



*the* Montessori  
Country School

**Parent Handbook**  
**2023 – 2024**  
**Milton Campus**

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[www.montessoricountryschool.ca](http://www.montessoricountryschool.ca)

## **MCS Mission Statement and Parent Promise**

All teaching staff, administration, support staff and outside consultants of the Montessori Country School (collectively “We”) are committed and dedicated to your family and your child’s success.

### **Mission Statement**

Through trusted partner relationships and an accredited, academic Montessori program, we enrich lives and empower each child to realize their individual potential with passion and confidence.

### **Parent Promise**

We are **Trusted Partners**. We work side-by-side with parents and families to create the best learning environment for each child. We have open communication and share our expertise and knowledge.

We act with **Integrity**. We are open and honest with you regarding our services and design the best learning plan for each individual child.

We are Fully **Engaged**. We work entirely for the best interest of each child and give our focused attention to their needs.

We **Excel**. We continue to maintain our strong Montessori pedagogy, with the child at the center of every decision. We are a fully accredited Montessori school with the highest standard of excellence.

We **Collaborate**. We work together with parents to create the best individual plan for each child. We work with other educational institutions to make links so your child will have all the appropriate tools at the time of transition to their next school.

We are **Growing**. We continue to learn, take professional development courses, and strengthen our knowledge to stay current so we can best serve the child. We keep up to date on educational trends and best practices.

We make an **Impact**. We encourage each child to explore new ideas, take calculated risks and support growth in each child’s academic, emotional, social, and physical aspects.

### **We Enrich Lives.**

We are the **Montessori Country School**

## **The Montessori Country School Program Statement Implementation Policy** (Regulation 46)

Montessori Country Schools (MCS) interpretation of Montessori pedagogy and programming is consistent with the Minister of Education's Policy Statement as set out in "*How Does Learning Happen (HDLH)?*" It is important to note that Montessori pedagogy often describes children's activities as 'work' whereas HDLH describes children's activity as 'play,' but the activities, as experienced by a child, are one and the same.

This Ministry program statement will be reviewed with staff, volunteers, and students annually whenever an amendment is made or upon initial hire or the start the of placement.

MCS holds the view that all children are competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential.

This program statement describes our goals for children at MCS and the approaches we implement to meet those goals. Our goals have been developed from our organization's charter and our Parent Promise.

We promote the health, safety, nutrition, and well-being of the children in our care by diligently meeting all the requirements of ONTARIO REGULATION 137/15.

The following are ways in which we will promote the health, safety, nutrition, and well-being at MCS:

- MCS classrooms are designed to meet the CCEYA requirements with regard to size, window space, number of students, activities, and temperature
- The playgrounds meet the requirements of square footage, age-appropriate activities, annually inspected equipment, and appropriate numbers of children
- A playground policy has been established and reviewed by staff, student teachers, and volunteers
- Adult to student ratios are always maintained, including during outdoor times
- All staff are certified with Standard First Aid and CPR and are recertified regularly
- Records of Accident/Injury are completed as required, and monthly analysis occurs to address any trends or problem areas
- An anaphylaxis policy has been established and has been reviewed by the staff, student teachers, volunteers, and families
- Nutritious meals and snacks are provided by our caterer, Wholesome Kids Catering and follow the Canadian Food Guide for portion sizes
- Staff, student teachers and volunteers follow proper food-handling procedures
- Daily rest periods are available for students who require a nap. Cots with appropriate bedding are provided
- A Sanitary Practices policy has been established and reviewed by staff, student teachers, and volunteers
- School building is locked, and front doors are supervised to permit entrance only to parents/guardians and family members
- A medication policy has been established and reviewed by staff, student teachers, and volunteers
- Monthly health and safety inspections are conducted by the Joint Health and Safety Committee
- Playground inspections occur daily, monthly, and annually
- Water flushing occurs daily and weekly

- Regular fire drills and annual fire inspections are completed
- Health inspections are completed by Halton Region Public Health Department. A Serious Occurrence Policy was established and is reviewed with staff, student teachers, and volunteers. The Behaviour Guidance Policy has been established and reviewed by staff, student teachers, and volunteers

We support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, staff, volunteers, and students by communicating, promoting, and adhering to our ‘Values’ and our ‘Code of Conduct.’ These are communicated in our staff policies and in the Parent Handbook. They are applied to all members of the MCS community – staff, Board, interns, students, parents, volunteers, and visitors. The following are ways in which we will support positive and responsive interactions at MCS:

- Through the Montessori lessons of Grace and Courtesy, students are introduced to the Code of Conduct
- Multi-age grouping – we learn from each other
- Behaviour Guidance Policy has been established and reviewed by staff, student teachers, and volunteers
- Formal Parent/Teacher meetings are conducted twice a year, with additional meetings scheduled as necessary. These meetings can be in person, telephone, email, etc. During any outbreaks or pandemics, in-person meetings will not be permitted. Virtual meetings using Zoom communications will be implemented
- Special events encourage a sense of community, e.g., BBQ, concerts, presentations, parent education nights, special speakers, etc. These events can be in person or virtually
- We celebrate cultural diversity
- We promote community connections with local charities and visitors from the community, for example, food drives, clothing drives, etc.
- Parents are invited to observe in any classroom. During Outbreaks or pandemics, only virtual observations will be permitted

We encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way, and we support their ability to self-regulate by having mixed-age Montessori communities where children remain with the same adults for three years. This provides many opportunities for interactions with children older and younger than themselves and with adults. We also have a Code of Conduct that is applied consistently throughout the school and is adapted according to the maturity of the children involved. The following are ways in which we will promote children to interact and communicate in a positive way at MCS:

- Staff use positive re-direction of behaviour
- Montessori education promotes Peace Education
- Montessori education promotes care of self and care of the environment
- Montessori materials allow the children to self-correct, learn from mistakes, and explore personal interests
- Group lessons, circle, etc., promote positive communication methods
- Children are encouraged to observe each other, teach each other, and learn from each other
- Staff, student teachers, and volunteers are role models for children

We make an **Impact**. We encourage each child to explore new ideas, take calculated risks, and support

growth in each child's academic, emotional, social, and physical aspects. We foster the children's exploration, play, and inquiry by having fully equipped Montessori learning environments in which activities are present for the full range of ages in each room. There are activities and materials that assist children with the development of independence. Materials promote care of the self, care of the environment, and care of others (Grace and Courtesy). The materials allow the children to explore and refine all their senses as well as discover sequencing and order. There are activities to increase vocabulary, encourage discussion, explore sounds, and begin to develop the process of writing and reading. There are also activities to develop number sense, numeracy, understanding of large quantities, the mathematical operations, geometry, and even rudimentary algebra concepts and then lots of activities to introduce all the wonderful things in our world. In addition, there are activities for cutting, colouring, painting, exploring colour, shape and texture, pasting, etc. Children understand where everything is kept and can choose and return things independently and with friends.

The following are ways in which we foster the children's exploration, play, and inquiry at MCS:

- Each classroom has a full complement of Montessori materials
- Outdoor areas have a variety of age-appropriate materials with interesting activities and equipment available
- Children have uninterrupted time to explore and learn
- Children are offered a variety of opportunities for self-expression, e.g., art, music
- Children are offered a variety of opportunities for physical development and motor exploration in the outdoor environment, gym, or gross motor room
- Staff use the outdoor environment for learning and activities, and our student teachers are encouraged to incorporate the use of the outdoors in their placement requirements
- Children's individual interests are followed and encouraged by the staff, student teachers, and volunteers

We act with **Integrity**. We are open and honest with you regarding our services and design the best learning plan for each individual child.

We are **Fully Engaged**. We work entirely for the best interest of each child and give our focused attention to their needs.

We **Excel**. We continue to maintain our strong Montessori pedagogy, with the child at the center of every decision. We are a fully accredited Montessori school with the highest standards of excellence.

We provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences. All Montessori materials are introduced to a child by an adult or by another child, and while the Montessori adults are always observing children to see what support each child might need, they are very sensitive to allowing children their own initiative as this most often results in children being deeply engaged and peaceful in what they are doing. Adults are always trying to find exactly the right moment to introduce a child to something new so that they have enough time to master something, but they are also always being gently challenged. The following are ways in which we provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences at MCS:

- Freedom of choice is essential in a Montessori environment
- Montessori educators are advocates for the child

- Children’s choices and development are observed by the staff, student teachers, and volunteers
- Staff, student teachers, and volunteers observe the child’s progress, understanding of concepts, learning style, interests, etc.
- Lesson plans and record keeping are maintained weekly and monthly
- Anecdotal notes are maintained
- Daily logs are maintained
- Formal reports to address observations and assessments are conducted
- The classrooms are designed specifically for the age of the child, e.g., child-sized furniture, work is easily accessible, etc.
- Staff receive regular professional development to understand how to meet the needs of each individual child and learning style

We plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child’s learning and development is supported by using the international Montessori curriculum and materials that have been proven through research to be effective with children from all socio-economic and cultural groups. The following are ways in which we plan for and create positive learning environments at MCS:

- Based on the Montessori curriculum, individual lesson plans are created for each child weekly and monthly
- Daily observations are used to plan for each child
- Additional activities are also introduced to enhance learning, e.g., Field trips, guests, etc.
- Meetings and observations from the Principal or colleagues for support and modifications of programs are available
- Staff have professional development opportunities for learning styles, learning strategies, learning differences, etc.
- Resource teacher on staff to support in providing assessments, observations, recommendations, and referrals

We incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest, and quiet time into the day, and consider the individual needs of the children by allowing them to manage a great deal of their day. Children can choose to move about the class carrying materials, manipulating objects, or sitting quietly at a table moving intricate pieces. Children can choose to have a snack or a drink when hungry or thirsty; they do not have to wait for the whole group. Our school has a large, well equipped outdoor environment that children access each day. The following are ways in which we incorporate indoor and outdoor play, rest, and quiet time and consider the individual needs of the children at MCS:

- Uninterrupted work time which respects the child’s freedom of choice
- Gross motor opportunities in the gross motor room or gym and outdoors daily
- Opportunities for quiet activities, e.g., Library corner in every room, rest periods
- Ample supplies provided for all activities
- Snack table available during the morning and afternoon work cycles

We are **Trusted Partners**. We work side-by-side with parents and families to create the best learning environment for each child. We have open communication and share our expertise and knowledge.

We **Collaborate**. We work together with parents and, if necessary, outside consultants to create the best

individual plan for each child. We work with other educational institutions to make links so your child will have all the appropriate tools to transition to their next school.

We foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children by having meetings with parents to explain what is happening in the classrooms, inviting parents in to observe their children, writing weekly school memos, and sharing photos on Transparent Classroom explaining what the children are working within the classroom. Parents can access their child's teacher by leaving a voicemail/email or by chatting briefly at the door during arrival and dismissal. We also have whole school events where the parents of the younger children can meet and discuss their child's experience with parents of older children. The following are ways in which we foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children at MCS:

- Parents can schedule appointments and meetings with staff in person or over the phone or via email
- Records are kept of daily snacks, sleep, and toileting for Toddler children
- Transparent Classroom is a communications platform utilized at the school which allows teachers to post messages and photos and share them with our families. There is also the capability to complete documents, such as permission forms for excursions where Teachers can note specific materials children are working with, and parents can explore the lessons and purpose behind each
- Formal interviews are scheduled twice per year, but parents can schedule additional meetings at any time
- Parent Education workshops are regularly scheduled to assist parents with understanding child development, the Montessori curriculum, etc.
- Weekly memo is sent home with pertinent information about the child's program and upcoming events
- Yearly school calendar with all events is shared with families, and the weekly memo highlights all upcoming events

We involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families, and staff. We welcome specialists from private agencies and find spaces for them to work with our children, and we meet with the parents and these specialists as necessary. The following are ways in which we involve community partners at MCS:

- Teachers make observations and referrals for Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Hearing Specialists, etc.
- Speech, OT, and Hearing Specialists support the needs of the children and are welcome at MCS
- We participate in local events and charities, e.g., Food and toy drives, local fairs, parades, etc.
- Community partners come to school to share their expertise, e.g., Firefighters.
- During an outbreak or pandemic, only virtual visits will occur

We are **GROWING**. We continue to learn, take professional development courses, and strengthen our teaching practices so we can best serve the child. We keep up to date on educational trends and best practices.

We support our staff and others who interact with the children in relation to continuous professional learning by having an annual policy review meeting in the fall. At this time, all staff review and complete all

necessary documentation required by ONTARIO REGULATION 137/15. Our staff also set goals for themselves in discussions with their direct reports, and we plan for how to support them in the achievement of those goals. Depending on their particular needs, we have a budget dedicated to Professional Development that any staff member can access. We have three Professional Development days set aside each year where staff are encouraged to either work together and plan for improvements or attend workshops/conferences.

Our Vice Principal and/or Principal walk about the school regularly, observing in classes and then engaging the staff in conversation about their observations. We also meet monthly to discuss ongoing issues or topics of particular interest. Each staff member also spends time three times per year observing in another's class. The following are ways in which we support our staff and others in relation to continuous professional learning at MCS:

- Staff are encouraged and supported financially to attend Professional Development opportunities outside of school
- CCMA, CAMT, Halton Region Capacity Building and OFIS provide workshops and conferences on a variety of topics
- Professional Development opportunities are shared among staff via email or postings
- The school library has a staff resource section
- Staff participate in monthly goal setting meetings with administrative mentors
- During CCMA accreditations, self-evaluations are conducted
- MCS accepts and mentors student teachers from Montessori training schools as well as placement students from colleges or universities studying ECE

We document and review the impact of the above strategies on the children and their families through observation, conversation, meetings, surveys, etc. The following are ways in which we document and review the impact of the above strategies on the children and their families at MCS:

- CCMA re-accreditation
- MCS is continually observing, assessing, evaluating our program and ensuring that we are following the Montessori pedagogy
- We get feedback from parent surveys, meetings, and various inspectors

## **Admission Requirements & Procedures**

### **CWELCC**

The Montessori Country School has carefully reviewed the documentation, policies, and guidelines regarding the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System (CWELCC). With approval and support from our Board of Directors, and after thoughtful consideration and conversation, we have made the decision to **Opt-Out** of the CWELCC program due to the risks it poses to the sustainability of our entire Montessori program.

We are confident this is the best decision for the school, the staff, the students, and you, the families we serve, because, as it stands today, the CWELCC document does not include or consider the Private School education sector, making it difficult to see how it will benefit families looking for a higher educational standard for their children. As a Private Montessori School, MCS remains dedicated and true to the

Montessori pedagogy, which is the foundation of Our Promise to You as Trusted Partners. In addition, MCS offers many enrichment programs to enhance your children's educational learning further, providing greater value to the quality of education delivered and received.

MCS is committed to offering and providing your children with the quality education you have come to expect and deserve. Thank you for entrusting us with your children and your continued support in all our efforts as we support your children's educational journey. We look forward to continuing to work alongside you in our efforts to Enrich Lives.

### **Admissions**

Admissions are accepted only for the entire year or the remainder of the academic year if enrolled after the first day.

### **Academic Year Start Dates:**

**Toddler Students:** First Monday in July. Should Canada Day fall on the first Monday in July, the start of the academic year will commence the Tuesday.

**Casa Students:** First Monday in July. Should Canada Day fall on the first Monday in July, the start of the academic year will commence the Tuesday.

**Elementary Students:** The Tuesday after Labour Day.

### **Applications**

A parent/guardian shall apply to have a child enrolled in a program by:

1. Satisfying the admission requirements
2. Completing, executing, and returning the Application or Re-enrollment Agreement
3. Providing the EFT Payment Form (Electronic Funds Transfer)
4. Proving a copy of the student's Birth Certificate and current Immunization Record or Exemption Form

### **Acceptance for Enrolment**

MCS shall notify the parent/guardian in writing of the student's acceptance into the program applied for. The acceptance shall be reserved at the absolute discretion of MCS. Upon acceptance of the student by MCS, this Agreement shall constitute a legally binding contract.

MCS reserves the right to end any enrollment during the balance of the school year if circumstances so warrant. If MCS terminates enrollment, tuition shall be pro-rated up to the time enrollment is ended.

### **Financial Terms**

Payment of tuition fees are made through EFT Payment (Electronic Funds Transfer).

A Sibling Discount outlined in the 'Tuition Schedule' will be applied for each additional child from the same family registered in the school. This discount is conditional on all tuition fees paid by their due dates.

EFT Tuition Payment Form must be submitted upon acceptance of the application to complete the enrolment and re-enrolment process.

\$50.00 service charge will apply to any item that does not clear the bank for any reason.

Interest will be charged at a rate of 4.5% per month on all overdue accounts commencing fifteen (15) days after their due date.

### **Tuition Fees**

Fees are processed within the first five business days of each month in accordance with the Tuition Schedule. (Tuition Schedule outlined below)

- Toddler and Casa enrollment is for a 12-month period. As noted above, the academic year is for July to June, inclusive
- Elementary enrollment is for a 10-month period. As noted above, the academic year is for September to June, inclusive
- The parent/guardian is required to pay the Tuition as stated for the full academic year

**Casa:** Student enrollment is for July through June. Tuition is payable monthly or yearly, with a 5% discount for a year's tuition paid in full by July 1.

