- independence
- flexibility
- creativity
- respect for self, other children, and adults
- responsibility
- self-discipline
- cooperation

Social

We encourage:

- cooperation at home, in the classroom, and on the playground
- respect for the rights of others and responsible use of freedom
- conversation when conversation is appropriate
- quiet when quiet is appropriate
- good manners
- eye contact when speaking to another
- "grace and courtesy" in dealing with other people

PHILOSOPHY

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

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

ALL-SCHOOL POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

Arrival and Dismissal

The school building opens at 8:00 a.m. Students must be in their respective classrooms at 8:15 a.m. The morning primary class dismisses at 11:10 a.m. and extended-day through elementary classes dismiss from 2:45 until 3:05 p.m. For the convenience of those parents who must be at work by 8:00 a.m., we offer **before school for Elementary-age children only**. Before school care begins at 7:30 AM, and it is based on availability, so please pre-arrange this through our office. The price is \$350.00 for the school year.

All elementary students should enter the school using the Lower Elementary classroom door (facing the playground). Primary/Kindergarten children should enter the school using the foyer doors.

Detailed dismissal procedures are sent with registration materials. Please do not come into the school to pick up your child. We will bring your child to your car. We cannot stress the importance of having a large printed sign in each car's window for dismissal, and we will provide one to you on the first day of school. **Please leave your sign in the window until your child is delivered to you.** Cars without signs slow the dismissal procedure, and it is our goal to facilitate safety and efficiency in our dismissal line.

If any of your children are in 3rd, 4th, or 5th year elementary, please pick-up ALL of your children from the doorway upstairs. (A teacher will bring primary and lower elementary children to wait with their older siblings.) Enter the parking lot via the east entrance, make a sharp, right-hand turn down the hill, and line up, single-file, in front of the double doors.

Tardiness

When children arrive late for school it is a disruption to the entire class. We expect children to be ready to start school by 8:15 a.m. This means arriving before then, giving time to put things away and feel ready by 8:15. Your child needs to feel in control when he/she enters the building. Knowing he/she is late makes a difficult start to the day.

Absence

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

Early Release

Parents should notify the office or send a note with their child if there is any reason that a student needs to leave school early. Whenever possible, parents should schedule appointments for their child during non-school hours. When a child leaves school early, the parent is asked to come to the office and sign the child out. The child should, in turn, sign back in at the office if he/she returns to school.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE and LATE DISMISSAL

Our afternoon dismissal is from 2:45 until 3:05 p.m. Late-dismissal is offered for parents who cannot be here before our dismissal ends at 3:05 p.m., but who will pick-up their child prior to 3:30 p.m. Children are supervised by our staff until 3:30 p.m. in the gym at The Independent School, and there is an additional charge of \$2.00 per day, or \$350.00 for the school year, for this service. This fee is due at enrollment. Panther Care provides after school care for those parents of elementary-aged children, who will pick-up their children after 3:30 p.m. Panther Care is operated by the Independent School. Pre-enrollment is required prior to your child attending Panther Care. We take the children from our building and see that they are safely turned over to the PC team. Children who attend PC do NOT pay the late-dismissal fee.

For primary/kindergarten students, WMS offers our own After School Program. ASP is run from our building and provides care for our youngest students from 3:05 to 5:15 p.m.

SECURITY MEASURES

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

1. The parent has signed a standing authorization for that person to pick up the child on a regular basis.
2. A signed note is sent to the school giving permission for another person to

pick up your child. Be as specific as possible, (name, phone number, car description)

3. A phone call to the school MAY NOT be sufficient, especially if the caller's identity cannot be authenticated.

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

Our outside classroom doors are unlocked at 8:00 a.m. and re-locked at 8:15 a.m. Late arrivals must enter using the foyer doors.

BANNED ITEMS

Students should not bring toys, cell phones, cassette players, CD players, electronic games, anything that might be construed as a weapon, or any other such items to school. They get lost or broken, and are a distraction to the students. We do not have "Show-and-Tell", but if a child has something of an educational nature that would enhance the classroom environment, he/she may check with the teacher about bringing such items to share.

BIRTHDAYS

We rejoice with you on the day of your child's birth. Students may provide a birthday treat to their class on that day. Keep it simple and nutritional, please. Please provide napkins if you choose to send edible treats. We prefer no drinks for birthday treats. WE ASK THAT NO BIRTHDAY PARTY INVITATIONS BE PASSED OUT AT SCHOOL, EVEN IF THE ENTIRE CLASS IS INVITED. Hurt feelings about exclusion often last a lifetime. Names and addresses may be obtained from the student directory.

For children in Primary AM or EDP, we ask that you send a paragraph about your child's memorable events or highlights of each year to date.

CLASS PARTIES

Class parties should be very simple. Usually four or five people sign up to provide for each party. The office will contact one of the volunteers prior to the party to set the date and time. We ask that children do not wear Halloween costumes for the Fall Festival.

CORRECTION AND GRADING POLICIES

We are an ungraded school. In the elementary classes through fifth year, each child is expected to correct his/her work. Each paper should come home error free. The exception to this policy might be in the area of creative writing. The process of creative writing is separate from the process of proofreading. Invented spelling is noted and addressed in a separate lesson.

