

# Alexandria Montessori School Handbook

Updated: November 2023



Alexandria Montessori  
School

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## **About Our School**

Established in 1981, Alexandria Montessori School initially catered to students aged six through twelve. In 2011, we expanded our offerings to include a preschool class, accommodating children aged three through six. Presently, our school is structured into three classroom environments, each dedicated to specific age groups: 3-6 years, 6-9 years, and 9-12 years.

Our deliberate use of multi-age groupings allows the younger children to benefit from the knowledge and behavior of the older child. Older children benefit as well by developing leadership skills and serving as academic mentors. The older students reinforce their knowledge by assisting the younger students when needed.

Our unique approach ensures that students have the same teacher for three consecutive years. This continuity allows teachers to develop an in-depth understanding of each student, recognizing their strengths and areas for growth. The extended teacher-student relationship also facilitates a seamless academic progression, with both parties aware of their previous accomplishments and challenges from year to year.

## **School Philosophy, Curriculum and Goals**

At Alexandria Montessori School, our purpose is to immerse children in a distinctive educational program rooted in the profound research and philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori. This program is crafted through systematic observations of children's learning behaviors, encompassing their interests, learning styles, and information retention abilities. The Montessori method, derived from these observations, aims to cultivate a unique physical and psychological environment where students are expected to develop intellectually and socially.

Dr. Montessori's philosophy, developed through her observations, research from psychologists and doctors, personal experience, and her beliefs about the potential of the human race, underscores three key aspects:

1. Montessori believed that children have a natural inclination to grow and develop and that they mainly need the opportunity, expectation, and permission to let the natural inclinations develop.
2. Montessori believed that all information should be presented so that children might discover the interrelationship of concept. Every Montessori director/directress (teacher) is expected to emphasize the interrelatedness so that children will not experience their education as covering a series of unrelated subjects but as a continual unfolding of how their world works and makes sense.
3. Montessori believed that just as all information is interrelated, so also are the members of the human race. She believed that all people and countries should realize their financial and political interdependence. This realization will be the key to world peace. Montessori believed that educators have the responsibility to foster this realization in those who offer the only real hope for the future of civilization – the children.

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## **Educational Facilities**

Our facilities include an outdoor play area that encourages exploration, physical activity, and a connection to the environment. Each classroom provides a calm and organized space where students can engage in individual group work. Our classrooms offer spacious areas for hands-on learning and exploration with Montessori materials, allowing students to develop both fine and gross motor skills. We also have a flexible space suitable for a variety of activities, including group exercises and large motor skill development, aligning with the Montessori philosophy of education as an integrated experience.

We believe in providing parents and guardians with the information they need to make informed decisions about their child's education. At Alexandria Montessori School, we undergo regular inspections and evaluations to ensure the quality and safety of our educational programs. These reports are important tools for understanding our school's performance and adherence to safety and quality standards.

To request copies of our school's inspection reports, please contact the school office. We will be more than happy to provide you with relevant documents. Your interest and involvement in our school's quality and safety standards is greatly appreciated.

## **Staff Certification**

In alignment with our commitment to maintaining high standards of educational excellence, Alexandria Montessori School adheres to the following policy for staff certification and classification:

All full-time teaching staff members at AMS are required to meet the certification standards outlined by the State of Ohio. Additionally, they must have successfully completed a Montessori training program accredited by either the American Montessori Society or the Association Montessori Internationale.

## **Instructional Materials**

At Alexandria Montessori School, we employ a diverse array of material to facilitate enriched learning experiences for our students. These materials encompass a comprehensive selection, including those developed by Dr. Montessori herself. The purpose of utilizing such materials is threefold:

1. **Sensorial Introduction to New Concepts:** Our materials aim to provide students with a sensorial introduction to new concepts, ensuring that their initial encounters are grounded in tangible and concrete experiences.
2. **Stimulate Active Imagination:** We strive to capture the active imagination of our students, fostering an environment that encourages creativity and exploration.
3. **Promote Independent Learning:** The materials are thoughtfully designed to promote independent learning, incorporating self-correcting features wherever possible.

