

Oakland Montessori School Parent Handbook

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Introduction

Our common goal for the care of the children is their emotional and physical safety at all times.

The intention of the OMS handbook is to uphold policies of operation, which not only state the business practices necessary to insure the stability of the school, but also clarify for parents, practices that protect the children in our care. The policies are a mix of those we have developed through the years, and those mandated by law.

We ask that you read this handbook with care. If you have questions or concerns, please bring them to our attention. It is our experience that thorough knowledge of these policy statements will enhance communication and prevent misunderstanding providing an important element of mutual respect between parents and our professional staff of teachers.

You have chosen a Montessori environment for your child for a number of reasons. Among them are the child-centered philosophy of Maria Montessori, the opportunity for independent work and discovery, and an environment that supports the development of independence and confidence.

We hope that you will educate yourself not only on the principles of Montessori but also on the stages of child development. We will have several parent education meetings throughout the year and will be happy to guide you to books and answer questions. Your children are so young for a very short time and during this time they change daily. The more you understand, the easier it will be to live in the moment, and the better you can support their work.

Classroom Orientation



Tending to the emotional and physical needs of your child prepares your child for a positive experience. We've found that you pave the way at home for a positive education experience and that the following contribute to positive learning and classroom behavior:

- The proper amount of sleep. Busy days spent learning and growing lend themselves to early bedtimes.
- A healthy breakfast. Our first snack is not until 10:30.
- Limited television exposure. Excessive television may lead to diminished interest in school activities.
- Weather preparedness. The children spend a lot of time outside in the yard and we need them to be comfortable in the ever-changing Oakland weather. Send your child with a sweater and apply sun screen before school. Keep a complete change of clothes on hand at the school in the boxes we provide. It's a good idea to check your child's box daily to make sure it is "stocked." Make sure your child wears protective and stable shoes.

(Classroom Orientation (cont.))

The Day

The day's schedule varies according to the needs of the class. There is usually a group meeting (a "circle") for lessons, sharing, songs and discussion. The children choose their work from the shelf and work either alone or together. Many of the lessons are learned by repetitive manipulation of the Montessori materials, and at times an older child or teacher may assist. There is time for group activity such as music, physical education, art, play, snack, quiet time, and care of self and the environment.

- There are three additional education programs per week, gymnastics, art and music, taught by outside specialists.
- A general weekly schedule is posted and emailed so that parents can know and support daily activities.

Arrivals and Departures

Security

The front door to the preschool is locked to outside entry. You should use the gates for entry to the school. In case of heavy rain, you can use the front door at appropriate times (arrival and pick-up).

- Please check with the teachers for the current gate lock combination. You will be notified if the combination changes, which it does periodically. Do not share the combination with anyone, including your child!
- Please be sure to lock the gate after you enter the School, and again after you leave.

(Classroom Orientation (cont.))

School Hours

- Regular school hours are from 8:30 AM to 12:00 AM or from 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM. We offer day care from 7:30 AM-8:30 AM and from 3:00 PM-6:00 PM.
- You must sign your child in and out on the Clipboard. If your child is using extra daycare, please note on the Attendance Sheet.
- It is very important to respect our neighbors! Please park properly and do not double park, park in driveways, or block other cars.

Arrivals

Children not participating in the morning day care may arrive between 8:30 AM- 9:00 AM. If a child is dropped off before 8:30 AM, you will be charged \$6.00 per hour or a fraction thereof.

If your child will arrive later than 9:00 because of special circumstances, please let us know ahead of time. Excessive tardiness can be disruptive to the entire class so please teach your child how to enter and join the group unobtrusively. If it is necessary to arrive after the school day has begun, please keep in mind the following:

- Come in quietly. Speak with your child in a whisper.
- Help your child hang up his or her coat, put away lunch coat, remove shoes and wash hands.
- If necessary, remain quietly with your child if she or he needs help with the transition. If the transition is difficult, please ask an assistant to help and remain outside the classroom until your child is ready to join the group.
- Please do not interrupt the teachers. If you need to communicate with them, please indicate that you are leaving a note.

(Classroom Orientation (cont.))

Departures

- Please let us know In advance if you will pick up your child early.
- With the exception of 6:00 PM, you have a 10-minute grace period after your standard time to pick-up your child. If you do not pick up your child after 10 minutes, you will be charged for additional daycare.
- Please clear all late pick-ups with Tanya in order to assure proper staffing.
- You will be asked to complete an emergency form with a list of people who will be allowed to pick up your child. We must be notified in writing if anyone else but you is to pick up your child.
- We must have written, dated and signed permission to release your child to anyone other than a parent. Phone permission may be given for those listed on the emergency form. An unfamiliar pick up person will be asked to show identification.

