



Student/Parent Handbook

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Accredited by the Canadian Council of Montessori Administrators (CCMA)

Member of the Ottawa Independent Schools Athletic Association (OISAA)

Licensed by the Ministry of Education (CCEYA)

OMS Montessori – a non-profit organization

OMS Vision is a peaceful, global community where individuals are joyfully engaged in contributing to the well being of all life.

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A Decalogue

BY DR. MARIA MONTESSORI

1. Never touch the child unless invited by him (in some form or the other).
2. Never speak ill of the child in his presence or absence.
3. Concentrate on strengthening and helping the development of what is good in the child so that its presence may leave less and less space for evil.
4. Be active in preparing the environment. Take meticulous and constant care of it. Help the child establish constructive relations with it. Show the proper place where the means of development are kept and demonstrate their proper use.
5. Be ever ready to answer the call of the child who stands in need of you and always listen and respond to the child who appeals to you.
6. Respect the child who makes a mistake and can then or later correct himself but stop firmly and immediately any misuse of the environment and any action, which endangers the child, his development, or others.
7. Respect the child who takes rest or watches others working or ponders over what he himself has done or will do. Neither call him, nor force him to other forms of activity.
8. Help those who are in search of activity and cannot find it.
9. Be untiring in repeating presentations to the child who refused them earlier, in helping the child acquire what is not yet his own and overcome imperfections. Do this by animating the environment with care, with restraint and silence, with mild words and loving presence. Make your ready presence felt to the child who searches and hide from the child who has found.
10. Always treat the child with the best of good manners and offer him the best you have in yourself and at your disposal.

OMS Montessori Peace, Diversity & Inclusion Education Statement

“The needs of humankind are universal. Our means of meeting them create the richness and diversity of the planet. The Montessori child should come to relish the texture of that diversity.”

-Maria Montessori

We are a growing community of learners and guides that follow the teachings of Maria Montessori and her strong belief in peace education as a pivotal force in the development of the child. Maria Montessori believed that education should be more than a means to prepare for adulthood. It should be an avenue for self-fulfillment and bring greater peace and harmony into a complex world.

At OMS Montessori, we seek to fulfill Maria Montessori's goal in peace education by promoting a peaceful, inclusive, and diverse environment for optimal development. A peaceful world comes through understanding and appreciating that our distinctness creates a wonderful rich tapestry in which all humans can thrive. We understand that differences between cultures, traditions, ethnicities, religions, abilities, and identities provide an opportunity to foster peace and embrace diversity. We use respect, responsibility, justice, and equity as our guiding principles to promote an inclusive and collaborative environment for our learners. We are committed to making all students and families feel safe, seen, and included.

Our Values

When we have tough decisions to make, we will always consider foremost the best intentions of the students and err on the side of integrity.

- Respect for ourselves, for others and for the world
- The power of individual responsibility, as well as the power of collaboration and community
- Our best selves and continual growth
- A culture of compassion and mutual assistance
- Commitment to what is possible, to that which is not yet seen
- Active engagement and perseverance
- Enthusiasm, camaraderie, and joy

Code of Conduct

OMS Montessori is a community based on respect

- Respect for yourself;
- Respect for others and the community;
- Respect for the environment.

All members of the OMS Montessori Community –students, parents, staff members, Board members – have a responsibility for behaving in a respectful manner and for promoting respect in our school.

All forms of harassment/discrimination are not tolerated. If a member of the OMS Montessori community (student, parent, staff member, Board member) feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused, or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the Head of School/designate. If the behaviour escalates, it is at the Head of School's discretion to request a withdrawal of enrolment, contact the police and/or pursue legal action.

Non-Discrimination Statement

We value, welcome, and celebrate a diverse population. OMS is a nonsectarian Montessori school that does not discriminate against individuals based on race, creed, religion, national origin, cultural heritage, age, gender identity or expression**, marital status, political beliefs, disability, sexual orientation or family style in its admissions and employment policies and procedures.

OMS Montessori is committed to providing equality of opportunity and an environment that fosters respect for all members of the school community. This policy has the goal of promoting an environment that is free of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. To facilitate that goal, OMS Montessori retains the authority to discipline or take appropriate corrective action for any conduct that is deemed unacceptable or inappropriate, regardless of whether the conduct rises to the level of unlawful discrimination, harassment or retaliation.

*** As used in this definition, gender expression or identity means having or being perceived to have a gender identity, self-image, appearance, behaviour, or expression, whether that gender identity, self-image, appearance, behaviour, or expression is different from that traditionally associated with the sex assigned to that person at birth.*

OMS Montessori Origins to Today

In 1966, OMS Montessori began offering Montessori education to a small number of children between 3 and 6 years of age under the name of Ottawa Montessori School in the Edinburgh/Rockcliffe community.

In 1972, Ottawa Montessori School applied for charitable status in Canada. At the time, the Department of National Revenue approved the school to be classified as a charitable organization. Today, we remain a not-for-profit charitable organization, with a Board of Directors governance model.

Ottawa Montessori School began as a 'Casa dei Bambini', or 'Children's House' for students 2.5 to 6 years of age. In September 1973, the school extended its authentic Montessori program to include Lower Elementary (6 to 9 years of age). Seven years later, in 1982, the 'Junior High' program was opened for students aged 9 to 12 years, which we now call Upper Elementary.

An official bilingual policy was passed in May 1973 and in September 1976, the school started a Montessori Francophone Casa classroom. In that same year, a Montessori Francophone Lower Elementary classroom was opened.

In 1981, Ottawa Montessori School had multiple locations, in four separate buildings. They were located in Maple Lane, Glebe, Osgood and Pinecrest.

In 1985, Ottawa Montessori School purchased two buildings in Alta Vista. Ten years later, the two separate schools were connected by a "link", which still remains today.

In 1996, the Board of Directors voted to change the school's name to Ottawa Montessori School/Ecole Montessori d'Ottawa. In September 1998, Ottawa Montessori School opened the Francophone Upper Elementary class.

Ottawa Montessori School extended its program offering to include the Toddler level in 1999, and in 2003, an Adolescents program was developed for grades 7 and 8.

In 2009, a significant strategic focus was directed at opening the first Montessori High School in Ottawa. This goal was implemented in 2012, and in September 2015, The Element High School moved to its current location in the heart of Lansdowne Park, offering grades 7-12.

Two natural playgrounds, with water features, were added to the school grounds in 2013. One year later, the company, which built the playground, received a Landscape Ontario Award of Excellence in the category of 'Special Interest' for their work.

In 2014, the school's operating name was changed to OMS Montessori; however, its business name Ottawa Montessori School/École Montessori d'Ottawa remains active.

OMS Montessori was awarded the top *Montessori School (2015) in Ottawa* by Top Choice Awards. In 2016, OMS Montessori celebrated its 50th year of service in Ottawa.

Due to the increasing demand, a second Toddler class was added in 2018 and an additional French Casa class was added in September 2019.

Montessori Philosophy: A Guide for Students and Parents

The basis of the Montessori philosophy of education is the belief that all children carry within themselves the foundation of the person they will become. In order to develop physical, intellectual and spiritual potential, the child must have freedom: a freedom to be achieved through order and self-discipline.

Dr. Montessori's revolutionary idea was that the mind of the child was different from that of an adult and that the child goes through predictable stages of change. She described these changes as **Stages of Development**. The Stages of Development precept is one of two critical tenants of Montessori's philosophy; a second tenant for which we place emphasis at OMS Montessori is the **Prepared Environment**.

The first stage from **birth to six** years is a time of tremendous active growth. It is the period of the Absorbent Mind when the child literally absorbs his or her environment, to become a citizen of his or her culture and society.

The second stage from **six to twelve** years of age is a period of great intellectual growth motivated by a strong imagination and a sense of reason. The elementary child demonstrates the capacity to deal with abstraction and develop a sense of morality.

The third stage from **twelve to eighteen** years of age is another time of tremendous active growth primarily in social and vocational development. The adolescent develops social responsibility through community development activities, serving the community and studying society.

While the content and approach to each stage is unique, there are consistent practices permeating throughout these programs.

- Children are mixed in age within the three-year cycle. This grouping develops a sense of community with older children helping younger children, with younger children looking forward to being able to reciprocate.
- Learning is individualized so children are challenged to maximize their potential.
- Children utilize the Montessori materials to understand abstract concepts.
- The teacher has completed an accredited Montessori course emphasizing child development, thus enabling them to implement the program.

Dr. Maria Montessori also developed what she called the **Prepared Environment**, which already possesses a certain order and allows children to learn at their own pace, according to their own capacities and in a non-competitive atmosphere.

"Never let children risk failure until they have a reasonable chance of success."
- Dr. Maria Montessori

The teacher (Guide) prepares the environment, programs the activity, functions as a facilitator and mentor, and offers the child the opportunity to learn and grow in a safe environment. It is the child, however, who learns, who is motivated through the work itself (not solely by the teacher's personality) and experiences focused engagement in a chosen task. The Montessori method introduces children to the joy of learning at an early age and provides a framework in which intellectual and social growth are nurtured and actively pursued by OMS Montessori.

The Montessori method is the largest educational philosophy on earth, with approximately 20,000 schools worldwide. The Montessori philosophy has proven effective for over one hundred years and been attended by the founders of Google and Amazon, multiple Presidents' children, three Canadian Prime Ministers, and various global leaders. Maria Montessori was a careful observer and her life's work was based on the scientific study of children.

Dr. Montessori’s writings have been collaborated by neuroscientists in the millennium, including Dr. Stephen Hughes. Dr. Angeline Stoll Lillard and others are completing current research on Montessori education. Parents are encouraged to view books on Montessori subject matter listed in **Appendix One**, as well as: <http://www.montessori-science.org>.

School Day/Programs

* Revised December 23, 2022, to reflect CWELCC Program Fees

Program	Drop-Off Time	Program Time	Pick-up Time	Food Included	Fees (2024-2025)
<i>*Toddler Extended Day -Twelve Month Program (18 months – 3 yrs)</i>	7:30 – 9:00 a.m.	8:45 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.	3:45 – 5:45 p.m.	Morning and afternoon snacks and lunch	\$12,852.76
<i>*Casa Extended Day (3 to 6 years)</i>	7:30 – 9:00 a.m.	8:45 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.	3:45 – 5:45 p.m.	Morning and afternoon snacks and lunch	\$9,762.33
<i>Elementary (Grades 1 to 6)</i>	8:45 – 9:00 a.m. (Supervision offered at 7:30 a.m.)	9:00 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.	3:45 – 4:00 p.m. (Supervision is offered until 5:45 p.m.)	Students pack snacks and a lunch (Catering is available to Elementary students four days per week at a nominal fee.)	\$17,524.00

Toddler Program

Our Toddler environment is as home-like as possible and with Toddler-size sinks, toilets, and shelves. Unlike other Montessori programs, there are only a small number of Toddlers together (up to 15) and a larger number of adults (a 5:1 ratio of children to adult) as Toddlers need more one-on-one assistance than older students. However, all activities in the community are designed to foster independence and self-reliance.

The activities in the Toddler community are designed to stimulate the Toddler and to aid the process of development. The Toddler program is designed specifically to meet the needs, natural curiosities, and interests of children 18 months to three years of age. The stimulating learning environment promotes cognitive and gross motor development, the development of the senses, language, hand-eye coordination, independence, and self-esteem. There are also opportunities for self-expression through music and movement.

Casa Program

When Dr. Maria Montessori set up her first class for children ages 3 to 7, (which she called a Casa dei Bambini – a children’s home), she observed that some activities appealed to the children more than others. The activities that engaged the children fully (or put them in a state of ‘flow,’ to use the modern term coined by psychologist Mihály Csikszentmihályi) became the basis of the international Montessori Casa curriculum for 3 to 6 year olds that is found around the globe today. In considering the types of materials that fully engaged the young child, Dr. Montessori realized that in addition to the human tendencies we all have for communication, exploration and order, children have periods of development when some tendencies or sensitivities are much more pronounced than others. For the young child, these sensitivities include what Montessori termed an absorbent mind; the ability of young children to absorb the culture and language in which they exist. For example, young children naturally mimic what the adults around them do and say. Young children are also very interested in exploring their world through their senses; this helps explain why they have such a strong desire to move and explore. These children also have a strong sense of order and a tendency to repeat things independently.

By respecting and responding to children’s natural tendencies Dr. Montessori was able to create a learning environment for young children that has stood the test of time. The ‘Casa’ classroom is a prepared environment that stimulates the development of motor skills, the senses, cognition, language, eye-hand coordination, and

independence. A Montessori prepared environment encourages the full development of children physically, emotionally, socially, and academically.

Elementary Program

Students between 6 – 12 years of age are entering a new stage of development. The absorbent mind of the younger child is evolving into a conscious mind. Elementary students are interested in reasons, explanations, and the perspective of time; they love grand ideas and lofty concepts— the bigger, the better. They are eager to explore.

Students of elementary age have developed a sure sense of what is real and now enjoy using their imaginations to explore things that they cannot experience concretely, such as other cultures or big ideas. The concrete, manipulative work of the pre-school Casa program naturally gives way to more abstract, intellectual work. Elementary students are also more aware of their peers, community, and global issues. They are less focused on physical order and more interested in a moral sense of order. They have a strong sense of justice, fairness and rules.

Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, Adherence

The Ministry of Education licenses the Toddler and Casa programs operated by OMS Montessori annually. The *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (CCEYA) which has replaced the *Day Nurseries Act* (DNA) identifies the legislative requirements for obtaining and keeping a license to operate a licensed centre. The CCEYA also outlines the consequences to the operators, if the CCEYA is contravened. Included are legislative requirements in the areas of staffing, program, premises, playground, nutrition, and health. A Program Advisor from the Ministry of Education inspects centres for annual renewals of this license and may make periodic visits. OMS Montessori is committed to meeting and exceeding all legislative requirements of the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*. A copy of this legislation is in the Head of School's office at all times. Anyone is welcome to review this document.

OMS Montessori Ministry of Education Program Statement (Regulation 46)

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

This Ministry program statement will be reviewed with childcare staff and volunteers annually or whenever an amendment is made.

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

Teachers observe the developmental skills of each child, academic, social and emotional, and support the child's individual timeline of growth by capitalizing on interest and demonstrated readiness for specific lessons. Teachers individualize lesson plans to meet the specific needs of each child. Where developmental milestones are not being met, teachers and the Head of School facilitate specialist services.

This Ministry statement describes our goals for children at OMS Montessori and the approaches that we implement to meet those goals.

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

Staff serve balanced and nutritious snacks and healthy lunches for children daily. Staff are provided with a list of children with allergies and are instructed to ask questions and read labels for all foods served at school; staff help to enforce that OMS Montessori is a nut-aware school.

Staff are instructed in specific guidelines for supervision of children within the school walls, as well as outdoors on the playground. Staff also have specific instructions regarding safety on off-site field trips, including supervision and transportation.

Staff are instructed also on equipment and facility safety at school; any mal-functioning equipment or facility safety issues are reported immediately to the Head of School and/or the Property Manager. Staff are responsible for ensuring that all licensing regulations regarding safety in storage of cleaning products, sharp utensils, plastic bags, personal belongings, etc. out of reach of children. Staff ensures the maintenance of First Aid Kits, knowledgeable of where kits are located outside and taking rosters with children to playground; emergency contacts are also taken on all trips away from the school. Staff receive training in First Aid and CPR every other year.

We support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, childcare providers and staff by communicating, promoting, and adhering to our 'Values' and our 'Code of Conduct.' These are communicated in our staff policies and in the parent handbook and calendar. They are applied to all members of the OMS Montessori community – staff, Board, interns, students, parents, volunteers, observers, and visitors.

Staff are guided by the basic rules of respect in interacting with any member of the community. Grace and Courtesy lessons for the children are a part of the school curriculum at all levels; the same respect is expected of each staff member. Teacher approach to the children in both instruction and discipline is that of guidance; discipline redirects and instructs (following Jane Nelson's Positive Discipline books) and is never harsh, disrespectful, or punitive. Teachers speak to children with respect and at eye-level. Part of the Montessori philosophy is never to speak ill of a child either in his or her presence or absence.

Staff are encouraged to approach with respect and honesty the person with whom they have a difference. Staff signs off on the Policy and Procedure Manuals, as well as the Behaviour Management Policies to indicate that they agree with the standards of behaviour and conduct appropriate to their positions as guides and role models for the children of OMS Montessori.

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

Staff bases rules and discipline on guidance and mutual respect. Students are encouraged to help create and take ownership for the rules of the classroom and are given lessons on conflict resolution. Teachers instruct children throughout the school to use their words and demonstrate “I messages” to assist in conflict resolution. Older students then model their understanding of the conflict resolution process to the younger students.

We foster the children’s exploration; play and inquiry by having fully equipped Montessori play/learn environments in which activities are present for the full range of three ages in each room. There are activities that assist children to become independent or able to assist others in care of the self, care of the environment and care of others (Grace and Courtesy); activities to explore and refine all the senses as well as discover sequencing and order; activities to increase vocabulary, encourage discussion, explore sounds, and begin to develop the process of writing and reading, and activities to develop number sense, numeracy, understanding of large quantities, the mathematical operations, geometry and even rudimentary algebra concepts and then lots of activities to introduce all the wonderful things in our world. In addition, there are activities for cutting, colouring, painting, exploring colour, shape and texture, pasting, etc. Children understand where everything is kept, and they are able to choose and return things independently and with their friends.

Staff in each classroom are provided with an inventory list of the materials considered by CCMA (Canadian Council of Montessori Administrators) to be essential teaching materials at each classroom level; any missing materials are noted, then ordered or made by staff. Teachers provide Practical Life materials and lessons to aid in the child’s ability to master practical living skills and thus grow in independence. Lessons on the Montessori Sensorial materials are given to heighten the child’s sensory awareness of differences in dimension, colour, sound, touch, and taste. Teachers instruct children individually on phonics, reading, writing, math, and cultural subjects according to a logical sequence of lessons within the Montessori curriculum. Instructing the students to restore each material on the shelf is a part of each lesson given; independence is encouraged in all activities to the extent the child is able.

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

A part of the teacher’s job is to observe when the child is ready for each new and appropriately challenging lesson. Freedom of choice is respected to the extent the child is able to occupy him/herself in purposeful activity during the work cycle. Teachers honor the child’s initiative, recognizing that children learn best when their will is engaged.

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

Teaching staff are trained and certified to know the sequence of the Montessori lessons and how each material and lesson is to be presented. Montessori created her materials to be self-checking, hands-on learning experiences, by which the child internalizes the concept. Teachers present concepts first through the concrete

manipulatives and later abstractly when the child is ready.

We incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest, and quiet time, into the day, and consider the individual needs of the children by allowing the children to manage a great deal of their day. Children can choose to move about the class carrying things or building things or sit quietly at a table moving intricate pieces. Children can choose to have snack or a drink when they are hungry or thirsty; they do not have to wait for the whole group. Our classes have outdoor environments directly accessed from the Preschool classrooms so that children can choose to be inside or outside. In addition, we have a large, well equipped, outdoor playground that children access in groups twice each day.

Teachers respect the fact that children need opportunities for gross motor movement, as well as rest; outdoor time is a part of each day, as is a rest time, if needed. Children are also allowed to monitor their own needs by serving themselves food and drink and using the restroom as needed.

We foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children by having regular group meetings with parents to explain what is happening in the classrooms, inviting parents in to observe their children, writing regular communications and sending children's work home. Parents can access their child's teacher by leaving a voicemail or by chatting briefly at the door during arrival and dismissal. We also have whole school events where the parents of the younger children can meet and discuss their child's experience with parents of older children.

Teachers communicate monthly through the school newsletter, conferences three times yearly and written report cards; they are available to communicate by e-mail, phone, or meeting, as needed. In addition, teachers assist in providing Parent Education events for families several times each school year. Teachers also work with students to prepare musical presentations for parents at various times of the school year.

We involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families, and staff. The Anglican Church of St. Thomas the Apostle (in Alta Vista) listens to our needs as part of their community outreach and we send staff to attend their meetings. We act as the Emergency Refuge for the Riverview School before and After School programming. We welcome specialists from CCAC and find spaces for them to work with our children and we meet with the parents and these specialists as necessary.

Staff supports OMS students in partnerships and activities with local artists, charities, sports teams (OISAA), CHEO, Jump Rope for Heart, Terry Fox Run, Ottawa Food Bank, The Snowsuit Fund of Ottawa.

We support our staff and others who interact with the children in relation to continuous professional learning by having a retreat every August at which time all staff review and complete all necessary documentation required by ONTARIO REGULATION 137/15. At the beginning of each year, our staff also set goals for themselves in discussion with their direct reports and we plan for how to support them in the achievement of those goals. We have a budget dedicated to Professional Development that any staff person can access depending on their particular needs. We have four Professional Development days set aside each year to meet as a whole staff and in smaller groups to review our work and plan for improvements. Our Head of School and Admissions Director walk about the school regularly, observing in classes and then engaging the staff in conversation about their observations. We also meet weekly to discuss ongoing issues or topics of particular interest. Each staff member also spends time at least once a year observing in another's class.

In the interest of continuous self-improvement, staff are presented with opportunities throughout the year to review areas of the curriculum, learn new technology, attend workshops on relevant topics, and conferences to develop support and collegiality with other Montessorians.

Observations in other classrooms and schools provide teachers with valuable insight. Feedback from others at regular staff and levelled meetings helps to communicate information and build understanding among staff, also. The August retreat serves to introduce new staff members, communicate information and any changes in policies and procedures, program statement, and review our behaviour management and health policies and procedures for the new school year.

We document and review the impact of the above strategies on the children and their families through observation, conversation, meetings, surveys, etc.

Prohibited Practices

In accordance with the *Child Care and Early Years Act* we shall not engage in, nor shall we permit our staff, students, volunteers to engage in any of the following:

1. corporal punishment of the child
2. physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a highchair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting themselves or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent
3. locking the exits of the child care centre premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures
4. use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine their self-respect, dignity or self-worth
5. depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding
6. inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will

OMS Montessori has policies in place for the monitoring of staff, student, and volunteer conduct and for addressing contraventions of this policy. The safety and well-being of the children is always our priority.

Learning Goals

All members of the OMS Montessori Community will:

1. Commit to Montessori philosophy and principles
2. Nurture development of the individual
3. Promote peace through respectful attitudes, words, and actions
4. Demonstrate responsibility for self, others, and the environment
5. Foster diversity

6. Promote, seek, and use research-based materials and strategies
7. Integrate technology
8. Demonstrate essential content knowledge

Governance

OMS Montessori is an independent school, operating as a non-profit, non-denominational organization since 1966 and governed by a Board of Directors that serves without remuneration. The Ministry of Education recognizes it as a private school. The purpose of the corporation is entirely educational: to operate an accredited Montessori school for students and provide opportunities for focussed engagement and the development of the whole child.

As a not-for-profit, independent school, OMS Montessori is not supported by government funding at the elementary and high school levels. Tuition does not always cover the complete operating costs of the school; as a result, we rely on fundraising and development to fill the gaps in operating expenses. Fundraising activities, such as the Annual Giving Campaign during the autumn season and OMS Montessori Gala in the spring, are applied to operating costs, tuition assistance and program materials. Capital Campaigns provide for enhancements, which make an OMS Montessori education the best possible experience for each student.

The OMS Board of Directors welcomes experienced and committed parents and others from the community to assist as members of advisory committees. It may also provide interested individuals with a path to Board membership. Those who wish to share their talents and time to assist OMS Montessori by serving on a committee of the Board are encouraged to contact the OMS Montessori Board Chair or the Head of School to discuss their interest.

Significant duties of the OMS Montessori Board of Directors include:

- Govern OMS Montessori by policies developed by the Board
- Establish strategic direction and long-term goals for OMS Montessori to meet the needs of the community and maintain the special nature of OMS Montessori as an exemplary Montessori school
- Prepare for and participate in the discussions and deliberations of the Board
- Monitor the effectiveness of OMS through regular monitoring of Board policies
- Foster a positive working relationship with the other Board members and Head of School
- Be aware and abstain from any conflict of interest

The OMS Montessori Board is an arm's length Board. The operations of the school is the responsibility of the Head of School, Carrie Whalen, who, with the support of the school's administrative team, oversees the daily operations, sets the pedagogical direction, and implements OMS Montessori Board policies.

School Structure

As a non-profit corporation, OMS Montessori is overseen by a volunteer Board of Directors, comprised of parents and non-parent members of the local community, whose responsibilities include hiring and evaluating the Head of School, establishing policies, long-range planning, and fiscal decision-making. The Board conducts regularly scheduled meetings.

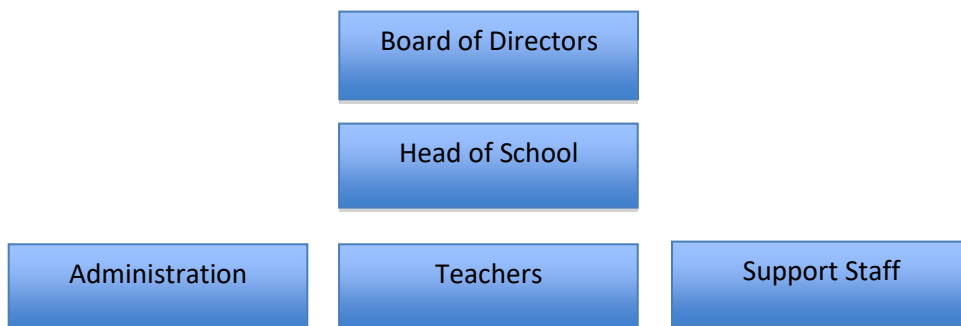
The Head of School manages all components of the day-to-day operations of the school. Responsibilities include the safety and welfare of all students and adults at the school, hiring and evaluating all staff members, establishing procedures, and ensuring compliance with all government agencies. The Head of School delegates aspects of these responsibilities to the school's staff, as appropriate.

The students' classroom teachers are responsible for the implementation of the school's educational program. This program is founded upon respect for the individual child and follows the premise that children have an internal motivation to exercise and develop their mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual abilities. This program follows a curriculum and provides materials for the students' exploration, practice and mastery of skills and knowledge.

If you have a concern or grievance:

We will make every attempt to acknowledge receipt of concern/grievance within 24 hours.