In addition to the Montessori materials, we integrate a diverse range of supplementary resources, including teacher-made materials, books, educational games, films, computers, videos, compact discs and other contemporary instructional materials. Furthermore, specialized materials are available to enhance music and art education. This comprehensive approach ensures a well-rounded and engaging educational experience for our students.

## **Special Programs**

In addition to our standard curriculum, Alexandria Montessori School extends its offerings through diverse special programs and external educational resources.

Collaborating with esteemed institutions such as The Dayton Art Institute, Boonshoft Museum of Natural History, Cox Arboretum, Cincinnati Zoo, Aullwood Audobon Center, Victoria Theatre, Sunwatch Indian Village, the MUSE Machine, Dayton Philharmonic, and local artists, AMS provides students with guided field trips and in-school programs.

In the realm of physical education, AMS leverages community partnerships with Ignite Yoga, our local yoga studio to provide weekly yoga classes for our students.

## **Screening Services**

We partner with Montgomery County Public Services for annual vision and hearing screenings to ensure your child's well-being and academic success. These screenings are conducted by trained professionals to catch potential vision and hearing issues early on. They are non-invasive and designed with your child's comfort in mind. If any concerns arise during screenings, we'll promptly inform you and work together to address them. Your child's health and academic success are our top priorities.

## **Special Education Services**

While the goal at Alexandria Montessori School is to provide the best education for all our students, restrictions may arise due to federal and state regulations as well as limited funding and personnel. If your child has a special need or has been placed on an IEP/ISP (Individualized

Education Plan/Service Program), any special needs must be indicated on the student application as well as provide a copy of your child's IEP/ISP and ETR (Evaluation Team Report) must also be submitted at the time of application to determine if Alexandria Montessori School can provide the least restrictive environment for your child.

Please be aware that Alexandria Montessori School does not conduct evaluations for special education. Nonetheless, upon a parent's request, students can undergo a comprehensive evaluation through Centerville City Schools if it becomes necessary.

We recognize the crucial role parents and guardians play in ensuring that students receive the appropriate special education services they require. If, at any point, you have concerns or believe that your child's special education rights are not being adequately addressed, we encourage you to contact our Director, Karen Graham. If you feel your concerns have not been properly resolved, you can also reach out to the following program:

Ohio Department of Children & Youth  
246 North High Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
info@childrenandyouth.ohio.gov

## **Health and Safety**

Our commitment to ensuring the well-being and safety of our students is reflected in the following policies:

- A. Awareness of Communicable Diseases: All staff members are expected to be vigilant and knowledgeable about the symptoms of communicable diseases and conditions.
- B. Exclusion Policy: No child shall attend or remain at the school while in the communicable stage of a disease or condition.
- C. Immunization Records and Health Conditions: Staff members are responsible for maintaining awareness of student's health immunization records, ensuring completeness and currency. Additionally, they must be informed about any special health conditions, such as asthma or allergies, that may necessitate special attention.
- D. Supervised Outside Play: All outdoor activities will be supervised by a staff member to guarantee a safe environment.
- E. Emergency Procedures: Both staff members and students will be well- acquainted with emergency procedures for situations such as fire, tornadoes, or other calamities.
- F. Required Documentation: Each student must have the following on file:
  - Emergency contact form
  - Emergency medical authorization form
- G. Illness protocol: If a child falls ill during school hours, they will be promptly removed from class, and parents will be contacted.
- H. Personal Hygiene: Students are kindly requested to arrive at school clean and well maintained, clean clothing.  
clean clothing in good repair.
- I. Medication Administration: Students requiring medication during school hours, whether prescribed or over the counter, must submit the medication along with written instructions to the AMS office.

