



Kindergarten and Elementary Parent Handbook

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| About our School | 3 |
| Montessori Philosophy and Curriculum | 5 |
| Administrative Policies | 6 |
| School Calendar and Daily Schedule | 10 |
| Arrival and Departure and Transportation | 13 |
| Parent Involvement and Communication | 14 |
| Health Policies and Practices | 16 |
| Classroom Policies and Procedures | 20 |

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

WELCOME

Welcome to Grace Montessori Academy! We are glad your family has chosen Grace Montessori to care for your child. We hope parents and children will feel welcome here at all times.

Grace Montessori Academy, in partnership with parents and community, is committed to providing an affordable, quality Montessori program for students of diverse abilities, and economic and cultural backgrounds in Elizabeth City, NC. We embrace the philosophy and educational approach expressed by Dr. Maria Montessori while always keeping ourselves open to new ideas to broaden and enhance our programs. The staff views each child as an individual with a unique background, personality, maturity, and intellect. We encourage a whole family approach at Grace by providing opportunities for parents and staff to work together, share, and to learn from one another .

This handbook has been written to describe our program, goals, policies and the practical details that go into making each day as happy and successful as possible. Please review it and keep it for a reference, as it will answer many questions. Feel free to talk to your child's teacher or director at any time. Once again, **WELCOME!**

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Grace Montessori Academy nurtures a child's love of learning and sense of personal and social responsibility, using a child-centered Montessori philosophy and curriculum. At Grace Montessori, we believe that children can become highly functioning adults if given an environment that encourages all children to become creative, independent, responsible, self-directed and able to make decisions for themselves. At Grace Montessori we strive to "build" children that are physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually strong. In order to achieve this:

We believe that children need a clean, healthy, safe and stimulating environment.

We believe that children will learn cognitive, language, physical and social skills through hands on activities in a classroom environment prepared for their development.. We believe that developmentally appropriate activities need to be planned according to the stages of development that children go through. We want the children to feel confident and secure enough to explore and grow in a stimulating educational and social environment.

We believe that children are all individuals and their uniqueness will be an asset to the group. Each child will have the opportunity to participate in group and individual activities throughout the day. We believe that this will allow them to develop socially, physically, emotionally and intellectually.

We believe that all children have the right to feel good about themselves and it is the responsibility of all teachers to nurture the child's self-esteem.

We believe everyone is entitled to feelings, "good and bad". It is important for people to understand these rather than deny them.

We believe that creativity, self-expression and curiosity are expressions of individuality and should be encouraged to develop in all people.

We believe each child and family are due the respect for personal privacy demanded by professional ethics.

We believe that parents are vital in developing a maximum amount of continuity between home and school so as to permit greater satisfaction with the program for both parent and child.

AFFILIATION INFORMATION

Grace Montessori Academy is registered with the North Carolina Department of Nonpublic Education. Grace Montessori is a private institution with no religious affiliation.

Before and After school License

Grace Montessori Academy is also licensed by the North Carolina Division of Child Development to provide before and aftercare for our enrolled students.

How to obtain information about our child care license:

The North Carolina Division of Child Development makes every effort to provide information parents need to make the best possible child care choices. The Division records a variety of information on regulated facilities that you might find useful in your search, including:

- Sanitation scores
- Complaint investigations
- Visits made by Division staff
- Any administrative actions taken

MEMBERSHIP AND AFFILIATION INFORMATION

We are an American Montessori Society Member School. Our teachers hold Montessori teaching credentials from American Montessori Society and the International Montessori Council which are both accredited programs by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education.

Grace Montessori Academy is not affiliated with any specific religion; we honor the religious beliefs of all our families. We acknowledge the rich and diverse heritage of our school through classroom studies and celebrations of traditional and cultural holidays. In most classrooms the children sing a song of thanks before eating lunch. This is not intended to be religious in nature but allows the children the chance to calm themselves before enjoying the meal.

Grace is a Non-Smoking Campus, please no smoking on our premises.

MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM

“A child’s work,” Dr. Montessori wrote, “is to create the man he will become. An adult works to perfect his environment, but a child works to perfect himself.” Dr. Montessori, an engineer, physician, and an educator, developed an approach to education that would aid the child in his work. The Montessori Method, based on careful observation of and respect for the natural development of the child, has been used in schools around the world for more than 100 years.

The theory behind Montessori education is simple: Children want to learn. From birth to maturity, the child lives in what appears to be a chaotic world. He or she gradually establishes order by learning to distinguish the senses and develop their inner resources. The child who accomplished this becomes a confident, self-assured learner.

The main purpose of a Montessori school is to provide a carefully planned, stimulating environment which will help the child develop an excellent foundation for creative learning. Montessori classrooms provide a prepared environment where children are free to respond to their natural drive to work and learn.