1. Communicate your concern to the faculty member most immediately involved. Often, this will be the class teacher. If your child raises the complaint, have them attend the meeting with the teacher as well. Often, concerns can be managed through this level of conversation.
2. If you are not satisfied with the result of your interaction with the faculty member, or if your concern is more general in nature, make an appointment to meet with the Head of School.
3. If you cannot resolve the issue with the Head of School, and you feel you have not been accorded a reasonable interpretation of your rights, you can bring the matter to the attention of the Board of Directors using the Board's Grievance Procedures.
 - a. Inform the Head of School, in writing, of your concern and inform the Board Ombudsperson either by e-mail at: ombudsperson@omsmontessori.com or in writing to the Ombudsperson of the Board via the office.
 - b. The Board of Directors will investigate the concern using its Complaints Policy. A copy of the Complaints Policy is available from the office.



The Learning Network

A child of OMS Montessori works in a classroom with children of different ages. This multi-age grouping has several advantages: it enhances socialization; allows the children to teach and learn from each other; facilitates the Montessori Guide's concentration on individual rather than grade level norms; allows the Montessori Guide to make fuller use of the knowledge the child gathers during the child's first year in a classroom; provides community for the child; it fosters the development of a family spirit in the classroom.

While multi-age grouping, unstructured time and the prepared environment are important tools; it is the Montessori Guide who makes these methods truly meet the needs of children. The Montessori Guide's knowledge is what ensures a range of materials that is diverse and appropriate. The Montessori Guide's creativity and organization produce the order and beauty of the classroom. The Montessori Guide's enthusiasm calls forth energy; the Montessori Guide's affection generates warmth. The Montessori Guide's observation and direction ensure progress toward academic goals. The Montessori Guide's example models how to learn. Finally, the

Montessori Guide's guidance provokes thought, explores boundaries, and makes connections. In short, it is the Montessori Guide's presence that makes the classroom a place of discovery.

Children, faculty, and administration are on a first-name basis, a concrete example of mutual respect.

Beyond the Montessori Guide's critical role in the classroom, there is a larger network of people – fellow students, parents, and community, who also affect the child's school experience. OMS Montessori seeks diversity in its enrollment, believing that a child benefits from learning with children of various backgrounds, learning styles and inherent abilities. OMS Montessori opens its doors to parents and the community, believing that everyone has something to share as well as something to learn. Children need adults to expose them to the possibilities of their lives. They need ideas and models. They need real-world applications of classroom learning. They need companionship along the way. Montessori Guides need sources of renewal and support. Parents need to see their children's lives unfolding. The community needs to learn the lessons of the child. OMS Montessori is committed to forging meaningful and productive relationships between child, parent, school and community.

The Learning Process: Freedom within the Prepared Environment

OMS Montessori utilizes an open classroom design, enabling children to move around, do for themselves, make choices and experience consequences. In the classroom, the materials for different subjects and activities are placed on low shelves around the room. The children are free to work alone or with other students at various workspaces, which have been created and arranged by the Montessori Guide. Everything is carefully designed to be aesthetically pleasing, to provide planned exposure to materials and experiences that will foster the children's expanding knowledge and abilities. Montessori materials are a central part of the program.

The organization of space and materials is very thorough, always directed toward freeing the child to work. The day is largely unscheduled so that the child's pursuit of projects and academic activities may proceed to natural conclusions, rather than being fractured into time slots for different subjects. There is time for observing, deciding, doing; time to re-do, start over, abandon, return. Having few interruptions, the child may learn concentration, and the child may experience the satisfaction of finishing their business with a task or an idea before moving on.

The open day schedule combined with the open classroom design facilitate not only independence and self-discipline, but also a unified experience of "subjects" and an integration of affective and cognitive learning. Montessori classrooms are designed for safety in mind, with clear sightlines of the room.

The Child-Teacher-Parent Triangle of Responsibilities

The Child is Responsible for:

Their Environment

- Returns materials to shelves in perfect order, once experienced in the classroom
- Cleans up their own working space
- Learns how to care for the outdoor environment, including gardening
- Uses materials for what they are designed to teach

Themselves

- Walks when inside or on walkways outdoors
- Chooses challenging work and practises with it
- Works as long as one desires with a specific material
- Uses one's body in appropriate ways

Their Community

- Respects other people's workspace
- Talks in a polite manner to other people
- Observes others in their work process without disturbing their focus
- Restores the environment so it is ready for others to use
- Uses one's body in appropriate ways towards others

The Montessori Guide is Responsible for:

Their Implementation of the Montessori Educational Philosophy

- Applies all facets of one's training (philosophy, curriculum, material making, classroom management, observation strategies, record keeping, etc.)
- Models the behaviour one seeks the children to follow
- Designs the classroom to support the needs of each child
- Practises and refines Montessori lessons
- Demonstrates a sincere respect for each child
- Speaks positively to and about each child, visualizing and holding in mind that the child is in a process of creation

Supporting the needs of the whole child

- Records observations of the whole child (social, emotional, mental, spiritual, physical development)
- Communicates with parents about any needs of the child that need to be fulfilled within the home environment (sleep, social nurturance, physical health, nutrition, etc.)
- Remains accessible to parents to support their observations of the needs of their child
- Adheres to the Montessori Decalogue, School Policies and Procedures, and Head of School's guidance and directives

Supporting the School Community

- Attends all staff meetings, special events, Professional Development Days, etc.
- Attends fundraising functions
- Helps with the process of team-building efforts
- Attends internal school committee meetings when time permits
- Observes other programs and in other classrooms
- Supports other faculty members with problem-solving
- Helps evaluate and refine procedures

The Parent is Responsible for:

Supporting the Montessori Educational Philosophy

- Attends the OMS annual Parent Orientation Night
- Attends parent/teacher conferences
- Attends parent education evenings
- Focuses on the process of the child's work, not the finished product
- Does not challenge the child with minute details
- Does not attempt to impose personal curriculum agendas on classroom teacher
- Fosters quiet time daily within the home environment
- Fosters quiet observations of nature

Communicating between the Montessori Guide/Parent about the Whole Child

- Keeps the Montessori Guide aware of major changes in the child's life (i.e., illness; celebrations; changes in sleep/diet; new sibling; death of pet, loved one; divorce; separation; company in home; extracurricular activities; spouse's travel)
- Informs the Montessori Guide of changes in the child's behaviour
- Requests meetings with Montessori Guides/Specialists rather than attempting to communicate when Montessori Guides/Specialists are engaged in activities, as well as during entry and exit routines
- Respects the communication plan: first dialogue is with the child's Montessori Guides/Specialists, second is with the Head of School; Montessori Guides/Specialists may be present, situation-dependent

Supporting the School Community

- Ensures the child arrives at school on time
- Signs the child in and out of school (office) for lateness and early departure
- Monitors that the child is appropriately attired (for weather; without popular culture or aggressive/violent fantasy-theme clothing)
- Gives the child a balanced breakfast before school
- Supports the school's ground rules; reviews ground rules periodically with the child
- Informs office when the child is sick, including their symptoms
- Notifies office when the child has exposed other children to a contagious disease
- Informs office when the child has any changes regarding who is picking up the child after school
- Chaperones on field trips, when possible
- Supports the fact that OMS Montessori fosters a respect for cultural identity by honouring all cultures and studying religious holidays in an educational manner, reserving actual celebrations for the home environment
- Supports school fundraisers
- Returns necessary forms promptly and pays fees on time

Supporting the Whole Child

- Attentive to refining the home environment to foster independence of the child (hooks are low so the child can hang up own clothes; small pitcher so the child can pour their own drink; unclutter the bedroom; purchase clothes that the child can put on and take off on their own; give the child jobs within the home that can be accomplished successfully after being shown how)
- Sets limits and adheres to those limits
- Honest about warranted praise; praises the process, not the product
- Helps the child to identify and accept their feelings
- Helps the child to accept their imperfections
- Lets the child work out their own minor struggles at school; remains available as a sounding board, but guides the child to make their own decisions
- Is an active listener
- Is a conservative consumer (simplifies rather than clutters the environment)
- Helps child differentiate between fantasy and reality
- Limits the amount of very young (birth – age 6) child's exposure to fantasy
- Limits the amount of child's exposure to violent television programs and computer games
- Limits screen time to appropriate daily exposure
- Models a love and joy for reading
- Shares spiritual convictions or tendencies
- Helps child learn to delay gratification (process as important as product)

- Secures a daily routine in child's life (regular bedtime routine on weekdays and weekends; daily time to read; participation in household chores)
- Makes sure the child gets an ample amount of sleep
- Preferably, does not allow for any screen time during the drive to school
- Spends quality time with their child

Ground Rules for Student Behaviour in a Montessori Classroom

The school's behaviour guidelines centre on the concept of respect – for self, others, property, and the environment. We list below some of the specific behaviours that allow children in the Montessori classroom to operate in freedom and mutual respect.

1. A child is free to work with any material displayed in the environment if the child has been given a lesson on the work. Some activities do not require a lesson and the child may use the material on their own. The child may not harm the materials or use them inappropriately. The child may not harm themselves or others. The child may use the materials in ways that do not disturb the activities of others.
2. A child may work on either a mat or a table, whichever is suitable to the work the child has chosen. The rug or table designates a child's workspace. Other children must travel around a child's mat or table space without disturbing the child's work. Children do not work at or on display shelves, as their presence there would obstruct the other children's access to materials.
3. The child restores the environment during and after an exercise. The child cleans personal spills (after demonstrations by the teacher). The child puts their own mat away. If the child has been working at a table, the child pushes the chair back in place under the table. The child returns the material to its place or the display shelf, so other children can find the work complete when they are ready for it.
4. A child does not touch the work of another child. The child may not interfere with another child's activity unless the child has been invited. This provides security for the child involved in an exercise to continue it to completion. The child's right to initiate, complete or repeat an exercise is protected by this ground rule. If a child must leave their exercise temporarily, the child is confident that their work will be as it was left and the child can resume the activity. Each child has their own nametag to place on their work, to ensure the child can return to it when inclined and available.
5. Children walk inside the school and walk on walkways outdoors. Children are asked to retrace steps if they run. Children can run in designated play areas. Children must use respectful, polite language among themselves and with teachers. Outside, the children play games that will not harm anyone. Any form of physical aggression towards teachers or children is not permitted and serves as grounds for a child's immediate removal from the school environment.
6. A child is not forced or even encouraged to share with another child an exercise that the child has chosen to work alone. Generosity develops from within as a child matures and gains self-security. If materials are adequate and ground rules are effective, sharing will come naturally where sharing is appropriate.
7. A child is free to observe if the child desires, as long as the activities of others are not disturbed. The child may be learning by observing others working or may be thinking or simply relaxing. After an extended period of time, and at the teacher's discretion, the child will be encouraged to choose some work of their own.
8. Polite table manners are encouraged and practiced, as well as modelled by the adults.
9. Children do not bring toys, weapons, money, or expensive jewellery to school. Clothing should not display popular culture, aggressive or violent fantasy themes or slogans, acts, or postures. The school serves children across a broad age range and all members of the community should model appropriate behaviour and attire.

Bullying

'Bullying' is a form of repeated, persistent, and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals that is intended or should be known to cause fear and distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation. It is a serious issue that has far-reaching consequences for individuals, their families and

peers, and the community at large. Children who suffer prolonged victimization through bullying, as well as children who use power and aggression as bullies, may experience a range of psychosocial problems that may extend into adolescence and adulthood.

Providing students with an opportunity to learn and develop in a safe and respectful community is a shared responsibility between the school, its staff, students, and families. Bullying, in any form, poisons this environment and can negatively impact a student's academic, social, and emotional well-being.

Bullying occurs in a context where there is a power imbalance, whether real or perceived and may be based on a difference in size, strength or age; intelligence; economic or social status; race, religion or ethnicity; disability or need for special education; sex, gender or sexual orientation; and family circumstances. It can take many forms including *physical* (i.e., hitting, pushing, tripping); *verbal* (i.e., name calling, mocking, or making sexist, racist, or homophobic comments); *technological or communicative* (i.e., spreading rumours, images, or hurtful comments through the use of e-mail, social media, text messaging, Internet websites, or other technology); or *social* (i.e., ostracization, spreading gossip or rumours). **Bullying of any form is not tolerated under any circumstance**, including bullying related to a student's allergy or any medical condition. Victims of bullying are dealt with sensitively and confidentially.

As the nature and reach of bullying is constantly changing, OMS Montessori may become involved in a bullying incident that occurs on OMS Montessori's property, during an OMS Montessori event or in any other circumstances where the bullying may have a negative impact on the school climate. This includes any act of bullying that occurs outside of school property or hours, if that bullying negatively impacts the quality of life at OMS Montessori, and if that bullying is between two students, two faculty members, a faculty member and student, a faculty member and parent, or a parent and student.

Parents who suspect their child may be subject to bullying at school should discuss the incident with the child's teacher, if the bullying takes place in the classroom or in the school yard, or with the Head of School, if the bullying takes place off school property or involves the child's teacher or another faculty member. All reports of bullying are held in confidence and shall be held as such to minimize the possibility of reprisals. The Head of School should be included on communiqués between any faculty members and parents related to the bullying incident.

To help prevent bullying, the school will provide parents with updates on new bullying prevention and intervention strategies to be implemented in the school. Further, parents are encouraged to educate themselves about bullying prevention and intervention strategies.