**Elementary:** Student enrollment is for September through June. Tuition is payable monthly or yearly, with a 5% discount for a year's tuition paid in full by July 1.

If you are enrolling two children, a 5% Sibling discount off the annual tuition fee of the equal or lower sibling fee will be applied to at least one of the two children is enrolled in the full day program.

### **Non-instructional Days and School Closures:**

Non-instructional school closures include, but are not limited to, weekends, statutory or observed holidays and/o, inclement weather. All programs will be closed for Professional Development Days four times annually. For Elementary programs, non-instructional days also include Winter and Spring Breaks as part of the academic year.

### **Statutory or Observed Holidays at MCS include:**

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

No refund of fees will be given for the absence of a student due to illness, family holidays or any other circumstances.

MCS will not reduce fees for absences, withdrawal, or dismissal. Parents/Guardians are required to give advance notice when extended vacation and/or absenteeism is planned.

Refunds will only be given if the school is closed greater than 3 days because of safety and/or emergency reasons.

The non-refundable registration fee of \$500.00 must accompany an application for new children only and returning students that have withdrawn from previous programming.

Tuition Fees are payable on the first of each month in accordance with the Tuition Schedule.

The child is enrolled until the parent/guardian submits a withdrawal request or until the child moves up into the Elementary program. A minimum of thirty (30) days written withdrawal notice is required. If thirty (30) days' written notice is not provided, payment in lieu of notice is required. This notice will only be accepted at the start of a month; *\*mid-month withdrawals will not be accepted\**

Parents/guardians acknowledge and agree that should the child be withdrawn from the program, a minimum of thirty (30) days' written notice of the withdrawal is required. If thirty (30) days' written notice is not provided, payment in lieu of notice is required. The parent/guardian will be responsible for payment of all services rendered (paid or payable) up to the date of the notice period; Parents/Guardians are not entitled to a further reduction or refunds of tuition fees including, but not limited to, absence, voluntary withdrawal, suspension, cancellation, non-attendance, payment default, expulsion or otherwise. The \$500.00 registration fee is non-refundable.

**Please note:** the school reserves the right to accept or reject this application. MCS also reserves the right to cancel enrollment and/or expel the student if fees remain outstanding. The parent/guardian will remain responsible for the payment of all tuition fees.

### **Notice of Withdrawal**

Parents/Guardians acknowledge and agree that should the student be withdrawn from the program, a minimum of thirty (30) days written notice is required. If thirty (30) days written notice is not provided, payment in lieu of notice is required. This notice will only be accepted at the start of a month; **mid-month withdrawals will not be accepted.**

MCS calculates tuition as one student's share of the year's operating expenses. It is essential that the parent/guardian understands that there can be no reduction or remission of fees if the student withdraws before the end of the academic year. However, we understand that circumstances may arise that require you to withdraw your child; each request must be submitted in writing and will be assessed on an individual basis.

In extreme situations where the school feels the health and/or safety of the student or other students, families and staff are compromised, written notice may be waived, and immediate dismissal enforced.

Parents/guardians will be responsible for payment of all services rendered (paid or payable) up to the notice period date. The parent/guardian not entitled to a further reduction or refund of tuition fees, including, but not limited to, absence, voluntary withdrawal, suspension, cancellation, non-attendance, payment default, expulsion or otherwise. The \$500 registration fee is non-refundable. If tuition fees are not current to one month, students will not be permitted to attend the following month unless the matter is dealt with to the satisfaction of the Principal and/or Director of Admissions.

The accounting department will notify the Admissions Office that a charge was not successfully processed due to NSF or stop payment within one week of initial processing.

The Principal then contacts the parent/guardian within three (3) days of notification of the pending fee. The parent/guardian has five (5) days from this date to provide updated banking information or written approval for the fee to be processed with the NSF applied to the pending amount.

A \$50.00 service charge will apply to any item that does not clear the bank for any reason. Interest will be charged at a rate of 4.5% per month on all overdue accounts commencing fifteen (15) days after their due date.

MCS reserves the right to cancel enrollment and/or suspend the student if fees remain outstanding past thirty (30) days.

### **Waiting List Policy**

Applicants accepted for all reasons other than space availability will be placed on a Waiting List (completed application and registration fee must be on file). There is no fee for being placed on the waiting list; the registration fee will not be processed until a space becomes available and the application is confirmed.

Our waitlist will be organized by age group, the date a space is required and the date of the request to be placed on the list.

Any time it is confirmed that a space is becoming available for a date close to the time a space is needed, we will contact the first name on the list via telephone or email to discuss their continued need/desire to enroll. If we do not reach you in person, we will wait five (5) business days before going on to the next name.

Once a family is notified of an opening, acceptance must be confirmed within five (5) business days, at which time your registration fee will be processed. If confirmation is not received within five (5) business days, we will offer the space to the next person on the Waiting List.

To obtain a space by the date required, a family will be offered spaces up to a month before should they become available earlier than the desired start date or longer if a family has indicated flexibility. The parent/guardian will confirm within five (5) business days if they want the space or not and if they wish to proceed. If the parent/guardian agrees to the space, a letter of acceptance will be sent via email with a confirmation of the starting date. At this time, the non-refundable registration fee will be processed. We cannot guarantee a space later than the date we have on record, but we may be able to delay the start in some situations.

Priority is given to siblings of children in the school and families with more than one child waiting to enroll should spaces become available in the appropriate age groups.

To ensure transparency, should someone want to check where they are on our waitlist, they can call, and we will be glad to share the status with them.

The confidentiality of all families on the wait list will be maintained.

### **Montessori Country School Fees: 2023-2024**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>2023-2024 Monthly Tuition</b>
Toddler Full Day	18 – 30 months	7:00 a.m. – 6:00 pm.	\$1,450.00
Casa Full Day	2.5 – 6 years	8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	\$1,353.62
Elementary	6 – 12 years	8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	\$1,636.56

All programs include snacks and meals provided by Wholesome Kids Catering.

5% Sibling discount off the annual tuition fee of the younger sibling, provided that at least one of the two children is enrolled in the full day program.

#### **Tuition Add on Fees:**

<b>Fee Description</b>	<b>Times (if applicable)</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Extended Care – A.M. & P.M.	7:00 – 8:30 a.m. & 3:30 – 6:00 p.m.	\$350/month
Extended Care – A.M.	7:00 – 8:30 a.m.	\$200/month
Extended Care – P.M.	3:30 – 6:00 p.m.	\$200/month
Late Pick Up Fee	after 6:00 p.m.	\$3.20/minute
NSF Service Charge		\$50.00
Registration Fee		\$500.00

#### **Elementary Enrichment Fee:**

The Student Enrichment Fee will supplement school programs, activities, and equipment. The enrichment fee will not be paid monthly; this will be made in two installments of \$500. The first payment will be due with September’s tuition and the second payment will be due with February’s tuition.

#### **Uniform Policy**

The Montessori Country School (MCS) requires all Casa & Elementary students to wear a school uniform to support our students to take pride in belonging to their school community. All MCS students are expected to adhere to the Uniform Policy.

Casa and Elementary students are required to wear their uniform daily to school and for all external outings, inclusive of field trips and community outreach.

The aims of this policy are to:

- ensure clarity of what can be worn or not at school
- promote a sense of pride in our school
- help to create a sense of community and belonging in the school
- ensure that our pupils can be clearly identified with our school
- support our commitment to inclusion
- ensure pupils' uniforms are practical, smart, affordable, and suitable, with health and safety in mind

The Uniform can be bought with the Montessori Country School logo from our supplier, R. J. McCarthy.

### **Tops**

- Grey short sleeve T-shirt
- White short sleeve or long sleeve Golf Shirt
- White short sleeve or long sleeve Oxford Shirt
- White short sleeve or long sleeve Peter Pan Blouse
- Navy Dry-Fit T-shirt
- Navy Knit Pullover
- Navy Crewneck Sweat Top

### **Bottoms**

- Navy Dress Pant
- Navy Casual Pant – Pull on
- Navy Box Pleat Tunic
- Navy Pleated Skort
- Navy Dry-Fit Short

### **Footwear**

For health and safety reasons, we do not allow children to wear shoes with platform soles, Heelys, or high heels. Sandals and flip-flops are not permitted. Appropriate footwear includes running shoes, boots for outdoor recess, closed-toe flat shoes. Footwear should be comfortable and conducive to students independently putting on and taking off.

### **The Role of Parents/Guardians**

We believe that one of the responsibilities of parents/guardians is to ensure that their child has the correct uniform, and that the child's name is written on all items. Children who arrive at school wearing non-school uniform items will be loaned an appropriate item from the school where

possible. Parents/guardians will be contacted to discuss the matter and may be requested to return to school with the correct clothing.