Late Pickup

- We are very sympathetic to emergencies and will assist in any way that we can. We also expect realistic planning, timely communication and foresight from families. Regular emergencies are not acceptable.
- In case of an emergency and if no one from your emergency pickup list is available, you can phone in permission for your child to go home with another OMS family.
- If you anticipate difficulty getting to school by 6:00 PM, arrange with another 6:00 PM family to pick up your child should you be delayed in traffic. Give us a signed release form to keep on file.

(Classroom Orientation (cont.))

Late Pickup (cont.)

- We cannot release your child to anyone else! If we do not hear from you and no one can stay at the school after 6:00 PM, we will leave a note on the front door to let you know where to find your child.
- After 6:00 PM, you will be charged \$1.00 per minute for every minute you are late. For a teacher to remain with your child after 6:00 is extremely disruptive to the teacher's life. As such, you will be expected to pay the teacher who stayed with your child within 24 hours.
- Excessive lateness may result in the dismissal of your child from the School.

Food and Clothing

Lunches

Good nutrition directly affects a child's health, concentration and behavior. Teaching children the importance of good nutritional habits when they are young will help them choose healthy food throughout their lives.

- Children should bring their lunches in an unbreakable lunch box or paper sack. Include a napkin and any utensils that they might need.
- Due to the number of children, we are not able to microwave food.
- Disposable juice boxes are not allowed. Unbreakable thermoses or reusable juice containers are ideal.
- Please prepare lunch so that your child can eat without assistance.
- Please avoid prepackaged foods. While we understand the convenience, we would like to teach the children about conservation and the protection of the planet!
- No sugary, salty or fatty (potato chips, candy) treats please.

(Classroom Orientation (cont.))

Snacks

- There are two snacks per day, in addition to lunch.
- Parents sign up to bring one week of snack for their child's class at least twice per year. This is a tremendous help to the teachers and provides variety in the food and pride for the child who brings the snack.
- The School provides afternoon snack.

Clothing

- Children should dress for comfort and neatness. Shoes need to protect feet and toes and not hinder movement.
- Coats and sweaters should have a loop for easy hanging.
- Label all clothes. We cannot be responsible for unlabeled clothing.
- Keep at least one set up extra clothing at school. Good additions are sweatpants, socks and shorts in case the weather changes unexpectedly.
- Bring appropriate outdoor wear for play even on cold or wet days.
- If your child is in the process of toilet training, it is especially advisable to provide additional changes of clothes, including socks, shoes, pants and underwear.
- Check the provided box for clothing daily.

Shoes

- Children need to take their shoes off inside school and place them on the shoe shelf in the classroom. If you would like, your child can bring a pair of slippers to wear inside school.

(Classroom Orientation (cont.))

Personal Belongings

- Children may not bring toys to school without permission of the teachers. There are days of "sharing" and on those days, your child may bring a small, educational, special treasure.
- We welcome books and family pictures!
- Items of interest to be shared should be approved by a teacher upon arrival to school.
- If a child brings something to school that the teacher determines is inappropriate (usually a toy), the item will be set aside. Families will be asked to take the item home at the end of the day.
- If you find any school materials at home, please return them as soon as possible. Classroom materials are expensive and can be difficult to replace.
- Please be aware of what your child brings to school. Toys and special personal items can be easily lost or broken.
- Please clean your child's cubby daily.
- Do not bring pacifiers or bottles. These encourage unsanitary habits and spread disease.

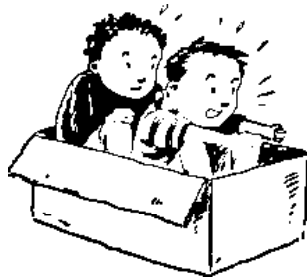
Naps

- We wish to make nap times as comfortable as possible. If your child takes naps, you will need to bring a pillowcase to slip over a nap mat and a blanket. Be sure these items are marked with your child's name. These items should go home at the end of each week to be laundered.
- Children who take naps can bring a "nap-time-only-small cuddly".

(Classroom Orientation (cont.))

Field Trips

- Excursions away from School are an important part of the curriculum.
- Occasionally, we take short neighborhood walks to Dimond Park or to the Library.
- For all longer trips, we provide prior notice to all families. In prior years, our destinations have included a Pumpkin Patch, Symphony Hall, the Nutcracker Ballet, and the Chabot Space and Science Center.
- Children are expected to wear OMS tee-shirts.
- Families are needed to drive to these events. You can earn volunteer hours!
- For excursions away from school, children bring carseats & bag lunches.



Parent Field Trip Instructions

- Let us know how many children you can take by yourself. If you have a large car let us know how many children you can take with another adult. Seat belts and/or car seats are required for all children and adults.
- Drivers must provide the School with information about their insurance and driver's license number.
- Please be at OMS on time; you probably need to install car seats.
- We will have directions and a roster.
- Parents must attend a fieldtrip workshop prior to the first fieldtrip.