Cyber-Harassment and Cyber-Bullying

New technologies such as e-mail, cell phones, text and picture messaging, chat lines, websites, blogs, wikis, social networking sites such as Facebook, and online voting booths have, unfortunately, become outlets for harassment and bullying, which can often be especially damaging and corrosive. Young people need to know that the same basic rules of respect and courtesy apply to the use of these newer technologies as to any other form of human communication. The school cannot presume to police the use of private Internet services at home, and parents have an important role to play in monitoring their child's conduct there. Nonetheless, off-site cyber-harassment and cyber-bullying very often spill directly into school relationships, targeting individuals or groups of students, and undermine their dignity and well-being as members of the OMS Montessori school community. Such incidents will warrant intervention and appropriate disciplinary action by the school.

Standards of Behaviour

Respect, Civility and Responsible Citizenship

All school members must:

- demonstrate honesty and integrity;
- respect differences in people, their ideas and opinions;
- treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is a disagreement;
- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, color, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability;
- respect the rights of others;
- show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others;
- take appropriate measures to help those in need;
- respect persons who are in a position of authority;
- respect the needs of others to work in an environment of learning and teaching.

Factors to be Considered

In selecting the most appropriate consequence, the following factors will be taken into account:

- nature of the offence;
- number of individuals involved;
- degree of harm caused to the victim and school community (both people and property);
- intent to cause harm;
- age of the individuals involved, as it pertains to the child's ability to understand the nature and consequences of their actions;
- history of offences
- level of parental cooperation.

Discipline

Our philosophy on discipline is to aid children in developing inner control, acceptable behaviour, and respect for the rights of others and themselves. We need to help children without rejecting them as persons. Children need to understand why their behaviour is considered inappropriate. All discipline is based on the individual child's needs and stage of development.

The children are expected to conduct themselves in a manner respecting people and property. They are given verbal, positive reminders as necessary to encourage positive conduct. They are corrected by only one adult at a time

Forbidden forms of discipline include:

- corporal punishment of the child;
- physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a highchair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;
- use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

The child may be drawn to a teacher's side to work alongside the teacher until behaviour and order are restored. A child may be dismissed from the general activity area to a quieter place in the room when verbal reminders and shadowing are not sufficient to change conduct, returning to work alongside the teacher when good conduct and control are evident. If by their actions a child puts self, others or property in jeopardy, the child is removed from the situation or held until they have regained control. The Head of School may be contacted at any time, to lead the positive discipline process and support efforts toward calming the child. Our primary goal is to return him/her to the classroom.

To meet the child's needs and help a child gain inner control, we use the following discipline techniques:

- Be sure of the child's attention when using a positive approach with eye contact on the child's level
- Give simple, developmentally appropriate directions
- Prepare a child verbally before requiring a change of activity
- Allow a choice, whenever it is possible
- Be consistent
- Set reasonable limits that the child can understand and, hopefully, accept
- Be attentive and reinforcing desirable behaviour
- We do not allow a child to injure themselves or others by their actions
- Help the child to understand routine
- Firstly: give verbal instruction and working alongside, when needed
- Secondly: give verbal instruction and offering positive time out, when needed
- Repeat or reinforce an instruction only after a child has had sufficient time to act
- Involve the child in finding a solution to difficult situations
- Give the child the dignity to be responsible for their own actions

If, after working with a child to assist them in making good choices to curb inappropriate behaviour, a student does not respond positively to normal discipline (usually restrictions from freedom):

1. The teacher will redirect the student toward work that will engage them. The teacher will record the incident.
2. If misbehaviour continues (three occurrences), the teacher will inform the Head of School and contact the parents. An appropriate consequence will be decided on and recorded.
3. If misbehaviour continues, the student, the teacher, the parents and the Head of School will meet. An appropriate consequence will be decided on and recorded.
4. In the case of repeated, unacceptable behaviour, the parents may: (a) be asked to engage in the services of a counsellor or classroom aide (both at their expense, the aide to be approved by the Head of School) who will suggest strategies for the teacher to follow, and/or (b) be asked to withdraw the child from the school. Suggestions for a more appropriate learning environment will be discussed with the parent.

It is NOT the desire of the Head of School to have any of our children dismissed from OMS Montessori. However, we believe a safe and proper Montessori atmosphere must be maintained in the classroom. Generally, working with the family and the child proactively makes dismissal a rare occurrence.

Consequences for Serious Misbehaviour

In the following instances, the student will receive an in-school suspension. Conditions to return to regular classes will be decided in consultation with the Head of School:

- swearing
- destruction of school material or property

- fighting, punching, kicking, hitting, or biting
- stealing
- other acts deemed serious by staff members
- acts that jeopardize the personal safety of the child or the safety of others

Consequences for Serious Offences

In the following instances, police may be contacted (situation dependent), and the student will be immediately suspended:

- possession of a weapon with the intent to cause bodily harm or to threaten serious harm
- physical assault causing bodily harm requiring professional medical treatment
- uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm
- acts of vandalism causing extensive damage to school property or property located on school premises
- racial slurs/comments

An expulsion or conditions to return to school will be decided by the Head of School. Counselling, at the parents' expense, may be required as a condition of returning to OMS Montessori.

While we discuss consequences of misbehaviour above, it should be understood that Toddler and Casa children are learning about correct behaviour and it is our responsibility, as adults, to model correct behaviour and correct unacceptable behaviour, so that children may come to a full understanding of what is and what is not acceptable. An Elementary, Junior High or High School student is expected to abide by school's Code of Conduct. While we continue to correct unacceptable behaviour, Elementary, Junior High or High School students are held to a higher level of expectation and, therefore, are subject to the penalties mentioned above. Teachers, parents, and Administration, working together, will ensure a safe and happy learning environment for all children at OMS Montessori and The Element.

Volunteers and Student Teachers

Vulnerable Screening Checks are required for all volunteers having direct contact with students. No child will be supervised by a person younger than 18 years of age or will be looked after by a volunteer/student-teacher without the supervision of their direct report, in most cases, the class Montessori Guide.

Visitors

All visitors must enter the school at the main entrance and present themselves to the office to obtain a visitor's pass. The visitor's pass must be worn at all times while on OMS Montessori premises.

Fundraising, Gifts, Endowments

Every Independent school depends on the generosity of its families and friends to supplement its tuition income to cover operating costs, develop new programs, supplement faculty salaries, build endowments and create stronger tuition assistance programs. The act of giving is an important demonstration of your support and recognition of OMS Montessori's values, philosophy, and contribution to your children's lives. Support may take the form of a direct financial contribution, a gift of something tangible that the school can use, or the precious gift of one's time and talent. Most importantly, just as we believe each child is unique, so is each family. We hope that those families with the ability to give more will do so. A generous parent body promotes excellence and diversity in our community and models the spirit of service for all members of the community, including our children.

Annual Giving Campaign

Each year the school will conduct an Annual Giving Campaign. This is the anchor of our yearly fundraising efforts. OMS Montessori looks to our parents, friends, faculty and administration to give a meaningful gift, as each is able. This annual giving funds classroom materials, enrichment opportunities and other vital components of the school's operations.

Capital Campaign

The Board of Directors prioritizes our long-term, large capital needs and these may be funded through occasional capital campaigns, as relevant.

OMS Montessori's Annual Fundraiser

Annually, the school will host an evening Fundraiser. This event will be organized and implemented by a faculty committee and group of parent volunteers; proceeds are critical to the school's operating budget. The event will feature a dinner, as well as live and silent auctions. Tickets are available for purchase by parents of currently enrolled students, as well as family, friends and neighbours of our parent community. Information will be made available to families through a school newsletter. Donations of auction items are collected throughout the year. Please contact the Head of School for more information or to make a donation.

Sales and Events

Throughout the year, sales and events occur with the net proceeds donated to the school. If funds are marked for a specific program, this will be announced prior to the event or sale. Please refer to the classroom and school calendars for the schedule of these upcoming events.

Policies and Procedures

School Day Arrival and Departure of Students

Arrival and departure are important times in the school day for everyone concerned: parents, staff, and children. For these transition times to flow smoothly with a minimum of confusion, and to ensure the security of all children, we have developed the following guidelines:

- OMS Montessori asks parents/guardians to use the circular driveway for Carline for **Elementary-aged** children. Toddler and Casa parents are asked to walk their child to and from the school every morning and afternoon.
- Staff members are stationed to receive and dismiss students during morning and afternoon Carline.
- Elementary students are not permitted to cross the street to a car parked on the other side of the road.
- Students at the Drake Building cannot leave the classroom and go to the parking lot unattended.
- No parking is permitted in the Lindsay circular driveway – it is designated as a fire/bus lane. Parking is available in the Lindsay and Drake parking lots.
- If you arrive after the designated arrival time, you must park, escort your Elementary child to the front entrance or walk your Toddler/Casa child to class. Do not drop your Elementary child off and depart the school before or after your child's arrival time without ensuring they are in the school. We realize this might warrant additional time and effort on your part; however, we cannot accept responsibility for a child's safety when we are unaware of the child's presence on the premises.
- Elementary students not picked up by the end of afternoon Carline (4:00 p.m.) are brought to the After School Care Program, for which the appropriate fee will be charged.
- We will release your child only to those persons whom you have authorized on your pick-up list or to a person whom you authorize on a specific occasion. If you or another designated person regularly pick-up

your child, you must advise the office by phone or e-mail if someone else on your authorized list will be picking up your child on a given day. If you need your child to go home with someone not on your authorized pick-up list, you must send to the office a dated, signed note or an email to info@omsmontessori.com. **Inform this person that they will be asked to show identification.** Also, inform all persons on your pick-up list of the school's location, as well as arrival and departure times/procedures.

- The school is not able to be a clearinghouse for messages between parents or drivers, except in cases of emergency. Any changes of plans about pick-up or carpool arrangements should be made directly between parents and the drivers involved.
- Please refrain from talking at length with staff during arrival/departure times; any necessary messages should be written. Additionally, do not get out of your vehicle in Carline during arrival or departure times. If it is necessary to get out of your car, please park in the designated parking spots located in the visitor parking (Drake or Lindsay), or the two visitor parking spots located in the circular drive.
- Please pull up to the furthest point of the semi-circular drive available and wait for your child to exit or enter the car. Once all cars have been unloaded/loaded, you may leave the semi-circular drive slowly. Thank you for supporting an efficient morning and afternoon Carline.

Before and After School Elementary Care (Supervision) Departure of Students

OMS Montessori's Before and After School Care program is an extension of the Montessori classroom environment; all ground rules apply whether in a classroom or outdoor environment. It is important for parents to carefully consider their Before and After School Care needs for the year when enrolling. It may be the case that drop-in After School Care spaces are few. A Before and/or After School Care contract will be sent in the Enrolment Package.

To contact the After School Care faculty to note that you may arrive later than 5:45 p.m., please phone (343) 996-6072.

- Elementary Before School Care is offered from 7:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.
- Beginning at 3:45 p.m., Toddler and Casa Extended Day students remain in their classrooms/playground for their Extended Day Program. We wish to provide younger children with the consistency of their environment, as it is their "home" at our school. Elementary After School Care is located in the Multi-Purpose Room/playground.
- After School Care students remain in their respective areas, in the outdoor environment or by attending their respective after-school clubs.
- Beginning at 5:00 p.m., remaining children participate in community chores and prepare to depart. All children should be picked up by 5:45 p.m. A late fee of \$6.50 per minute will be charged for pick up after 5:45 p.m., in all programs.
- It is imperative that parents sign their children in and out each day. In the case of an emergency, the sign-in/out serves as the student roster – we would jeopardize everyone's safety if we were searching for a child who has already been picked up.
- If, because of unavoidable circumstances, you cannot pick-up your child at the designated time, please call the office or After School Care at (343) 996-6072. It is upsetting to a child and unsettling for the teachers to be expecting a parent who does not arrive or phone.

Attendance

In order for a child to gain as much as possible from an educational program, timely arrival and regular attendance are necessary. **If your child is going to be absent from the school, parents are asked to notify the office prior to 8:45 a.m.** You may leave a message at (613) 521-5185. Attendance is taken promptly at 9:00 a.m.; if your child is not present, the school will contact you to confirm their absence.

OMS Montessori takes seriously the negative effects of tardiness and absenteeism on a child's mastery of social skills and educational endeavours. Often, a child who arrives late feels that they have missed something, because the child is entering a space where all their peers are already busy at work. Further, being late unfairly disrupts

the work cycle of the other classroom members and teaches children that being late is acceptable behaviour. For these reasons, OMS Montessori's students' attendance is recorded as follows:

- The magnetic doors (keypad entry) are open between 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.
- A child is counted late after 9:00 a.m.
- The Drake door is manually locked and unavailable after 9:00 a.m. Students and parents arriving after 9:00 a.m. must enter the building by the Lindsay back door or main door.
- Absences over five (5) days (aggregate, not necessarily consecutive) must be made up by work given by the teacher and completed by the student (age 6 and older).
- Planned absences (e.g., family trips) should be made known to the Montessori Guide and the office in advance. Further, the student must make up any extended absences by completing a project pre-approved by the Montessori Guide.
- The parent is responsible for keeping track of absences, in addition to the school.

