

Versailles
Montessori
School *Educating for life.*



PARENT
HANDBOOK



480 PINCKARD PIKE VERSAILLES, KY 40383

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INFO@VERSAILLESMONTESSORI.ORG

Rev. June 2025



MISSION STATEMENT

To create peace through education...one child at a time.

VMS GOALS

Versailles Montessori School actively seeks a wide variety of staff and children in order to share the rich resources we all have to offer.

The specific goals for the children who attend VMS are:

- To encourage a positive attitude toward school and learning
- To encourage a sense of independence
- To encourage concentration and positive study habits
- To foster an abiding curiosity
- To encourage initiative and persistence
- To foster self-discipline and orderly thinking

Versailles Montessori School does not discriminate with regard to its student enrollment or employment procedures. VMS accepts students and staff without regard to race, color, national or ethnic origin. VMS may, however, in the exercise of its sole and inferred discretion, deny enrollment or suspend a child's enrollment if it is determined that the child or the child's parent(s) are not abiding by the rules and/or policies of VMS or if the child's enrollment or continued enrollment would be detrimental to the interest of VMS, its staff, or students.

VERSAILLES MONTESSORI SCHOOL

AT A GLANCE

School Structure

VMS is a non-profit 501(C)3 organization allowing donations to the school to be tax deductible to the full extent permissible by law. VMS administration is responsible for day-to-day operations, finances and school policy and report to the board of directors. VMS is a member of the American Montessori Society (AMS). The school is recognized for its ongoing commitment to providing and sustaining a quality Montessori program through the Pathway of Continuous School Improvement. VMS administration and lead teaching staff are AMI or AMS certified.

Location

VMS is a smoke/vape free environment. **Address: 480 Pinckard Pike Versailles, Kentucky 40383.** The school's 10-acre rural campus is located on the left, ½ mile down Pinckard Pike (Hwy.169). Pinckard Pike is off Hwy. 33 south, approximately 1 mile past the Bluegrass Parkway.

VMS has a variety of animals on campus. We may have reptiles, amphibians, fish, sheep, cats and dogs. Cat and dog vaccinations are current. **By enrolling in VMS, you acknowledge and give consent that your child may interact with any of the animals on the campus.**

How VMS came to Versailles, Kentucky, Woodford County

In 1965, in Lexington, the first Montessori school in Kentucky opened. Among the students of that inaugural class was a young three-year-old boy named Tony Guagliardo. Tony was the youngest of five children, raised by two working parents who struggled to make ends meet, yet who realized the sustaining value of a Montessori educational experience.

Flash forward to 1986, Tony and René begin their Association Montessori International (AMI), Primary Montessori training under the direction of Signorina Paolini who worked directly with Dr. Maria Montessori. Signorina Paolini dedicated her life to Dr. Montessori's ideas about child development. In the spring of 1987, after written, oral and practical exams from an international board of examiners, Tony and René received their AMI Primary diploma and returned to Versailles, Kentucky.

In July of 1987, Tony and René opened Montessori's House of the Children, Versailles first Montessori school. They started with twelve children between the ages of three and six years. Seven years later in May 1994, Versailles Montessori School, Inc. (VMS), and IRS recognized 501C3, non-profit was created and by the fall of that year VMS expanded their services by offering a toddler program and an elementary class.



In September of 1997, the school's campus relocated onto 10 acres of donated land allowing for outdoor science opportunities, organic gardens, a high tunnel greenhouse, wetlands, a sporting field, small farm animals, a small orchard, wildflower areas, and bird sanctuaries.

In May 2011, after 24 years of dedicated service, René retired from VMS.

School Schedule & Hours

VMS basically follows the Woodford County Public School calendar, operating between August and May, Monday through Friday. VMS is open from 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. The school has several closings and early dismissals during the school year so **alternate child care arrangements will be necessary. VMS reserves the right to amend the closing schedule.**

Fee Schedule

The fee schedule is posted on the [VMS web site](http://www.versaillesmontessori.org), www.versaillesmontessori.org, or you can request a copy from the office.

Forms

The application of interest is required to schedule a tour of VMS. No money is required to submit the application. It is available on the [VMS website under the Admissions Tab](#).

There are several additional forms to complete and return to VMS *before* your child's starting date. They will be supplied to you by VMS Administration. **Please be sure to report changes to any of the forms as they occur, especially changes to the Authorization Forms. We must always be able to reach you in case of emergency.** [A new Authorization Form is available on the website.](#)

Student Programs

VMS offers three programs.

TODDLER

15 months to 3 years

The toddler child must be taking only 1 nap per day (no longer taking morning naps), walking securely on their feet. At VMS they will drink from an open cup (not a sippy cup), and use silverware.

PRIMARY

3 years through Kindergarten

The primary child no longer is wearing a diaper and is past daily bowel movement accidents. Additionally, the child is losing the toddler gait, able to communicate verbally, and respond to simple spoken instruction. The child must be able to function physically and comfortably within the primary environment. The primary program prefers to enroll new children who are three or who have prior Montessori experience. Exceptions are made on an individual basis.

ELEMENTARY

6 years to 12 years, Grades 1-6

The elementary class requires prior Montessori experience with any exceptions made on an individual basis. The elementary student must meet academic standards set by the Montessori primary program, and also show physical, emotional and social signs of entering the second plane of development (explained in further detail later).

Although each program serves children within general age guidelines, these age ranges are not absolute. Because children are unique, program placement is made with consideration of their individual needs.

Administration and Head Staff

Tony Guagliardo - Principal/Administrator

Alicia Guagliardo - Administration

Amy Ford - Administration

Elaina Howard - Toddler Teacher

Orsola di Cugno - Toddler Teacher

Miao Liang - Primary Teacher

Kenzie Salva - Primary Teacher

Stephanie Wooten - Primary Teacher

Alana Boyd - Elementary Teacher

Dakotah Frank - Elementary Teacher

Administration and the *Teachers* have been trained in the Montessori method by an international or national training center, or are undertaking supervised training. Teacher accreditation is granted by the Association Montessori International (AMI) in Amsterdam, Holland or the American Montessori Society (AMS) in New York City, New York, or Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE). All teacher assistants are trained directly by administration and the teaching faculty. Assistants are individuals who have a desire to work with children and/or are interested in receiving their Montessori teaching certification.

All staff have a background check, are CPR/First Aid/Stop the Bleed certified, trained to recognize and report child abuse, and participate in state mandated training, 15 hours minimum per year.

THE MONTESSORI APPROACH

The Child's Work: Toddler - Kindergarten

Play is the work of young children. The object of their efforts is creating the adults they will become. The children clearly show an inner need to learn, to know themselves and their world. They want very much to develop their intelligence, to learn to control movement precisely, to explore and order their impressions of the world, to become independent and responsible.

The Young Students Work: Elementary

Students in the elementary grades make most of their educational discoveries through hands-on research. They are introduced to their studies via stories that capture their imagination and compel them to want to discover more. Elementary students are driven by the need to understand and relate their education to mankind as a whole.

The Prepared Environment

All human beings, from conception to maturity, form themselves, taking from the environment (the womb, the home, the school, the community) the materials for self-construction. We adults prepare and provide these environments upon which the children's work depends. We assist in the fulfillment of the children's potential.

The Montessori classroom is prepared to help children accomplish their goals whether we call it work or play. Gradually the children reveal qualities for which they are not usually given credit, such as intense concentration and surprising attention span, exactness and precise movement, a sense of order, maximum effort even by the youngest ones, self-discipline and respect for others, peacefulness, kindness and an obvious joy in "work".

Each classroom is a specially furnished environment designed to support the child's need for **purposeful** activity. For toddler and primary students, it is the children's house: the child-sized furniture is easily moved, pictures are hung at the children's eye level. Plants are easily watered by children. The sink is not a toy, but a real, child-sized sink. There are many carefully designed materials to meet the children's natural interests. The atmosphere is positive, supportive, and noncompetitive.

The elementary environment incorporates the ideas of the primary environment but the size of the tables, chairs and materials have increased to support the physical growth of the students. Another main difference in the elementary environment is the support of group work since they now express a deep interest in their peers.

Television and computers are not used in the toddler or primary program as they are developmentally inappropriate.

Another important component to the prepared environment is the Montessori trained teacher. Each Montessori teacher has been instructed on the particulars of the Montessori approach for their age group. Their training also consists of child development, record keeping, observation techniques, curriculum development and more.

Sensitive Periods -- Windows of Opportunity

Sensitive Periods occur only during the formative years, from *birth to six years of age*. During this particular time, windows of opportunity exist for the ease of learning in that area. The child has a natural drive to focus on that subject or characteristic.

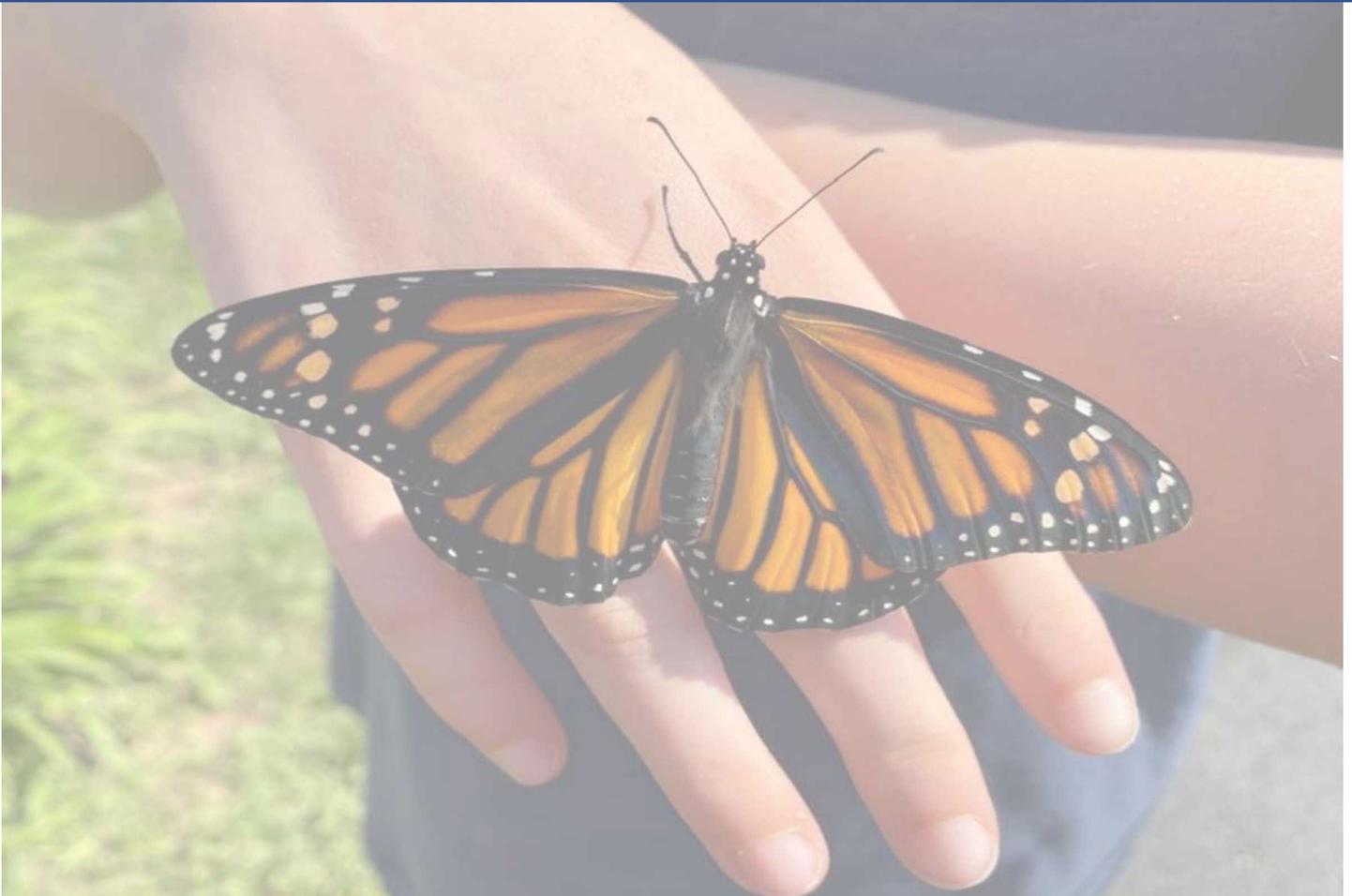
An example is the sensitive period for language acquisition, which is present at birth and continues through the age six. After six, language acquisition gradually wanes. If you and your two-year-old child went to a foreign country, your child would soon speak the new language. You, being long past your sensitive period, would struggle for many years and probably never achieve the exact accent. Montessori observed many sensitive periods in young children for language, order, academics and for each of the developing senses. Montessori toddler and primary classes are especially attractive to children because the materials appeal to their sensitive periods.