## **Admission and Placement**

Alexandria Montessori School provides an educational program for students ages three to twelve. The governing board has adopted the following nondiscrimination policies:

*The school recruits and admits students of any race, color or ethnic origin into all the rights, privileges, programs and activities. The school will not discriminate on the basis of race, color or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, scholarships, loan fee waivers,*

*education programs and athletic/extracurricular activities. In addition, the school is not intended to be an alternative to court or administrative agency ordered or public school district-initiated desegregation.*

*The Alexandria Montessori School will not discriminate on the basis of race, color or ethnic origin in the hiring of its certified and non-certified personnel.*

For admission, students must be at least three years of age by September 30 of the school year, with the only exception being students eligible for an early admission appraisal or special needs students.

Placement into the multi-age level program is determined based on various criteria, including a half or whole-day visit, an interview with a teacher, the student's previous academic experience (especially in Montessori), and performance recorded in available cumulative records. Social maturity is also considered in making placement decisions.

Decisions on acceptance to Alexandria Montessori School for the upcoming school year will be finalized at the beginning of April, with parents notified in mid-April. Therefore, all visits, interviews should ideally be completed by the end of March.

## **Student Evaluation**

To assess the effectiveness of instruction and its alignment with established objectives, the following measures will be employed:

- Observation of the child's engagement in various tasks.
- Examination of the activities the child independently chooses.
- Assessment of the child's participation in group discussions.
- Evaluation of completed assignments.
- Verification of the child's comprehension of prerequisites before introducing new material or steps.
- Maintenance of detailed records documenting academic progress.
- Utilization of standardized tests.

These evaluation procedures will be applied cumulatively to gauge the success of a particular group.

Twice a year, your child's teacher will meet with you to discuss your child's progress. Additionally, students will receive two written academic reports to provide a comprehensive overview of their academic development.

## **Expectations**

At Alexandria Montessori School we hold the following expectations:

### **The Teachers**

- A genuine affinity for children and a joy in their company.
- Professional training and accreditation in the Montessori approach.
- A comprehensive understanding of the developmental nuances and opportunities within the age group they instruct.
- A commitment to treating students as unique individuals through diligent observation and meaningful interaction, thereby discerning their distinct strengths and needs.
- An active willingness to engage in open and constructive communication with parents regarding their children.

### **The Parents**

- The deliberate choice of Montessori education for their children, demonstrating familiarity with the practices and values associated with it, and a strong alignment with these principals.
- A proactive commitment to staying informed about their children's school activities and progress.
- Wholehearted dedication to the comprehensive Montessori program, promoting a holistic educational experience.
- A willingness to engage in regular and open communication with the teachers concerning their child's educational journey.
- Punctuality in dropping off and picking up their children, demonstrating respect for schedules and routines.
- Consistent attendance of their children, ensuring their presence on all school days except in cases of illness.
- Active support and contribution to the Parent Advisory Council by participating in at least one of its committees, fostering a sense of community and collaboration.
- Adhere to the financial responsibilities outlined in their tuition contract, promoting the school's financial stability and operational efficiency.

### **The Students**

- Demonstrated openness to making new friends and trying new ideas.
- Show willingness and capacity to work independently, pursuing personal interests and goals with diligence and self-motivation.
- Work well with teachers and classmates by being helpful and working together.
- Understand that school is a place for doing interesting and important tasks.
- Be willing to be positively assertive in expressing concerns, wants and needs.

## **Code of Conduct**

Our code of conduct revolves around one central theme: respect. Faculty members are expected to respect students, and in turn, students are expected to reciprocate that respect towards both faculty and peers.

Students should come to school prepared to work and learn, respecting the rights of others to enjoy their school experience. It's essential to show respect for property and resolve conflicts without causing harm.

If a student doesn't meet these expectations, our response is focused on redirecting their interests and, when needed, helping them develop cooperation skills through discussions and agreement.

In cases of persistent disruptive behavior, the teacher or school director will contact parents, and the child may need to be taken home from school. A conference will then be arranged with parents to address and resolve the situation collaboratively.

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

We are committed to fostering a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. Our approach to anti-bullying is rooted in a set of principles that guide our staff, students, and parents.