The Montessori apparatus is carefully designed to provide opportunities for the child to explore concrete examples of abstract ideas. It is self-correcting, allowing children to develop their senses and discover concepts under the guidance of a Montessori teacher. Each piece of material teaches a single concept or skill, and is introduced to the child depending upon his interests and abilities. For instance, the younger child develops eye-hand coordination through exercises such as transferring beads from one container to another with tweezers. The older child is interested in more specific learning activities, such as reinforcing multiplication facts using the multiplication board. The children are introduced to these independent learning activities in two ways: discovery and demonstration. The child can discover certain materials on his own or by observing an older child do the work. Other exercises are demonstrated by the teacher who then allows the child to work through the material on his own.

The Montessori approach recognizes that a child is more responsive to certain learning experiences at particular times or “sensitive periods.” Careful observation allows the Montessori-trained teacher to recognize these sensitive periods when a child is ready for a new learning experience. The teacher can then direct the child toward materials that will satisfy his developmental needs. Through their work, the children develop concentration, motivation, persistence, and discipline. Within this framework of order, the children progress at their own pace and rhythm, according to their individual capabilities, during the crucial years of development. The Montessori environment teaches children a positive, “I can do it” attitude that will ensure their future success in all aspects of their life.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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|---|-------|
| Application fee (non-refundable) for returning students | \$20 |
| Application fee (non refundable) for new students | \$100 |
| Matriculation fee, all students | \$425 |

TUITION

The yearly tuition for the Kindergarten and Elementary programs is \$6168. **A one year tuition contract with Grace Montessori Academy, Inc is required for the Kindergarten and Elementary programs.**

Tuition can be paid \$6168 yearly (due the Friday before attendance) or \$616.80 monthly. Monthly tuition is due by 5:30pm on the first of each month. Automatic bank draft through SmartCare is the preferred method of payment. **Late payments will be charged a \$10 per day late fee.**

If default is made on any payments covered in the tuition contract, Grace Montessori Academy, Inc. reserves the right to dismiss the child until all financial obligations have been met, with reinstatement only if space is available and if account is paid in full. If the parent/guardian removes their enrolled child, they are still financially responsible for all tuition in full until May 26, 2023. There will absolutely be no refunds.

In the event the parent/guardian fails to pay for tuition, that party will be turned over to a collection agency. Payment fees will continue to build up at the daily rate until that balance is paid in full. The responsible party will be accountable for any costs related to the collection of fees, including – but not limited to attorney's fees and court costs. School records will not be released until payment is made in full.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Students must be pre-enrolled in before school and after school care in order to attend and drop-in care is not available. The weekly fee for before school and after school care is \$40. This fee will be billed on Friday and must be paid by no later than Monday at 5:30pm.

Late pickup rate: If a child who is not enrolled in after care has not been picked up by 2:45pm they will go to after care and will be charged the late pick up rate. **\$25.00 per 15 minutes per child (regardless of the number of children)** due in cash at time of pick-up.

NSF CHECKS AND DENIED CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS

If a check is returned for non-sufficient funds or your credit card payment was denied, you will be required to pay a \$35.00 fee. This is the amount the bank charges for returned items, and any other fee that may incur as a result of the returned check. Enrollment will be immediately stopped until full payment and all charges have been made in **cash only**. If two NSF checks/denied Credit Card payments are received from you, you will be required to pay in cash or by money-orders weekly.

NC OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP AND DISABILITIES GRANT

Grace Montessori Academy participates in the North Carolina Opportunity Scholarship and the Disabilities Grant. The Opportunity Scholarship Program provides tuition assistance of up to \$6168 per year for awarded students who enroll in a participating nonpublic school. This program is income-based. For more information on eligibility requirements, visit <http://www.ncseaa.edu/OSG.htm>. The Disabilities Grant Program provides assistance of up to \$8,000 per year for awarded students who enroll in a participating nonpublic school. This program is for students with disabilities. For more information on eligibility requirements, visit <http://www.ncseaa.edu/CDSG.htm>. Applications for priority consideration for the following school year typically begins January 31st and closes March 1st.

CLASS GROUPS

Montessori classrooms are composed of children within a three-year age span. Multi-age classrooms foster a sense of collaboration and mentoring among students. Older students are encouraged to be role models for younger ones. The usual age divisions are 3 – 6 years for Primary, 6 – 9 years for Lower Elementary, and 9 – 12 years for Upper Elementary. Before moving a child to an older age grouping we consider the child's social and psychological needs as important as his/her academic needs.

The Kindergarten program will be in a separate class from Primary for the 2022-2023 school year. The Kindergarten program is open to children 5 – 6 years of age. Grace Montessori Academy will consider children for enrollment in Kindergarten that turn 5 years of age after August 31st on an individual basis, but will not accept children with a birthdate after September 15th. Considerations include but are not limited to prior enrollment in the Primary classroom or other similar academic preschool program, the social and emotional maturity of the child, and readiness for the structure of the Kindergarten work day.

The Elementary classroom is a learning community that is open to children 6 – 12 years of age or those in 1st – 6th grade; combining Lower and Upper Elementary.