CURRICULUM

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

PRE-SCHOOL CURRICULUM

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

Practical Life

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

Sensorial Training

Visual, auditory, olfactory, and tactile sense discriminations are developed through

the use of special Montessori materials such as the pink tower, the trinomial cube, the color tablets, and the sound cylinders. This education and refinement of the senses is an essential step in the child's intellectual development.

Spanish

Children in primary are exposed to Spanish, informally, with songs. Kindergarten students have formal Spanish class three times per week, exposing them to a second language at a time that is described as a language sensitive developmental period.

Language

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

Mathematics

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

Artistic Materials and Expression

Children are encouraged to express themselves with painting, paper cutting and design, drawing, and other media. Music experiences such as singing, listening to tapes and CDs, and playing rhythm games provide avenues for expression and discovery.

Cultural Subjects

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

Physical Activities

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

ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM

Language Arts

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

Mathematics

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

Geography and History

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

Zoology and Botany

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

Science Lab

Physical Science Lab classes are offered once a week for students in K-5th years. Hands-on lab experimentation is the best way to introduce students to scientific inquiry, the process of asking questions and conducting experiments. Through this method, students learn to understand the world in which they live, the foundation for science education. Afterwards, directed discussions move the students to more abstract ideas related to their investigations.

Practical Life

These experiences continue to be crucial in the development of the elementary child. Care of the person and of the environment are stressed. Now the child is concerned with product as well as process. A table top may be washed because it is dirty, not just for the pleasure of washing. Other experiences such as food preparation and table setting are often included.

Art and Music

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

Computer and Keyboarding

Beginning in 2nd year, students utilize computers for research and investigation. This is followed in 3rd-5th years, with expansion on these skills, including Power Point presentations. Keyboarding classes are offered to students in the 3rd-5th years, building critical 21st century skills. The program emphasizes both accuracy and

words per minute, and provides each student with individualized remediation and goals for success. Students learn through lessons and engaging skill-targeted typing games. Without this skill, valuable time is lost searching the keyboard.

Character Education and Leadership

As part of Grace and Courtesy, lessons in character education and leadership happen on a daily basis. Students build developmental assets, through specific lessons or real life situations. Social and emotional skills are learned and practiced, building a positive school-wide culture of character. Special leadership classes are held for 4th-5th year students. Although there are natural leaders, every group requires both leaders and followers. With support, skills, and encouragement, all children have potential leadership skills that can be developed and enhanced. Leadership is truly about being in control of one's life and making positive choices for self, others, and our world.

Physical Activity

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

Foreign Language

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

DISCIPLINE

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

DRESS CODE

Wichita Montessori School has a dress code to provide guidelines for students' appearance. Adhering to these guidelines helps to maintain a learning environment that is academically and behaviorally productive, as well as to minimize distractions and focus students' attention on their work. Parents and students are expected to use good judgement in choosing school clothes. A general statement regarding dress code is that the students' dress is proper, clean, and neat in appearance, reflecting the importance of school.

Clothes for Primary and Kindergarten children need to be comfortable, easy care, self-managed, and fitting for outdoor activities. Due to distractibility and safety, we ask that parents do not send children in light up, flip-flop, or higher heeled shoes.

Students may wear shorts of appropriate length from April throughout October. Please see that your child is properly dressed for weather conditions.

There will be occasions when children will need to wear dressier, WMS spirit, or unique clothes for special days during the year. A specific notification will be sent home for these events. Children should wear their finest attire for music performances. For safety on stage, please no high-heeled shoes or flip-flops.

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

Examples of inappropriate school clothing:

Flip-flops

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

Inappropriate screen prints

Spaghetti strapped shirts or clothes too revealing

Hats and caps (inside the building)

Clothing too tight or too sloppy

Distractible or valuable jewelry

FEES

A consumable fee is charged for each student at the time of registration. This fee includes purchase of consumable workbooks, a yearbook, and other supplies used in the classroom. Field trip fees are included in this charge.

A school supply fee is charged for each student as well. We provide all materials needed by the children and purchase them on an as-needed basis during the school year.

A late-dismissal fee of \$350.00 (or \$2.00 per day) for the school year is charged for each student who regularly stays after our dismissal ends at 3:05 p.m., to be dismissed with The Independent School. Children who attend our After School Program or TIS Panther Care do not pay the late-dismissal fee.

FIELD TRIPS

Participating in field trips is a privilege, which we consider an excellent opportunity for enrichment. Many times we will invite speakers, storytellers, or musicians to present "in-house field trips". For elementary age children to leave the building, a blanket permission slip is sent with registration materials, then details of each field trip are communicated via newsletter, calendar, and/or letters sent home. We generally hire a bus to transport children, unless the group size is small, in which case we would ask parents to drive.

For primary and kindergarten students, any time we take children from this location we will need a signed permission slip. Current legislation reads that three-year old children require use of a car seat.

Children ages four through seven years must use a booster seat, unless the child weighs 80 pounds or more and/or are 4'9" or taller in height.