(classroom Orientation (cont.))

Special Events

- Families are invited to join with the teachers to organize celebrations for holidays and special family get-togethers.
- Birthdays are celebrated with a special ritual symbolizing the child's journey around the sun. Families can help the child prepare a timeline of pictures and words signifying the important events of each year or his or her life. The timeline may be shown or read by the child or parent as the child reenacts the journey around the sun.
- The child may bring cookies or other treats to share with classmates on their birthdays.
- Birthday invitations to parties at home are NOT to be handed out at School unless the entire class is invited. The invitations should be placed in files, not cubbies.

Communication



Because of the nature of pre-school and children, communication between the school, teachers and parents is very important. We make every effort to provide all the information you need and to respond to any questions you might have. Successful dialogue and communication contributes to an environment where you and your children, as well as the teachers are happy and the school runs smoothly.

We provide information in a number of ways -- through email, file folders, bulletin and white boards and various meetings. And we encourage you to contact us through meetings, written messages, email, or phone. If your own contact information changes (phone, work, etc.) please let us know immediately.

Communication (cont.)

Phone

The phone will be answered in the administrative office between 9:00 - 10:00 and 3:00 - 4:00 Tuesday through Thursday. During all other times, please leave a message on the answering machine, and we will return your call as soon as possible.

You can also use email - treuvekamp@aol.com

Classroom Phones:

Remember that answering the phone requires a lesson interruption and unsupervised class time - your calls directly to the classroom are for emergencies only. Messages of a non-urgent nature can be left with the Administrative Office. If you are at the school, please do not use the phones to make personal calls unless it is an emergency.

Email

One of the most effective and efficient communication methods used by OMS is email. Weekly schedules are emailed out at the beginning of the week. Updates and other news are also sent as needed. If you are not receiving emails and would like to, please let one of the teachers know.

White board

The white board frequently has announcements on it, particularly related to field trips and events.

Bulletin Board

Schedules, calendars, notices are often posted to the bulletin board by the sign in sheets.

Communication (cont.)

Folders

You will receive notices, as well as invoices and statements, in the folders by the sign in sheets. The folders are labeled with the children's names.

Committees – Parent Advisory committee

We encourage and welcome parent participation in the school. There are several committees, which meet regularly on various issues, including school policies and procedures. For example, the Parent Advisory committee reports its findings in the email distribution.

Group Parent Meetings

Several times throughout the year, we have informal gatherings. Sometimes they consist of simply a potluck dinner, and several times a year we also invite speakers to make presentations to us. These gatherings are a good place to informally catch up with parents and teachers.

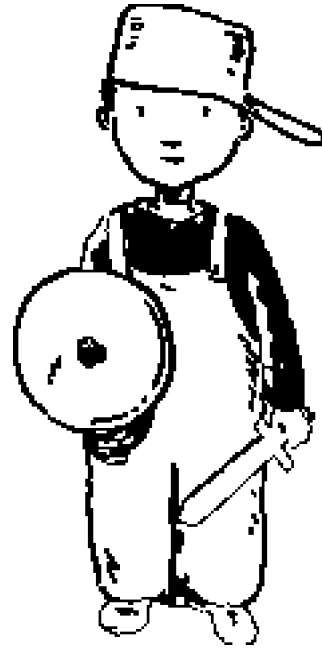
Written Messages

There is a mailbox on the Dimond school door and Fruitvale porch where you can leave payment as well as any other messages you might have for Tanya. You can also leave written messages for the teachers on the attendance sheet clip board. Some communications, such as medicine delivery, require that you provide written instructions, and those you can leave for the teachers.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

While we schedule parent/teacher conferences twice a year, we also welcome you to arrange appointments with the teachers for conferences, as you feel necessary.

Health and Safety



We would like to be informed of any health issues that arise for your child during the year, as they may affect your child's behavior and progress at school. General guidelines for promoting good health and safety in the classroom are listed ahead.

Health and Safety (cont.)

Health Record

Before your child may be admitted to OMS, he/she must have a completed Health Record Form on file. This form is part of your admissions package – please contact us if you didn't receive one or if you have any questions.

Illness

Your child must remain at home if he/she displays symptoms of illness including: fever, constant runny nose, diarrhea, vomiting, lethargy, infectious conditions, unusual level of irritability, etc. Children need to remain at home until they have had 24 hours of being symptom free. We need your help in following these guidelines so that we can provide the healthiest environment for all the children and staff.

Children will also be expected to wash their hands before coming inside, before meals, and after using the bathroom – please help by reinforcing these basic hygiene lessons at home.

Medical or Dental Emergencies

All the teachers at OMS are certified with CPR and First Aid training. If a child is injured at school and we feel that more than a hug and a band-aid is required, we will contact you. If contact is not made, we will call the child's physician and follow directions as to the necessary actions. Actions may include:

- Call 911 for ambulance service
- Drive child to his/her doctor or the nearest hospital
- Call Poison Control if necessary
- Call Kaiser advice nurse if necessary

Health and Safety (cont.)