ENROLLMENT AND TERMINATION

Grace Montessori Academy welcomes students of any race, religion, color, national, or ethnic origin and does not discriminate in the administration of its educational or admissions policies. The program accepts children with special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided for the child and we have enough staff to accommodate all of the children's needs. GMA does reserve the right to deny enrollment of a child/ren if deemed appropriate. Additionally, GMA has the right to terminate enrollment at any time if deemed appropriate.

All new children will be cared for on a two-week trial period beginning on your child's first actual day of enrollment. This gives the child time to adjust to the program. The goal of Grace Montessori Academy is to ensure an environment that is safe, calm, and conducive to learning. While most children thrive, not all children are successful in our program. Termination from GMA becomes necessary due to misbehavior, delinquent payments, etc. No notice will be required if enrollment is terminated. **The full yearly tuition is due even if enrollment is terminated by a parent and there will absolutely be no refunds including, but not limited to, for inclement weather closures, illness including closure due to quarantining for COVID-19, vacation, acts of god, government shutdowns, or any other reasons.**

THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

- 1. PRE-REGISTER YOU CHILD:** Pre-register your child on our website. This will add your child to our waiting list as there is a list for his/her age group.
- 2. PARENT VISIT AND OBSERVATION:** The admissions process begins with a parent visit. Parents tour the school, observe a classroom in session, and meet with the Director. This allows prospective parents and the school representative to become acquainted with each other and to share pertinent information ensuring a good match between the family and Grace Montessori.
- 3. APPLICATION:** Parents must submit a completed Application for Enrollment form and a Release of School Records form allowing Grace Montessori Academy to obtain records from the students previous/current schools accompanied by a \$20 nonrefundable application fee as promptly as possible after the classroom observation.
- 4. STUDENT CLASSROOM VISIT :** Before children enroll in the Kindergarten or Elementary programs they must come in for a visit. Children will explore the classroom and meet with the Director to affirm if the Montessori Method is a good fit for your child.

Priority re-enrollment in the program for the following school year will be available for current students beginning February 1st and ending March 1st. Beginning March 1st new student applications will be accepted.

CHILDREN'S RECORDS

Parents/Guardians shall fill out and turn in all enrollment and medical forms. These forms are needed one week prior to the child's attendance. An up-to-date immunization record will be requested at the time of enrollment and prior to the start of services. If the Child Health Assessment and immunizations are not supplied in a timely manner, the provider will refuse services until this request is met. Emergency information on the enrollment form must be complete, leaving no blanks, and must be updated as information changes. In addition to the above, we must receive a copy of a birth certificate. It is the parent's responsibility to keep all forms updated with all necessary telephone numbers and any new information pertinent to their child's well-being.

PERSONNEL POLICY

Grace extensively interviews all potential staff, follows through with contacting their reference and notifies all staff that there is a required 90 day probationary period. Grace meets with its staff on a regular basis for verbal evaluations and also conducts annual evaluations. We also utilize our Professional Development Days as a way to train, brainstorm and effectively

All staff (volunteer and paid) who have any contact with the child/ren will have required health assessments, a public records check for history of conviction of crime, and be oriented to the program's policies. They will have current training in First Aid and CPR. Continued education will be maintained and kept in a personnel folder for each staff member.

We welcome and encourage communication with our parents. Please feel free to contact us at any time via phone, email jen@gracemontessoriacademy.com or face to face. We will also happily make an appointment to be able to speak with both the Director and your child's teacher to discuss your concerns. We understand the importance of objective evaluations of our Administrative staff, our teachers and our program and we welcome any information that will help us grow in a positive manner! Grace abides by the requirements of the North Carolina Department of Nonpublic Education, NCDHHS Childcare Division Standards for the Before and After school program.

Grace is a private corporation and is responsible for all operational and fiscal management aspects of the building along with the daily operations of Grace Montessori Academy.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

To help the provider better understand the child's needs, the parent/guardian will be asked to complete a "Special Care Plan" in agreement with the child's health provider. The program will attempt to accommodate children with special needs consistent with the

requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If the program is unable to accommodate the needs as defined by the child's health care provider or the Individual Family Service Plan/Individual Educational Plan without posing an undue burden as defined by federal law, the provider will work with the parent or guardian to find a suitable environment for the child.

SCHOOL CALENDAR AND DAILY SCHEDULE

2022-2023 CALENDAR

The Academic School Year for 2022-2023 will begin on August 22, 2022 and end on May 26, 2023 for Kindergarten and Elementary students. Please note the following dates that school will be closed or have an early release for the 2022-2023 school year. It is your responsibility to arrange back-up child care on these dates.