FINANCIAL POLICY

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

released unless all financial accounts are settled.

Our refund policy is as follows:

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

HOMEWORK

Children in the primary classes will not have homework. Kindergarten children will occasionally have homework. Elementary children will always have a spelling list to study and math facts to learn. These two things should be addressed daily. Additional homework assignments may be given in the elementary class. Each child will have a Homework Folder. The work should be brought home and returned in that folder. We ask that students use folders, and not backpacks, EXCEPT students in Upper Elementary, or those who stay for after school care.

If your child forgets his/her homework, all extra privileges are suspended until it is finished. Homework is the child's job. They must learn to put important things in important places and to think before leaving for school if they have anything to bring with them. **Please, do not bring any forgotten items to school for your child. We will send you back home, with a smile and with the forgotten items.**

LIBRARY

Use of the Independent School library is made available to our students ages kindergarten and older. Along with this privilege are responsibilities. Kindergarten through 3rd year students may check out one book at a time. Fourth and 5th year students may check out two books. Allowances are made for special research projects. If books are not returned on time, overdue notices are issued. When books are lost or damaged, the replacement cost of the book is charged to the student. Checkout privileges are suspended until the book is returned or payment is received.

LOST AND FOUND

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

LUNCH

A hot lunch program, operated by T.I.S. Cafe, is available for all elementary students. This program may be purchased by the semester. Questions or complaints about the lunch program should be directed to Nichole Bachman, 686-0152, x 412. Upper elementary students may purchase occasional use lunch tickets from our office, or from T.I.S. business office. (checks should be made out to T.I.S. Lunch Program).

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

MEDICAL INFORMATION

All students are required by Kansas State law to have health forms on file in the school office. For students ages 2 1/2 up to 6 years, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment form is required. For children ages 5 years and above, the Kansas Certificate of Immunization is required.

For the well being of the child and other children in the class, students are sent home if they have a temperature of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or above.

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

Students who have contracted chicken pox must remain at home until all pox have scabbed-over. Students with strep throat or scarlet fever must be on medication at least 24 hours, and be fever-free (without fever-reducing medication) before

returning to school. Pinkeye requires that the child be excluded until there is no discharge from the eye. Do not send your child to school if he/she has had fever or has vomited or had diarrhea within the last 24 hours. A child found with head lice will be sent home immediately. The child must be treated with a prescribed shampoo before re-admittance to school. Children will be re-examined before admission to the classroom and may be sent home if nits are found in the child's hair. Parents will be notified if there are cases of communicable diseases or of head lice in their child's class.

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

1. The medicines must be retained by a school staff member.
2. There must be a completed *Authorization to Administer Medication, to Children* form on file in our office, or for over-the-counter remedies offered by the school, and only In the case of an elementary-age child, a completed *Field Trip Waiver and Medicine Permission* form is on file.

MESSAGES

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

OFF-CAMPUS LUNCH

We encourage you to occasionally take your child off-campus for lunch. Please observe your child's regular lunch time and be sure your child is on time for the afternoon session. Please check your child out and in with teachers or with our office. Do not allow them to go to the playground without checking back in. We regret that due to space limitations, we cannot invite parents to join us for lunch in the school.

PARENT GROUP

We have an active parent group in our school. All parents are invited to attend meetings, stay informed through our newsletter, and to get involved at any level

that seems appropriate. Specific information about the parent group will be made available.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Two parent-teacher conferences are scheduled during the school year: One in the fall and one in the spring. School is not in session on these days. Ample notice will be given in order to allow you to make work/sitter arrangements so that you may attend your conference. Please do not bring children to conferences.

PARENT VISITATION

Parents are always welcome at Wichita Montessori School, and we hope that you will visit during the school year. We encourage visits of 30 minutes or less, and we limit the number of visitors in the classroom. Please check with the office to arrange a time. Teachers have a great deal of preparation to do each day before class starts. For that reason, we are usually unable to visit with you before school.

PROGRESS REPORTS

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

RECESS

It is our expectation that each child will participate in outdoor recess. If for some reason, a child should not go out to recess, the child must have a note signed by the parent. Usually, a child too ill to go out to recess should not be in school. Children should come to school prepared to go outside, even when it is cold. We may go out for only a couple of minutes, but we will go out. The exception is when the temperature or the wind chill factor is 0 degrees or lower, or in inclement weather, when all children will remain indoors.

SCHOOL CLOSING

Should hazardous conditions necessitate the closing or the delayed opening of

school, an announcement to that effect will ordinarily be made between 6:00 and 8:00 a.m. on all TV stations. Please note: Anytime The Independent School is closed, we will be closed as well. HOWEVER, there may be times that WMS closes and The Independent School does not, so please watch your screen carefully. If school is closed, all extracurricular activities and meetings are canceled as well.

STUDENT RECORDS

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

TELEPHONE

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

TESTING

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

VOLUNTEERS

We recognize volunteering as a perfect way for parents to help their children's school and to give special attention to their school-age child. There are a number of opportunities for involvement: pizza lunch helper, class parties, listening to children read, etc. We do ask that siblings not be brought to school when you are volunteering.