Communicable Diseases

If your child has a known communicable disease such as strep throat or measles, you must inform the teachers at OMS as soon as possible. We are required to post notices to warn other parents about the possible exposure of their child to a communicable disease.

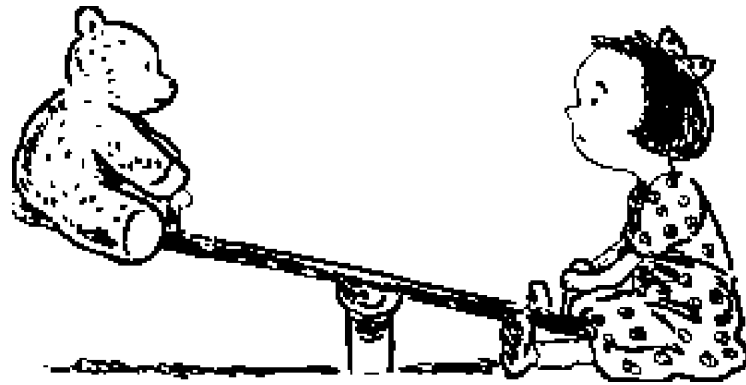
Allergies

Please note on your child's health form if there are any allergies we should be aware of. If your child has food allergies, such as milk or peanuts, please bring it to the attention of the teachers so that we can monitor snacks and treats. You may want to supply us with a small bag of emergency snacks or treats that are okay for your child to eat.

Lice

As with many preschools, we do experience an occasional lice infestation. If this should occur we will ask for your cooperation in following all steps of eradication at an assigned time, so that children do not re-infect each other.

Administrative Policies



Hours of Operation

Regular school hours are from
8:30 AM to 12:00 AM or from
8:30 AM to 3:00 PM.

We offer a Day Care Program
to cover the hours from
7:30 AM to 6:00 PM.

Administrative Policies (cont.)

Tuition and Payments

The yearly tuition is payable in ten equal installments or in one lump sum. The first installment is due May first, and is a non-refundable deposit.

You will receive a bill for the remaining nine installments in your child's work folder, and payment for these bills is due by the tenth of each month. The second installment is due September 1st, the third installment is due October 1st and so forth so that the tenth installment is due May 1st. Additional charges for field trips, special programs like Gymnastics or Music, and day care hours will be included in these invoices. Late payments are subject to a \$10 charge. An overdue balance for two consecutive months is cause for dismissal.

If you believe there is an error you must notify us within 30 days.

Please deliver your payments - by check ONLY - in an envelope to one of the two mailboxes, either on the Fruitvale front porch or by the Dimond school back porch. Please identify the corresponding invoice number on your check.

For your tax records, Oakland Montessori School's
Taxpayer ID # is 942842365.

Day Care Program

Occasional day care\$6.00 per hour.

Please log in the hours you use on the sign up sheet;
you will be billed accordingly.

Administrative Policies (cont.)

Parent Volunteer Hours

All families are required to contribute 20 volunteer hours each year. This is a great way to get to know the teachers and the children that your child spends his day with, and to keep our school looking great. You can meet this requirement in a number of ways – chaperoning field trips, helping out at parties, performing repairs in the classroom, etc. We also organize occasional Parent Work Days to tackle larger projects, like cleaning the basement or painting.

A form will be posted in the classroom for you to track your Parent Volunteer Hours during the year. If you have fewer than 20 Volunteer Hours at the end of the year, you will be billed \$12.50 for each hour not contributed.

Contact Information

Administrative Office: 3625 Fruitvale Avenue
Oakland, CA 94602
(510) 482-3111

Dimond Classroom: (510) 482-3634

Fruitvale Classroom: (510) 482-3148

Makeup Days

Our capacity is limited by Community Care Licensing and Fire Department Occupancy Permit. We may not accept extra children beyond this number.

With the exception explained below we do not offer make-up days for illness, travel, holidays, or appointments.

“Make-up” days/hours are available only to children enrolled in three day programs which include a MOnday when a non-Federal Holiday (Friendship Day, Veteran’s Day, and February 13 of the President’s Day weekend) falls on a Monday. When both school and daycare are closed there can be no make-up.

The days or hours can be made-up, the week of, or the week following the holiday. There will be no exceptions.

Extra Days

Extra days may be permitted only if space is available. You must submit a request in writing or by email a week in advance. If space is available your request will be confirm in writing or email. If your reservations for days are made more than a week in advance they may be canceled up to a week in advance. Unless canceled a week before, you will be billed for extra days whether you use them or not.

If Tanya is not available to respond to your request, please speak to Carmelita, Wendy or Ada.



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