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| August 22th | First Day of School Kindergarten and Elementary |
| August 26th | EARLY RELEASE at Noon |
| September 2nd | CLOSED for Professional Development |
| September 5th | CLOSED for Labor Day |
| October 14th | CLOSED for Professional Development |
| October 31st | EARLY RELEASE at Noon |
| November 10th | CLOSED for Professional Development |
| November 11th | CLOSED for Veterans Day |
| November 23–25 | CLOSED for Thanksgiving Holiday |
| December 21st | Early Release at Noon |
| December 22– 31 | CLOSED for Winter Break |
| January 2nd | CLOSED for New Year's Day |
| January 16th | CLOSED for Martin Luther King Jr. Day |
| February 17th | CLOSED for <u>Professional Development</u> |
| February 20th | CLOSED for Presidents' Day |
| March 17th | CLOSED for Professional Development |
| April 7th – April 14th | CLOSED for Spring Break |
| May 26th | Last Day of School |

All students in grades three and higher will be given the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills during week of May 8th. No absences will be allowed.

OTHER CLOSINGS

In the case of weather conditions, the facility will remain open until the weather worsens. During **extreme** weather conditions, the facility will usually follow the county school closings. If the county school is closed or delayed, please call the school, check our FB account or read your email from Transparent Classroom before bringing your child. GMA will not always follow the schools closings and delays. It will be determined by the director according to the severity of weather and road conditions. Parents must prepare themselves to pick up children when these conditions occur. We will announce any closings through email and we will continually update our FB Page as needed.

GMA reserves the right to notify parents of vacation, training days or leave two weeks in advance. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make other arrangements for child care.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Hours of Operations

School day is **8:15 am – 2:45 pm**, Monday through Friday.

The Montessori morning work period will begin promptly at 8:15.

Before school care is 7:00 am – 8:15 and After school care is 2:45 pm – 5:30 pm

The daily schedule for the Kindergarten and Elementary classrooms will be provided to parents before the start of the first day of school. The schedule is subject to change based on the needs of the classroom and students.

ABSENCES

Kindergarten and Elementary student may not miss more than 20 academic days during a school year. Frequent absences impede children's academic progress and cause children to miss important experiences. Unless otherwise approved by the Director, students who exceed these guidelines may be withdrawn from GMA, lose preferred enrollment status, and/or not advance to the next level. This policy allows us to do all we can to ensure that each child grows and learns to his/her potential. Absences and excessive tardiness will be noted on all forwarded records.

Please notify the office and your child's teacher in advance of any planned absence. To report a daily absence or tardy for illness or other unexpected event please call the school no later than 8:15 am on the day of the absence.

Payment ensures placement for your child is held. A child withdrawn due to illness, vacation, acts of god, government shutdowns, or any other reasons will lose his or her current and future space unless tuition payments are continued during the absence period.

TARDINESS

All children must arrive by 8:15am to appropriately participate in the Montessori Work Day. The Kindergarten and Elementary Work Period begins at 8:15 am. A student who arrives after 8:30am will be marked tardy. If you know your child will be late, please give us notice.

Children arriving beyond 8:45am without prior notification will not be accepted for the day. Please understand that this is a school and it is disruptive for both the classroom and your child's schedule.

ARRIVAL, DEPARTURE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Parents are responsible for providing or arranging for transportation for their child to and from school.

ARRIVAL

Grace Montessori Academy opens each weekday at 7:00am for before school care and at 8:15am for the school day. **Grace Montessori's cut-off time for arrival is no later than 8:15am. Children arriving beyond 8:45am without prior notification will not be accepted for the day.**

Kindergarten students should be escorted to the classroom door or playground door.

Elementary students may be dropped off at the front door and received by a teacher. Do not allow your elementary child to exit your vehicle if a teacher is not at the door to greet him/her. As part of our efforts to encourage independence, we ask that you take the time to hug & kiss your child outside the classroom door. The teacher/assistant will welcome your child into the classroom and assist them in putting their belongings away.

Parents are required to check their child in/out each day. **During the COVID-19 pandemic teachers will sign students in/out each day.**

DEPARTURE

Students that are enrolled for the school day only must be promptly picked up at 2:45pm. Aftercare ends at 5:30pm. Children are to be picked up at the agreed time. Students that are picked up at 2:45pm will be escorted by a teacher to the front door. Parents that pick up from aftercare should wait at the classroom door for their child to be dismissed by a teacher. Parents should always make the staff aware that the child is leaving so that he/she can be checked out. If you are going to be late you need to call the school so that the child does not feel abandoned. **\$25.00 per 15 minutes per child (regardless of the number of children)** will be due in cash at time of pick-up or before child can return. If your child is picked up after the agreed upon pick up 5:30 more than 2x, we will terminate enrollment effective immediately.

If someone other than persons on the "Authorized Pick-Up list" is to pick up your child a written, signed note from the parent should be given to the teacher and a call to the school from the parent. A valid picture identification will be required and a copy will be placed in the child's folder.

PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

Active parent involvement is an integral part of an effective school program. Grace Montessori families take an active role in their child's education. From helping students apply lessons learned in the classroom at home, to participating in events, fundraisers, and school activities, our parents are excited to help each child reach his or her personal best day after day and grow into themselves as young adults.