Inclement Weather/Emergency School Closure

The Head of School monitors inclement weather reports continuously and may implement the School Closure Plan based on best judgment of reported impending inclement weather condition: (1) as early as possible before the school day begins or (2) as early as possible during the school day to allow all parents time to pick up their (child)ren from the school. Our emergency auxiliary power only lasts for one-half hour. Following that period of time, the school is without heat and lights. Our telephone system has a battery back-up for both incoming and outgoing calls.

OMS Montessori generally closes when the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board closes.

Parents will receive e-mail notifications for OMS Montessori closures.

As families travel from near and far to get to school, and weather conditions frequently vary, the school may be closed even when conditions in your neighbourhood would indicate otherwise. Please check to determine OMS Montessori's status when snow, ice, etc., are forecast or present. Similarly, if conditions in your neighbourhood seem hazardous, but the school is open, please use your discretion about attendance.

If weather developments during the school day become threatening, parents will receive an email from Administration. The faculty will not make individual phone calls to parents, due to the necessity of conserving phone line resources and caring for students.

P.D. Days/School Holiday Programs and Closures

We have four Casa and Elementary and eight Toddler scheduled days for Professional Development during the school year. This is a time for our teachers to attend staff development workshops arranged by Administration. Contact with other educators within the Montessori community and beyond is vital to the assessment and development of our own programs. While we hesitate to inconvenience schedules of busy parents, our responsibility to the children and the school necessitates working days of this nature. Teachers are also required to participate in other Professional Development opportunities over the course of the year. Please note that the school is closed on these days.

The school is closed for all statutory and civic holidays and no childcare is provided:

- Thanksgiving (October)
- Winter Break – 2 weeks (end of December to early January)
- Family Day (February)

- Spring Break – 2 weeks (March)
- Good Friday (April)
- Easter Monday (April)
- Victoria Day (May)
- Canada Day (July)
- Civic Holiday (August)
- Labour Day (September)

Illnesses

A child’s physical ability to focus and participate fully in the day’s activities requires adequate sleep, good nutrition and full health. Children who are ill, “under the weather” or who have had an insufficient amount of sleep need to use their energy just to maintain themselves; as such, they are unable to benefit from being at school. Further, cold, flu, viruses, infections, and infestations spread easily within a classroom environment. If your child is ill, please do not send your child to school.

Keep your child home or see a physician, as appropriate, if the following symptoms or ailments arise:

- Oral temperature of 100 degrees F/37.8 degrees C or more within the previous 24 hours
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the previous 24 hours
- Exceptional crankiness, fretfulness, fatigue or listlessness
- Skin rash; ring worm; pin worms
- Persistent cough
- Sore throat (frequently with fever and/or nausea an indication of strep throat)
- Excessive sneezing or runny nose
- Inflammation of eyes/discharge from eyes
- Discharge from ears/pulling at ears and crying
- Head lice

Should a child display any of these symptoms/ailments during the school day, parents will be notified immediately and asked to pick up their child from school as soon as is practicable. If the parent cannot be reached, a person on the child’s emergency contact list will be asked to pick up the child. If it is suspected that the child has a contagious illness (e.g., chicken pox, pink eye, etc.) an additional form will be sent home that requires a physician’s signature prior to the child’s return to school. It is the parents’ responsibility to report any contagious illness to the office, so that other parents can be notified, if necessary.

Disease	Incubation Period	Exclusion	Other Criteria
<i>Chicken Pox (Varicella)</i>	10 to 21 days; commonly 14 to 16 days.	No exclusion, children can return with rash.	Contact with immunocompromised individuals, susceptible pregnant women, particularly those in the third trimester, or newborns should be avoided. Children should be seen by a physician as soon as possible if: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. fever (>38.3°C) lasts for more than 3 days or recurs, 2. redness, swelling and severe pain develop around a blister.

<i>Gastroenteritis – single case of unknown cause</i>	Depends on cause.	Exclude until 24 hours after diarrhea and vomiting is resolved, unless symptoms can be explained by a non-infectious reason.	If diarrhea recurs within 48 hours, it is recommended to be assessed by a health care professional to see if a stool specimen is needed.
<i>Gastroenteritis –outbreak</i>	Depends on cause, number of cases and source of infection.	Depends on cause, number of symptomatic individuals and source of infection. All outbreaks must be discussed with Ottawa Public Health. During on outbreak, persons with vomiting or diarrhea should be excluded until 48 hours symptom free before returning to work or childcare.	
<i>German Measles (Rubella)</i>	14 to 21 days.	Exclude for 7 days after onset of the rash.	Highly infectious.
<i>Impetigo</i>	Variable. Commonly 4 to 10 days.	Exclude until 24 hours after the initiation of antibiotic treatment.	Upon return, any draining or open blisters must be covered with a clean dry bandage.
<i>Influenza</i>	1 to 3 days.	Exclude for 5 days after the onset of symptoms, or until fever free and feeling better, whichever is shorter.	
<i>Measles</i>	7 to 21 days, commonly 10 days.	Exclude for 4 days after the onset of rash.	Highly infectious.
<i>Mumps</i>	12 to 25 days; average 16 to 18 days.	Exclude for 5 days from the onset of swelling.	
<i>Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis) - Bacterial</i>	24 to 72 hours.	Exclude until treated with antibiotic drops or ointment for 24 hours.	
<i>Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)- Viral</i>	12 hours to 12 days.	Not required if no eye discharge. Otherwise, children can return upon approval by health care professional.	
<i>Ringworm (Tinea)</i>	Usually 10 to 14 days.	Exclude until treatment has been initiated.	

<i>Streptococcal Infection (Strep throat, Scarlet fever)</i>	Commonly 1 to 3 days.	Exclude until 24 hours after treatment is initiated.	
<i>Streptococcal Infection (Invasive Group A Strep)</i>	Usually 1 to 3 days.	Exclude until 24 hours after treatment is initiated.	
<i>Whooping Cough (Pertussis)</i>	6 to 20 days, commonly 9 to 10 days.	Exclude for 3 weeks after onset of cough or until completion of 5 days of antibiotic treatment.	
<i>Other</i>	Recommendation of health care professional.		

After an illness, your child should return to school only if there are no restrictions on playing outside. OMS Montessori is not staffed to provide care for individual children who are not well enough to participate fully with their classroom peers due to illness.

For more information, you can read the Guidelines for Communicable Disease and Other Childhood Health Issues for Schools and Child Care Facilities (CCF) at ottawapublichealth.ca.

Medications

Certain health procedures, including the administration of medications during the school day or at related events, require daily written permission from the parent or guardian to be on file PRIOR to the procedure or medication being administered. If your child requires medication (prescription or non-prescription) during school hours, you must complete an authorization form and a staff member must agree to administer the medication. This form may be obtained from the main office. All medicines and permissions should first be submitted to the office and then stored in the classroom's locked medicine box. Under no circumstances will school personnel be permitted to administer medication without written authorization, except in the case of an emergency.

Other considerations for medicine administration include:

(1) Except as authorized in writing by a licensed physician and with written daily request of the parent or person exercising custodial control, prescription medication or over-the-counter medications shall not be given to a child.

(2) Non-prescription medication (over-the-counter):

(a) May be given to a child only with the written daily request of the parent; or person exercising custodial control of the child;

(b) Shall be administered according to the instructions on the label.

(3) The childcare facility shall keep a written record of the administration of medication, including: Date, time, amount and name of staff person giving the medication.

(4) Medication, including refrigerated medication, shall be:

(a) Stored in a separate, locked place, out of the reach of the child;

(b) Kept in the original bottle and properly labelled.

(5) Medication shall not be given to a child if the expiration date on the bottle has passed.

(6) Upper Elementary students may not self-administer medication while at school without a completed authorization form from the parent or guardian.

Accidents/Injuries

Student accidents and/or injuries are reported to parents by classroom teachers via an Injury Report. Most minor injuries (e.g., cuts, scrapes, bumps, falls, etc.) are tended to by faculty members. Should an injury occur that requires professional medical care, a parent (or, if unavailable, someone on the child's emergency contact list) will be contacted and either: (a) informed of the injury and the fact that an ambulance has been called; or (b) informed of the injury and the fact that the child is being transported by a staff member, when possible the Head of School, to an Emergency Room.

It is very important that each child's Student Information Form, which includes the names and phone numbers of persons with permission to act on behalf of the child's parents, as well as the child's physician's name, address and phone number, be complete and kept current at all times.

Serious Occurrence Notification

As required by the Ministry of Education in accordance with the General Regulations taken under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*, OMS Montessori will notify its community when it has reported a serious occurrence (Toddler and Casa levels) to the Ministry of Education. According to the General Regulation:

"serious occurrence" means:

- a. the death of a child while receiving childcare at a home childcare premises or childcare centre, whether it occurs on or off the premises,
- b. any serious injury to a child while receiving childcare at a home childcare premises or childcare centre, whether it occurs on or off the premises or,
- c. fire or other disaster occurring at a home childcare premises or childcare centre or,
- d. a complaint concerning operational, physical or safety standards at a home childcare premises or childcare centre or,
- e. abuse of a child within the meaning of the *Child and Family Services Act* by a staff member of a childcare centre, a home child care centre provider at a home child care premises or any other person while the child receives child care at a home child care premises or child care centre, whether it occurs on or off the premises ("Serious Occurrence").

Immunizations

Proof of immunization is required for childcare and school attendance. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring a child's immunization record is up to date with Ottawa Public Health. Toddler and Casa parents are required to provide the school with an updated record of their child's immunization. Students may be suspended from school until their immunization record is up to date, directly due to Ottawa Public Health's requirements of the school. For more information, contact Ottawa Public Health at (613) 580-6744.

Homework

A fundamental tenet of a Montessori school is that students' learning comes from stirrings within themselves, not from assignments from their teachers. Furthermore, after a school day, we believe that students should engage in free time and family activities without the pressure of mandated schoolwork. In other words, teachers at OMS Montessori do not assign young children nightly homework in the conventional sense of the word.

Homework assignments may be given that allow students to do their work at their own pace, with sensitivity to the varying schedules and routines of each family. Project work, approximately one per term, is given at the Elementary age levels. When students reach the Adolescent level (Grades 7 – 8), homework is an extension of the required daily work, which provides students with the opportunity to complete work at home (if not completed during the daily work cycle).

Technology

Computers, technology, and the Internet help us to extend the world around us: the same ethical, moral, and legal considerations apply to all technology-related endeavours.

Computers

Computers offer unique opportunities to educate, inform and communicate. The Internet serves as a dynamic, educational resource that has the potential to dramatically expand the classroom by delivering current information, data, and images from around the world.

However, the use of the school's computers and Internet is a privilege and not a right. Due to computers being an extension of everyday life, any action or comment that would raise concerns if committed "in-person" bears the same consequences and considerations if committed with the aid of a computer, or other electronic communication device. As such, students who violate the school's computer policies may face disciplinary and/or legal consequences for their actions.

General Use

Computer and Internet use is for school purposes only. Users may not change any settings on school computers, install programs or uninstall programs on any drive of any computer without the permission of the Head of School.

Printers and scanners are exclusively for school use. Use of the colour printer should be minimal. Students require permission from the teacher to print in colour.

Internet Access

Internet access is available for students aged nine (9) and older. Students and parents are required to sign an "Internet Acceptable Use Agreement" before Internet access will be granted.

Student access to the Internet will be limited to such sites as a teacher deems acceptable and makes available, although students are encouraged to take the responsibility of guarding against unacceptable information. Visiting other sites is prohibited.

E-mail Access

Students may access their personal e-mail accounts on school computers only if given permission by a teacher.

Prohibited Activities

The following activities are prohibited on school computers:

- (i) Downloading files
- (ii) Listening or viewing streaming content
- (iii) Playing online games
- (iv) Accessing violent, hateful or pornographic sites
- (v) Downloading and/or accessing sites that are instructive in illegal activities, such as hacker sites
- (vi) Producing documents that may be
 - a. Hurtful to others;
 - b. Used for illegal purposes (i.e., false IDs)
- (vii) Distributing any of the above
- (viii) Using chat, instant messaging or other such programs

- (ix) Purposefully harming or destroying any equipment or data on the network

In general, students are prohibited from doing the following:

- (i) Violating copyright
- (ii) Taking digital photographs, videos, or audio recordings of people without their consent
- (iii) Publishing text documents, digital images, video, or audio recordings of, or belonging to, other people on any social network or website without their permission
- (iv) Emailing, online chatting and postings on social networks that are not guaranteed to be private. Messages relating to, or in the support of, illegal or inappropriate activities will be reported to OMS Administration.
- (v) Using the network for unauthorized, illegal, inappropriate, or obscene purposes
- (vi) Accessing, vandalizing, damaging, or disabling the property of another user
- (vii) Engaging in any form of harassment

Use of Computer Programs

OMS Montessori has obtained licenses for all the programs on its computers. Students may not execute any program that is not licensed to the school. The school will neither aid nor give permission to a student to copy any of these programs from a school computer for personal or home use.

Copyright

OMS Montessori pays royalties to the Copyright Board of Canada for the use of copyrighted works. Under the independent and tutorial school licence, educators and students can:

- share and distribute relevant content
- make slides and overheads that enhance the classroom experience
- select and share content right away
- reward the original creator and publisher

Any copyrighted material from the Internet or other sources must be duly credited. Failure to cite a source is plagiarism and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Log-In

All users must login and logoff of the computer they are using. A person's login information is personal and confidential. It should not be shared.