Elementary - Cosmic Education

In the elementary program the Montessori materials and activities lead the child gradually from concrete concepts to abstract understanding. The curriculum centers around giving the child "cosmic education," presenting the universe at large and then learning the smaller parts that are within. As a result, the subjects overlap in the learning process and are often presented simultaneously. The curriculum becomes increasingly integrated, so that what most adults call *subjects* are rather facets of a larger design.



VMS PROGRAMS

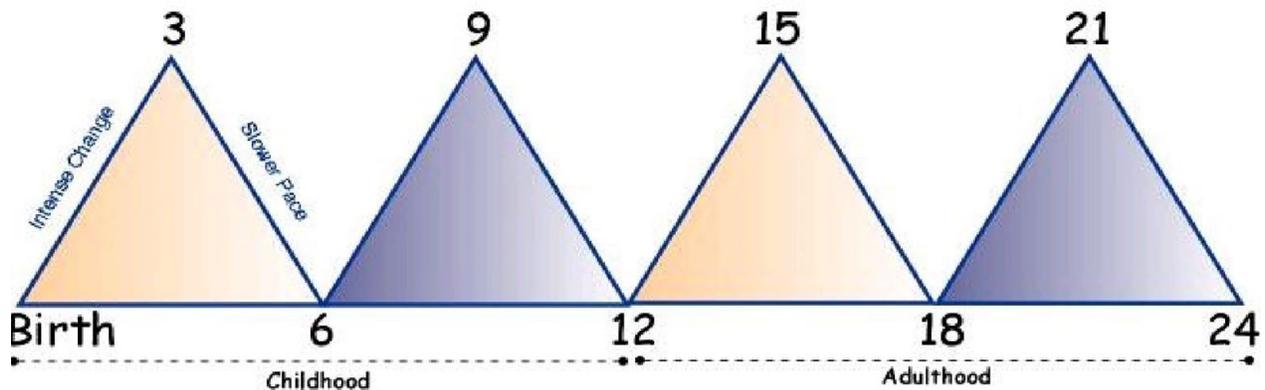


MONTESSORI FUNDAMENTALS

Through her research, Dr. Montessori identified the growth of an individual from birth to age 24 in four "planes of development": birth to 6, 6 to 12, 12 to 18, and 18 to 24 years of age.

In each of these planes she noted unique and specific needs and defining characteristics associated with the child's interests and abilities. Those needs and characteristics grow and then diminish in importance during each six-year plane. That is, the needs/characteristics are at their strongest at each midpoint of the plane of development (ages 3, 9, 15, 21) and are diminished at the points of transition from one plane to the next (ages 6, 12, 18).

Montessori's Four Planes of Development



Dr. Montessori believed that a school carefully designed to meet the needs and interests of the child will work more effectively because it is consistent with basic principles of psychology. Rather than fight the laws of nature, Dr. Montessori suggested that we 'follow the child' and allow our students to show us how to facilitate the development of their human potential. This focus on the child led Dr. Montessori to develop a methodology and materials to respond to the needs and characteristics of the evolving individual at each plane. The materials and methodology are implemented in what is commonly referred to as the 'prepared environment.' This name reflects the care and attention that is given to creating a learning environment which will reinforce the children's independence and intellectual development. Each classroom is a specially furnished environment designed to support the child's need for purposeful activity.

Part of the prepared environment is the AMI and AMS Montessori teacher, who serves as a link between the children and the environment. Older children help with younger ones, just as they would in a big family, and in doing so reinforce what they have already learned and strengthen their own integrity and responsibility. The younger children in turn benefit because children often learn better from their peers. There is spontaneous sharing among the children, who work individually, or in small groups, at self-chosen activities and at their own pace.

An authentic Montessori program requires your child to have an uninterrupted 3-hour work period in the morning and a couple hours available in the afternoon. During this time, presentations are given and each child has the opportunity to work on acquiring various skills while building their concentration.

The Three-Year Developmental Cycle: Key to Our Children's Education

"The three-year developmental cycle is at the very heart of the Montessori educational experience for our children at VMS. It is what assures the children success and it is one of the features that distinguishes our educational program from others. Curriculum development, staffing, classroom design, and student admission, re-enrollment, and placement all revolve around it.

It drives the educational continuum (our academic scope and sequence), determines materials purchased and placed in the classrooms, and defines student record keeping, progress, and assessment. It is a clearly defined and discrete educational unit with a beginning, a middle, and an end for each child, with the third year in each sequence a capstone year that is a culminating experience academically, emotionally, socially, and developmentally. If not followed, a child's work in that three-year sequence is simply incomplete.

With each plane divided into two three-year developmental cycles, conventional 'Kindergarten', Third Grade, Sixth Grade, and Ninth Grade are endings, or rather completions that are culminations. They are *not* beginnings. This runs directly counter to the paradigm in schools across the country where Kindergarten is the start of the elementary sequence, Sixth Grade is the start of Middle School, and Ninth Grade is the start of High School.

We respectfully but vigorously disagree.

We know there are specific years of academic and intellectual explosion. It is 3- & 4-year-old children, 1st & 2nd, 4th & 5th, and 7th & 8th grade students. Additionally, Dr. Montessori observed that in kindergarten, third, sixth and ninth grade, the child's great work is social and emotional development, laying the foundation for the next "explosion". She concluded that **unless the social and emotional growth was addressed directly and effectively, rather than suppressed, academic growth could slow and suffer**. Rather than fighting the social and emotional growth of the children in the third year of each sequence, Montessori encourages it.

Instead of making kindergarten/third grade/sixth grade students the youngest of the children in a sequence, we make them the oldest and most mature in their group. We give them age-appropriate responsibility. We make them educational and civic leaders in this community.

The leadership of the older children has a remarkable impact on the health of the three-year community they help lead. It allows the oldest children in each cycle to stand tall with confidence during an uncertain time while internalizing the academic work of the first two years by sharing their knowledge and expertise with the younger students in the group. They become role models for the younger students, who long to reach their level of academic accomplishment and community responsibility.

We embrace the maxim, "You do not understand something until you can teach it," and giving lessons to the younger students in the group requires that the oldest children reduce complex concepts to

their simplest elements and then convey them with clarity and understanding. If they cannot, it is clear that *they* need a lesson before going on! Thus, without fully realizing what they are accomplishing, our "third-years" internalize and consolidate the academic skills they have garnered for two years before exploding into the next three-year cycle.

The three-year grouping also makes sense because we know from experience that 5-year-olds have much more in common with 3- and 4-year-olds than they do with 6- and 7-year-olds. Sixth graders have much more in common with 4th and 5th grade students than with 7th and 8th grade students. And 9th graders have much more in common with 7th and 8th grade students than with 10th through 12th grade students.

[Consider this, 6th grade students are separated from 7th and 8th grade students at Woodford Middle School and 9th grade students are separated from 10th - 12th grade students at Woodford County High.]

Finally, each of our Montessori Faculty members is trained for the 3-year developmental cycle with which he or she works. Clearly, the full benefit of the educational program accrues to our children in the third and capstone year of each cycle, and a student's educational experience is greatly diminished without it. So, too, is the program and the educational experience for the younger students left behind without the gift of the leadership, mentoring, and instruction from the older children they have come to admire."

The article above was written many years ago but is of critical and lasting importance. It comes from the Montessori School of Raleigh's Newsletter, Vol X, No 2. Minor modifications have been made to reflect significance to **Versailles Montessori School**.

TODDLER PROGRAM: 15 months – 3 years

Daily Schedule

- 7:30 - 8:30 Children arrive and welcomed in classroom
- 7:30 - 9:30 Breakfast Available
- 7:30 - 10:00 Class work period
- 9:00 Bathroom- Toileting/Diaper changing
- 10:00 Food tasting
- 10:15 Singing
- 10:30 Outside play/gross motor activity
- 11:15 - 11:30 Transition inside to prepare for lunch/Reading
- 11:30 Lunch
- 12:00 Lunch clean-up/Bathroom/Transition to Nap
- 12:30 - 3:00 Nap Time/Staff sanitizing classroom
- 3:00 - 3:30 Bathroom/Snack/Transition to Outside
- 3:30 - 5:30 Play/Gross Motor Activity/Parent Pick-up

In the first two months of life, the infant, having moved from the comfort of the womb, learns to trust the new outside world. During the rest of the first year of life, infants learn to trust in themselves: "I can do; I am able." In the next two years, they confirm that they are able to act in the world: "I am worthwhile; I can contribute."

The Montessori philosophy is unique in its approach to toddlers. Some of the key concepts of a Montessori toddler class are: communicating respect for the individual child, the importance of freedom of movement to aid the child's physical and cognitive development, and allowing the child to participate in daily routines of self-care and care of the environment. All of these assist learning and the development of independence.

The class is lively and spontaneous, but you will see the beginnings of concentration and genuine social awareness. The program is rich with language acquisition and budding social skills. The room is arranged to allow toddlers to move about freely, and to socialize among themselves. The teacher moves peacefully about, conversing, encouraging, or simply observing. As the children become able, they take an active role in the running of the class, preparing food and feeding themselves, as well as their toileting needs. The materials look simple but are very precisely designed to enhance gross and fine motor skills. Most of the activity is individual. There are two to three adults for each group of 10-12 toddlers.

The toddler child must be taking only 1 nap per day (no longer taking morning naps), walking securely on their feet and eating finger foods, etc.

An Environment Designed for Independence

Toddlers are intrepid explorers. They require an environment worthy of their exploration, one that encourages but does not overwhelm. They are constantly making new discoveries and are striving to perfect the skills that will allow them to pursue their explorations more independently. Our job is to provide a supportive environment (space, materials, and staff) in which these things can take place.

Everything is designed to allow children to function independently, to whatever extent they are able, so they will view themselves as capable individuals. This sense of independence and self-reliance is fostered from the time toddlers arrive at the toddler room - carrying in their own diapers, taking off their own coats, choosing their own work - until the time they leave - cleaning up their space, putting on their own coats, changing their own shoes. Parents are asked to encourage this self-reliance. By encouraging their child to walk on their own into the toddler room, parents are supporting their child's independence and assisting the staff with a smooth transition.

Activities

Practical Life Exercises - care of self, care of the environment, and snack (including an introduction to forms of courtesy). The toddlers practice putting on clothes and help prepare fruit snacks. It is a wondrous site seeing a child not-quite-two carefully setting a table for snacks and then adding a bouquet of flowers.

Sensorial Exercises - focusing on individual sensory qualities of the environment (sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste). Food tasting and musical instruments are examples.

Language - conversational and vocabulary building (overlaps with all other areas). The toddler environment is rich with language which is very exciting for them. Real objects and photographs of common objects are used for learning names of things. Abstract words are attached to experiences: "Would you like a sweet taste or a sour taste?" Stories, songs, conversations, simple explanations, and questions add to their understanding.

Social Skills - Through daily interaction with each other and adults, the children learn appropriate language to foster interaction.

Music - Exposure to a variety of music such as Jazz, Classical, Bluegrass, and more, singing with the children, and discovering rhythm and movement.

Art - Discussion of pictures on the walls, painting, collage sticker work, sidewalk chalk drawing, painting, pasting, as well as drawing on the chalkboard are the beginning of art.

Physical Development - Movement is essential to toddlers, thus special care is given in arranging the furniture and providing materials that encourage and help the development of movement.

This is not an academic environment. That begins in the next program, primary. We seek to help toddlers develop the necessary foundation that allows for joyful and satisfying learning in the future.

The Teacher's Role

As teachers, we monitor the environment and observe the children in order to provide those elements needed for each child to act constructively and independently. We also acknowledge the respect of self, others, and the materials by operating within a consistent set of limits, all derived from the children's need to feel safe and secure.

Toileting

Between 18 months and 28 months, toddlers have both the physical ability and interest to control bladder and bowel. In the toddler class, we observe and follow the child's interests. We then help the child to acquire useful information and skills that will make toileting come easily and naturally. Pulling down their pants, sitting on the toilet (usually backward since this provides more support), wiping their bottoms, pulling their pants up, flushing, and washing their hands are all practiced. The child is changed while standing up in the bathroom, allowing her to participate and gain experience.

We work in partnership with the parents as to when the child should begin to wear underwear. It works best for both home and school environments to work on the same page in this regard for smoother success. However, quite often it is on the child's timetable, and we don't want to miss the window of opportunity. Therefore, we work with parents to guide in this process because often this is unexpected for the parents.

When the child is ready, we expect the child to wear underpants to school, at school, on the way home, and at home, for the sake of consistency. We do not recommend Pull-ups because it is easy for the child to confuse them with the diaper since they absorb and don't give the natural consequence of the child feeling wet/dirty in underwear. If this program is followed, the toileting process is generally complete within a few weeks.