Besides the obvious benefits of shared communication and direct support of the functioning of the school, your interest in the school shows your child that they hold an important place in your lives and that you value his/her accomplishments at school. Parents are encouraged to visit, observe, and participate in all of their child's activities.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Parents are welcome and encouraged to observe their child's class. When parents are present, children must still follow the guidelines of the facility. Appointments for observations can be made with the Director. Please notify the provider of your presence immediately upon entering the premises. If your presence in the classroom is deemed disruptive, we will ask you to observe outside the classroom through the windows located in the hallway. Also, we ask that you not take pictures of the classroom or students by camera or by camera phone. We have to respect the privacy of all of the children in the classrooms.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic parent observations inside the classrooms will not be permitted until further notice.

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Parents and teachers need to have open communication. We will be utilizing Transparent Classroom to send classroom announcements, share photos and student progress. We will also share classroom photos and information on our Facebook page.

If you have a question or concern that needs to be addressed regarding your child you may speak with the teacher upon drop off or send a note to pass along brief information. Please be mindful that the teacher's attention must be on the students during the school day. If the issue requires more lengthy or private discussion it will be necessary to schedule a meeting at another time. Please contact the classroom teacher through email, a phone call, or Transparent Classroom to arrange a mutually convenient time to talk.

At Grace Montessori, we have an open door policy. This means that I want children, families and staff to feel that they can come to me at any time with questions or concerns. I feel that talking and listening with respect promotes a positive environment. If there are any issues or concerns please talk with the teacher first and if you are not satisfied then don't hesitate to bring it to myself or the Assistant Director.

Grace Montessori is a Cell-Phone Free School. Please leave your cell phone in your car or on silent while in our school. What your child or their teacher has to say to you is important, please be respectful of both.

PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCES

We will be observing your child throughout the year to assess their development physically, emotionally, socially, cognitively, creatively, and verbally. Parent-Teacher Conferences are held two times during the school year for Kindergarten and Elementary students.

A conference can be requested at any time by either the parent or teacher. If you have something to discuss in length with the teacher please make an appointment, since it is necessary for the teacher to devote their time during their day to the children.

Evaluations

Progress reports will be issued three times during the school year in the Kindergarten and Elementary classes.

The Department of Nonpublic Education requires that all students in 3rd and 6th grades be given an approved standardized test each school year. In addition, the statute which governs the K-12 Opportunity Scholarship, Disabilities Grant, and Education Savings Account programs requires that all nonpublic schools submit test results for all scholarship and grant students in grades three and higher. All students in grades three and higher will take the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills during the week of May 3rd.

PARENT NIGHTS

Parent Nights are held at different times during the year. Parent Nights focus on different aspects of Montessori education and child development. These meetings are an excellent chance for you to deepen your knowledge of how your child learns. This is also a time to meet the parents of your child's classmates.

HEALTH POLICIES AND PRACTICES

EXCLUSION FROM CHILDCARE DUE TO ILLNESS

You are the best judge of your child's health and we trust you will not bring a sick child to school. If in the opinion of the staff or director, your child is sick we will call you to come and pick up your child. **Symptoms of COVID-19 will require that your child cannot return to school until symptom free for 72 hours without the aid of medication. This includes if the child has a fever of 100.4 and above. Please see the COVID-19 Handbook Addendum for details about symptoms, classroom policies and procedures, and criteria to return to school after illness.**

The following criteria will be considered in determining if your child must go home and cannot return to school until symptom free for 24 hours without the aid of medication.

- Symptoms of Measles, Mumps, Chicken pox, Hepatitis, Strep Infections, Scabies
- Head lice, Ringworm, Scarlet Fever, Hand, Foot & Mouth
- Discharge from ears or complaint of pain in ear(s)
- Pink Eye
- Any visible rash or skin source with suspicion of communicable nature.

Any child whose illness required that the child be sent home shall be provided appropriate attention until the ill child's parent or guardian arrives to pick up the child. You are required to pick up your child within one hour of notification and sign our illness form. The child shall be provided separate care apart from the other children until the parent arrives if available. If your child is sent home due to an illness, he/she cannot return to the school until they have been symptom free for 24hrs without medication.

While we understand that parents have to work, please do not medicate your child to reduce their fever prior to dropping them off at school. If they require medication to reduce the fever, they need to stay home as to not infect the other children at the school.

It is your responsibility to notify the center if your child has a communicable disease, such as; measles, mumps, chicken pox, head lice, etc. A child may be readmitted without a physician's note if a period of time equal to the longest incubation period of the disease as specified by the Department of Health and Social Services and the Centers for Disease Control. In the case of parasitic infestation, a child is readmitted when all evidence of the infestation is gone. This is determined by the director or assistant director before the child can enter the classroom.

Families of children who may have been exposed to a child with a communicable disease or reportable condition will be informed about the exposure according to the recommendations of Albemarle Regional Health Services.

Minor injuries will be treated with soap, water, ice and bandages. Should there be a serious accident, parents or other persons listed on emergency form will be contacted. If no one can be reached, we will call the physician you have listed or 911 if necessary.