Storage

Storage space on school computers is limited. As such, students may only store school-related work. Storage of games, photos, music and/or video files on OMS Montessori computers is prohibited unless they specifically related to school projects.

Privacy

As owners of the computers and networks, OMS Montessori reserves the right to monitor all students' access to computer equipment, any files stored by students on the school's computer systems and any websites visited by a student while logged onto a school computer or system.

Consequences of Violation

If a student breaks any of the computer policies, the following measures will be taken:

First Violation	Verbal/written warning.
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Second Violation	One-week suspension of that student's computer privileges. Meeting with the child's parents and the classroom teacher.
Third Violation	Meeting with the child's parents and the Head of School. Loss of computer privileges for such a length of time as the Head of School deems necessary.
Subsequent Violations	Please see school policies and procedures on student discipline.

Cell Phones & Other Communication Devices

Cell phones and other personal communication devices are necessary communication tools. However, their use inside the classroom has the potential to distract faculty and students from their duties and responsibilities. To help ensure that an environment focussed on learning is maintained, the use of cell phone and other communication devices is limited. Cell phones and other devices have a plethora of uses.

The following activities are considered "use" of a cell phone or other communication device:

Talking
Texting
Taking or sending photo or video
Browsing the Internet
Using the device in any other way yet to be discovered or implemented

Generally, students should refrain from bringing cell phones and other communication devices to school, as this will help to prevent these devices from becoming damaged and/or stolen. Should a student wish to bring a cell phone or another communication device to school, the device is to be turned off, or on silent, and stored in the student's school bag during school hours. In addition, the students may only access/use his or her communication device before or after school, with permission and visibility of a teacher. Use of communication devices is not permitted at recess, as use of the device is likely to discourage the student from exercise and/or play.

Consequences

Students who fail to adhere to these policies will have their cell phone or other communication device confiscated by the teacher or school administration to be returned at the end of the day.

Conferences, Reports Cards, Parent Orientation, Parent Education Meetings and School/Parent Communications

It is very important that parents, children, and school staff work closely together (refer to the Child-Teacher-Parent Triangle of Responsibilities in this Handbook). By doing so, we can make a positive impact in your child's life.

Parent/Guide Conferences

Teachers confer with parents in order to inform parents of their children's efforts, interests, social well being and receptivity to the learning environment. When appropriate, students are included in these Parent/Teacher Conferences, as their sharing of work and involvement in the conversations further the educational focus of the conference.

- Formal conferences between parents and their child’s classroom teacher are held twice a year: fall and spring. During these conferences, information and observations concerning the child’s progress are shared and strategies are planned that might be helpful to the child.
- Upper Elementary, Jr. High (Grades 7 – 8) and High School students participate in these conferences, **but Toddler, Casa and Lower Elementary students do not attend conferences** with their parents. Your Upper Elementary child starts in the conference with you, and the latter portion of the conference is dedicated to just the parent(s) and teacher(s). We do provide care for students who are just attending conferences.
- Teachers are unable to share information about other children, other families, administration, or financial accounts.
- Conferences are confidential.
- Conferences are mandatory. The attendance of both parents is preferred. Appointments must be kept or cancelled appropriately and rescheduled immediately. Rescheduled appointments are done at the convenience of the classroom teacher. Virtual conferences can be arranged.
- Conference dates are announced and scheduled by the Administration staff. The annual school calendar lists the dates for conferences, so that parents may make childcare arrangements well in advance of the school closings associated with conferences.
- Closing classes for conferences is intended to provide reasonable scheduling time for teachers and parents. Please do your best not to plan family vacations during Parent/Teacher Conferences, as this requires teachers to adjust their personal time to accommodate rescheduled appointments.

Progress Reports

Student progress reports are issued at the end of a three-year Cycle at the Casa level and once per year at the Elementary level, in June.

Student Records

The OSR

An Ontario Student Record (OSR) is maintained for every student in the Office Administrator’s office. The OSR is the record of a student’s progress through the Ontario educational system. It contains biographical data and a record of student academic achievement, including copies of all report cards and an up-to-date Ontario Student Transcript (OST) for Secondary Students.

The parents/guardians of a student have the right of access to the student’s OSR until the student turns 18, at which time the student must grant permission for a parent to view the records. The Head of School and faculty of the school have access to the OSR for the purpose of improving instruction of the student. The file is available for inspection by the parent (or the student, if the student is 18 years of age or older) but must remain in the Office Administrator’s office.

Parent Orientation

At the beginning of each school year, orientation meetings are conducted for parents. This orientation is important: all parents should attend. If you have children in more than one classroom environment, you should attend all pertinent meetings. Orientation meetings are not only for parents new to OMS Montessori. Policies, procedures, staffing and general information vary or change from year to year. Attendance at these meetings by all parents is equally important.

Parent Education Evenings

The Montessori method is unlike most other educational pedagogies in many respects. Parent education meetings are held to provide context for the specialized materials and processes encountered by the students in the Montessori environment. Hands-on learning opportunities are offered annually for parents in the areas of

curriculum overview (i.e., the cultural curriculum), mathematics and language, as well as other topics related to student assessment, progress reporting, and so forth. Parents should attend these meetings; they serve as a foundation for understanding the children's tasks and accomplishments.

School/Parent (and Parent/School) Communications

Communications throughout the school year between parents, students, teachers, administration, the Head of School and Board members may take many forms. In addition to those discussed in the previous paragraphs, some of these mediums are highlighted below.

OMS Montessori Student/Parent Handbook

This handbook is disseminated annually and when revisions are made. Parents are required to sign a statement affirming their receipt, reading and acceptance of this handbook.

OMS Montessori "News & Reminders"

The OMS News & Reminders is disseminated as needed via e-mail. It contains classroom highlights, school community news, important dates, program updates, announcements of upcoming events, and more.

OMS Montessori Social Networks

The school maintains a Facebook and Instagram account as well as a private YouTube channel.

Sporadic Notes, Memos, Announcements

Please check your child's daily items for any correspondence that may have been generated by the Head of School or teachers. OMS' Blue Bags are sent home with children, which is our primary method of delivering hardcopy notices that require your attention. Blue Bags are available at the Main Office for free upon enrollment and a replacement bag is \$10.00.

Notes, Phone Calls, Requests for Meetings

Small contacts are of great value in keeping the child's home and school life in touch. We encourage you to write notes or leave messages about information that would help teachers. Illness in the family, divorce or separation, or any event that affects the child's behaviour should be shared. Staff members are under the strictest code of confidentiality and will maintain your confidence. If you feel a need for additional information about your child, or a discussion that may take a longer period of time, please call the office, send an e-mail or write a note to your child's teacher requesting a meeting. Teachers return phone calls as the timeline for their classroom responsibilities permits, and within 24 hours. Impromptu discussions are difficult for teachers because their priority must be given to all the children under their care. Further, confidentiality is difficult to maintain in these circumstances, as children and other adults are near at hand. Scheduled conferences, meetings and phone calls are the most ideal way to communicate with your child's teacher.

Partnership with OMS families and other members of the community is important to OMS Montessori. There are circumstances when the school may request in-person meetings with parents to discuss concerns related to their child, account, conduct, etc.. It is imperative that parents attend these meetings to work on solutions with school officials.

Changes in Vital Information

Notify the office promptly if there are changes of address or telephone numbers (home or work; self or emergency contact persons; physicians) in order that written communications or emergency calls can reach you without delay. Further, please communicate to the school any changes in family structure, any time when a parent will be out of town, illness or death in the family, significant visitors, and so forth.

Communications Chart

For information regarding	Please speak first with
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child's progress • Classroom activities • Classroom assistant • Classroom procedures • Classroom observations • Day's events 	<p>Your child's classroom Teacher</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensing • Human Resources • Admissions • Tours/orientation 	<p>Bilingual Admissions Director/HR</p> <p>Julie Perreault, ext. 103</p> <p>admissions@omsmontessori.com</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment and re-enrolment agreements • Waitlist • OSR and student files • Special Events • Parent/Teacher Conferences • Licensing support 	<p>Administrative Coordinator</p> <p>Julie Lantaigne, ext. 104</p> <p>admin@omsmontessori.com</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities Rental • Property, facilities, maintenance 	<p>Property Manager</p> <p>Perry LeBlanc, ext. 102</p> <p>property@omsmontessori.com</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student absences • Change of address, information • Leave a teacher message • Request a school form 	<p>Reception</p> <p>Laurence Mary, ext. 100</p> <p>info@omsmontessori.com</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunch and snack program • Tours • Parent Portal questions • News & Reminders 	<p>Administrative Assistant</p> <p>Laura Kotick, ext. 102</p> <p>support@omsmontessori.com</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuition and account inquiries • Tax statements • Donations • Bursary 	<p>Finance Officer</p> <p>Leslie Baldwin, ext. 106</p> <p>finance@omsmontessori.com</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees and payments (including tuition, supervision, after school activities) • Account statements 	<p style="text-align: center;">Finance Assistant</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Louise Picard, ext. 107</p> <p style="text-align: center;">fin.asst@omsmontessori.com</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions and Concerns • Accreditation • Pedagogical issues • Licensing • Facility • Classroom teachers • Hiring • Academic policy • Placement of students • Standardized testing • Development/Fundraising • Admissions 	<p style="text-align: center;">Head of School</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Carrie Whalen, ext. 101</p> <p style="text-align: center;">carrie@omsmontessori.com</p>

The Board of Directors may be contacted regarding strategic direction or grievances that cannot be resolved by the Head of School.

President: Vir Advani – board@omsmontessori.com

Assessment Testing

OMS Montessori administers the Canadian Achievement Test/4 (CAT/4) each spring. Standardized testing is administered beginning at the Elementary levels, with results being mailed to parents at the end of the school year. Students in Grade 2 and older take the CAT/4 standardized test:

<https://www.canadiantestcentre.com/CAT4/CAT4-Home.php>.

Uses of Test Results

Standardized test taking is a learned skill and can be viewed as a practical life activity requiring practice in order to achieve mastery. Students generally will perceive these tests as such unless influenced otherwise. Our goal is for students to be familiar with, comfortable about and confident in taking standardized tests.

The school administration and teachers review standardized test results with an eye toward school-wide trends, as a means of monitoring cohesiveness of the curriculum continuum throughout the Elementary, Junior High and High School programs, and make recommendations regarding specific areas of the curriculum in need of gap-analysis.

Absenteeism

Tests must be administered to students who were absent due to illness or emergency in the week following their general administration. Students with unexcused absences during the week of testing may not have the opportunity to make-up testing during the regular school hours. Make-up tests would be at the teacher's discretion and schedule.

Field Trip Safety (Elementary)

The Head of School is responsible for always ensuring the safety of students. Field trip safety rules are established to help ensure that school excursions are safe and enjoyable for all who participate. We also understand that parents who volunteer for field trips make a significant commitment of time and take on a serious responsibility

for the safety of students. Whether on- or off-campus, classroom teachers are directly responsible for the students under their care. Prior to each field trip departure, teachers will present the safety rules to be followed by students and attending adults alike.

Education takes many forms and takes place in many different settings. As such, OMS Montessori may decide to take students on a field trip to visit a museum, project or historical site that compliments a subject they are learning in the classroom. A blanket field trip waiver is included in the Enrolment Package to Elementary families, which we request to be signed and returned before the beginning of the school year. The waiver permits OMS Montessori students to attend field trips (on- and off-campus) within the Ottawa city limits, without a second permission form to be signed.

Parents must have a Vulnerable Sector Screening before being approved to assist with a field trip.

Private Vehicles

While not part of regular school business, OMS Montessori may need to transport students in private vehicles in emergency or exceptional circumstances or where members of the faculty, and/or other volunteers, drive students to and from approved education activities under the auspices of the school. In such circumstances, OMS Montessori will act to ensure the safety of the students and adherence to all provincial driving laws.

Bus

School buses are a primary means of student transportation for field trips and other excursions. OMS Montessori expects that when on a bus, students will conduct themselves according to the following:

- (i) Be respectful and courteous to each other, as well as the bus driver and other passengers
- (ii) Use respectful and appropriate language
- (iii) Speak quietly to their neighbour – no shouting
- (iv) If using a public bus – offer courtesy seating to a person who is in need

OMS Montessori has developed a separate parent policy for bus transportation and field trip supervision; this form may be signed on the day of the field trip.

Clothing and Dress Code

Please label all loose clothing (i.e., rain boots, coats, sweaters, sweatshirts, hats, gloves, scarves, etc.) and personal belongings (e.g., lunch boxes, thermoses, books). It is the only way we can determine what item belongs to whom when something gets misplaced. A child may easily mistake a classmate's red sweatshirt for his own red sweatshirt if not labelled. If your child brings home an article of clothing that you do not recognize, please return it to school the next morning with a note attached stating it is a lost-and-found item.

Children should dress for comfort, freedom of movement and to protect their bodies from the elements:

- Young children need to be able to push down and pull up their own pants for efficient use of the washroom. Please promote this success by dressing your young child in elastic-waist pants or shorts. Overalls and pants with zippers, buttons and snaps can be quite challenging for young children.
- Dressy clothing sometimes makes a child hesitant about getting involved in work or play activities for fear of soiling the clothes. With gardening and art as important parts of the curriculum, it is a reality that children will at times come home 'smudged' from an active day at school.
- Clothing should not display aggressive or violent fantasy themes or slogans, acts or postures. The school serves a broad age range, and all members of the community should model appropriate behaviour and attire. As a rule of thumb, children should refrain from wearing clothing bearing images from popular culture and the media, but we are aware that it is quite prevalent and difficult to find clothing without such images on them.
- OMS Montessori reserves the right to make the final decision regarding the appropriateness of clothing.