Napping

Parents provide a plain (no animated characters) crib-size sheet **and** blanket for napping. We don't use pillows or sleeping items.

The Montessori philosophy is unique in its approach to toddlers. The key concepts of Montessori are:

1. Communicating respect for the child to allow for their self-esteem to develop.
2. Freedom of movement to aid the child's physical and cognitive development.
3. Allowing the child to participate in daily routines of self-care and care of the environment, to assist learning and the development of independence.

Routines

Consistent routines are extremely helpful in accomplishing things in your Toddler's life. The same sequence of activities every day can lead to a pleasant bedtime, mealtime, or beginning of the day. The sameness of these routines encourages independence and a feeling of security in your child because once the sequence has begun, she knows exactly what to expect, and can proceed independently of you.

Your child's day in the Toddler program will include several routines: putting away lunch, hanging up a coat, tasting, singing, getting ready to go outside, toileting, etc. You can help your child to adjust to her first (or new) school experience by establishing routines that lead to arriving at school consistently and on time, with no surprises and no chance for each day to become a debate or power struggle. All pacifiers and toys remain at home or the car.

Setting up a routine that leads calmly to school takes time. It is not a routine until you make it one. Once established, it pretty well goes by itself. You will find many times in your day when the consistency of a routine will actually save you time and ease your day because your toddler will know what to expect.

Supplies To Bring

Crib sheet

Crib Blanket (no bigger)

4 shirts, shorts, socks, underwear if toilet trained

Diapers (can bring a big box for backstock)

Big case of wipes

Diaper cream if needed (must be signed in at the front desk one time)

Sunscreen, bug spray if desired (must be signed in at the front desk one time)

Outdoor shoes (Old sneakers or Crocs are best for times when we have water activities)

2 pictures of your child so they can identify their cubby and drawer

In the winter, insulated boots and waterproof/snow pants are appreciated

Soft-sided Lunch box with an ice pack

(Lunchboxes remain in cubbies; food is NOT stored in the refrigerator)

Per the school-wide policy and state regulations, please send healthy lunches which include a minimum of: 1 protein, 1 grain, 2 different vegetables or 1 vegetable & 1 fruit (2 fruits w/o vegetable, not allowed)

We will provide cereal in the mornings, morning and afternoon snacks, milk, and water.

When shopping for your child's clothes, please try to think like a 1 or 2-year-old! So many clothes and shoes are "cute" or "the latest style" but are not user-friendly for toddlers. Help them by choosing *fairly simple clothing and shoes so they can manipulate themselves to dress independently* – for example, no belts, all-in-one outfits, or high-top shoes. Clothing must be updated as weather changes.

Wet or dirty clothes are sent home in a plastic grocery bag with their name on it that will be put in their cubby to go home. Please send replacement items the next morning. **Please label all of your child's belongings with their name. The clothing does get mixed up at times and unless they are labeled, we have no way to determine who they belong to.** Thank you for your help!

PRIMARY PROGRAM: 3 – 5 years (K)

In the next phase, from age three through kindergarten, children strengthen coordinated movement, articulate language, and independence. The overall goal, one that overshadows the particular goals of "curriculum areas," is offering many opportunities for the child to develop a profound self-confidence and a healthy, happy, strong self-image.

Academics are presented at this level. Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Mathematics, Cultural, Arts and Physical Education areas are part of this classroom. Their work leads to concentration and is therefore often individual. The teacher moves quietly among the children, presenting activities to individuals or small groups. Large group activities are less frequent since their development is still an individual or internal construction.

Practical Life

Practical life activities are basic, vital, and continuous, though they take different forms at different ages. They appeal to sensitive periods for order and for the control and perfection of movement. In the primary class, much of practical life has to do with adapting to one's own culture. Children learn to snap, button, tie bows, shine shoes, scrub tables, dust, polish, sweep and mop, sew and cook. They also learn forms of manners common in our culture such as shaking hands, closing doors quietly, and not interrupting.

These activities are designed in a sequence of steps, through which the child comes to realize order and logic in activity. Concentration (watch a little one wash a table!), carefulness, exactness and coordination, independence, social awareness, helpfulness, and self-esteem are some of the qualities that grow through this work.

The Senses

The sensorial section of material is unique to the primary class, where the children are passing through sensitive periods related to the perception of form, texture, color, weight, sound, smell, taste, temperature: the ways in which we take in information about the world. The materials are not intended to give new impressions, but to order, classify, refine, explore and realize the sense impressions the child has already had. Each piece of material isolates a single quality; for example, the pink tower shows only variations in mass (each cube changes in size by 1 cm from 10 cm - 1 cm) - the color, texture, and shape of each piece are the same.

The sensorial materials serve as keys to other areas of learning. The sound exercises lead to music and composition. Texture is used giving shapes of alphabet letters. Discrimination of forms extends into geometry, botany, geography, and so on. The language of the material is usually given after the child has explored it: long, longer, longest; blue, violet, purple; triangle, trapezoid, corolla, calyx; Japan, Ghana, B flat, F sharp ... the words crystallize the concept for the child.

Language

Language, as we have already seen, is woven into all parts of the program. In the primary class enrichment of vocabulary continues through the use of classified cards, sensorial materials, and games. Fine distinctions between words (broom/brush, string/thread) and long words (tyrannosaurus rex) delight the children. Stories, poems, plays, and ordinary conversations are important in the environment, but no one is ever pressed to perform. The aim is to increase children's knowledge, organization of thought, and confidence in the ability to use and express their minds.

With the sandpaper letters, children learn sensorially the cursive forms and phonetic sounds of the alphabet. They make words with a special moveable alphabet in cursive form and write the words in this way for a long time before they realize that the words can also be read. After this great discovery, various materials and games lead the children through cursive, print, and capital letters, phonics, puzzle words, parts of speech, forms of sentences, and finally into "total reading." Our aim is to delight the children with the magic of language, not to pressure them.

Mathematics

Montessori proposed that all humans are born with a "mathematical mind". In the primary class, the children are given mathematical concepts in the form of objects that represent abstract ideas; the objects can be felt and moved about so that (as with most Montessori work) the hand and movement are always involved in the learning process. The children are introduced to counting and arithmetic processes with numbers into the thousands. In Montessori math materials, arithmetic, algebra, and geometry are integrated into a system in which these concepts are absorbed sensorially.

Cultural Areas

History, geography, botany, zoology, physical science, music, and other general subjects are first presented to the children through sensorial materials and stories. In botany, for example, the children analyze a real plant into basic parts: corolla, calyx, stem, leaf, root. With pictures and games, each part is broken into more parts: types of leaves, venation of leaves, margins of leaves, enabling the child to observe carefully and to classify. Various cultures are respectfully presented through stories and collections of pictures, music, and celebrations.

The Arts

Montessori environments are aesthetically pleasing and enriched with fine art, crafts, and music. Children's ability to create is essentially realized from what is known and understood. The child's own creative energy is used everywhere in the program as he discovers and teaches himself painting, writing stories, and music appreciation. In an environment that is ordered, beautiful, and rich in possibilities, the child acquires something to paint about, dance about, write poems about.

Physical Education

In the primary class, children are interested in refining the skills they acquired during their first years. Materials and activities encourage precision and control. Children spend time outdoors each day (weather permitting). The playground equipment includes climbing structures and slides, for exercise and bravery.

Napping and Rest Periods

State guidelines require a rest period. Those children who need a longer rest period are free to nap up to two hours. Parents provide a plain crib sheet and crib blanket for napping. We don't use pillows or sleeping items.

Extended Day - Kindergarten

Students in their Kindergarten year have outgrown their need for a nap. Dr. Montessori realized that these students desire, and are capable of, more opportunities for purposeful work. The afternoon session is a smaller class because many of the three and four-year-old children are napping, allowing for more individualized collaboration between teacher and student.

Toileting Requirements

It is very important that the toileting milestone in child development be attained before starting the Primary program. Students should be using the toilet independently, without accidents, on a regular basis. The class has 20 - 30 students with two adults and it becomes logistically difficult for one adult to be with one student for toileting reasons. VMS staff understands that an accident can happen due to illness or because the child is excited about the new environment.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRIMARY

Arrival: Class begins promptly at 8:00 am and you are setting a good example for your child by getting to school on time, as well as honoring the hard "work" your child will be doing at school. (Read the article *The Importance of Arriving on Time: The Uninterrupted Work Period* at the end of this handbook.)

Classroom Schedule:

7:30 - 8:00 Arrival

8:00 - 11:00 Group time, Work period inside and outside/Snack time woven in

11:00 - 12:00 Recess

12:00 - 1:00 Lunch/Clean-up/Bathroom

1:00 - 3:00 Nap/Rest time/Work Period for non-nappers

3:00 - 5:30 Snack/Recess/Parent pick-up

Clothing: Please have your child dress in comfortable and appropriate clothing which is easy for him to take off and put on. Avoid clothing with belts, tiny buttons, or difficult closures. There is nothing more frustrating for a child than to be "trapped" in his clothing when it is time to use the toilet.

Also, save tutus, color-changing sequins, and the latest super-hero and other character clothing for non-school days. Experience has shown us that, minimally, it can be a distraction, and has also led to aggressive or inappropriate play on the playground. If a child comes to school in distractible clothing, we will help the child change into one of their replacement clothing options.

When clothing gets soiled at school, we will bag it and place in their cubby to go home for laundering. Please send a change of clothing to replace the ones used that day. VMS maintains a collection of clothing for emergencies. These pieces of clothing will be labeled "VMS" and need to be returned promptly in consideration of others who may need them.

Footwear: All primary students will wear slippers during class time. Below are a few samples of what we want. Please do not veer from these suggestions.



Please note, these are plain and have no characters, no floppy ears, no flashing lights, no glitter, etc. Rubber or leather soles are best to last more than a few weeks. If in doubt, email Tony a picture of what you want to purchase to be sure it will work for us. Thank you for your attention to these important details.

Additionally, all-weather boots or mud shoes are a necessity here as the playground gets muddy quickly. The boots will be left at school. Please find boots that your child can easily pull on and off himself. Ones that must be pulled on over shoes are very difficult for the child.

Lunch: Your child will need a lunch box (clearly marked on the outside with your child's name) with an ice pack. When choosing a lunch box, please get one that is 10.5" x 10.5" x 4" to fit in their cubby slot. Please remember, toys are not allowed in school, this includes toys attached to lunch boxes, as they are a distraction.

Per the school-wide policy and state regulations, please send healthy lunches which include a minimum of: 1 protein, 1 grain, 2 different vegetables or 1 vegetable & 1 fruit (2 fruits w/o vegetable, not allowed)

Any item that contains more than 9 grams of sugar, will be packed away for your child to enjoy on the way home from school. We provide milk and water and have a microwave to warm up food. We can help with heating up food in the microwave. However, we encourage heated food to be brought in a thermos to facilitate the lunch setup process. **Due to extremely limited capacity in the classroom, any foods that require more than 30 seconds of heating in a microwave should be precooked at home first before being packed.**

We offer the opportunity for your child to order pizza for Friday lunches. You will be given a sign-up sheet for each half of the year.

Nap/Rest items: If your child naps/rest at school, bring a **plain** crib sheet, and a crib-sized blanket. No pillows, please. Nap items are laundered weekly at VMS.

Supply List in Summary (details above): LABEL EVERY ITEM

- 3-4 changes of seasonal clothing (shirts/pants/underwear/socks)
- Slippers
- Rain/Winter Boots
- Soft-sided lunch box w/ice pack
- Nappers: Plain crib sheet & crib-sized blanket

Communication:

In the event that a significant change occurs in your home, please inform your child's teacher. All information will be regarded as confidential. Common causes of distress are a parent(s) away from home; separation/divorce; the illness of a relative; any hospitalization, accident, or death in the family; a recent move; or death of a pet. Please keep the lines of communication open so that we can offer a little extra TLC when an occasional upset occurs.

Conferences: Parent/Teacher conferences will be held school-wide in November and at the end of the school year. Parents may ask for a conference at any time with their child's teacher.

Jewelry: Jewelry is not allowed (earring studs are an exception). Jewelry (necklaces in particular) can become entangled on playground equipment and is a distraction for the children. Watches should only be worn by those children who can tell time. Time is a very abstract concept and difficult for this age group to comprehend. If the child cannot tell time, the watch is superfluous. If your child is learning to tell time and you feel having one at school will help, please give him a plain, analog (with hands) watch, not a digital one.

Sharing: While we do not conduct a "show and tell" session at our group time, we do make time for your child to share something unusual and educationally enriching. Some examples might be shells collected at the beach, a cultural item from another country or state, bones, or feathers the child can name. If your child plans to bring in a living creature, talk with the teacher a day or two ahead of time. Wild creatures will be released after viewing.

Toys/School Material: No toys from home are needed at school, including stuffed animals and such. Occasionally a classroom material/object might "fall" into a child's pocket and be brought home. Please assist the child if needed with returning the item to school. This **does not** need to become an issue about stealing.