### **Help to Provide Uniform**

The Montessori Country School accepts new and gently used items of clothing from students graduating from the school or when sizing has been outgrown. These items are available to families who may require these or would like supplementary uniform pieces free of charge.

## **School Policies**

It is understood and agreed that parents/guardians and children are expected to follow school rules and policies. In addition to the Rules of the School, the school has a right to make and enforce such further and other rules and regulations as are deemed by the school, in its sole discretion, to be appropriate and necessary. It is a condition of the child's enrolment that the school's rules and regulations are observed by both the children and their parents/guardians.

Note: Parents/Guardians should be aware that a general attitude of cooperation on the part of both the child and parents/guardians is expected and is essential to the smooth running of the child's class and to the teacher's ability to educate the child (socially, emotionally, and academically).

### **Behaviour Guidance**

Students learn what they live. The use of positive methods will create an environment conducive to learning and cooperation. Teacher support and guidance will help students to learn and problem-solve in difficult situations. Clear, consistent, and age-appropriate limits are a necessity for students to feel confident and secure. Realistic expectations are also essential to a child's self-esteem and growth. Age-appropriate intervention must be used as expectations and abilities vary enormously from Casa to Elementary students. Children's needs must always be considered, regardless of age. Students (when developmentally appropriate) will be encouraged to monitor and reflect on their behaviour actively.

Consistency between home and school will benefit your child. For further information on our methods of behaviour guidance and suggestions for you to try at home, please ask for our guideline sheet.

In extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour, further behaviour guidance strategies and techniques, as well as our policies in this regard, will be reviewed with you as required.

Our school does not permit staff, students, and volunteers under any circumstances of the following prohibited practices as identified in section 48 of the Child Care and Early Years Act:

- Corporal punishment of the child (which may include but is not limited to hitting, spanking, slapping, and pinching)
- Physical restraint of the child for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting themselves or someone else and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent

- Locking the exits of the school for the purpose of confining the child or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures
- Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame, or frighten the child or undermine their self-respect, dignity, or self-worth
- Depriving the child of basic needs, including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing, or bedding
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children, including making students eat or drink against their will

If any prohibited practices are employed by staff, students, or volunteers, these events will be recorded and addressed and may include disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or placement.

The Montessori Country School expects that all parents/guardians, staff, and persons doing business with or are on the premises of the School(s) conduct themselves respectfully. In keeping with the premise that students learn through example, verbal and/or physical altercations will not be tolerated.

It is understood and agreed that parents/guardians and students are expected to follow the school rules and policies. In addition to the rules of the school, the school has the right to make and enforce additional rules and regulations as deemed by the school, in its sole discretion, to be appropriate and necessary. It is a condition of the student's enrollment that the school's rules and regulations are observed by both the student and their parents/guardians.

Note: Parents/Guardians should be aware that a general attitude of cooperation on the part of both the student and parents/guardians is expected and essential to the smooth running of the student's class and to the teacher's ability to educate the student (socially, emotionally, and academically).

Anyone displaying unacceptable behaviour will be subject to being prohibited from our premises and possible expulsion from the program.

### **Physical Guidance Policy**

The Montessori Country School does not condone the use of physical restraint of a child in behaviour guidance situations. ONLY in extreme cases where the child's or any other person's safety is in jeopardy, will a more controlled physical redirection be allowed and, this, only to the minimum extent so as to remove the child from the dangerous situation or calm a child down to prevent injury.

In a case where any kind of physical guidance has been necessary, the Principal must be informed, a report must be written detailing the situation, and the parent/guardian of the child must be informed as soon as possible. Consequently, the staff and Principal will meet with the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the incident and work cooperatively to determine strategies that can be used should there be a similar situation.

The most effective strategies for addressing challenging behaviour are primarily focused on

The prevention of challenging behaviour and promotion of appropriate social behaviours. These strategies include environmental manipulations, providing positive attention and feedback to children, and teaching social skills and emotional competencies.

The Principal is required to contact the Serious Occurrence Line to report the incident. Additionally, the school is required to send a full report detailing the incident to the Ministry of Education. Refer to the school's Serious Occurrence Policy and Child Abuse Reporting for further details.

The Principal and staff will continue to keep the parent(s)/guardian(s) up to date on their child's progress using a mutually agreeable method, either by phone, meetings, etc. This will also include a review of the recommended strategies.

Should the child continue to experience challenging behaviour, the School Principal may call in a specialized Consultation Service with parental consent. Specific strategies and interventions will be devised in cooperation with the resource consultant, family, and staff, including a regular communication plan with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to review the child's progress. Through discussion, a plan of action will be determined to ensure any available services have been accessed which may further support the child and family.

### **Bullying Policy**

The Montessori Country School believes that all children deserve a safe learning environment. It is our belief that bullying goes against our values, and it will not be tolerated. It will be considered a *Serious Misbehaviour* or a *Serious Offence*, and the consequences will follow our behaviour protocols and may result in suspension, expulsion and/or withdrawal.

#### **Definition:**

Bullying means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil where:

- The behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of,
  - causing harm, fear, or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social, or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation or harm to the individual's property, or
  - creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and
- The behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnicity, origin, sexual orientation, family circumstance, race, disability, or the receipt of special education

Behaviour includes the use of any physical, verbal, electronic, written, or other means.

#### Cyber Bullying Includes:

- Creating a web page or blog in which the creator assumes another person's identity.
- Impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and
- Communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals

(From Bill 13, "Accepting Schools Act", Ontario Ministry of Education, 2012)

## **Attendance**

Children shall arrive at school prior to the time designated for the commencement of classes and be picked up at the time designated for the completion of classes. The school's hours are 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., inclusive of extended programming for all age groups. Classes begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m.

If there is a reason that a student will be absent from class, the parents/guardians are required to inform the classroom teachers and school administration. This helps us keep an eye on each student's health and well-being and aids in daily activity planning.

Health authorities require that students' illnesses are reported to the school. If there is no one in the office at the time you call, please leave a message on our voicemail. Any parents/guardians who do not contact the school when their child is absent will be contacted by the school.

## **Program Hours**

Parents/Guardians shall abide by the pick-up times and other rules of attendance.

One Parent/Guardian is to escort their child to the designated drop-off area.

### Late Arrival:

- Parents/Guardians are encouraged to make every effort to get their child(ren) to school on time
- Students arriving after 8:30 a.m. must wait in the vestibule with their parent/guardian until a staff and/or administrative staff can come out and greet them

### Pick Up for Full Day Students:

- Parents/Guardians may park and enter the school or walk to the playground area to pick up their child(ren). After pick-up, we kindly ask that you make your way back to the car to allow parking spaces for other families to pick up

### Early Pick Up:

- Parents/Guardians wishing to pick up their child between 8:31 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. must email the school to notify the administration of this. Upon arrival, please ring the school doorbell, and a staff member or administration member will greet you

### Extended Pick Up:

- Any students not picked up by 3:45 p.m. are taken to our After School Extended programs
- Casa Extended will be in the playground (weather permitting) or in the gross motor room
- Elementary will be in the Elementary Playground (weather permitting) or in the classroom
- Anyone picking up a student during these hours who is not the student's parent/guardian, whether they are on the pick-up list, must check in with dismissal staff for the student to be released

### **Authorization to Pick Up Student**

- No student will be released to any person other than the student's parents/guardians or persons authorized by parents/guardians (i.e., on the pick-up list), without written authorization from one of the parents/guardians
- If you, the parents/guardians, wish to have someone else pick up your child, you are to advise the administration in writing beforehand. On the Student's Information form, there is a space for the inclusion of all persons authorized to pick up a student. Names can be added or deleted at any time by advising the Administration in writing
- Photo Identification will need to be presented by all persons not listed as the student's parent or legal guardian
- Once MCS becomes familiar with the persons authorized for pick, the need for producing photo identification will no longer be required. Any person on the Authorized Pick-up list can pick up; however, we prefer to have written authorization of this occurrence from the parents/guardians
- Only persons 18 years or older are authorized to pick up a student

### **Student Progress Interviews**

Parents/Guardians are expected to attend scheduled interviews and be available to meet with the teachers at mutually convenient times should specific concerns arise.

### **Parent Education**

Parents/Guardians should attend at least one Parent Education session. This is recommended for all families and mandatory for new families.

### **Absenteeism due to Illness**

A child with an illness of a highly contagious nature (e.g., strep throat or chickenpox) shall be kept home until the child's doctor determines that the child is no longer infectious. Parents/Guardians of a child with an illness of a highly contagious nature should immediately notify the school.

*\* Please review the Exclusion of Sick Children Policy*

### **Suspensions**

Should a child's influence and/or behaviour be considered by the school to be harmful as a result of a breach of these or such other rules as the school may make or for any other reason, or if a child's presence in the school is regarded as undesirable by the school, the Principal (or such person as is authorized by the Principal) shall have the discretion to require the immediate withdrawal of the child from the school. This withdrawal may take the form of either a suspension or an expulsion. In such cases, the parent/guardian will remain responsible for the full payment of tuition fees for the entire year.