***If your child has a contagious infection, written notification from his/her physician will be required before returning to care.**

HANDWASHING

Hand washing is the single most important way to prevent the occurrence and spread of illness in the children and the staff. Signs will be posted at each sink to show the steps to follow. The school shall ensure that staff and children are instructed in, and monitored frequently on the use of running water, soap, and single-use or disposable towels in hand washing. Children will be washing their hands for at least 20 seconds upon entering the classroom, when returning to the classroom from outdoor play, before and after using a shared classroom material, and before and after meals.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

All medications will be kept in locked storage. This includes topical medications, allergy medicine, sunscreen, eye drops, and cough medicine. If you need a form to complete, please notify the provider. All unused medicines shall be returned to the parent. Medication permission forms will be kept in the child's record. We will not administer fever reducing medication.

Types of medication permission slips include:

1. Prescription Medication Permission Form
2. Over-The-Counter Medication Permission Form
3. Permission Form for Asthma and Allergic Reactions
4. Sunscreen and Bug Spray Permission Form

ALLERGIES

All allergies must be listed on the registration form. I will accommodate your child's diet, if there is an allergy to a particular food item, but we **must have a diet statement from a certified health professional.**

SAFETY

OUTDOOR SAFETY POLICY

No child will be left unsupervised while attending the program. The teacher will directly supervise children by sight and hearing at all times. The director will conduct monthly inspections of the facility for hazards. The results of the inspections will be reviewed to arrange for correction of hazardous conditions identified. Written reports of inspections will be kept in the program files. All potentially toxic materials such as pesticides, toxic cleaning materials, aerosol cans, and poisons will be kept inaccessible to the children.

All children are required to wear closed-toed shoes with a back on the playground.

Please be aware that the staff members who are on the playground before and after school, and at lunch time, are there to supervise the children. For safety reasons, this is not the place for conversations. If you need to talk to your child's teacher please make an appointment.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING PROCEDURES

Any suspected abuse or neglect will be immediately reported to the child protective services agency no matter where the abuse might have occurred. We will follow the guidance of the child protective agency regarding notification of the parent/legal guardian. Staff members that are accused of child abuse will be suspended or given leave without pay pending investigation of the accusation. However, no accusation or affirmation of guilt will be made until the investigation is complete. Caregivers found guilty will be summarily dismissed. Each complaint will be submitted to the Division of Child Development within 24 hours. Department of Social Services: 252-338-2126

Division of Child Development: 1-800-859-0829

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES AND INJURIES

In the event of an emergency, established procedures will be followed to ensure prompt action to the emergency. Emergency situations will include but are not limited to lost or missing children, injuries or illness of children requiring medical or dental care, serious illness, hospitalization, and death of a child or staff member.

First aid kits will be locked and inaccessible to children, and will be restocked to maintain the supply of items. The kit will be taken on field trips and during any transportation. In the event your child should suffer an injury while at school, a record will be kept by the school. You will be notified of the injury and asked to sign a notification of injury. Please alert us to any injuries received elsewhere.

The telephone numbers of the Fire Department, Police Department, and Hospital, EMS, and Poison control will be posted by each working phone. Emergency contact information for each child and staff will be kept readily available and updated regularly.

OTHER EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Other emergency situations will include but are not limited to evacuations due to fire, explosion, power failures, and closings due to snow/storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, or other natural catastrophes. During these situations, should it be necessary to evacuate the facility, child: staff ratios will be maintained, and the children will be evacuated to the local designated shelter. The teacher will carry attendance and emergency contact information from the facility to the location where evacuees will gather and compare attendance at the shelter to the attendance sheet to be sure no children/staff have been left behind. A final "sweep" of all areas accessible to children will be conducted before the last person leaves the facility. Families will be notified by phone or local radio/television stations. Parents/Guardians should be prepared to pick up their child within one hour of the emergency situation or send someone on the emergency contact list. ***It is essential that emergency names, telephone numbers and work information be current and accurate.***

Evacuation drills will be held monthly. The timing of the drills will be varied to include early morning and meal times. Documentation will be maintained in the facility records for review by the licensing consultant. Fire exit plans are posted in the facility.

HAZARDS

Please do not allow your child to bring gum, hard candy, or toys/small items to school.

CLASSROOM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

MEALS

Please be sure that your child has a nutritious breakfast **before** arriving for school each day.

LUNCH

Grace Montessori Academy requires that parents provide a daily lunch for their child. We recommend that parents teach and encourage their child to assist with packing his/her lunch at home. When possible, send food in reusable containers. All containers and food packages must be labeled with the child's name and the date. Food that contains meat, dairy or rice must be labeled so that it can be easily found & put in the refrigerator. A microwave is available in the classroom to warm foods for no more than 2 minutes or put hot foods in a thermos labeled "HOT".