Work: Because learning is a matter of process and not product, do not expect your child to bring paperwork home each day. Be aware that your child is constantly learning at school. Her mind is so busy absorbing and processing information that when asked, "What did you learn at school today?" Your child may answer, "Nothing" or not know what to say. You can always contact your child's teacher to learn more about what your child does at school.

ELEMENTARY PROGRAM: 6 - 12 years (Grades 1 - 6)

Elementary Students 1st - 3rd grade refine the basic skills acquired during the primary years such as reading, writing, and mathematics but in a more intellectual than sensorial realm. The Montessori curriculum includes several major areas of study - geography, mathematics, language, history, biology, earth science, art, music, and physical education.

Elementary Students 4th - 6th grade further extends their knowledge base through the more advanced materials. They also interact more independently in the outdoor environment both on the land and with the community in general. While having a more independent role in their learning process, they are still guided by the teacher. Students move toward more abstract and integrated ways of reasoning.

Daily Schedule

7:30 - 8:00 Arrive & settle in

8:00 - 11:00 Work period

11:00 - 12:00 Recess

11:30 - 12:30 Lunch (Lower EI – 11:30; Upper EI – 12:30)

12:30 - 3:30 Read aloud/Work period/Classroom chores

3:30-5:30 Snack/Recess/Parent pick-up

As with the primary program, the special developmental needs of the 6–12-year-old children are met in the elementary program. While Dr. Montessori saw that the young child had a unique ability to *absorb* almost a limitless amount of factual information, she also observed that the elementary-aged child develops a reasoning mind. Therefore, the environment needs to change for them and support their way of learning. The older students are equally compelled to learn in groups and begin to learn how to relate to society at large.

Responsibility

The elementary-age child is encouraged at all times to take responsibility for his or her actions, thereby developing a strong sense of personal awareness, respect for oneself, time management skills, and **his** contribution to society. Keeping a work journal and individual student-teacher conferences (described below) are a few examples of how this is supported.

Reading Comprehension and Creative Writing

Reading, vocabulary, and writing skills are developed with the materials using oral, self-reading, and written formats. Materials focusing on parts of speech and sentences are used while still effectively enhancing the fundamental skills in language. Modern and classical literature are integrated throughout the elementary program, including book studies for the oldest children where they specifically work on vocabulary and comprehension questions.

Mathematics

The mathematics foundation has been laid in the primary class. Montessori materials are now used to take the children to full abstraction in the four basic functions. Work with materials demonstrating fractions, decimal numbers, squaring, square root, cubing, cube root, bases other than 10, and pre-algebra give the child a formative and visual foundation for higher mathematics.

Geometric Concepts

Materials used in geometry enable the children to learn a conceptual and practical foundation for advanced work. Analysis of basic geometric shapes leads to a sensorial-based understanding of theorems and their applications learned in later schooling. This includes the study of equivalence, area, and volume.

Biology

The study of plants, animals, and humans is expounded on in elementary with imaginative stories to create pictures in the children's minds on how these organisms function. For example, the function of the leaf is presented as a food factory inside the leaf that breaks up the particles needed for food and is cooked by the sun to make it useful to the plant. As they mature and research further, they classify and learn the scientific names. The long-term result is experiencing how life is interdependent.

Physical Fitness and Development

The elementary children are building on the basic refined primary skills and taking them to another level. Physical fitness and development are closely related to academic achievement. It is encouraged through planned and spontaneous outdoor recreation. Elementary children often start up a game of kickball, soccer, croquet, dodgeball, touch football, freeze tag, etc.

The Arts and Humanities

Dr. Montessori believed that arts and humanities should be available daily. To that extent, the children are free to study and practice a variety of information and skills such as: composers, poets, authors, dance, music, story writing, etc. Also, the elementary class puts on plays, musicals, and exhibits for the school. Visiting artists and special programs are offered so that creative energy may be encouraged by other professionals and learning can extend beyond the classroom.

Practical Life

The practical life skills taught and developed in both toddler and primary are continued in elementary as well. Care of the environment is emphasized with daily chores at the end of the day where a child is responsible for a particular section of the classroom. Sewing skills are developed further to the level of working with a sewing machine or making moderate-level craft projects. Cooking is also supported by preparing menus, examining recipes, shopping for ingredients, and finally cooking an entire meal with minimal adult involvement.

Student Conferences

Student conferences are meetings held by the teacher with the student to check on the progress of their work. This is a tool to help encourage the freedom and responsibility that we are trying to instill in our children. This is a brief meeting to assess the work performance for each individual child, going over together the child's finished work, work in progress, and work journal (a log kept by the child of work done per day).

These meetings initially start off weekly with each student. As time goes on and students show their personal growth in their responsibility for their work, the meeting may be extended to two weeks. By the time children reach the older levels, they often show a level of responsibility for only needing to meet monthly. In the event that progress is minimal, then the teacher will make an agreement with the child for when certain pieces of work will be completed. If the pattern continues, then other commitments/consequences will have to be met by the student, including meeting more frequently.

By meeting this way, the child becomes personally involved in their educational process and the importance of personal responsibility is emphasized. This is a positive meeting to discuss progress, offer ideas for follow-up work, and for the child to request lessons in which he is personally interested. If the child does not happen to be ready for that lesson, then an outline of what needs to be accomplished first is discussed. This time also allows for uninterrupted dialogue with the teacher for any personal concerns the teacher or child may want to discuss. If further time is needed, then that time is scheduled for a more detailed discussion.

Homework

From a Montessori standpoint, there isn't any homework. A Montessori class schedule is required to have large blocks of work time in the morning and afternoon, especially at the primary and elementary levels. This scheduled, large block of time, along with more personalized teaching, allows the children to repeat as much as needed/desired to absorb the key concept being taught during school hours. Also, much of the curriculum is taught with hands-on materials that must stay at school.

On occasion, there may be times that elementary children have homework as a consequence of not working during the work period in class. This homework may be done during the after-school program. A discussion with parents to explain the circumstances and expectations would be handled by the teacher or administrator.

Starting in the second half of the sixth year, small amounts of homework will be assigned in order to give the students experience with time management outside of the classroom. This is direct preparation for the skills they will need to accomplish homework in middle school.

Other types of homework beneficial for the child to pursue include his own interests or that of the family's morals and values. This work should be purposeful, support the goals of the family, encourage independence, responsibility, positive study habits, and self-discipline. Your child's teacher

might suggest activities that relate or could more fully support what is being done in the classroom if they feel it is needed for your child.

Below is a brief list of life activities that could be "homework" for the child to encourage his thinking ability and family bonding. Parents can be as involved as they like or are needed.

- letter writing (thank you notes, invitations, etc.), writing stories
- regular library trips, reading aloud to your child, occasionally having your child read aloud to you
- drawing objects in the home environment/neighborhood
- help plan the dinner menu, help prepare dinner or if older, prepare the dinner independently
- have your child help write out the grocery list
- practicing math facts with games
- age-appropriate household chores, care for plants and pets
- play a board game, invent new rules
- repair something
- compose songs
- make a model

Standardized Testing

VMS administers the TerraNova achievement test to all students in 3rd - 6th grade. For VMS, testing is another tool we use to help the teachers monitor the effectiveness of their lessons. The scores from the test are reviewed along with the questions that were missed so we might discover gaps within the curriculum. Sometimes the results foster minor changes on the teacher's behalf and other times they do not. Additionally, VMS teaching staff will work on an individual plan for our students so we can support their progress in the areas they are weak. Standardized testing is one of many tools used to evaluate student progress at VMS.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ELEMENTARY

- Class starts at 8:00 am – please use the drop-off service beginning at 7:30 am. Class officially ends at 3:30, which we ask you to respect, if at all possible, when picking up your children so that they can do their part during class job time at the end of the day (3:00-3:30).
- Early morning school time (7:30-8:00 am) is crucial for the teacher to prepare lessons. We know, however, there are going to be times where you will want to provide information about your child prior to class. That information is definitely wanted, so please let Tony or Becky know so the lesson preparation is not disturbed.

If the information requires a discussion of sorts, then the morning is not the best time for that. A phone call by appointment that day should be made. Texts or emails directly to the teacher will not be seen immediately during the school day, so please call the school phone or email Tony and Becky.

- Sunscreen is a must – Please provide a bottle of 30spf or higher no later than the first day.
- Bug spray is HIGHLY encouraged – ticks are very abundant.
Permission for applying sunscreen and bug spray is required and on the school's Authorization/Medical Release Form.
- All medicines including cough drops, vitamins, and lip balm must be signed in at the front desk. They also must be left with the front office staff.
- Your child needs a pair of shoes for outside – rain boots or old tennis shoes. Ask your child what they prefer (old tennis shoes are recommended and serve a dual purpose on PE days).
- Going Out Permission Slips must be returned prior to attendance on any kind of trip, including the snack grocery shopping trips.
- One set of clothes to remain at VMS for possible changes at school. In general, clothes and shoes need to fit our environment - we work outside and have physical activity regularly – dresses, sandals, and nice clothes may get ruined and are not functional much of the time.
- All materials your child will need for the school year are provided by the school – no additional items or toys please. Have fun not having to do any back-to-school supply shopping!! They should not bring additional school supplies to school.

Additional items for handwork need prior teacher approval. Once approved, they are allowed all school year.

Snacks and Lunch

- Please support us as we enforce the healthy eating policy from the school handbook which states that your child should have no more than 9 grams of sugar per item during the school day. Yogurt excluded.

The elementary age child is completely responsible enough to put together their own lunch, given the guidelines they need to consider for it, which needs to include a healthy morning snack, as well.

- Lunch ~ Please provide a healthy lunch including good proteins, carbohydrates, fruits, and vegetables, and VMS provides milk and water.
- Afternoon snack is provided by VMS.
- Pizza days are every Friday for \$2.00/slice. This will cover the pizza, sides, and morning snack. Unless your child just wants to bring something else, no packed food is needed on Friday.

P.E.

P.E. is held weekly. It is imperative that your child is dressed to participate in PE. Tennis shoes are required to participate - Crocs are not tennis shoes. Please plan to leave a pair at school since the P.E. time will be flexible like the other work in the class.

Conferences/Communication

- There will be a 6-week check-in mid-September to provide you an update on your child's progress and answer any questions you may have with a new year having started. Afterwards, monthly contact will be made throughout the year.
- *Parent*-teacher conferences (30 min meetings) will be held school-wide some time in November/December and then at the end of the school year, after school, is out. These conferences are built into the schedule to give you time to see all that your child has been accomplishing, so please make every effort to sign up.
- At VMS we strive to maintain an open-door policy with communication about your child. Please do not hesitate to let us know any concerns you have. Letting them brew won't make them go away or get better.
- If at any time you need to ask a question or discuss your child's growth and development, a conference can be scheduled other than the bi-annual ones.
- *Student*-teacher conferences are held on a regular basis during class-time. This is how we follow-up on the work your child is doing and incorporate responsibility and ownership, as well as organization and time management with their work.



VMS PROCEDURES



First Days of School

In order to support your child's transition, we need to follow a few procedures. The orientation process takes place before your child begins school full time, and can be shortened or lengthened to meet your child's needs.

Orientation allows an opportunity to impart the fundamental guidelines of the class and initiates the student-teacher bond. Orientation will be arranged on an individual basis with your child's teacher. ORIENTATION IN AUGUST IS DIFFERENT FROM ORIENTATION MIDYEAR OF THE SCHOOL CALENDAR.

The First Good-Bye

Once orientation is complete the first good-bye can be painful for both child and parent. As a **toddler**, often this step is the child's first major separation from the secure and familiar world of home and family. It marks entrance into a new world of friendships, learning and adventure. Parting is easier for some than for others.

Over all our years we discovered that having all new students separate at the car, under the portico, provides the quickest adjustment to VMS. Lingering does not facilitate a painless departure but merely prolongs it. Children easily read the tender hearts of reluctant parents. Your loving, confident, matter-of-fact approach will help your child take this big step positively. You are encouraged to call anytime to get an update on your child's transition and to schedule an observation of the class.

Entering the Campus

Please drive cautiously on the road. The road is wide enough to accommodate traffic entering and exiting school grounds. Even though we have designated play areas away from traffic, children can often be found with their teacher/parent exploring areas beyond the play area fencing. Follow the white arrows on the road for the one-way portion of the road leading to the portico.

Parking

VMS has three designated types of parking. **Visitor/short-term parking** is located closest to the portico. **Long term parking** is located on the right just after the yellow post, after driving up the driveway. **Handicap parking** is located next to the rock wall grave site. **Please do not use handicap parking unless you have a decal.**

*** Parking under the portico is prohibited unless you are unloading items.**

Morning Drop Off: Valet Service All students use the valet for drop off.