### **Nutrition**

Healthy food and snacks are important in fostering good eating habits in young children. At MCS, we offer a variety of nutritious foods and snacks through our lunch and snack program. All our food is catered by Wholesome Kids Catering, whose menus have been reviewed and approved by a certified dietitian. As a result, we are requesting that you do not send your child with any additional food/snacks to the campus. Due to the possibility of other students in the school with Life-Threatening Allergies, the school's administration must approve all external food items prior to them being served in the classroom.

## **Sleep Arrangements**

Public Health Canada promotes safe sleep environments.

Toddler and Casa children three years and younger will be assigned a designated cot to rest on during the rest period. Children unable or not wishing to sleep will be offered quiet activities within the classroom during the rest period. The rest period will be 2 consecutive hours in length at maximum.

Staff will visibly and physically monitor children regularly during rest periods. Safe Supervision Practices are in place on how to check each child and how often checks will occur. We will discuss sleep arrangements for your child at the time of enrolment and any other time deemed necessary.

## **Outdoor Play**

Except in most inclement weather (greater than -13 with or without windchill), we are required by the Child Care and Early Years Act regulations to take every Casa child outdoors for at least two hours every day during which students are in our care. This is an important part of your child's program and is beneficial for the health and well-being of all children and an excellent tool to extend their learning. Fresh air is an old-fashioned but powerful remedy against long-term or recurrent upper respiratory problems. In addition, outdoor play helps children develop active, positive lifestyles. Integrating knowledge and activity will help convince children that exercise is important to their well-being and increase the chance that physical activity will become a permanent part of their daily lives.

All Elementary students will be outside for a minimum of 30 minutes per day.

## **Sun Safety Policy**

Outdoor play and physical activity are essential to children's health and development.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that protocol is in place in to assist children in their development of healthy sun safe habits.

The following standard sun safety recommendations are supported by Health Canada, the Canadian Cancer Society and Halton Region Public Health.

Staff at MCS will implement the Sun Safety Guidelines to protect themselves and the children outdoors:

- Staff are required to role model sun-safe behaviours
- All heat warnings put out by Halton Region Public Health will be adhered to.
- Modified times for outdoor recess will be implemented as necessary to accommodate for higher temperatures
- Staff will ensure that children have access to their water bottles while outdoors

- Parents/Guardians are asked to provide the following items for their children:
  - All children should have sunhats at school every day. While baseball caps provide head and eye protection, they do not protect the ears or the back of the neck. We recommend a full-brimmed hat bucket-style hat
  - Shatter-resistant UVA/UVB (sunglasses labelled 100% UV protection or UV400), close-fitting or wraparound sunglasses will provide protection from direct and reflected UVR
  - Reusable, shatter-resistant water bottle
- Staff will follow the guidelines for the use of sunscreen and bug repellent as outlined in the ‘Sunscreen and Bug Repellent Poli.’. Parents/Guardians are expected to apply sunscreen in the morning at home; if they forget to apply, they will need to let the school know so that the teacher can make sure the child is protected

It will not be the obligation of staff to check the sunglasses worn by children for compliance with the requirements of UV protection. By sending children to school with sunglasses, parents/guardians are consenting to the risk factors associated with the wearing of sunglasses during physical activity and the repercussions of not providing sun-safe protection for their child.

### **Montessori Items**

From time-to-time items go missing from the classroom. Please do not discard items that may come home with your child, as they may be an important part of materials that belong to the classroom. Many of these materials contain small pieces, such as jigsaw puzzle map parts. When in doubt, please check with your child’s teacher. Other items that belong to other children should also be returned to your child’s teacher.

### **Toys and Valuables**

- Toys shall not be brought to the school
- Valuables such as electronic devices and/or money (except for special sales, field trips, etc.) should not be brought to school
- Should valuables be brought to school, they will be kept in the student’s cubby
- MCS is not responsible for any loss or damage to any valuables brought into school

### **School Property**

Children shall not engage in destructive behaviour such as the intentional damage of school property, including all books, equipment, furniture, or school buildings. The parents/guardians of any child who so willfully damages school property shall be assessed sufficiently to repair or replace the damage to school property, and such assessments shall be paid immediately.

### **Parking Lot**

Anyone coming to the Montessori Country School Milton Campus must enter the property via the South entrance driveway and exit via the South exit driveway. The driveway has a posted speed limit of 25km, and our parking lot has a posted speed limit of 10 km/hr. This is to ensure the safety of our MCS community. We expect all persons using the parking lot to respect the posted limit.

### **No Smoking or Vaping**

Smoking or Vaping of any substances is not permitted in or at, The Montessori Country School outside, including the playground, parking lot or entrance areas. Any person who refuses to comply is in contravention of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

### **Parent/Guardian & Staff Relationships**

The intent of this policy is to identify the appropriate relationships permitted at the school between staff and parents/guardians.

At the Montessori Country School, we make every effort to build positive, trusting, and professional relationships with our families. This is the rapport we value within the school; thus, we do not condone personal relationships between our staff and clients outside of their professional duties at the school. This includes asking our staff for tutoring, babysitting, or nanny services.

Should there be any friendships or relationships, these must stay outside of operating hours and off the school premises. These must not affect the employees, clients, or the school in any negative manner as they relate to the services provided at the school. Any persons involved are to refrain from discussing anything about the school, and its other clients, and all confidentiality are to be adhered to. MCS will have no choice but to act with the parties concerned should any issues arise from these relationships. This includes the withdrawal of services provided to the family and/or discipline for the staff member(s) involved.

At no time, while a child is enrolled in the school can a staff member babysit, tutor, or nanny for any family. Staff must be viewed and treated as professionals with clear boundaries. These boundaries also include giving out their personal contact information, such as their cell phone numbers, for use in discussing school matters. Staff can be reached through work email addresses or by calling the school directly.

Staff will not be permitted to transport children in their personal vehicles to and/or from school-related events/excursions without receiving written consent from the parent/guardian as implied on event/excursion permission forms.

Out of respect to the quality of care offered at the school and the well-being of the children, we ask that families do not put our staff in a position which could be detrimental to them or cause a strain on their professional relationship with you at the school.

### **Students and Volunteer Policy**

The Montessori Country School provides hands-on learning opportunities for students and volunteers and encourages a cooperative relationship with families and within the community. We recognize the benefits to the children and volunteers from participating in a positive and diverse learning environment.

All employees, students, and volunteers supervising children in our centres must be a minimum of 18 years of age (as per CCEYA). Only employees will have direct unsupervised access to children; volunteers and students are not to be left alone with children under any circumstances, even for short periods of time. In addition, volunteers and students are not to be counted in the staffing ratios.

All students and volunteers will complete an orientation to review all centre policies, including program statement and implementation policy, child abuse, infection control, anaphylaxis, Serious Occurrence and supervision policies and procedures prior to providing care or guidance in a classroom and annually thereafter.

Individual needs of the children enrolled in the centre will be reviewed with the students/volunteers prior to supporting in a classroom, including individual plans and emergency procedures for children with anaphylaxis.

The school's Administration is responsible for monitoring the behaviour management practices of volunteers or students as set out by the Montessori Country School's Behaviour Management Policy and Code of Conduct. Employees, volunteers, and students are required to report any contraventions to this policy.

Employees are always legally responsible for the children; thus, it is imperative that students and volunteers follow the direction and guidance of employees while assisting in the supervision of the students. Employees should take the lead in dealing with difficult situations (i.e., guiding challenging behaviours) and sharing information with clients. Volunteers and students must comply with all policies and procedures set out by the Montessori Country School while supervising children enrolled in our programs, including supervision, health & safety, de-escalation and confidentiality policies and procedures.

Volunteers and students will be identified initially to families through Transparent Classroom to identify themselves and a written posting introducing themselves and the purpose of their visit near the entrance of the classroom they are volunteering in.

Volunteers and students are to conduct themselves professionally while in the school. They should refer all clients and visitors to a staff member or school Principal for any questions or concerns regarding their child.

An up to date and current vulnerable sector checks are required for all volunteers having direct contact with children (valid within a maximum of 1 month from the beginning of the volunteer period).