Please send a nutritious, balanced lunch for your child each day. Send foods that you know your child enjoys. Limit the amount of dessert. **Candy, gum, and soft drinks are not allowed.** They will be sent home to be enjoyed.

SNACK

All students will have the opportunity to have a snack during the morning work period. Please send a snack that is healthy and filling such as those with greater protein and avoid dessert items for snack. If your child stays for aftercare they will also have a snack at 3:00pm

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Each child will have his/ her own storage for jackets, extra clothes, work materials and treasured art projects. Please check your Kindergarten child's cubby daily for items that do not need to remain at school or for any notes from the teachers. Children should leave personal belongings at home including toys, jewelry, and trinkets. The materials in the classroom are for the use of all the children. Please do not bring backpacks.

BIRTHDAYS

It is our custom to celebrate this most important day for your child. The Kindergarten and Elementary classes celebrate birthdays using a Montessori tradition, "The Celebration of Life". Parents are invited to come to participate in the classroom celebration in the afternoon on the child's birthday or another arranged day. Treats are not shared in the classroom for birthdays. Please notify your child's teacher if you would like to participate in your child's

birthday celebration. You may put birthday party invitations and notes in the children's cubbies, but please notify the teacher before doing so.

HOLIDAYS

Grace Montessori Academy is fortunate to have children of diversified racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds. The rituals and special foods associated with each group's celebration of the holidays provide valuable learning experiences for the children. Parents are welcome to arrange a holiday celebration with their child's teacher.

FIELD TRIPS

At the beginning of the school year parents sign a blanket permission slip for field trips to local museums, playgrounds, library, gym and other local places for the year. You will be notified of field trips through email, the class newsletter, and will be given a permission slip for any field trip locations not listed on the blanket permission slip.

When chaperoning a trip where direct supervision is not needed during the program, parents should model appropriate behavior: avoid cell phone use in view of the children (unless taking pictures) and ensure that social conversation is conducted away from the group where it will not distract from the program. When parents go on field trips, your own children often need your careful guidance even more, being uncertain who is in charge of them. When supervising your own children, please do not wait for the teacher to act if you are closer to a situation needing adult intervention. To prevent lost, missing children, the staff will count children frequently while on a field trip. The staff will not make any child's name visible to a stranger who might use the child's name to lure the child from the group.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

“To let the child do as he likes when he has not yet developed any powers of control, is to betray the idea of freedom,” – Maria Montessori

At Grace Montessori Academy it is our goal to promote each child's physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being and growth. The staff believes that self-discipline is the desired goal of all people. To this end, the staff provides the children with clear examples of positive behavior and how to act in specific situations through Grace and Courtesy lessons. We believe that prevention of inappropriate behavior, based on clear expectations, is best. Expectations are developed and discussed with students in an age - appropriate manner.

We, as a staff, do not believe in threats of reward or punishment. Natural and logical consequence is used as a means of helping the child to develop inner limits. If a child is

disruptive or endangers himself or others, we will stop that child. Expectations will be verbally clarified. If these measures should not work and if a child should continue to lack self-control, a teacher will separate the child from the group, but continue to supervise him/her until he/she regains control to resume normal class activity. If a persistent breakdown occurs, parents will be notified. If a child should show some of the behaviors below on a continual basis and it cannot be modified, we may request that the child leave the program. Such behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Any type of bullying (verbal or physical)
- Constant over activity, undirected toward any specific activity
- Inability or refusal to follow even simple instructions or requests
- Uncontrolled emotional state when spoken to or unable to calm oneself
- Being destructive to the room and the materials
- Physical aggression towards other children, staff or danger to self
- Being unable to separate from the parents after one month of attendance
- The first biting incident

When a child demonstrates an inability to respond appropriately to ordinary discipline the following steps will be:

1. Parent will be notified and the teacher and Head of School will meet with the child's parents to discuss concerns.
2. Next offense- Parents will be notified and met with to discuss concerns. Parents will be called to remove the student from school immediately for that day.
3. Last offense- Expulsion from school

The Director of the school reserves the right to review each situation and respond to the needs of our students and staff and serve their best interests while preserving the integrity of our programs.



**PARENTAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF
PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK
AND CHILD CARE LAW**

I have received a Parent/Student Handbook from Grace Montessori Academy, Inc. I have read and understand what is expected of me as a parent, of my child as a student, and Grace Montessori as my child's school. I agree to do my part in helping my child to transition into this Montessori program, making it the best it can be for my child, by cooperating with the teachers and Director. I agree to be supportive with their teacher concerning positive or negative situations, positive verbal promotion in the community, or my financial support in order to keep the school in operation for the future. I have also received a summary of NC Child Care Law and Rules with an opportunity to review and ask questions.

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Director Signature

Date

Grace Montessori School 2022-2023

COVID-19 POLICY ADDENDUM to the Parent Handbook

The health and safety of our students is always of our utmost concern at Grace Montessori Academy. During this time of facing a global COVID-19 pandemic we are responding to the need to be even more vigilant about practices to minimize the risk of exposure to illness. We will be following requirements and recommendations from the Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Strong NC, and Albemarle Regional Health Services. All policies are subject to change based on the requirements and recommendations. Please review the following information about COVID-19, classroom policies and procedures, criteria to return to school when exposed, experiencing symptoms, or diagnosed with COVID-19.