1. AMS staff adheres to a strict policy against any form of physical or psychological harm inflicted by one student upon another.
2. Every student at AMS holds the fundamental right to attend school without fear of harm, contributing to the creating of a secure and nurturing atmosphere.
3. AMS students play a pivotal role in maintaining a respectful community. They are responsible for upholding the rights of their classmates and themselves, reporting any instances of bullying promptly. We encourage parents to inform the school if their child has been involved in such an incident, allowing for swift and appropriate intervention.
4. In the event of a bullying incident, an investigation will be conducted, and an incident report will be completed. Parents of all parties involved will be promptly notified, and a conference will be scheduled. Students engaging in repeated acts of bullying may be subject to consideration for expulsion, in accordance with our school's discipline policy.

Our educational approach places a strong emphasis on instilling values of respect among students, encouraging both kind words and actions. Our curriculum is thoughtfully designed to cultivate self-respect and respect for others. Taking a proactive stance against bullying, we firmly believe that prevention is far more effective than addressing the consequences post-incident.

## **Parent-Teacher Communication**

At Alexandria Montessori School, we emphasize the significance of open and candid communication between parents and teachers promoting the educational and social development of each child. If a parent has concerns related to their child or a faculty member, it is crucial that these concerns are effectively communicated. We encourage you to follow the guidelines and procedures outlined below to facilitate professional and constructive communication:



## **Guidelines for Parent-Teacher Communication**

1. Maintain direct communication with the individuals involved; refrain from involving other staff members or parents as intermediaries and avoid being utilized as an intermediary yourself.
2. Uphold honesty in your communication with all parties involved. Express your concerns, beliefs, and emotions openly and clearly.
3. Foster a climate of kindness and respect in all your interactions.
4. Persist in addressing a concern until it is satisfactorily resolved.

## **Procedures for Parent –Teacher Communication**

1. Initiate contact with the staff member(s) in question via written communication or telephone. Schedule a mutually convenient time for a discussion regarding your concerns. Adhere to the guidelines mentioned above to effectively voice your concerns and work towards resolution.
2. If a satisfactory agreement or resolution is not reached following the initial meeting, please contact the school director to arrange an additional meeting. Once again, ensure that you follow the guidelines above to articulate your concerns and collaboratively seek a resolution.

## **Attendance**

Every day at Alexandria Montessori School holds significance, and regular attendance is a fundamental expectation. We view daily attendance not just as a school requirement but as a valuable life skill. However, we recognize the importance of both physical and emotional health, encouraging students and parents to acknowledge personal needs and respond accordingly. It is not considered admirable for a sick student to attend school.

In the event of a student's absence, parents are required to contact the school office before 10:00 AM to report the absence. If no contact is made by the parent, the school director or secretary may initiate a telephone inquiry about the absence. For patterns of frequent absences, the director will arrange a conference with the parent(s) to discuss potential solutions. Excessive absences, exceeding 10 days, will be reported to the truancy officer of the child's school district unless a reasonable medical explanation is provided.

Being a private school certified by the State of Ohio, we emphasize that our attendance expectations align with those of all certified schools. Therefore, family vacations should be planned when school is not in session, and medical appointments should, whenever possible, be scheduled outside of class times.

While teachers will exert effort to assist students with excused absences in making up lost classroom time, they are not obligated to compensate for unexcused absences from normal school class time.

## **Tardiness**

Punctuality is a key expectation at Alexandria Montessori School, and students are required to arrive on time every day. In the event of tardiness, the student must initially report to the office. Should tardiness become excessive, (more than 10 days) the school will notify the parents. If excessive tardiness continues, the school will notify the truancy officer of the child's home school district.

## **Dress Code**

While Alexandria Montessori School does not enforce a formal dress code, we expect students to adhere to appropriate attire suitable for an academic environment.

Inappropriate clothing includes but is not limited to: short shorts and skirts, tops that expose the stomach, tops revealing the shoulders or back, pants worn below the waistline exposing underwear unless covered by a longer shirt, and shoes that impede comfortable walking or safe outdoor play.