### **Parental Involvement**

Parent/guardian(s) are strongly encouraged to be actively involved in MCS's program and activities, etc. We hope to enhance the partnership between parents/guardians, staff, and management. Interested parents/guardians can act as a great resource by sharing their input, ideas, and advice, which will help us meet our goal of providing the highest quality services to all our families and co-partnering on your child's educational journey. Parents/guardians are free to choose their level of involvement through the following opportunities:

- Volunteering your help on field trips – police reference check required
- Bringing in special programming items when appropriate or coming in personally to talk with the children
- Contributing to our newsletter or weekly memos
- Offering any suggestions and/or comments to the school's administration

- By completing our parent/guardian survey
- Participating in parent education sessions
- Participating in formal interviews regarding your child's development and program
- Participating in meetings, workshops, and events hosted by the school
- Fundraising initiatives
- School-led community events

It is in the best interest of your child for you to take part in as many of these opportunities as possible, and we look forward to your participation. Parents will be notified of all opportunities to participate in these events.

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

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, the school, and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns. It is designed to outline the channels of communication employed by the school to ensure that general inquiries, questions or concerns and issues, are addressed appropriately and within a timely manner. It also outlines the escalation process from teacher to Principal upwards to the Vice President of Education where necessary.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our school and regularly discuss what their child(ren) is experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, 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.

The teachers and administrative staff take all issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians. 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 - 2 business days (s). 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 the parties involved.

#### **Confidentiality:**

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially. 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 school maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication, and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated by 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 school Principal.

<b>Nature of Issue or Concern</b>	<b>Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:</b>	<b>Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in Responding to the Issues/Concerns:</b>
<p>Program Related (Non - urgent)</p> <p>E.g.: schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements,</p>	<p>Speak to the teacher directly at pick up time</p> <p>Email teacher to arrange a phone call or in person appointment</p> <p>Classroom observations also available October through November and May through June</p>	<p>Response Time: within two business days</p> <p>A recommendation form is completed during meeting, signed by both teacher and parent/guardian, and then given to Principal for review.</p> <p>Communication Record completed, signed by teacher, and then given to Principal for review</p>
<p>Concerns and issues about child’s behaviour or progress in class</p> <p>(Time sensitive)</p>	<p>Speak to the teacher directly at pick up time</p> <p>Contact administration or teacher via phone to arrange a phone call or in person appointment</p>	<p>Response Time: within one business day if not immediately able to converse</p> <p>Phone Conference Record Sheet or Communication Record signed by teacher and then given to Principal for review</p>
<p><b>General, Centre- or Operations-Related</b></p> <p>E.g.: childcare fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to - the administration via phone or email or, within one business day.</p>	<p>Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised via phone or email or within one business day</p>
<p>Concerns about Staff, Student Teachers, or Volunteers OR:</p> <p>Suspected Child Abuse</p>	<p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, student teachers or volunteers, that puts a child’s health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the Principal as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>The Principal will speak with the parent/guardian immediately if available or correspond via email after school operating hours.</p> <p>In selecting the most appropriate consequence, the following factors will be taken into account:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Nature and circumstances of the offence</li> </ol>

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in Responding to the Issues/Concerns:
	<p>Contact administration via phone to arrange a phone call or in person appointment with Principal</p> <p>If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent/guardian will be advised to contact the local Children’s Aid Society (CAS) directly.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Number of individuals involved</li> <li>3. Degree of harm caused to victim and school community (both people &amp; property)</li> <li>4. Intent to cause harm</li> <li>5. Age of individuals involved</li> <li>6. History of offences</li> <li>7. Level of family cooperation</li> </ol> <p>- The principal will follow the steps laid out within the Serious Occurrence Policy – Suspicion of Child Abuse and consult with the Vice President of Education.</p>

## Health & Safety

### Sick Children Policy and Procedure

The Montessori Country School is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children, families, and employees and will take every reasonable precaution to prevent the risk of communicable diseases within all our locations.

Infection, Prevention, and Control (IPAC) procedures have been developed in accordance with the Ministry of Health and are followed to reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms to staff, students, and visitors. IPAC policies are updated and reviewed annually.

Upon arrival at the school, all children will have a basic health check and screening to ensure that the children are asymptomatic. Staff will continue to monitor children throughout the course of the day.

All families are asked to continue to self-screen for symptoms of COVID-19 every day before attending school. Please use the COVID-19 school and childcare screening tool (<http://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>). The results will tell you:

- If you should go to school or stay home
- What to do next

If your child feels sick or has any new or worsening symptoms, they should stay home until symptoms are improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours for nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea) and contact your health care provider if needed.

As clearly defined in the Ontario Child Care and Early Years Act, the school must isolate children of ill health. The school is not equipped to care for children exhibiting signs of ill health, and to maintain the health and safety of **all** the children in our care, parents/guardians will be contacted in order to pick their child up from care should they exhibit one or more of the following CoVid-19 related symptoms that are new or worsening;

- Fever (37.8 degrees Celsius or greater)
- Cough or barking cough (croup)
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea, vomiting and/or Diarrhea
- Muscles Aches or Joint Pain
- Extreme tiredness
- Sore Throat
- Runny or Stuffy/Congested nose
- Headache
- Abdominal Pain
- Pink Eye
- Decreased or no appetite

### **Guidelines for Excluding from School**

Fever and other symptoms in children may suggest the presence of a communicable disease. Children who have the following symptoms should be excluded from school until: (1) a physician has certified that the symptoms are not associated with an infectious agent, or there is no longer a threat to the health of other children at school (please bring a doctor's certificate) or (2) the symptoms have Subsided, or (3) there is no danger to the child who has been ill to resume attendance.

#### Fever:

If present within the previous 24-hour period. Temperature is 37.8 C or higher, especially if accompanied by vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea, headache, stiff neck, and undiagnosed rash. Children must be fever-free and without medication for 24 hours before re-entering the school.

#### Respiratory Symptoms:

Difficult or rapid breathing or severe coughing. High-pitched, croupy, or whooping sound after coughing. The child is unable to lie comfortably due to a continuous cough.

#### Diarrhea:

Increased number of abnormally loose stools (i.e., liquid or semi-liquid) in the previous twenty-four hours. Children must be diarrhea-free and without medication for 48 hours before re-entering the school.

#### Vomiting:

One episode of vomiting in a twenty-four-hour period. Children must not have vomited and be without medication for 48 hours before re-entering the school.

#### Eye-nose Drainage:

Thick mucus or pus draining from the eye or nose.

### Sore Throat:

Sore throat, especially when fever or swollen glands in the neck are present.

### Itching:

Persistent itching (or scratching) of the body or scalp.

### Skin Problems:

Skin rashes undiagnosed or contagious. Skin patches-crusty, yellow, dry, or gummy areas of the skin.

### Appearance/Behaviour:

The child looks or acts differently. Is unusually tired, pale, lacking appetite, tearful, irritable, feels general discomfort or seems unwell.

### Unusual Colour:

The symptoms can be found in hepatitis and should be evaluated by a physician: Yellow eyes or skin, grey or white stool, and dark or tea-coloured urine.

### Head Lice:

The presence of any live lice or nits in your child's hair necessitates that they be sent home for treatment. The child must be free of lice and all nits before returning to school.

The parent/guardian will be called, or a designated emergency person, if their child becomes sick at school. There are no facilities at the school for the care of sick children, so a sick child should be picked up as soon as possible, within the hour when possible. The parent/guardian will be asked to sign a Sick Report. This report will have the necessary information, and they will know when the child can return to school. Parents/guardians are required to inform the school if the child is diagnosed with a communicable illness.

Notification of communicable illnesses will be posted outside the classroom when a diagnosis has been received. Also, a notification will be posted at the main entrance.

### **Anaphylactic Policy**

The Montessori Country School (MCS) is committed to taking a proactive position regarding the prevention of anaphylaxis. The purpose of the policy is to provide a process for dealing with anaphylaxis at MCS.

In keeping with the Child Care and Early Years Act requirements and in reference to children with serious allergies, we will require all families to keep the School informed of all updated information regarding contact numbers and emergency contact individuals. In addition, it is imperative that any/all updates regarding allergies and the child's medical condition are communicated without fail in writing.

Students will not be accepted without the school being in possession of the child's Epi-pen. The school requires an Individual Plan and Emergency Procedures form to be completed by the child's parents/and or guardians for any anaphylactic allergy. Admission or attendance will be denied until the school has received this form.

The school requires a signed doctor's note/medical prescription for all medications, and this will be required to be updated annually or when substantive changes occur. The school will provide suitable substitutes (if available) or eliminate the use of the causative agent to avoid the risk of the child being exposed to the allergen.

The school will post a photo of the child on a classroom bulletin board beside the children's list of allergies. Parents are also required to provide the school's administrative team and teaching staff training on signs and symptoms in the event of exposure to the allergen, possible physical reactions, and treatment (first aid, Epi-pen use).