Inclement Weather and Outdoor Gear

- Rain gear (i.e., raincoat, rain hat or hood) should be worn on rainy days. If it is not storming or down pouring, we try to allow the children outdoor time.
- EXCEPTION: Please do not send umbrellas with your children.
- Even when cold, children will be outside for play. Children need to be dressed appropriately for the temperature. Dressing in layers generally provides children with the option to adjust as needed.
- Please do not send a scarf with your child. Instead, send a neck warmer. In some situations, a scarf can be a choking hazard.
- In spring, autumn and year-round, please have a pair of rain boots and raincoat to remain at school. In winter, please have an extra set of mittens/gloves and a hat to remain at school. Snow pants should be brought to school on appropriate days.

Inclement Weather and Outdoor Activities

OMS Montessori receives alerts from Ottawa Public Health, including Extreme Cold and Extreme Heat and Humidity warnings. The Head of School will use their discretion to determine if weather conditions at the school conflict with maintaining a safe outdoor learning environment (e.g. recess, lunch, or class related activities).

Students will not go outside when the temperatures reach the following degrees:

Class	Temperature Boundaries
Toddler	- 20 degrees Celsius or colder (with windchill) / +35 degrees (with humidex)
Casa	- 24 degrees Celsius or colder (with windchill) / +35 degrees (with humidex) - At - 20, students will spend a reduced amount of time outside
Elementary	- 24 degrees Celsius or colder (with windchill) / +35 degrees (with humidex)

Footwear

Children feel much pride and independence if they can take off and put on their own shoes. Sneakers with Velcro fasteners work well for younger children. Older children who have learned to tie laces may wear laced shoes. Indoor shoes help children to move quietly and gracefully in the classroom and athletic shoes provide secure footing when playing. Children should not wear Crocs, jellies, sandals without a back strap (flip-flops), or slick-soled shoes. Rubber-soled shoes are the safe and preferable choice.

All indoor shoes must have non-marking soles.

Change of Clothing

All Toddler and Casa students must always have a full change of clothes left at the school, as accidents are not only of the bathroom kind. When cooler weather arrives, shorts and sleeveless tops should be replaced with a set of warmer clothing. Please label all items of these clothes with your child's name and provide to the classroom teacher in an extra-large zip-lock bag, also labelled with your child's name.

OMS Montessori Elementary Physical Education Dress Code Policy

Please find listed below the uniform items that are mandatory for all third-year Casa and Elementary students.

- OMS Montessori Logo T-Shirt (3r-year Casa, Lower and Upper Elementary)
- Shorts or Athletic Pants
- Socks, any length
- Athletic/Tennis shoes, shoestring or Velcro (no sandals, crocs, dress shoes, or marking soles)

The P.E. t-shirts can be ordered from Signatures 360 (form included in the Enrolment Package, also available in the main office).

All 3rd-year Casa and Elementary students will be required to wear an OMS Logo T-Shirt while on field trips.

Scent Awareness Policy

OMS Montessori is a scent aware school. We kindly ask our staff, students, parents and the greater community to be mindful of those who suffer from sensitivities to fragrances (i.e. perfume, cologne, deodorant, soap, fabric softener, laundry detergent, etc.).

Personal Objects

Children do not bring toys, comic books, trading cards, weapons, money or expensive jewellery to school. When these items enter the classroom of young children, tears often follow. Frequently, children will be confused about whom the toy belongs to and feuds begin. Toys also get in the way of the process of using the Montessori didactic materials.

Toddler and Casa students younger than Kindergarten age are required to rest for a short period daily. Parents are to provide a blanket for their own child. Cuddles are not permitted during napping as we focus on independence and self soothing.

Books and other objects that enrich the curriculum and can be shared with the class are welcome and should be marked with the child's name. If you have questions about the appropriateness of a particular item, please ask your child's classroom teacher.

Nutrition

A good breakfast is important for your child's school day. Foods high in protein and carbohydrates serve the child best. Sugar is discouraged because it alters some children's attention span and energy level. This applies to both snack and lunch. Please make a point of reading food labels to become aware of the level of sugar and high fructose corn syrup, as well as sugar substitutes and preservatives contained in common food items marketed to children. Many of these items can affect children adversely and often the nutritional value is questionable.

NUT-AWARE Policy

To maintain a safe environment for students with severe peanut allergies, food products must not contain nuts. OMS Montessori makes every reasonable effort to purchase nut free products for school events. Caterers, the school's volunteers and any rental parties are informed as well. Parents are asked to refrain from providing nut products for lunches for their children. Classroom celebrations must also abide by our nut free policy. Under no circumstances should nuts of any sort, or products containing nuts, be brought to school.

EpiPens Responsibility

Based on feedback from the experts at Anaphylaxis Canada, students with anaphylactic allergies in Elementary must wear their auto-injector at all times. OMS will store a second EpiPen in the Main Office. For Toddler and Casa students, one will remain in the child's classroom, and the second will be stored in the Main Office.

Lunch (pertaining to Elementary students and older)

Please send nutritious lunches for your child to eat each day. We recommend a protein source (cheese, meat), a fruit or vegetable (carrot sticks, sectioned oranges, dried fruit), whole grain bread or crackers and an unsweetened drink. Candy, chocolate, and soft drinks are not allowed at OMS Montessori. We ask that parents do not send Gogurts or Lunchables. Please do not send sugary snacks or sugary cookies, as students will be asked to wait to have these items when they are not at school. For more information, please visit: <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/> to view Canada's Food Guide.

Label your child's lunch box/bag and all containers or implements brought to use at lunch. As a rule, lunches should be packed with the idea of promoting your child's independence. Though we have microwaves, we do not encourage this as a rule and are not staffed to cook frozen entrées.

No Lunch

If your child forgets to bring their lunch to school, or you forget to send your child with a lunch, you/guardian will be contacted to bring food for your child.

Snacks

A snack shall include three (3) food groups. An example may be found below:

1. Milk and Alternatives
2. Meat and Alternatives
3. Vegetables and Fruits
4. Grain Products

Snack time is an appropriate opportunity for socialization. Participating in snack is optional for students. School-day snack is available mid-morning; Afternoon snack occurs by 3:15 p.m. If you have questions about snack, please direct them to your child's classroom teacher.

Restrictions:

Due to our efforts to promote positive nutritional intake and the increasing reports of behavioural research that supports a direct link between certain foods and behaviour, please do not send items containing:

- Products containing Red Dye 40
- Chocolate
- Splenda, Aspartame, NutraSweet, Saccharin, or other sugar substitutes
- Cookies – cookies are the treats that we reserve for celebrations only

Note: We regret that we cannot serve home baked or canned goods to Toddler and Casa aged children.

Food Allergy Policy

OMS Montessori recognizes that food allergies, in some instances, may be severe and occasionally life threatening. The foods most likely to cause allergic reactions are peanuts, tree nuts, dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, fish, and shellfish. Although most food allergies produce symptoms that are uncomfortable, persons with allergies to the above-listed foods can suffer more serious consequences. OMS Montessori has created this policy to reduce the likelihood of severe allergic reactions of students with known food allergies while at school.

Policy

- Parents must submit written protocols for students with allergies. These protocols should be designed to avoid exposure to foods to which the student is allergic.
- The office will work with parents to implement reasonable protocols submitted by parents.
- Information pertaining to a student's allergies will be shared with faculty and staff who have contact with the student, but otherwise will be kept as confidential as possible.
- OMS will provide anaphylaxis certification opportunities for faculty.
- OMS will ensure that a child prescribed epinephrine will have their EpiPen with them when on a field trip.
- OMS will strive to instruct faculty to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction and respond appropriately, as necessary.
- OMS may require the student/family to provide lunch and snacks to ensure the student's safety.

Peanut allergies are among the most common. Please note that OMS is a peanut and tree nut aware school.

Also:

- OMS Montessori will request that parents send mostly fresh fruits and vegetables to serve as snacks.
- OMS Montessori will avoid serving food with nuts but cannot guarantee that products with nuts will never

be present at OMS. Likewise, OMS cannot monitor products sold at athletic events or special student sales, products brought for potlucks or celebrations, or served during off-campus trips. Therefore, persons with severe food allergies must carefully monitor their food intake in these situations.

- OMS Montessori faculty will send all lunch items home with any peanut or tree nut items, which are included in a student's lunch.

Parent/Student Responsibility:

- Parents of students with allergies must submit to the Office Administrator protocols designed to avoid exposure to certain foods.
- Parents of students with life-threatening allergies must provide OMS Montessori with emergency medications and a written medical treatment protocol for their student for addressing allergy-related events (forms are available in the Enrolment Package). The office and classroom will maintain the medication and information.
- Parents are responsible to educate their child about managing their allergy at school, including, but not limited to, identifying "safe foods."
- If parents are uncertain about possible exposure to allergy-causing foods, they should provide meals or treats for their child.
- Parents of students with severe food allergies or multiple food allergies may be required to provide meals or snacks for their children.
- If a parent of a Toddler and Casa student is concerned about food allergies, the parent may provide their child's teacher with a supply of safe snacks to reduce the likelihood of accidental exposure.

OMS Montessori cannot guarantee that a student will never experience an allergy-related event while at school. OMS Montessori is committed to student safety, and therefore has created this policy to reduce the risk that children with allergies will have an allergy-related event.

Table Manners

Appropriate table manners are a life-skill that is a learned behaviour. Students are expected to behave appropriately during lunch by sitting properly while they are eating, using their indoor voices and showing respect to others.

During the meal, students are expected to keep their eating area tidy and free from crumbs, including their table, the chair on which they were sitting and the floor space under and around the table. Students who do not cooperate with these expectations will be asked to eat and clean up their space individually, until they are ready and able to consistently meet the expectations.

Special Celebrations/Birthdays

Birthdays at Montessori – Every child is given the opportunity to celebrate their birthday at school. Parents may be asked to provide a short history for their child along with a few pictures to share with classmates during the birthday celebration. Please remind your child's teacher at least a few days before your child's birthday. If your child's birthday comes during the summer or on a school holiday, please contact your child's teacher to schedule a celebration time.

Parents may choose to provide a special birthday snack for the whole class. Accepted snacks are cheese and crackers, fruit trays, veggies and dip, etc. Please do not provide cakes, cookies, or sugary treats. Due to certain dietary restrictions and food allergy considerations, please check with your child's teacher first. For Toddler and Casa students, we are not allowed to serve homemade birthday treats, as all food served to children aged 2 to Kindergarten must be the product of a commercial kitchen.

Some children like to choose a book or other gift to give the school on their birthday. This is by no means required but, if you wish to do this, it will be a welcome addition to the festivities. Discuss an appropriate selection with your child's teacher.

Birthdays Away from School

No child likes to be omitted from a birthday party invitation. The very young child simply does not understand that the child has not been included; the older children have their feelings hurt easily when they discover they have not been included. Every attempt should be made to keep private birthday celebrations private, unless each child in the classroom is being invited.

- Do not distribute birthday invitations at school UNLESS each child in the classroom is being invited. Please coordinate distribution with your child's teacher.
- Do not send a child to school with a birthday gift for another child.
- Do not make arrangements to transport or carpool children to birthday parties from the school unless each child in the class is invited.
- Do not make arrangements to transport or carpool children back to the school from a birthday party.

Holidays and Other Celebrations

As part of the Montessori cultural curriculum and three-year cycle, children study holidays and cultural observances from a global, anthropological perspective. We welcome your suggestions about cultural observances in which the students might participate with your assistance.

Financial Arrangements/Withdrawals

Tuition policy and procedures are stated on a child's Enrollment Agreement and are reviewed annually by the Finance Committee. Please ask for a copy of this document if you have misplaced it. Highlights include:

- The enrollment process includes payment of a \$250 non-refundable admission fee and of a deposit, as well as receipt of a signed Enrollment Agreement, which obligates the responsible person to make the entire student's tuition payments for the academic year covered by the contract.
- Payments 30 days in arrears and beyond are assessed at a 1% monthly finance charge and reviewed by the finance committee. If payments are 60 days in arrears, the Head of School will act to have the child withdrawn from school. In this event, the child's withdrawal does not release the enrollment contract signatory(ies) from financial obligations of the enrollment contract. When satisfactory arrangements have been made with the Finance Officer and/or Head of School to pay the amount due, the student may be readmitted, if a space remains open in the class. Student records will not be released unless a student's account is paid in full. A \$500 non-payment fee will be added to the amount due.
- A child's withdrawal, suspension or dismissal from OMS Montessori does not release the contract signatory(ies) from the obligations of the enrollment contract unless:
 - The withdrawal is received in writing before June 1st: 10% of the Annual School Fees shall be retained by the school.
 - On or after June 1st: 10% of the Annual School Fees shall be payable for each month or part month which has passed, and 40% of the Annual School Fees allocable to the remaining months shall become immediately payable. This is based on a 10-month academic school year.
- Tuition and ancillary fees are processed through the Financial Office of the school. Occasional users of Before and After School Care are billed at the end of the month, usually in time periods of 20 school days (October through June). Fees for Before and After School Care are net-30 days. Unpaid Before or After School fee obligations are treated as unpaid tuition as per the enrollment agreement.