Program Times for drop-off: **Elementary & Primary by 8:00am; Toddler by 8:30am** (Exceptions can be made for appointments.)

Instructions:

- Pull up slowly so the front of the car is extending from the portico, put the car in park.
- VMS staff will help students exit the car.
- AFTER CHILD IS SEEN ON DOORMAT, then the parent can drive off.

Pick-Up Procedures

Parents walk inside the school, and make contact with the staff at the front desk. Front desk staff will radio to the childcare staff that their child can be sent in to be picked-up. Parents are welcome to wait for their child in the child's classroom (if children are outside) or in the media center.

Children are only allowed to leave school with the individuals listed on your child's Student Pick-up Authorization Form. You must inform us, preferably **in writing**, if someone different is picking up your child. E-mail (preferred), call or fax the front office **prior** to your child's pick up. Make sure the person has identification when they pick up.

Late Arrival

Late arrival is stressful for your child, and their class, who are settled into their routine. It also affects the lesson plans the teacher made for the day. Your child could miss an important, small group lesson due to late arrival. Prompt arrival sends a message to your child's teacher that you value the time they spend creating your child's individual educational plan.

Attendance – Truancy

State law requires the principal in charge of a private school to report to the superintendent of schools of the district in which the school is situated (Woodford County) any student who is truant.

KRS 159.150 defines truant and habitual truant as:

- Any student who has attained the age of six (6) years, but has not reached his or her eighteenth birthday, who has been absent from school without valid excuse for three (3) or more days, or tardy without valid excuse on three (3) or more days, is a truant.
- Any student who has been reported as a truant two (2) or more times is a habitual truant.

Closings

Planned Closings - Check the school calendar on the VMS web site for scheduled closings.

Snow Days

If Woodford County Schools **close or are on a delay**, VMS will **automatically** be on a one-hour delay, opening at 8:30 a.m. By 7:00 a.m., if not sooner, the school will decide if it is necessary to close and will notify you via the school's notification system. Things we take into consideration are: ability of staff who live out of town to make it to school, road conditions, or no electricity. If VMS remains open, but you don't feel safe traveling the roads, please call and let us know that you will be staying home.

Emergency Early Dismissal

Should we have the need to dismiss students from school early we will contact you by phone, e-mail, or using our notification system.

Natural Disaster Procedures

We have special, practiced procedures for events such as tornadoes and fires. School evacuation plans are posted in each classroom and will be followed in the event of a fire or other need to quickly evacuate the building. Monthly fire drills and quarterly disaster drills are conducted to familiarize the staff and children with the procedures relating to emergencies or natural disasters. If Woodford County is under a Tornado Warning, all students will remain in the school's 2,400 sq. ft. basement until the warning is over.

Healthy Food at VMS - Lunch Policy

Adults and children alike need to eat nutritious food. However, children need to have something nutritious four to six times per day. A variety of good food aids in maintaining energy, strength, skin, muscle tone and overall good health. It also plays an important role in your child's school day and their ability to pay attention to the teacher, behave appropriately and to be able to focus and do their school work.

We are able to heat up fully cooked food which makes leftovers from dinner an excellent choice for your child's lunch. We provide all dishes and cutlery needed. **You provide a soft sided lunch box and if needed, an ice pack. VMS provides milk/water for lunch.**

For the toddler and primary programs, the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) requires VMS to *offer* a meal. If you desire, at a cost of \$50 per week, we will provide a meal. We recommend you pack a lunch from home.

CHFS also requires that lunches from home include a minimum: **protein, 2 different vegetables or 1 fruit and 1 vegetable, whole-grain or enriched bread and milk.** VMS provides milk. CHFS requires VMS to have a plan on ensuring parents send a healthy lunch. To that end, if VMS needs to regularly supplement your child's lunch so that it meets the regulations, we will charge \$10 per day. We have not needed to do this yet.

VMS has a school wide policy of no more than 9 grams of processed sugar per item, with lunch (or morning snack for elementary). Yogurt is excluded. Please understand we do not want to be the food police, but it is well documented that processed sugar is bad for the brain. **Candy, chocolate, gum and soda are not allowed.**

It is not always easy to think of healthy lunch items and snacks. Below is a list of suggested healthy foods from the various food groups. Foods sent to school should be high in nutritional content in regard to complex carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals. A general rule of thumb when sending lunch to school would be don't send anything that you wouldn't give your child 10 minutes before going to bed at night. As far as our toddler and preschool students, that is exactly what they are doing...eating lunch before taking a nap.

Packing lunch is a daily challenge. Planning with your child and preparing the night before can ease morning stress and the temptation to include less nutritious items.

Cereals

This is just a sample of breakfast cereals with 9 grams of sugar or less. Crisp X, Puffed Wheat, Puffed Rice, Rice Krispies, Shredded Wheat, Corn flakes, Cheerios, Cheerios with berries, Special K, Kix, Life, Cinnamon Life, King Vitamin, Wheat Chex, Rice Chex, Corn Chex, Multi-grain Cheerios, Wheaties, Oatmeal, Cream of Wheat, etc.

Bread, Rice & Pasta Group

Bagels, breads: fruit, nut, zucchini, carrot, pumpkin. Crackers: wheat, graham, saltine, vegetable, peanut butter, cheese, etc., Nature Valley Granola bars, granola mix, home baked muffins, pita pockets, popcorn, pretzels, pretzel rods, rice cakes, tortilla chips with salsa or bean dip, *Unsweetened* cereal mixed with raisins, pretzels, dried fruit.

Vegetable Group

Raw vegetables, served plain or with dip, "Ants on a Log" celery, filled with peanut butter and dotted with raisins, Power Boats: celery sticks or cucumber boats filled with cottage cheese or cheese spread, Stuffed celery: celery filled with creamed cheese and topped with green olive slices

Fruit Group

Apples, natural applesauce, bananas, blueberries, cantaloupe, grapes - seedless, kiwi, oranges, nectarines - pitted, peaches, pears, plums, pineapple, strawberries, tangelos, tangerines, watermelon.

Milk, Yogurt and Cheese Group

Cheese cubes, slices or sticks, cheese spreads, cottage cheese, cream cheese or yogurt.

Snacks

VMS provides healthy snacks for the students while at school, **except for elementary morning snack that is provided by the parents in their lunch box.** Snacks provided by VMS are: fruits, various crackers, vegetables and dip, popcorn, cheese, chips with salsa, pretzels, peanut butter, Cheerios, yogurt.

Pizza Friday

On Friday's, VMS provides lunch utilizing a local pizza delivery service. VMS provides all the side items required by Kentucky child care regulations as well.

Clothing

Remember the maxim, "There is no wrong weather, just wrong clothing." We try to go outside every day, in all kinds of weather but will remain inside if there is thunder/lightning, or if temperatures are below 25 degrees (with wind chill calculated in) or above 95 degrees (with heat index calculated in).

Please make sure your child has the appropriate clothing **and all clothing is LABELED with your child's initials.** As a rule of thumb, it is important for kids to feel at ease with what they are wearing. It is equally important for young children to manage their own clothing as much as possible because children take pride in being able to dress without help. Clothes that are simple and functional allow the child to move and "work" freely. Natural fibers clean more easily and "breathe" better. Two pieces are usually easier than one.

In general, **when choosing clothes with your toddler or primary child,** look for front openings and simple fastenings. Sweat pants, or shorts with elastic bands instead of zippers or buttons are wonderful for children potty training or newly trained. Often, they have just seconds to get out of their pants before the flood waters come pouring down!

Rainboots for outdoors, a size larger than their shoes, are easier for children to take off and put on by themselves. *** All VMS STUDENTS MUST SUPPLY A PAIR OF "RAIN BOOTS/WATER SHOES" (depending on the season) THAT ARE TO REMAIN AT SCHOOL.**

Children's **clothes are bound to get dirty** or wet while at school! Activities that include gardening, washing dishes, digging or just playing in the yard will show by the end of the day. Please bring your

children in clothes you do not mind getting dirty. For the **Toddler and Primary programs**, we ask that you keep several changes of clothes and underwear, including socks and shoes, in your child's cubby. As the seasons change, so should the changes of clothes.

All Programs: Clothing that is detrimental to the learning process for a variety of reasons are: spaghetti strap shirts/dresses, pants/shorts with words across the bottom, clothes that expose the midriff region of the body, tutu type garments. **Don't send your child to school with these types of clothes.**

Children mastering and perfecting the way they move and walk can succeed best in simple, flexible, non-skid shoes. **Don't send your child with cowboy boots, jellies, high heels, flip flops, shoes with wheels, etc.** Please **mark in permanent ink** all clothes, boots, mittens, blankets, sheets, Tupperware, lunch boxes, etc. - basically everything with your child's initials!

Birthday Celebrations

Speak with your child's teacher about our low-key birthday celebration.

Holidays

We believe holiday celebrations are unique to each family, with many celebrated more than once via extended family circumstances. At VMS we want to address a prevalent issue within our community, food insecurity. We believe no one should go hungry in our community.

Therefore, the entire school participates in a **food drive** during the holidays. Having your children pick out nonperishable food items, and even help pay for some of it themselves, is a great way to include them in this important life lesson. The Woodford County Sheriff will distribute the items.

Field Trips and Excursions - – and only if it is safe to do so.

From time to time, all classes will have walking trips on and around the school's campus. Be sure to initial the Walking/Field Trip Authorization located on the Student Pick-up Authorization Form.

The elementary class requires a separate parent signed, field trip permission form specifying instructions for car/booster seats, allowing those students to join field trips off campus, throughout the year.

Program Promotions

Before a child moves from one class to another, parents and staff will meet to discuss the child's needs. The expectations of both teacher and parents will be openly discussed as well as how the classroom functions. The student orientation process into the new classroom will also be explained.

The Montessori curriculum covers emotional, physical, social and academic development. We are taught to look beyond the ABC's and 1,2,3's when determining a child's readiness to move from one level to the next. Academics certainly play a part, but it isn't the only component considered by the staff. The physical, emotional, and social development are held equally important in the well-being of the child.

Also, we are looking past the years your child is at VMS. We are thinking about the years of middle school, high school and college, when dealing with social pressures can have dire consequences on both academic performance and emotional well-being.

Children, as a whole, manifest certain characteristics at generally expected intervals. While each child develops these characteristics on their own personal time frame, there is an overall composite progression of these traits around three, six and nine years of age. Those developmental markers are what dictate which prepared environment is best suited for that group of children. A child that is not ready for the new environment, but moved along anyway, is equivalent to throwing a baby bird out of the nest before it can fly. Both bird and child will struggle to be successful.

VMS staff are trained and experienced in recognizing these characteristics in order to better fulfill the needs of the child and prepare them for the future stages of growth and development.

Delaying a Move to Another Program

Why would a child need to stay in a program longer if they are academically ready to move on? Usually, it is because the child isn't emotionally or socially mature enough to function in the next program, and maturity isn't something that can be taught.

VMS Staff trust the plan laid during conception that determines when a child is developmentally ready to walk or begin to talk, and we have the same trust that a child will mature in their own time. To assist the young child with gaining maturity, offering life experiences in an environment the child is developmentally comfortable in is the recipe for success.

By design, Montessori is a flexible teaching system with the teacher training programs overlapping each other with their educational content. As a result, any child that stays longer in a program will continue to progress with her academic development.

Parenting Issues and Special Needs

If a child's teacher and the administration jointly agree that a particular child is having difficulties cooperating with parents, staff or students, or other special needs, a conference with parents will be scheduled to determine if a referral to a professional for further evaluation is needed. **The goal of a referral is to provide additional strategies to the staff and parents so they can work jointly in helping the child be successful at home and in school.** At that conference, VMS will provide contact information for outside professionals that VMS feels are competent. However, you are not required to use individuals from that list. All fees for tests, tutors and specialists are the responsibility of the student's parents.

If you are seeking special services for your child, we would like to conference with those providers throughout the process. **A release of information from the specialist to the school will be required.**

Religion

Montessori has been used in schools of all the world's major religions, but the Montessori program itself does not have a specific religious persuasion, nor does VMS. The program does, however, assume a universal intelligence, or God. It views creation as a continuum of which we are a responsible part. Religions of the world are alluded to in multicultural studies.

Communication Between Home and School

When asked, our parents have always said that **there is no such thing as too much communication!** Montessori students are working with hands on, concrete manipulative materials. Most of their work is done in the classroom, hence parents do not tend to see too many dittos. Speaking with your child's

teacher is a good way to know what they are working on. This can be done by appointment. Meeting face to face or speaking on the phone are the best way to communicate.

Message Boards

There is a message board outside the front door of the school that will list important, current reminders for the parents.

Newsletter

Our almost monthly newsletter will include calendar updates, events planned, news, articles on Montessori and classroom activities. They will be emailed.

Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences take place in the fall and spring to collaborate on your child's unique development. It is during this time that we deepen our collaboration on behalf of your child, looking at his or her development from our respective places. **It is essential both parents attend** conferences, so all adults in the child's life are informed and working in consistent partnership. Each conference is scheduled for a ½ hour. You or the teacher may ask for a conference at any other time during the year as may be needed.

Changes

We want to be in close touch with you. The importance of parent-teacher communication cannot be overestimated, and we promise to respect confidentiality. We encourage a two-way discourse at all times. It is especially important that sharing takes place in the case of unusual circumstances that might affect your child. Often, we can help with a little added attention, understanding, and loving care.

It is very difficult for teachers to chat during class hours, so communication is more productive if you leave a note or call the office for a time to confer. Also, it can be confusing and sometimes humiliating for children to be talked about, positively or negatively, in their presence. We like to set aside a private time and place for conferring or a convenient time for a telephone call.

Privacy

Student files are confidential records and are kept secure from unauthorized access. A copy of the student's file may be sent to an outside professional, such as a psychologist or educational diagnostician, if requested in writing by the parent or guardian.

PARENT ROLE AT VMS

Open Door Policy

We understand it takes time to earn your trust and it is of most importance that you are comfortable that everything is above board. Please avail yourself of the observation rooms/windows to observe your child without interrupting them. In order to have a picture of how your child's work relates to what has gone before or what lies ahead, you may enjoy observing another age group.

Montessori Education

Evening meetings are typically interactive and in discussion formats to educate parents about the process of Montessori. These sessions are essential for new parents to provide you with knowledge about the inner workings of Montessori. It also offers you an opportunity to meet one another, share ideas about rearing children, and become better acquainted with the staff. Returning VMS parents' attendance is valued to share their knowledge and experiences with the new families. We feel these sessions are so beneficial to you and your child that we suggest at least one parent participate.

Volunteering

There are some things that even money can't buy, and one of the most valuable contributions that families make to Versailles Montessori School is the gift of their time and expertise. When you volunteer your time to VMS you meet fellow VMS parents and staff outside your child's class, fostering a connection that would otherwise be missed. Per the Student Enrollment Contract, each family is required to provide 10 volunteer hours with various projects in service to VMS each school year.

Committees

There are a few committees that parents can serve on to keep the school operating smoothly and to fulfill the volunteer requirement.

- Fundraising Committee - Plans and implements all fundraising activities.
- Worker Bee Committee - For parents who can't commit to serve on one of the committees listed above, you will be called on as activities and projects become available.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

Tuition Policies

Versailles Montessori is a non-profit organization completely dependent on tuition as its principal source of income. The school will be forced to withhold any and all services to students whose accounts have fallen behind unless written arrangements have been made for deferred payment. Your cooperation is essential and very much appreciated.

Tuition payments will still be required if a shutdown occurs.

Fees - Current Fee Schedule is located on our website. ***When you enroll your child in VMS you are agreeing to pay the full tuition for that session regardless of your child's attendance.***

Withdrawing or temporary suspension from the program does not relinquish your responsibilities for full payment. If VMS fills your child's spot, further payments toward your child's tuition will not be required.

Financial Aid

Financial aid is limited and based on both the school's funds and the family's need. Contact the school for additional information.

Re-enrollment

Invitations to continue at VMS are normally automatic, but are not guaranteed. Decisions are made by the administration and faculty, based on an annual review of each student's academic progress, social and emotional development, any special needs (if applicable), along with the attitudes and values expressed by the child and parents. Our goal is to help each family find the best match between the student, home, and school.

To protect the integrity and quality of the entire program for those children who stay to complete it, siblings of children who prematurely leave VMS will not receive sibling preference as experience shows that these siblings are also likely to leave prematurely. Also, it is important to note that sibling preference, while strongly considered, does not guarantee admission, as many factors go into the decision process.

Re-enrollment material will be available in January and is due back by January 31. If the school has not received the student re-enrollment materials, the space will be made available to new students applying for admission. **No student may re-enroll if there is an outstanding balance remaining on her account.**



Fundraising

Versailles Montessori School is an IRS approved 501-(C)3, non-profit, tax-exempt charitable organization. Voluntary contributions to VMS, where no goods or services are received in turn, are tax deductible as defined in the IRS guidelines. VMS relies on contributions from families and friends of the school who want to invest in the school's development. Fundraising money could be used to bring in specialists for the students, to replace equipment, to train staff or in general to help the school achieve its goals listed at the beginning of this handbook.

VMS fundraising events have been a front porch BBQ, chili supper, and a silent auction-dinner gala evening. Each winter we encourage families to donate to our Staff Appreciation Fund that is fully distributed to them just before the winter break.

Additionally, we encourage each family to participate with the Kroger Community Rewards Program. Eligible purchases earn VMS a donation from Kroger. Please speak with administration for details on enrolling. Remember, the purchases you make at Kroger is money you would be spending already.



The Spirit of Philanthropy - Why Give to Versailles Montessori

Some of us give to VMS because we are part of this community and feel strongly connected to it. We also give to fulfill a very personal need to see ourselves as patrons of something that we feel is truly worthwhile. We believe in Dr. Montessori's vision of the global community and her campaign for world peace and human dignity.

At VMS we believe in people, especially the promise inherent within children, and we have a great respect for what great schools can contribute to their lives. We want to give our children, and the children who follow them in the years to come, an extraordinary opportunity that wasn't available to most of us when we were young. We want to make a contribution back to life. By lending our support, we hope to improve the quality of life, and help develop solutions for some of our most deeply nagging social concerns with children. Every time we make a contribution to VMS, we are making an investment in our children's future and in the larger Versailles community.

GROUND RULES

Liberty and Limits

Young children test the environment to learn how the grown-up world works, and to learn to make responsible choices. To help them do this, we allow the children liberty and support in learning to make choices giving them clear, consistent limits. Montessori is based on peace. VMS does not believe in corporal punishment. We use positive discipline along with logical and natural consequences. Our goal for the child is to develop self-discipline and understand that all actions have a consequence. We seek to lead the child to cooperative behavior and membership in a productive, loving, caring classroom community. We all help each other grow.

Methods of behavior modification used in the classroom include:

- Modeling of desired behavior by adults.
- Problem solving skills that teach children "to use their words, not their hands."
- Careful classroom structure and ground rules.
- Clear and consistent communications of behavioral expectations by all teachers.
- Giving the child opportunities to make "good choices" regarding their behavior (*Positive Discipline* and *1-2-3 Magic*).
- Time to rethink one's actions and try again with appropriate actions and words.
- Regular opportunities to "role play" social situations and conflict resolution throughout the entire school day.

Code of Conduct for Student Behavior

As a school founded on the Montessori ideals, we assume that every person deserves respect. VMS expects students to demonstrate kindness, courtesy, and respect toward the school and fellow students, parents, teachers, and staff. The goal of all Montessori education is to establish safe, warm, and caring environments which exhibit positive and appropriate ways to handle situations. Developing a strong sense of self-discipline, responsibility and courtesy and to develop an atmosphere conducive to peaceful studies is important.

When anyone at VMS finds it difficult to follow the school's expectations about interpersonal conduct, we will quickly bring the student, family, and staff together to work toward a solution. We follow an approach based on empowerment, mutual respect, and trust. Neither corporal punishment, shaming, nor physical or emotional intimidation are allowed at VMS. Any student who repeatedly breaks the ground rules, or who endangers the health and safety of others, may be asked to leave the school by the principal.

Our ground rules are essentially the same at every level of the school, although the language and emphasis changes somewhat for the different levels.

- Be kind and gentle to one another. We expect everyone at VMS to treat everyone else in the school community - staff, students, and parents - with kindness and respect both in words and actions.
- Everyone has a right to privacy and concentration. Respect a request to walk away.
- Everyone has a right to their personal belongings. Seek the owner's permission before using another's property. If you accidentally lose or break something, please replace it without a fuss.
- You must have your teacher's permission to leave their supervision.
- Children must be carefully monitored by their parents/ guardians when playing on the school grounds after school.

Elementary Students

Under certain circumstances, students may be required to spend their lunch, recess, or field trip opportunities in their classroom. Often this involves completing unfinished assignments, assisting in one of the classrooms or with maintenance around the grounds.

Suspensions and Expulsions

Versailles Montessori School does not discriminate with regard to its student enrollment or employment procedures, and although VMS accepts students and staff without regard to race, color, national or ethnic origin, VMS may in the exercise of its sole and inferred discretion, deny enrollment or suspend a child's enrollment if it is determined that the child or the child's parent(s) are not abiding by the rules and/or policies of VMS or if the child's enrollment or continued enrollment would be detrimental to the interest of VMS, its staff, or students. Each case is handled individually and the cooperation and participation of parents and school is mandatory in order for continued enrollment in VMS. Your financial responsibilities to VMS continue during a suspension period.

Violence and Harassment: VMS cannot tolerate any irresponsible and dangerous behavior, acts of violence, threats of violence, emotional or sexual harassment, or verbal abuse directed toward anyone.

Resolving Problems Between Adults

- Any person with a concern relating to school matters is encouraged to discuss the problem with the individual perceived as responsible, be it another parent or VMS staff member, as soon as possible. The school's administration is counting on the parents to come to the staff with any concerns.
- If it is perceived that the situation continues to be unacceptable, a written complaint should be submitted to all parties involved, including VMS administration.
- The administration will then take all documentation to the Board of Directors and a final decision will be made on the matter.

If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions about your child's classroom progress, whether it is about the relationship to the environment, the teacher, or other children, please talk to the teacher directly and promptly. Assistants are instructed to send questions about the above topics to the head teacher because they are not Montessori trained. Questions relating to the operations of Versailles Montessori School should be directed to the school administration. Remember, VMS staff and administration are always available to conference with anyone involved with the school.

STUDENT HEALTH

Rev. 9/2/2021

Medicine & Health Issues - keeping children developmentally healthy

Our goal is to contribute to children's healthful and joyful development. Basic to this is physical health. Each parent wants their child and family protected from contagious illnesses. As parents and teachers, we know that some children may arrive at school apparently well then become ill during the day. We will notify you immediately of your child's symptoms.

Because many childhood illnesses are contagious, ill children must be picked up as soon as possible. Please carefully look over our **Health Policy** so you will know exactly which illnesses or conditions require your child to stay at home.

We consider you family, so please call if your child is sick and staying home. This helps us keep track of the latest illnesses going around. We try to post illnesses on the front board to let the other families know what to look for.

Medical Emergencies

Staff members are trained and equipped to respond with First Aid and CPR. If a doctor or paramedic is required, parents will be notified immediately. Upon arrival at the emergency room, we will continue to try and reach you or one of the people listed on your Medical Release Authorization. In any emergency, a staff member will remain with your child, accompanying them in the ambulance to the hospital until a parent/guardian has arrived.

Medications

VMS recognizes that some children will need to continue taking medication (an antibiotic for example) after they have returned to school and are no longer contagious. **We will provide medicine at noon each day.** CHFS and our insurance company have regulations we must follow. **One being, we are not allowed to dispense any medicine that is not signed in by a guardian.**

For all medicine, a VMS Medicine Authorization Form must be filled out. Medication forms will be provided and returned electronically.

The procedures required by state regulations are:

- 1 All medications must be in the original container, with the child's name on it. *Keep a portion of your child's medicine at home in case it is forgotten at school. The staff is not available to reopen the school if medicine is left at night.*
- 2 An authorization form must give the exact time, exact amount, name of medication, date to be given, and signed by the guardian before it can be administered.
- 3 All medicine must be handed directly to a staff member by the child's guardian or parent. **No medicine may be brought to school by the child or put in a backpack or lunch. Per CHFS this includes cough drops, vitamins, lip balm.**
- 4 You must sign in diaper cream, sunscreen & insect repellent one time per school year. Refer to the Authorization Form

VMS Health Policy

Policy regarding illnesses are made using the most recent information provided by the Woodford County Health Department.

When **clearance documentation (CD)** (i.e., either a negative test or note from doctor giving a diagnosis) is provided, then your child may return to VMS at the appropriate timing related to the symptoms (see Student Symptom Chart below).

VMS reserves the right to make adjustments to illness policy as patterns appear and develop at school or in the region.

Do not send an ill child to school.

It's possible some students have serious medical conditions that can become life threatening when exposed to certain conditions. Please alert the school office if your child has COVID-19, MIS-C (Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children), measles, rubella, chicken pox/shingles, whooping cough, or any other condition of concern.

According to the National Health and Safety Performance Standards: "A child that is not feeling well cannot work at a rewarding level and may also expose other children to a communicable disease. The parent, legal guardian, or other person authorized by the parent shall be notified immediately when a child has a sign or symptom requiring exclusion from the school, as described below ..."