Parents/Guardians will be required to keep **two** epi-pens on-site at the school for the entire duration the child is in attendance. Due to the severity of the child's allergies, the school will not accept the child into the campus unless accompanied by their prescribed Epi-pens. Two Epi-pens are required so that two doses can be administered in the case of a reaction at the school, and the first dose is not successful in alleviating symptoms. Consent by the child's physician is required for any child carrying their own Epi-Pen. One Epi-pen will be stored in the school's allocated emergency medication storage area in the administration, and the other Epi-pen will be kept in the emergency bag of the child's classroom. Staff are required to carry a child's Epi-pen in a sealed bag and always carry it with them to ensure quick access if required. During outdoor play and on school walks, the emergency bag containing the Epi-Pen is to be on the staff's body.

The Montessori Country School endeavours to be a **PEANUT/NUT FREE** environment and thus keeps parents/guardians and visitors informed of expectations and requirements in addition to providing updated information on severe allergy causatives within the school to reduce the risk of exposure. Parents/Guardians and visitors are informed of severe allergies in the school through school postings/notifications as required.

We cannot assume liability or responsibility for any information update not given to the School in accordance with the requirements set out in its policies.

### **Dispensing of Medication Policy**

For the safe administration of medication, the following guidelines will be followed:

- Only medication prescribed by a physician can be given. This may include the following:
  - Prescribed medication in a bottle with a prescription label
  - An over-the-counter or off-the-shelf medication accompanied by a doctor's letter, including proof of the date purchased
- A medication that is needed regularly, e.g., Ventolin masks for asthma sufferers, Epi-Pen etc.
- Parents/guardians must sign and date a Medical Needs Form, which gives staff permission to give the medication to the child and record daily when medications are required. Parents/Guardians must initial any changes. Medication WILL NOT be given without the parent's/guardian's signature

Please note: With regards to the use of Ventolin masks, epi-pen, puffer, etc., the following is required:

- The staff who may be required to administer this type of prescribed medication must receive training from an appropriate person, i.e., the parent/guardian, regarding the proper technique and use and the appropriate times to administer this medication

- The parent/guardian must sign a Medical Needs Form when prescribed medication has been administered; the staff will complete the Record of the Administration of Medication, which will serve as a running account to acknowledge that the medication has been administered that day. Staff must check that medication:
  - is in the original container
  - has the child's name on it
  - has the name of the medication/drug
  - specifies the dosage on the permission form
  - indicates the date of purchase
  - indicates that medication is current and not expired
  - may include instructions for storage
  - includes instructions for administration
  - may indicate possible side effects
- All medication is to be stored according to instructions, in a locked container or cupboard or refrigerated and inaccessible to children. All medications will be kept and administered in the health room in the office. For those prescribed medications that may be needed quickly, e.g., puffers for asthma attacks, epi-pens etc., these may be kept in the classroom nearby but must be inaccessible to children
- The staff member administering medication must sign a Record of the Administration of Medication that includes the date, time, amount of medication and his/her signature. The qualified staff member (Montessori Teacher or RECE), in each group, will be designated to administer medication to the child/children in their group. When a qualified staff is not available, a member of the administration staff will be designated as the alternate and will administer the medication
- Once the medication is finished or the parent/guardian requests discontinuation, return it to the parent/guardian. The Record of the Administration of Medication must be kept for at least two years after the child has been withdrawn from the School
- An actual medication measuring apparatus should be used when administering liquid medication (1 tsp. = 5 ml). Any time a child is administered medication, staff should monitor that child for any indication of possible side effects, allergic reactions etc.

**Note:**

The following over-the-counter products may be administered without a medical note: sunscreen, hand sanitizer, diaper creams, lip balm, moisturizing skin lotion, and insect repellent. These products will only be administered to a child with the parent/guardian's written authorization for the applicable product.

The product must be clearly labelled with the child's name, stored according to the instructions for storage on the label, and administered according to the instructions on the label.

The Following Forms are to be completed as they relate to the dispensing of prescribed medication or, over-the-counter products:

1. Authorization to Administer Over-the-Counter Products
2. Authorization to Administer Ointments/Creams
3. Authorization to Administer Prescribed Medication
4. Bug Repellent & Sunscreen Authorization

## 5. Record of the Administration of Medication

These forms are assigned to families as required through Transparent Classroom.

### **Immunizations**

All children must have up-to-date immunization upon enrolment into the school, and it must be kept up to date throughout their time with us. A record must be kept in each child's file, and parents/guardians will be reminded when updates/boosters are due. This is a requirement of the Child Care Early Years Act and may be checked annually by the Public Health Department.

You may accept exemptions from the above requirements on medical or religious grounds with the understanding that the centre may exclude children from the centre during an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease. A valid affidavit on why the child is not immunized must be kept in the child's file.

## **School Protocols**

### **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act**

The Montessori Country School is committed to providing an inclusive environment and that is free of barriers based on age, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex (including pregnancy), gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, a record of offences, marital status, family status and disability. The Montessori Country School commits to providing accommodation for needs related to the grounds of the Ontario *Human Rights Code* unless to do so would cause undue hardship, as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy on disability and the duty to accommodate*. Accommodation will be provided in accordance with the principles of dignity, individualization, and inclusion. The Montessori Country School will work cooperatively and in a spirit of respect during the accommodation process.

### **Human Rights & Equity**

The Montessori Country School is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are committed to providing an environment that is inclusive, and that is free of barriers based on age, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex (including pregnancy), gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, a record of offences, marital status, family status, disability and other characteristics that make our employees unique. The Montessori Country School is inclusive to all students and families without bias.

### **Freedom of Information**

We at The Montessori Country School are proud of the students we educate and their achievements. We are pleased to display their work, art, and projects; individual and group photographs and videotapes of school activities - concerts, open house events, field trips, sports activities etc. - in our classrooms, our schools, in our Administration, and in school newsletters, as a concrete demonstration of pride, often with the names of the students attached to the particular items.

Sometimes, however, we wish to provide this kind of information in public places and in publications of more general circulation outside of the private school and/or childcare system, and sometimes we wish to share

names and telephone numbers with parents/guardians and other organizations with which MCS has mutual interests.

To do so, we require your consent in order to comply with the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Consent is provided annually in the completion of the ‘Freedom of Information and Release of Liability form’.

### **Inclusion Policy**

The Montessori Country School accepts and welcomes children and their families of all abilities. Any family interested in having their child with any additional needs attend the program will be given an equal opportunity for admission.

Our school is committed to providing developmentally appropriate early learning and development experiences and supports the full inclusion of children who have additional support needs of a physical, social, or emotional nature.

We commit to participate in planning for a successful inclusive environment that supports the children and families of MCS, using program strategies that best meet the needs of each child, their family, and their support network.

The administrative and teaching staff supports families by consulting with all professionals involved with them and their children.

MCS recognizes the diversity of students and ensures developmentally appropriate practices that consider the unique needs of all children. We commit to making sure every child reaches their full potential and collaborate with our community partners to ensure a plan that best suits that specific child and family is put in place and followed for the duration the child attends MCS.

The indoor and outdoor environments are arranged to the best ability so that all children have the opportunity to make choices freely based on their abilities and interests. Staff will make every attempt to apply modifications as necessary to meet the needs of the children. Any adaptations will be reviewed with families and other professionals to ensure we properly support the child.

The Montessori program provides developmentally appropriate small and large group experiences for all children and encourages the socialization of every child with their peers.

The staff will collaborate with families and other professionals who have valuable knowledge and expertise to share with each other. The staff will also share our expertise with the families and other professionals with whom we have contact. This may be presented (but not limited to) through print material, workshops, parent/teacher interviews, information evenings, etc.

All MCS staff participate in regular professional development in current areas of child development, research, theory, and inclusion practices.

### **Child Abuse Reporting Policy**

Please be aware that the School Principal/Admin/Staff/students/volunteers are obligated legally to report any concerns of neglect or physical, emotional, or sexual abuse to the local Children’s Aid Society, even

unconfirmed suspicions. We will not inform parents/guardians before making these reports to CAS. However, in the event that an incident involving your child occurs in the school whereby Children's Aid has been contacted, the Principal will meet with you and inform you of the situation.

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/guardian 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/childrensaid/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

### **Serious Occurrence & Enhanced Serious Occurrence**

The safety and well-being of all children in our school are a priority, and we work diligently to provide a safe, creative, and nurturing environment for each child in our care. However, even under the closest supervision and in spite of all the best precautions, accidents and Serious Occurrences can sometimes occur. Many factors may lead to a Serious Occurrence, and it does not necessarily mean that the school is out of compliance with licensing requirements or that children are at risk in our school.

In the event that the school has a Serious Occurrence incident, a Serious Occurrence Notification form will be posted in a visible area in the school, near the school license and Licensing Summary chart, for a minimum of ten days. This posting will give parents information about the incident and outline follow-up actions taken and outcomes while respecting the privacy of the individuals involved. Longer-term actions taken by the school will also be included to prevent similar incidents in the future, where applicable.