If you require receipt of payment of childcare expenses, please call the Finance Officer at (613) 521-5185, ext. 106 or e-mail finance@omsmontessori.com.

Tuition Tax Receipts

Tuition tax receipts are issued on or before the end of February of each school year. They represent the amount of tuition used by the child for the previous calendar year. Children under the age of 7 receive a tax receipt for the full amount of tuition used. Children who turn 7 in the tax year or are older receive a receipt for 18% of the tuition used, which represents the portion of the day that is considered child care.

Admissions

Selecting a school is one of the most important decisions you will make for your child. OMS Montessori strives to provide prospective families with all the information necessary to make that decision and we look forward to partnering with you.

The Process:

1. Private Tour of the School or Attend an Open House

These individualized tours take place during the school day. During your tour, we will discuss: Montessori philosophy, important characteristics of a Montessori school, and a description of the programs offered at OMS Montessori. You will receive additional information about your program of interest following your tour.

We provide two Open Houses each academic year, usually in November and January.

2. Apply to OMS Montessori

Return the application form to our office. *Applications for Elementary students must be accompanied by a \$250.00 non-refundable admission fee and a copy of the student's most recent report card and any other pertinent information you feel is important to share with us. Prospective Elementary students are invited to join a class for one or two days as part of the application process and to determine that OMS Montessori will be the right fit for them.

3. Offer of Enrolment Contract

The final step in the process is to be offered a contract. Your child's space is confirmed once OMS Montessori has received the signed contract and deposit fee. (Please note: the \$250 admission fee is only due with the contract for Toddler and Casa families.) Welcome to the OMS Montessori community!

Applications & Contracts

For All Families, an application for admission must be returned to OMS Montessori Administration before a child is considered to be on the waiting list.

For Elementary, Junior High and High School Families, an application for admission and non-refundable admission fee of \$250.00 must be turned into the Admissions Director before a child is considered to be on the waiting list.

For New Families, applications for admission are first made available for new families after a parent/guardian has toured the school. Receiving an application for admission places a student on the waitlist, and in Elementary, an invitation to shadow in a classroom will be given once the student's records have been reviewed and OMS determines that we may be a good fit for the student. Contracts are distributed after the re-enrollment period for current students. This usually takes place in February.

For Current Families, an application is especially important for siblings. Please do not wait until registration time to notify the school of a younger sibling. Without an application on file, your current student's sibling is not

considered on the waiting list and is not eligible to register. Please be sure you have an application on file. Applications for siblings are distributed during the month of November. Current families are offered contracts at the beginning of January and are due toward the middle of January, before new families are offered contracts. After the deadline date, available space is offered to families on the waiting list and re-enrolment is not guaranteed.

Registration, Tuition, Fees, Records and Privacy

Sibling applications, to guarantee space for the following school year, must be submitted no later than December of each year. After the re-enrollment time frame has been realized, OMS Montessori will begin to offer contracts to siblings and then to new families and based on limited availability, a spot for a current student is no longer guaranteed.

New families are offered contracts after the re-enrollment window has passed and continues until spaces are filled. A tuition deposit is required, including a signed Enrolment Agreement commitment. A registration fee is not required for Toddler and Casa-aged students until an Enrolment Agreement is offered, as per section 75.1 of Ontario Regulation 137/15. A \$250.00 non-refundable admission fee is due with the Application for Admissions for Elementary, Junior High and High School students.

The Administrative Coordinator and Finance Officer handle tuition and fees. Payment options are available, including monthly installments using preauthorized withdrawals. Please direct questions to the Administrative Coordinator by calling the school office, ext. 104.

Records required for new students include a current Immunization Record (for Toddler and Casa students), a copy of each student's original birth certificate, passport or baptismal certificate, a signed Enrollment Agreement, and a completed Student Information Form with emergency contact information.

It is required by Ontario law that OMS Montessori have these records on file for your child. If we do not have them, your child will not be permitted to attend school.

Additional forms from the Enrolment Package are also required, based on your child's program.

Privacy in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, your child's records are kept strictly confidential and are kept in a locked file in order to protect your privacy.

Waitlist Procedure

Applicants wishing to enroll at OMS Montessori can have their name added to our waitlist if a spot in our programs is not immediately available. We necessitate having a tour before making this commitment, as an admission application must be completed before the student will be added to our waitlist. Submitting the application does not guarantee admission. Applicants will be contacted once a spot becomes available. Offers of enrollment are given according to the following Enrollment Seniority Procedure for New or Waitlisted Applicants.

Enrollment Seniority Procedure for New or Waitlisted Applicants

Space Availability:

In order for a waitlisted child or new applicant to be offered a spot for enrollment, a spot must be vacant in our Toddler or Casa program which matches (or is later than) the month in the school year which the child is applying for.

Age of the Child:

Applicant's age must match the age-appropriate opening in order to be offered the spot for that school year.

Application Date:

The Application date is considered when more than one family applies for the same spot. When more than one applicant is applying for an opening in the Toddler or Casa program, the offer of enrollment will be made in priority sequence to students according to date (day, month, year) that their application was received in the OMS Montessori office.

Please note that all offers of enrollment in our Casa program are conditional on the child being toilet trained. Children in diapers or disposable pants will not be able to have a place in our Casa program.

The Beth Mackay Bursary Fund

The Beth Mackay Bursary Fund allows OMS Montessori to maintain a diversity of students and families in its community by providing financial assistance to those who would not otherwise be able to remain at OMS Montessori.

No more than 50% of tuition will be covered by the bursary, and the bursary will not be available to those who are not current Elementary students of OMS Montessori. **The bursary is not available to Toddler and Casa students as rates have been significantly reduced through the CWELCC program, thus allowing a diversity of students to enter the school.**

Criteria for Financial Assistance

The criteria will be applied in the following order of priority:

1. Financial need
2. To finish a three-year cycle in a class
3. The length of time the child has spent at OMS Montessori

Financial Need

Financial need will be determined by *Apple Financial Services*, an external company that will assess the family's finances and determine the amount of money the family can afford to pay for tuition. Applying parents will pay \$125.00 per application to *Apple Financial Services*. Please note that there is an additional \$40.00 fee for a second application for the same student by the other parent.

Review

The Head of School or designate, will review the applicants and determine eligibility based on the above criteria. The name of the family applying for the bursary will remain confidential. Each application will be assigned a number. The application form will include information required by the criteria. The documents from *Apple Financial Services* will be assigned an application number as well, so that the committee is able to consider that information in a confidential manner.

Timeline

The deadline for a bursary application is in early December of each calendar year and is indicated on the school calendar. Once the decision has been made, all families who have applied will be contacted and given an answer. If a decision cannot be made until after the January re-enrolment deadline, a one-week extension will be granted to the applying families.

The Funds

The primary source of bursary funding will be from donations to the Bursary Fund. All donations are eligible for a tax receipt. Fundraising will also come from the fundraising activities of the school. The percentage of the profits

of each fundraising event that will be directed to the Bursary Fund will be determined and publicized prior to the event. The bursary funding is placed in a treasury account. Some of the Fund will be used directly for bursaries; some will grow the capital in the Fund. Eventually, the interest on the capital will be used for the bursaries. The application process will be published in the News & Reminders in autumn.

Child Abuse Laws

The protection of children is paramount. All members of the OMS community — staff, faculty, parents, and students — have a duty to support the school in its goal of creating a safe and orderly environment that promotes respect, civility and dignity. Furthermore, they have a duty to report suspected or alleged incidents of hazing or initiation-related activities as prohibited by this policy. To protect and promote the dignity, safety, and well-being of its students, and as directed by this policy, OMS Montessori has a responsibility to investigate and, as appropriate, apply disciplinary action for any incidents which compromise the safety and well-being of its students. The duty to report the sexual or physical abuse of a child to The Children's Aid Society is required of faculty and volunteers at the school.

Especially with younger children, adults must be responsible for protection from as well as prevention of abuse. Because the problem may lie within or near home, the educator who sees the child daily becomes the most likely person to act as the child's benefactor. Therefore, OMS Montessori abides by The Child and Family Services Act. In some instances, the school has a duty to report incidents of abuse to provincial authorities under the *The Child and Family Services Act*.

Outside Care-Conflict of Interest

It is inappropriate for parents to employ OMS Montessori faculty and staff for in-home childcare. This policy is furnished to maintain the professional integrity of our school program, unless approved by the Head of School.

Parents of OMS Montessori children must refrain from discussing OMS students or issues when they are in the company of OMS teachers at social events, sports events and public encounters. Mini-conferences should not occur away from school.

Crisis Response Plan

OMS Montessori has a Crisis Response Plan that faculty review regularly. During a crisis, our main medium for communication to parents is e-mail. If we do not have your e-mail address, you will not receive communication regarding our response to the crisis.

Safety Drills

OMS Montessori, as required by the Ministry of Education, practises regular fire drills and evacuation procedures according to the guidelines set forth required under Regulation 454 of the Revised Regulations of Ontario, 1990 (Fire Code). Fire drills are conducted each month. Three additional emergency protocols are in place and are practised every academic year. They are:

- Shelter in Place (external environment threat)
- Hold and Secure (danger near the school)
- Lockdown (danger inside the school)

In the case of an emergency, all building occupants (students, employees, and visitors) are expected to follow procedures under the direction of school Administration.

Transportation Policy

Children are transported for field trips by a licensed and insured bus service. In some cases, Upper Elementary, Junior High and High School students will use public transit, OC Transpo, to get to and from their desired location with staff and volunteer parents. A parent or teacher may transport Junior High and High School students. A general permission form is signed at the beginning of the school year for all Elementary students. Parents will be informed of field trips one week in advance.

Videotaping and Photography

Any videotaping or photography in classrooms must be cleared in advance by contacting the Head of School. Parents have the right not to sign the image release portion of their child's Enrollment Agreement, in which case their child's pictures will not be used internally or externally. OMS Montessori utilizes photos in the monthly newsletters and the News & Reminders.

Emergencies

If there is an emergency or change of plans at home while the child is at school and you need to reach your child or child's teacher, please call the school office. If you reach our voicemail, please leave a message.

Right to Amend

The Head of School of OMS Montessori reserves the right to amend this Handbook.

Telephone Calls & Phone Numbers

Callers may leave a message on voicemail at any time, day, or night. School staff check messages in the morning and often throughout the day. If there is a reason that you will be late in picking up your child, or if your child is ill, please note that in your message.

To access voicemail and leave a message, dial (613) 521-4066 and enter the extension number of the person you are calling.

Contact Information for School

The office is open from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. except for days when the school is closed, or an early closing is scheduled.

General Information

OMS Montessori Website: <http://www.omsmontessori.com>

Office Hours

Monday through Friday: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Contact

Telephone	(613) 521-5185
Facsimile	(613) 521-6796
Carrie Whalen <i>Head of School</i>	(613) 521-4066 ext. 101 carrie@omsmontessori.com
Julie Perreault <i>Bilingual Admissions Director</i>	(613) 521-4066 ext. 103 admissions@omsmontessori.com
Leslie Baldwin <i>Finance Officer</i>	(613) 521-4066 ext. 106 finance@omsmontessori.com
Louise Picard <i>Finance Assistant</i>	(613) 521-4066 ext. 107 fin.asst@omsmontessori.com
Julie Lantaigne <i>Office Administrator</i>	(613) 521-4066 ext. 104 admin@omsmontessori.com
Laura Kotick <i>Administrative Assistant</i>	(613)-521-5185 ext. 102 support@omsmontessori.com
Perry LeBlanc <i>Property Manager</i>	(613) 521-4066 ext. 102 property@omsmontessori.com
Laurence Mary <i>Receptionist</i>	(613) 521-4066 ext. 100 info@omsmontessori.com

Appendix One: Recommended Resources

Montessori Philosophy and Pedagogy

Maria Montessori – “The Child in the Family”

Maria Montessori – “The Secret of Childhood”

Maria Montessori – “The Discovery of the Child”

Angeline Stoll Lillard & Trevor Eissler – “Montessori, The Science Behind the Genius”

Aline Wolf – “A Parent’s Guide to the Montessori Classroom”

Tim Seldin and Paul Epstein – “The Montessori Way”

Elizabeth Hainstock – “The Essential Montessori”

Paul Polk Lillard – “Montessori Today”

Parenting

Alfie Kohn – “Unconditional Parenting: Moving from Rewards and Punishment to Love and Reason”

Barbara Coloroso – “Kids Are Worth It: Giving Your Child the Gift of Inner Discipline”

Recommended Websites

Montessori: The International Montessori Index:

www.montessori.edu/index.html

The Montessori Foundation and the International Montessori Council

www.montessori.org

Montessori Connections: The Website for the Montessori Community

www.montessoriconnections.com

American Montessori Society:

www.amshq.org



Student/Parent Handbook Acceptance

I have read and understand the OMS Montessori 2024-2025 Student/Parent Handbook and agree to follow the school policies and procedures as stated.

Student(s) Name(s)

Student signature (Elementary)*

Date

** portions applicable to the student, based on parent perspective.*

Parent/guardian signature

Date

Please print this page, sign, and return it to the office before the beginning of the school year.

For office use only: received on: _____