- a) The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in school activities;
- b) The illness results in a greater care need than the school staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children; or
- c) The child has any of the following conditions: *Refer to the VMS COVID-19 PROTOCOL on the next page for illness, travel guidelines and the following Student Symptom Chart for other specific symptoms and when to return to school.*

STUDENT SYMPTOM CHART

Your child should stay home if he/she has any of the following symptoms:

Student Symptoms/Diagnosis	Returning Requirements
Fever $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$	CD provided AND fever free for 24 hrs w/o fever reducing meds
Deep "barking-like" cough or difficulty breathing (not whooping cough/pertussis)	CD provided, following directions from PCP AND no persistent cough.
Vomiting	CD provided, symptom free for 24 hrs
Diarrhea	CD provided, symptom free for 24 hrs AND firm stool produced
New or sudden undiagnosed rash	CD provided, with instructions .
Diagnosed Strep Throat	CD provided, 24 hours after first dose of antibiotic
Impetigo (strep bacteria on skin)	Solid diagnosis required, CD provided AND 48 hrs on antibiotic treatments and no oozing from lesions
Ringworm	Solid diagnosis required, CD provided AND 24 hrs on antifungal treatment, w/ affected area covered.
Diagnosed Influenza (Type A or B)	7 days from onset of symptoms .
Pink Eye	24 hrs on medication AND no drainage from the eye.
Lice	Nit free policy. After treatment and removal of lice, upon return, child has to be inspected and cleared for return by VMS staff. Please schedule inspection time.
Unusually tired, fussy and/or pale	Symptom free

APPENDIX

VMS Board of Directors

Tony & René Guagliardo - Founders of the school. AMI certified primary teachers and Montessori School Administrators since 1987. They are responsible for all submittals to the board of directors. The Guagliardo's have two adult children and live in Versailles.

Russ Crawford - Mechanical Engineer designing commercial HVAC systems with an influence in school design. Russ is an expert witness on structural damage due to blasting. He lives in Lawrenceburg.

Marie Simpson - Licensed Clinical Social Worker and VMS alumna parent. Marie lives in Lexington.

Ryan Branstetter - VMS alumnus parent, retired VMS elementary teacher, and carpenter. Ryan lives in Willisburg.

We all - families and school staff - want to give children the best this world has to offer. We want the best of prepared environments - those that are beautiful, peaceful and purposeful. That is what prompted the need for our new school building. This incredible feat was accomplished because parents and staff joined together in a common goal. Although final decisions lie with VMS staff, administration and the Board of Directors, our parents can be a part of the process. The labor, talents and organizational efforts of these parent volunteers keep tuition costs down!

Inspection Reports

Inspection Reports from various agencies, local, state and national are posted on the bulletin board by the front office.

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN SCHOOL/CHILD CARE PROGRAMS AND THEIR PARENTS The following is required by law to be posted and in our school policies. 199.898.

➤ All children receiving child care services in a day-care center ... shall have the following rights:

- ~The right to be free from physical or mental abuse
- ~The right not to be subjected to abusive language or abusive punishment- and
- ~The right to be in the care of adults who shall meet their health, safety and development needs.

➤ Parents, custodians or guardians of children specified above shall have the following rites:

- ~The right to have access to their children at all times the child is in care and access to the provider caring for their children during normal hours of operation and whenever the children are in the care of the provider;
- ~The right to be provided with information about child care regulatory standards, if applicable; where to direct questions about regulatory standards; and how to file a complaint;
- ~The right to file a complaint against a child care provider without any retribution against the parent, custodian, guardian or child; and
- ~The right to review and discuss with the provider any state reports and deficiencies revealed by such reports.

Asbestos Management Plan

The school has available for review, a management plan regarding asbestos containing building material, ACBM. Tony Guagliardo is designated as the individual responsible for ensuring the plan is followed. We have on file, a letter from the project engineer, stating no ACBM was used when constructing the building.

Pesticide Management Plan

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT INITIAL NOTIFICATION FORM

Revised - 8/2021

Dear Parent or Employee -

VMS' campus is located in the country and therefore pest control is a necessary part of maintaining a clean and healthy environment for our students and staff. Cockroaches, mold, and mouse droppings are key triggers for asthma attacks. We diligently work at reducing our student's exposure to these triggers as much as possible.

Please note that if spraying for insects becomes necessary, the school is treated over weekends or breaks, leaving a minimum of 24 hours drying time before students return to the building. Mice are controlled with traps, as opposed to poison baits.

VMS has initiated an Integrated Pest Management Program (IPMP) in order to control pests in a way that minimizes economic, health and environmental risks via a monitoring and inspection program and the judicious use of pesticides. Those individuals applying pesticides will be properly certified in keeping with applicable legal requirements for the IPMP.

If you want to be notified 24 hours in advance of a planned pesticide application, other than when mouse traps are used, or as soon as possible when an emergency pesticide application is necessary, please register at the front office of the school.

If you are confident that VMS representatives will follow all applicable legal requirements you do not need to sign up for advance notification.

This special notice/form letter was mandated by the Department of Agriculture.

Sincerely,

Tony Guagliardo - VMS Administrator

VMS Mission Statement: To create peace through education ... one child at a time.

Safe Space Policy

Rev 3/1/2025

Purpose:

Dr. Maria Montessori saw education as the most powerful tool for social transformation. She believed that if children were raised in environments that fostered respect, independence, and an understanding of global interconnectedness, they would grow into adults who work toward peace and justice. She urged world leaders to prioritize children's education as a means of ensuring long-term peace and justice.

"The child is the forgotten citizen, and yet, if statesmen and pedagogues had a deeper insight into their work, they would find the child at the very foundation of state and society."
- Education and Peace, 1949

Montessori strongly believed that every child, regardless of socio-economic background, should have access to a quality education. She saw education as a means of eradicating poverty and injustice.

"The child is the forgotten citizen of humanity. He is disregarded in social and political life; he is excluded from governance, and yet he holds within him the potential for a new and more just world." - The Formation of Man, 1955

Montessori saw children as essential to the fabric of society but often ignored in discussions about world affairs.

Versailles Montessori School is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all students, staff, and families. VMS actively seeks a wide variety of staff and children in order to share the rich resources we all have to offer.

Early childhood programs play an important role in families' lives. Across the country, child care and early education providers offer millions of young children a safe space to play, learn, and grow while their parents work or attend school. These programs also connect families to important community resources like nutrition, health, and parenting services. For families facing adversity, early childhood programs provide stability when everything else is uncertain. However families cannot reap the benefits of child care and early education if they are too afraid to enroll in or attend these programs.

We recognize that having federal immigration agents on our property would discourage parents from bringing their children to Versailles Montessori School as well as accessing services on behalf of their children. It is our responsibility as early care and education professionals to ensure our program is safe, reliable, and accessible to every family we serve or who seeks our services.

This policy outlines our approach to safeguarding students from unwarranted interference or actions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials on school premises. We aim to ensure that every individual, regardless of immigration status, can access education without fear of detention, deportation, or harassment. [United States Supreme Court Plyler v. Doe \(1982\)](#)

Scope:

This policy applies to all students, staff, parents, guardians, and visitors who are part of the VMS community.

Policy Principles:**1. Right to Education:**

Every student has the right to a free and appropriate education, regardless of their immigration status. VMS affirms that no student will be denied enrollment or access to education based on their immigration status or the immigration status of their family members.

2. Privacy and Confidentiality:

VMS will protect the privacy of all students and families. School personnel will not share information regarding students' or their families' immigration status unless required by law. We will not disclose or share student records with ICE or other immigration authorities without written consent, except in cases where such disclosure is mandated by law. They must provide a warrant, or have an administrative request, such as a summons issued by a federal or state agency, like the Department of Homeland Security.

3. School Access:

ICE agents are not permitted to enter VMS premises without prior written consent from the school administration, unless they present a valid judicial warrant. In cases where ICE attempts to enter the school or detain any individual on campus, the school will act swiftly to ensure the safety and rights of students, staff, and families are respected.

4. Releasing Student Information and ICE interactions:

School staff are prohibited from voluntarily releasing information about any student, including the immigration status of students or families. School staff have the right to remain silent. School staff are prohibited from physically interfering with an ICE agent.

5. Support and Resources:

VMS will provide resources and guidance to students and families who may feel at risk of ICE enforcement actions. We will offer referrals to legal services, community organizations, and other advocacy groups that can provide support regarding immigration concerns.

6. Reporting Concerns:

Students, families, and staff who believe that their rights or safety have been compromised by the presence of ICE at school should immediately report the incident to the administration. The school will investigate the matter promptly and take necessary steps to address any violations of this policy.

7. Staff Training and Education:

All school staff will receive training on this Safe Space Policy and on how to respond if ICE attempts to enter school premises. Staff will be made aware of the rights of students and families, and will be equipped with resources to help protect and support individuals in potentially vulnerable situations.

8. Student and Family Rights:

Students and families are encouraged to understand their rights in the event of an ICE encounter. VMS can provide informational materials in multiple languages about student rights related to ICE and immigration enforcement.

Enforcement:

This policy is enforceable by the school administration, and any violations of this policy by staff or external parties will result in appropriate disciplinary action or other interventions to ensure that the rights of all individuals in our school community are upheld.

Conclusion:

At VMS, we believe in creating an environment where every individual feels safe, valued, and respected. This Safe Space Policy is not intended as a means to break any law, but it is a step toward protecting our students from fear, discrimination, and harm due to their immigration status, ensuring that they can pursue their education in peace and security.

For any questions or concerns regarding this policy, please contact Tony Guagliardo, school administrator.

The Process of Creating a Self-Disciplined Child

What you can say to your child that will teach them to follow the rules ... and other helpful phrases.

One of the goals for VMS students to reach is SELF-DISCIPLINE. We want our students to behave and follow the rules whether adults are present or not. This takes years to achieve. In order for the students to be successful they need many opportunities to make real, authentic choices and receive feedback about them. Those 'choice' opportunities need to be present daily and need to be about everyday options like: what to eat, who to play with, how to play with them, etc. For the students to make good choices they need consistent rules along with kind and firm consistent enforcement of those rules.

CONSISTENCY is the name of the game when it comes to rearing children. The rules are the rules no matter the person, place or time. For example: Rule - "When I say your name you need to stop what you are doing and look at me." or, "You must clean up your toys before going outside, no matter who you are with, no matter where you are. *Each and every time.*"

RULES will get tested by your child. Either by forgetting, refusing, crying, throwing tantrums, or whining that they 'caaaan't doooo iiiiiiit.' You will need to have your game plan in place before testing begins.

Be sure to be very matter of fact - not angry or frustrated. A child that learns they can "push that button" and make you mad, frustrated or even sad has gained a powerful tool. Know that if you do not pass the test - your child will keep 'pushing' to see if you really mean what you say and if you truly **are** the person in charge.

Children want to feel safe and need to trust that as the grown up - you won't let things get out of control. They need to know the 'boundaries/rules' and to know they will be enforced consistently. That knowledge makes them feel safe to be the child. When a child trusts and respects you first, then a child will 'like' you. If the adult is worried about being liked more than getting cooperation from the child, the relationship is doomed from the start. Remember this, after you discipline your child, if they tell you they HATE YOU, then you've probably done your job well, meaning your punishment fits the crime, so to speak. In the heat of the moment 'I hate you' means I'm really, really mad at you. Your response can be, "That's okay. I love you enough for the both of us right now."

The most important concept a child needs to understand: when my name is called, I stop and listen.

If a parent, grandparent or child care provider has to repeat a child's name over and over (or even worse, chase a child about the room) before the child stops what they are doing, then it will be difficult to teach self-discipline. That issue will need to be resolved first. Always rule out any physical condition that is impeding listening such as ear infections, fluid on the ear or hearing loss deterioration. These tests are simple and relatively inexpensive to conduct by your pediatrician or a physician who specializes in ear, nose and throat conditions.

Once all medical conditions are ruled out, teaching your child to listen can begin. Start by playing the 'Direction Game'. The first rule of the game is when your name is called you stop what you are doing and look at the person who called your name. If the person wiggles their finger toward themselves, that is the signal for 'come here please'.

To begin the game, have your child do something (play with a toy, color, set the table, etc.), speak their name and praise them when they stop and turn to look at you. Next, give them a one-step direction to follow. Repeat this several times with a new direction each time. Play the game when you are out and about. As your child shows they are listening, add multiple directions which will help them to develop concentration, attention to detail and sequencing - skills needed in school. Play the game often, and soon it will be ingrained that when your child hears their name, they stop, look and listen.

Time out as a self-discipline tool.

Time out is commonly used at home and unfortunately misused as well because many adults think they have to be in charge of how long a child spends in time out. We have all heard one minute for each year of age but often that isn't enough or is too long. The burden of how long to be in time out, ideally, should fall to the child. Below is a concrete example.

Child refuses to clean up blocks, do their chores etc.