### **Emergency Management Policy and Procedures Statement**

In the event of an emergency, The Montessori Country School has Emergency Management Policies and Procedures to ensure the safe evacuation of all students and adults on the premises. Evacuation procedures and emergency sites are posted in each classroom. You are welcome to review the Emergency Management Policy by speaking to the school Principal, or they are posted in the school.

Clear policies and procedures will support all individuals in managing responses and responsibilities during an emergency, resulting in the safest outcomes possible. Staff will follow the emergency response procedures outlined in the emergency response plan by following these three phases:

1. Immediate Emergency Response.
2. Next Steps during an Emergency; and
3. Recovery.

Staff will ensure that children are kept safe, accounted for, and supervised at all times during an emergency. All directions given by emergency services personnel will be followed under all circumstances, including directions to evacuate to locations different than those listed above.

For any emergency situations involving a child with an individualized medical or anaphylactic plan in place, the procedures in the child's individualized plan will be followed. If any emergency situations result in a

serious occurrence, the Serious Occurrence policy and procedures will also be followed, and the Principal will be responsible for ensuring all reporting procedures have been implemented.

### **The Montessori Country School Privacy Policy**

Personal information about our children & families is only collected, used, and disclosed by The Montessori Country School in accordance with our Privacy Policy and the legal obligations imposed by the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA).

We collect personal information only for the following purposes:

- To identify the students and their families
- To monitor the health and well-being of the students in our school
- To monitor developmental levels, skill acquisition and special needs of students
- To establish a culturally sensitive and developmentally appropriate program for the students
- To understand the desires, concerns, and opinions of the students and their families
- To establish and maintain good relationships with the students and their families
- To meet legal and regulatory requirements, such as those contained in the Child Care and Early Years Act, Canadian Council of Montessori, and its associated Regulations

MCS only collects personal information that is needed to fulfill the purposes if you have consented to such collection. Consent to the collection, use or disclosure of personal information is not required for us to provide services to your family unless such collection, use or disclosure is essential to The Montessori Country School services. Where such information is not essential to our services, consent may be withdrawn with reasonable notice. At that time, we will discuss if there are implications to such withdrawal of consent

#### When Do We Disclose Personal Information and to Whom:

We will make sure that any required disclosures of personal information are made on a “need to know”, and, where applicable, on a confidential basis and in accordance with the provisions of the Ontario Child Care and Early Years Act and its associated Regulations. Personal information is never traded, sold, or leased by us to any external companies. We may disclose personal information to:

- Our affiliates, partners, independent contractors, school administration, therapists, volunteers, co-op students; educational or regulatory observers; and other service providers (collectively “Representatives”) on an as-needed basis in order for them to assist us in managing, providing, or evaluating our school services and program
- An agent of a public authority (such as but not limited to, the Children’s Aid Society) if, in our reasonable judgment, it appears that there is imminent danger to personal safety or property which could be avoided or minimized by the disclosure of the information
- The Ontario Ministry of Education in order to assign, update and validate the Ontario Education Number and the personal information associated with them. A third party with whom we are negotiating in order for them to take over some or all of our services and/or other activities
- A third party where the child’s parent/legal guardian has consented to such disclosure
- A third party where such disclosure is required or permitted by law

When sharing personal information with our Representatives, we release limited information as required for the function that the Representative will perform on our behalf. We also ensure that every contract we enter into with a Representative clearly outlines the Representative’s obligation to protect personal information and

only use the information for the purpose(s) for which it is being provided.

Examples of the Representatives that MCS may share your limited personal information include:

- Professionals who can assist us in caring for the physical, emotional, social and/or intellectual well-being and/or safety of the students in our care; or
- Entities that assist us with general administration, including debt collection and fundraising activities; or
- Organizations that can provide products or services to the students in our care or their families to enhance our curriculum

Note that whenever practical, MCS discloses de-identified information as opposed to personal information.

#### How Long Is Your Information Retained:

We retain personal information only as long as it remains necessary or relevant for the identified purposes and in accordance with legal requirements. Therefore, we will retain your child's file as long as your child is enrolled in our school and for a fixed period of time thereafter.

Depending upon the circumstances where personal information has been used to make a decision about an individual, we will retain the information for a period of time that is reasonably sufficient to allow for access by that individual (or their parent/legal guardian).

MCS retains and securely destroys personal information in accordance with our internal record retention procedure. Our retention procedure considers the retention requirements for financial and insurance records, the statutes of limitation relevant to injuries that occur while students are in our care, as well as the requirements of both the Child Care and Early Years Act and the Canadian Council of Montessori and its associated Regulations.

#### How Do We Keep Your Personal Information Secure:

We have procedures and policies in place to ensure that personal information, in both paper and electronic format, is protected against the risk of loss, theft, unauthorized access, disclosure, copying, modification or destruction. For example, we have the following safeguards in place:

- Access to our facility is restricted by an alarm system on all our doors
- All visitors to our facility, including parents/legal guardians, are required to request entry to our premises, and visitors (not including parents/legal guardians) are requested to report to the office personnel upon arrival
- Filing cabinets containing personal information are located in an office only accessible to the school's administration. The filing cabinets and/or offices are locked after hours.
- Access to electronic files is limited on a need-to-know basis depending on job function. Paper records containing personal information that are no longer needed are securely destroyed
- Password selection criteria and automatic password expiry make unauthorized access to our systems difficult
- MCS's secure databases are well-protected on servers equipped with enterprise firewalls that are updated when new patches and fixes are released.
- Staff training on the importance of privacy and security is undertaken regularly

### How Can You Access Your Personal Information and Check its accuracy:

MCS relies on your information when enrolling your child in our school. You may, at any time, make a written request for access to your or your child's personal information using our "Access to Personal Information Form." Personal information will be understandable within a reasonable time and at a minimum cost to the individual.

However, in certain situations, we may not be able to provide access to all the personal information we hold about an individual (or their child) as there are numerous exceptions to the access principle under PIPEDA such as but not limited to:

- Personal information about another individual if they have not consented
- Information that could reasonably be expected to threaten the life or security of another individual
- Information that was generated in the course of a formal dispute resolution process

In such circumstances, if we cannot provide you with all the information in your child's file, we will let you know.

MCS strives to maintain accurate records of your personal information; however, this can only be achieved with your help. We ask you to provide us with up-to-date information and let us know of any personal information you have given us in the past that is incomplete, inaccurate, or no longer relevant or of any new issues or information that will help us in caring for your child. If you feel a record in your child's file is inaccurate or incomplete, and we agree with your assessment, we will promptly correct or complete the information. Any unresolved differences as to accuracy or completeness will be noted in the file.

### Contact Us with Any Questions or Concerns:

MCS takes full responsibility for the management, confidentiality, and protection of the personal information we collect, use, and disclose. If you have any concerns about this policy or feel that MCS is not abiding by it, please send an e-mail to [pattiel@forayeducation.ca](mailto:pattiel@forayeducation.ca).

### **Confidentiality**

The Montessori Country has policies in place for all employees who may encounter or become privileged to confidential or sensitive information about The Montessori Country School, its affiliated companies, officers, and shareholders (herein collectively referred to as "The Montessori Country School") and their staff, clients, products, services, or procedures. It is the expectation that information is kept in the strictest confidence during employment and any time thereafter. Our policies, as set out below, must be adhered to without exception. All files (both soft and hard) and confidential documents must be maintained under proper security within all offices/workplaces and during travel and other transportation.

### **Access Student's Files**

MCS is regulated by the Child Care and Early Years Act, which includes periodic inspections of our premises up to and including access to students' files. The School's Administration will inform you should external authorities review your child's file. For example, but not limited to the Provincial Program Advisor, Regional Consultant, Ministry of Health inspectors, etc.

## **Final Word**

The Montessori Country School adheres to all licensing requirements set out by both Ontario Federation of Independent Schools (OFIS), The Canadian Council of Montessori Administrators (CCMA), and the Child Care Early Years Act (CCEYA).

These policies and procedures are subject to changes with the introduction of additional governmental guidelines. Employees will continue to be updated and trained on any new protocols. Families and stakeholders will also be notified of all applicable changes.

Thank you for your commitment to the health, safety and well-being of the children, staff, and all stakeholders involved in The Montessori Country School community.

## Acknowledgement and Receipt of Parent Handbook

I/We, \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent / Guardian Name) have received and read the Montessori Country School Parent Handbook 2023 – 2024 Milton Campus.

I/We understand the policies and procedures given to me and agree to adhere to all school policies.

Please note: The Montessori Country School's policies and procedures are subject to change to reflect the needs of the program, children, and families we serve.

We may also make changes or modifications in our policies if required by our licensing agencies.

The Montessori Country School will inform parents/guardians of changes taking place whenever possible in a timely fashion.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_