Transmission and Symptoms of COVID-19

COVID-19 is mostly spread by respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze. It is thought that the virus may spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose or mouth, causing infection. Therefore, personal prevention practices (such as handwashing and staying home when sick) and environmental cleaning and disinfection are important principles to help lower the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread in child care settings.

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with COVID-19 have reported a wide range of specific and non-specific symptoms of COVID-19.

People with these symptoms may have COVID-19 (but this list does not include all possible symptoms):

| | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever of 100.5 or greater• Shortness of• New loss of taste or smell• Congestion or runny nose• Nausea or vomiting• New cough | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fatigue• Muscle or body aches• Sore throat• Headache• Diarrhea• Unexplained Rash |
|---|---|

CLASSROOM COVID-19 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Parents are expected to immediately report:
 - Any travel
 - Exposure to anyone with COVID-19 symptoms
 - A positive COVID-19 test result
- Parents will comply with the return to school guidelines if exposed, experiencing symptoms, or tests positive for COVID-19.
- Please see the arrival and departure procedures outlined in the Parent Handbook. Parents will not be permitted to enter the classroom.
- Handwashing frequency will increase. Students will wash hands upon entering the classroom, before and after meals, when returning to the classroom from outside, after using the bathroom, blowing nose, etc.
- We will be increasing the frequency of sanitizing.
- We will increase frequency of high touch areas throughout the day such as door knobs, light switches, tables, and bathrooms. We will sanitize the entire classroom at the end of the day as well.

GRACE MONTESSORI ACADEMY
PARENT HANDBOOK COVID-19 POLICY ADDENDUM
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have received a Parent Handbook Covid-19 Policy Addendum.

I understand that this policy is subject to change per the NC Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Strong NC, and Albemarle Regional Health Services.

I acknowledge the contagious nature of the Coronavirus/COVID-19.

I further acknowledge that Grace Montessori Academy cannot guarantee that myself or my child will not become infected with the Coronavirus/Covid-19.

I agree to comply with all set procedures to reduce the spread while on Grace Montessori Academy property and while my child is enrolled in the childcare center/school.

I am fully and personally responsible for my own safety and actions while and during my participation or my child's participation/enrollment and I recognize that I may be and/or my child may be at risk of contracting COVID-19. With full knowledge of the risks involved, I hereby release, waive, discharge Grace Montessori Academy, its board, officers, independent contractors, affiliates, employees, representatives, successors, and assigns from any and all liabilities, claims, demands, actions, and causes of action whatsoever, directly or indirectly arising out of or related to any loss, damage, injury, or death, that may be sustained by me or my child related to COVID-19 while participating in any activity while in, on, or around the premises or while using the facilities that may lead to unintentional exposure or harm due to COVID-19.

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Director Signature

Date

2022 - 2023 Kindergarten and Elementary IMPORTANT DATES

AUGUST

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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SEPTEMBER

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OCTOBER

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JANUARY

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FEBRUARY

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JULY

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- First and Last Days of School Year
- Grace Montessori Academy CLOSED for Holiday
- Grace Montessori Academy CLOSED for Professional Development
- Grace Montessori Academy Early CLOSING at NOON
- End of Progress Report Period/Progress Reports Sent
- Parent and Teacher Conferences

August 2022

First Day of School Kindergarten and Elementary 8/22
 Early RELEASE at NOON 8/26

September 2022

CLOSED for Professional Development 9/2
 CLOSED for Labor Day 9/5

October 2022

CLOSED for Professional Development 10/14
 Fall Interim Parent Conferences 10/18-10/20
 Early RELEASE at NOON 10/31

November 2022

CLOSED for Professional Development 11/10
 CLOSED for Veterans DAY 11/11
 End of Fall Progress Report Period 11/22
 CLOSED for Thanksgiving Holiday 11/23-11/25

December 2022

Fall Progress Reports 12/2
 Early RELEASE at NOON 12/21
 CLOSED Winter Break 12/22-12/30

January 2023

CLOSED Winter Break 1/2
 CLOSED for Martin Luther King Jr. Day 1/16

February 2023

CLOSED for Professional Development 2/17
 CLOSED for Presidents' Day 2/20

March 2023

End of Winter Progress Report Period 3/16
 CLOSED for Professional Development 3/17
 Spring Parent Conferences 3/21-3/23
 Winter Progress Reports Sent 3/24

April 2023

CLOSED for Spring Break 4/7-4/14

May 2023

Last Day of School 5/26
 CLOSED for Memorial Day 5/29
 CLOSED for Summer Break 5/30-5/31

June 2023

Final Progress Reports 6/2
 Closed for Summer Break 6/1 - 6/2