"Have a seat, Johnny. When you decide to clean up your blocks you can get up and put them away. (As the adult you don't care if it is 2 minutes or 2 hours). Your friends are outside waiting for you and you look sad sitting in that chair. So, when you choose to clean up, you can head straight outside with your friends." (You can offer to help if you feel the task is overwhelming.)

If the child starts to cry or wail about cleaning up, with a shrug of your shoulders, "I'm sorry you feel so sad but that is the rule at our house." You walk away and check back later to ask if he is ready yet. "Do you need a hug?" Acknowledge feelings, chat a little. "You're the man in charge - so how long do you want to rest in the chair before you are ready for your blocks? OK, I'll tell your friends that is what you have decided to do."

It is important that the child gets the message they are making the decision and are making choices that affect themselves. It is on them and not on you. You are simply following the rules - it is out of your hands and **their** choices are what makes this happen. This is teaching SELF-DISCIPLINE, RESPONSIBILITY FOR ONE'S OWN ACTIONS, and HOW TO MAKE GOOD CHOICES.

If the job is too big to tackle -- break it down. "OK, I don't want you to pick up ANYTHING but the GREEN blocks. Don't touch the red blocks ... only the green blocks." (Sometimes the child will only pick up the opposite of what you say. Use some humor at this point and run with it. Don't make an issue of not following directions.)

What if a child doesn't choose to pick up the blocks and it is time to go to bed or leave the house for an appointment? In a matter-of-fact way, tell the child something like, "Well, I see you decided to not

pick up your blocks. I'll do it now and when I am done, I will put them in the attic/garage and they won't be available for you to play with." Most likely the child will now decide to either help or do the job, but now it is too late. Don't allow them to help because it reinforces that they don't need to listen to your instructions the first time and in their mind the consequence is HUGE - no blocks to play with - when in the scheme of things, the consequence is pretty small.

At some point in the future, days to weeks later, when you want to reinforce the good choices, your child has been making you can bring the blocks out saying something like, "I have noticed you are listening/choosing well/etc. I think you are ready to have your blocks back." Don't make a song and dance out of it because you expect good behavior from your child.

You don't want to condition your child to expect over-the-top praise for expected behavior as that won't usually happen in life and you want to save over-the-top excitement for when it is really warranted.

In situations like these and all the other situations, you have to pass the 'test' (and you thought you wouldn't have to pass any more tests once you got out of school). Having phrases that you use for certain situations - regularly and CONSISTENTLY lets your child KNOW the phrase as well and she might eventually repeat the phrase right along with you. Guess what that same child will hear in their HEAD when you are not around???

Phrases to Say to Your Child

The following list of phrases are just a small sampling of consistent phrases used at school - if you choose to use the same at home - it is all the more CONSISTENT and therefore effective!

Some phrases are geared toward the younger students and some toward the older. **Never add "Okay?"** to the end of your request (unless you mean it) because that means there is an option to refuse you.

The best phrase ever is the first one on the list. It will carry you through many situations, BUT you must mean it and stick to it.

- **"You will never get what you want by _____.** I was going to let you have _____, but because you _____, now I can't let you have it. Let's see if you can ask/act the right way the **next time** (not right then) you want _____."
- "I can help you do it or you can do it." - particularly good for toddlers.
- To a toddler to encourage communication "You say, stop please.", "You say, up please."
- When hit by a friend (by accident or on purpose) you say to the injured child, "How did that make you feel?" To the hitter, "How are you going to fix this?" Offender can say ... "Is there anything I can do to make it better?" (Don't require an apology, they usually aren't genuine.)
- At drop off - "Mom will pick you up after nap. She loves you and will never forget to pick you up. She will be here when you ... wake up/ finish snack/play outside/etc."
- Child with attitude in voice - "You may talk to me with a polite tone of voice - not rude/loud -

- tone of voice - Try it again with the same words just a different tone."
- Child you are speaking to is walking away or looking away - "Please look at me when we are speaking to each other. It makes it easier to hear."
 - "You sound frustrated, would you like some help?"
 - "'Yes ma'am' or 'no sir' are required. I need more than a nod, a grunt, or a yeah."
 - "You say yes, not yeah."
 - Responding clearly to the child - "Yes you may, no you may not."
 - To a child who is rude - "If I offer you something, you may say yes please, or no thank you."
 - To an elementary child - "When someone is speaking, keep your eyes on him or her at all times. If someone makes a comment to you, turn and face that person."
 - 3 years - Kindergarten (hopefully older children aren't still doing this) - "Boogers are not food! Please wipe them on a tissue and wash your hands."
 - Why we use soap on cuts: "If you have a cut, you have to wash it with soap and water. If you don't use soap, you just get the germs wet but you don't kill them. It is the germs that make it hurt."
 - Kindergarten- Elementary - "If you win a game don't brag. If you lose, don't pout. Always congratulate the opponent for a good game. If you can't acknowledge your opponent, don't say anything at all. Don't make excuses because they beat you."
 - 3 years- Kindergarten- "Weapons are made to hurt people. It is against the rules to play pretend weapons. You are pretending to hurt people for fun. It is not allowed to even pretend to hurt people."
 - 3 years - Elementary not responding (or making excuses) to a request/question: "This is a yes or no question."
 - Toddler - Kindergarten: "You decide what happens, I can carry you or you can walk to the car. What do you want?" (Say the thing you want them to do last, not first.)
 - 3 years - Kindy: "Ouch that hurts. Can I help you? What do you think will help that feel better?"
 - 3 years - First grade when lying: "Now you need to tell me that you're kidding or it is lying. Like this. I see a dinosaur...just kidding." (Explain the difference.)
 - 3 years - Elementary: "How do you feel about your work?" Focus on the process to reinforce the effort.
 - 3 years - Elementary: "It looks like you worked hard on that - you should be proud."
 - 3 years - Elementary: "It looks like you worked hard on that picture. You should be proud of yourself. Look how carefully you colored the sky. You must like the color blue!" - Instead of: "I like your picture." (The idea is for the child to do this work for **self-satisfaction**. Not for anyone else.)
 - Toddler - Kindergarten: "I can't understand a whiny voice - use a regular voice or I can't understand you." "Ask me again later in your regular voice." Walk away if whining continues.
 - 3 years - Kindergarten: "You look sad. Can you use your words because I can't understand when you use your tears?"
 - 3 years - Kindergarten: "Look with your eyes - keep your hands down or behind your back."
 - Elementary: "Borrowing is taking something with permission - Stealing is taking it without asking."
 - Elementary: "You always tell the truth to your parents and teachers. If you don't, then when you

ARE telling the truth, no one will believe you. Even if it is really important, you will have to prove it because you can't be trusted to tell the truth. I want to be able to believe you every time you tell me something. And you can believe me when I tell you something." (Story of the boy that cried wolf.)

- Kindergarten - Teenagers: "You don't have to like what I say, you just have to do what I say."
- Child says, "I don't like you." You can say, "I am not here to be your friend, you already have friends. I am your teacher/parent and my job is not to have you like me. My job is to help you learn how to do this yourself. You can be mad at me, that is ok. But you DO have to do xxxxxxxx. Now please."
- 3 years - Kindergarten: "Use an inside voice please."
- Kindergarten- Teenager: "What can you do differently next time, so this doesn't happen again?"
- Toddler - Kindergarten: "When you hurt your friends it tells me you want to work alone."
- 3 - Kindergarten (for VMS staff mostly): "After you give your mom a hug you may clean up your work."
- 3 - Teenager: "You can tell me anything, and if you tell me the truth, I will not get angry." (It doesn't mean there won't be a consequence,)
- 3 - Kindergarten: "If you need to say rude words please go into the bathroom until you are finished. We don't want to hear them in the classroom. We don't use those kinds of words because it is bad manners."
- 3 - Kindergarten: "If you need to spit, the toilet is where we do that."
- 3 - Kindergarten: "When you break the materials it tells me you need to be with me so I can watch your hands and make sure you are being gentle and careful with them."
- 3 - Kindergarten: "You sound angry/sad/frustrated - what happened that you didn't like?"
- 3 - Elementary: "Tell your friend what happened that made you upset." "What will fix this problem?"
- 3 - Kindergarten: "Use your words and not your hands - it is against the rules to hit anyone. If they won't listen to your words, go get a teacher to help them listen to you."
- 3 - 3rd grade: "You hurt your friend's feelings when you talk to them like that. - Tell them what you would like them to do. Ask them politely."
- 3 - Kindergarten: "I won't allow anyone to hurt you - and I won't allow you to hurt anyone at school. We don't hurt each other here. It is against the rules."
- 3 - Kindergarten: "Have a seat and when you can walk and not run in the library, you can get up and walk. Good walking!"
- 3 - Kindergarten: (for VMS staff mostly): "Your mom will wait for you in the media center while you clean up your work."
- 3 - Kindergarten: "It is bad manners to pull down your pants on the playground. Would you do that in the middle of the grocery store? In the middle of the library? That is why they are called private parts. Pull your pants down in a private place like the bathroom to go potty."
- 3 - Kindergarten: "No one touches your private parts. Only YOU touch your private parts."

Of course, all these phrases can be tweaked according to the age and intellect of the child.

Use the positive action as much as possible:

- WALK PLEASE (instead of DON'T RUN).
- BE GENTLE WITH YOUR HANDS.
- USE A QUIET VOICE PLEASE.
- ONLY FOOD GOES IN YOUR MOUTH.

Some last bits of information to keep in mind.

Family Dynamics

During infancy (the first 12 months or so) it is beneficial to dote on the child's needs first and the parent's needs second. It creates a bond and an expectation that as the parent, you are going to provide what the child needs. After infancy, the child can be weaned from the 'throne of attention' with the spousal relationship taking that place. Placing the marriage first and the children second keeps the family foundation secure which is ultimately comforting to the children.

What is funny now might not be later.

While it might be cute and funny when your toddler does or says something, consider if you would think it's cute or funny when they're 4 or 5. You must do your best to avoid reinforcing inappropriate behavior because you are essentially telling your toddler it is okay to do it again.

Who is in Charge?

If your toddler is in the habit of giving you orders (instead of making requests of you), as they get older, they will expect that to be appropriate means of interaction with adults. When your three-year-old is speaking to you in a disparaging tone, acting bossy toward you or being defiant of your request, take that as a sign that you have more work ahead of you. If that inappropriate behavior isn't squelched soon, you will have a much harder time dealing with it when your child is a teenager and less chance of breaking them of that socially unacceptable trait.

Getting your attention / Interrupting the adult.

Usually, when your child wants your attention, it isn't a matter of life or death, even though they may think so. With that said, if you are engaged in something, for example, a conversation with your spouse or another adult, and your child wants your attention, she should be able to wait patiently for your attention. Even a three-year-old can wait a minute or two - if the adult expects that and requires it. If we condition our children to expect us to stop whatever we are doing to attend to their whim, then we are in the process of creating a self-absorbed adult which few of us care to be around.

When a child says your name over and over or is patting somewhere on your body, they are rudely attempting to get your attention. Think of your parents or grandparents. Would they put up with such discourteous behavior?

To get your attention, a young child (2 years to 3rd grade) can be taught to place their hand on your shoulder or hip and wait patiently for you to respond to them. If a child aggressively pats or hits the parent to get their attention that behavior can be addressed by telling the child to go wait somewhere (e.g., a chair, their room, the couch) until you are able to come see them. Patting or striking you should not be reinforced with attention for the child's request/demand. A 4th grade child and older can easily be taught how to wait for a natural pause in the conversation and then politely say "excuse me".

Defusing an argument before it becomes one.

Any time you can head an argument off at the pass it is advisable to do so. This can be done with humor and/or by acknowledging the desire of the child. "I know that you like your friend so much that you wish you could play together for days and days." Another great phrase is 'even though'. "Even though you love puppies, we don't have all the things puppies need at our house right now."

A definite 'maybe'.

You don't always need to have an answer for each decision made on your child's behalf. 'Maybe' or 'I don't know' is an effective response that can avoid conflict. It buys you time to think about the request/situation so you can follow up with your decision should you want to. At times, 'Because I said so' is all the follow up needed.

Politely answer.

'You may not....', or 'No thank you' is the same as saying 'no' which is abrupt and negative by definition. 'You may not' conveys the same message. 'Absolutely not' is also civilized, firm, but kind. These words don't usually invite rebellion in the same way as a 'no'.

How to offer your instructions.

'Would you like to take your bath now?' or 'It's time for your bath. Okay?' set you up for an answer you might not want to hear - "no". Instead, say something like, 'It's time for your bath. Should we use bubbles or leave the water clear?' It's all in the syntax.

We don't have to yell and intimidate our children in order to get compliance. Nor do we have to throw up our hands and settle for non-compliant behavior. **Respectful language works.** The information listed above assumes there is consistent parent-child interaction that provides ample amounts of affection, attention and love.

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