Parents are kindly requested to exercise good judgement in assisting their child in selecting suitable clothing for school. In the event of a dress code violation, parents will be promptly notified. Continued violations will result in the student being sent home.

## **Tuition and Fees**

Alexandria Montessori School offers several payment options to accommodate the financial preferences of our parents. These options include:

1. Payment in full at the beginning of the school year.
2. Two equal payments due in August and January.
3. Ten monthly payments spanning from August through May.

Tuition payments are due on the first of each month unless alternative arrangements have been established with the school's administrative office. Please note that a new tuition contract must be signed each academic year.

For families with multiple children attending AMS, we extend a 10% discount on the tuition of the second and third child.

A late fee of \$5.00 will be assessed for each day that tuition is not paid after the first of the month. Should tuition remain unpaid for 30 days past the due date, the student(s) may not be permitted to return to school until the outstanding balance is settled.

We kindly request that students are picked up promptly at the conclusion of the school day unless prior arrangements for after-school care have been made. A fee will be applied for every 10-minute increment, or part thereof, that a child remains at the school post-dismissal.

In cases where a student departs Alexandria Montessori School before tuition and fees are paid in full, all health and academic records will not be forwarded to the subsequent school of attendance.

until all outstanding payments have been settled. Unpaid fees will be referred to a collection agency.

To secure a place in the classroom for your child(ren), a non-refundable registration fee of \$150.00 is charged each school year. Additionally, a supply fee of \$50.00 is assessed annually to help cover the cost of essential supplies such as paper, notebooks and art materials that are used by the students throughout the academic year.

### **Before and After School Care**

Our Before and After School Care is based on the same expectations that we hold throughout the school day in respect to the individual child's needs as well as the needs of the group.

This program is available on a full time, part time or occasional basis. The cost of the program is \$8.00 per hour or part thereof. Parents will be charged \$15.00 per 10 minutes or part thereof for any student remaining after 6:00 PM. On days school is not in session Before and After School Care will not operate. This includes Parent/Teacher conference days.

The guidelines for all participating are:

1. Parents must notify the school office before their child will be admitted into the Before and After Care program. For the AM session parents must contact the office the previous day; for the PM program parents must call the office no later than 2:30 PM. Parents of regular participants must follow the same guidelines for notifying the school of absences. These guidelines are important to our planning as well as the safety of your children. If you do not contact us before sending your child to the Before or After School program, you will be charged \$5.00 per 15 minutes.
2. We can only accept students at Alexandria Montessori School into this program due to limited space and insurance regulations.
3. We cannot be responsible for lost items, but children may bring toys or games from home, apart from toy guns/weapons, monster/war figures and anything that will make loud noises. There is a time and place for such toys, and we believe this environment is not one of them.
4. We do not provide breakfast for your children during the AM session, but you make sent a snack breakfast and will help them set it up.
5. Our program operates on a tight budget so we will need your payment promptly after you receive your invoice. Your account must be paid within seven days of billing you your child may not continue in the Before and After School program.

Any child/family not following these guidelines will become ineligible for this program.

### **Cumulative Records**

Comprehensive records documenting a student's academic and health history are meticulously maintained in a secure file at the school. These records encompass the student's health information, successfully completed Montessori curriculum components, standardized test scores, and any relevant anecdotal records detailing the child's performance in the Montessori

classroom. Specialized testing records, such as those for vision, hearing, or learning differences, are also included, along with emergency medical forms.

It is imperative to note that these records are treated with the utmost confidentiality. Access is restricted solely to pertinent staff members and a child's parent(s) to ensure the privacy and security of sensitive information.

### **Obtaining School Inspection reports**

We believe in providing parents and guardians with the information they need to make informed decisions about their child's education. At Alexandria Montessori School, we undergo regular inspections and evaluations to ensure the quality and safety of our educational programs. These reports are important tools for understanding our school's performance and adherence to safety and quality standards.

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