

One World Montessori School



Parent Handbook

“The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six, for this is the time when a man’s intelligence itself, his greatest implement, is being formed.

At no other age has the child greater need of intelligent help.”

–Dr. Maria Montessori

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Section 1: Introduction

Dear Parents:

Welcome to *One World Montessori School*! We are so pleased to have you and your child join our community. Please take the time to read this handbook thoroughly, and then keep it in a handy place for frequent reference. All parents are expected to be familiar with the school policies and to abide by them.

Sincerely,

Debi Franz

Owner, *One World Montessori School*

Mission Statement: The mission of *One World Montessori School* is to provide a quality educational program as an alternative to the standard method of education. It is our mission, through the Montessori methodology, to meet individual children's needs while simultaneously creating an atmosphere of cooperation, teamwork, and group participation involving parents in unique student-related programs. We strive to increase intellectual growth and a continued desire and enthusiasm to learn in each and every student.

Goals: *One World Montessori School* has as its goal to serve the community by providing an authentic Montessori environment and education for all students. The four core curriculum areas of Practical Life, Sensorial, Math, and Language, are enhanced by Cultural Studies including Music, Art and Geography. We believe in Maria Montessori's philosophy that all children are unique, curious about their world, and are born with a desire to learn. We respect a child's individuality and learning style, and it is our goal to provide an environment where the child will have a quality learning experience.

Section 2: Admissions

All Age Levels: A tour is arranged where the family members may tour the school with the Director, who will explain what happens during class. This is a time to ask questions to determine how your child will do in this environment. If at all possible, an observation should be arranged, so that the parent can see first-hand how learning occurs in our school. Most likely, the observation will be on the same day as the tour. An application is completed in a timely manner. All documents are required upon return of the packet. Siblings of current students or former students will have first priority for enrollment. Our school has an open enrollment, depending on spaces available. If no spaces are available, the child may be placed on a waiting list after submitting a completed waiting list form, having a tour, and paying the \$25.00 non-refundable waiting list fee.

The Placement Process: In traditional school settings, a child's placement in a classroom is often determined by the child's ability to get along with the teacher (and vice versa). One World Montessori School is not a teacher-centered educational system: it is child-centered. When students are moving from one program into another, their assets and strengths are analyzed, and then students are placed in a learning community that needs their gifts. Placement is determined by matching the skills and needs of the individual with the skills and needs of the learning community. The teacher is only a small part of the learning community.

Pre-Primary: The pre-primary (toddler) community is a gathering of children from 18 months of age to three years, who have established independent walking. As spaces are limited, children may need to be placed on the waiting list. Children in pre-primary are not required to be toilet-trained.

Primary: The child should be at least 3 years of age, or have previous Montessori experience. The child must be fully toilet-trained and weaned. Manageable behavior and obedience are expected. The child should be able to follow simple directions such as, "Put the puzzle on the shelf and come sit down." To provide maximum advantage of the Montessori methodology, we recommend at least a 3 year program, consisting of both primary and kindergarten. If no spaces are available in the school, the child may be placed on a waiting list after submitting a completed waiting list form, having an interview with the Director, and paying the \$25.00 non-refundable waiting list fee. Placement is dependent upon space available.

Kindergarten: An afternoon kindergarten program with a limited amount of spaces is available. Minimum age of entering Kindergarten is usually 4 ½ years, if the child exhibits signs of readiness. Each public elementary school's admission process is different, so we recommend that all parents make sure that their child's future elementary school will accept our program as a replacement for public Kindergarten. They may also want to give your child an assessment test. When classroom occupancy has reached the limit of our license, children's names may be placed on a list and chosen to fill vacancies depending on spaces available.

Tuition: Tuition is due on the 1st or 15th of each month, unless prior arrangements have been made. Tuitions not paid within 3 days of the due date will result in an \$8.00 per day late fee. Mid-year enrollments are pro-rated for tuition only; all other fees still apply.

Section 3: Attendance, Tardiness, and Discipline

Attendance: All One World Montessori School students, even our youngest, are expected to attend school on a daily basis, arriving before the start of the school day. Even though One World is less formal and more flexible than most schools, consistent attendance and prompt arrival are still essential. Late arrival is disruptive and inconsiderate to the rest of the class, and nothing can be more damaging to a child's education than irregular attendance. Consistency and routine are important to every child's development, but especially important for our younger students. Every time a child misses school, for whatever reason, there is a period of readjustment as he tries to get back into the routine of his work. The longer the absence, or when he consistently misses days of school, the more detrimental it becomes to his educational development. If you know your child will be absent, please notify the school in advance. If not, please call the morning of to let us know he will not be in school. **If your child is contagious, please notify the school so that we may tell the other parents.** Whenever your child needs to be excused early from school, please send a note to the teachers indicating the nature of the absence and the time when you will want him to be excused from class.

Tardiness: Classes begin with morning lessons and a work time, which help children succeed during their school day. It is very important that children arrive on time (8:15—8:30 am). Children often feel embarrassed about coming into school late. Please make every effort to enhance your child's self-esteem and achievement at school by being on time. If you must arrive late, please do not disturb the classroom. Instead, give your child to the Director and she will take him/her to the classroom.

Discipline: All children will be directed to positive choices for their behavior at school. The Montessori environment encourages students to develop self-control. However, when children come from other schools, or from home environments that do not reflect our philosophy, it sometimes takes time for this sense of freedom and choice to make a difference in a child's self control. We expect a lot from our students, and we find that most will "rise to the occasion". If a child is having a particular behavioral problem that is not corrected after using positive classroom management, an incident report will be sent home for the parents to read and sign. After three incident reports have been sent home, if the problem is not resolved, the parents will be called in to a meeting with the lead teacher and Director to determine if the child should be asked to leave the school. There is a possibility that the child may then be expelled.

Section 4: Arrival, Departure, and Signing-Out

Arrival: When dropping off your child, please park your car in the parking lot and accompany him/her to the building. When picking up your child, please do not leave your car running or parked in the circular drive. If you are in a hurry, you may call the director to bring your child to the circular drive to be picked up.

Departure: When picking up your child, please make contact with the staff member supervising your child before taking him/her out of the group. All children must be signed out. We cannot allow your child to leave campus with anyone who is not on your dismissal form unless you give us written permission. Everyone who picks up your child for the first time must be prepared to show an ID to the teacher in charge and/or the Director. Please remind them to also sign out. At arrival and dismissal time, teachers are first and foremost responsible for the children. It is difficult for them to engage in conversation with parents. If you need to deliver a message or consult with a teacher, either send a note with your child or notify the Director. **If you have business in the school, please park in the designated parking areas, not in the circular driveway, on the side of the street, or in the fire lane. Please do not leave your car running.**

Signing Out: When dropping off and picking up a child, all parents must write sign in and out in the front office. The sign-in sheet contains a space for the child's name, time of arrival and your signature.

Saying “Goodbye” (separation): To help your son or daughter to become more independent, emotionally healthy, and well-adjusted, we recommend the following practices:

- Children should be walked in, not carried.
- Children should put their own lunchbox and jacket on the hook.
- Present your child to the teacher or assistant upon arrival. The greeting between teacher and child is invaluable. Many things about your child’s health and state of mind can be determined in that brief amount of time, and nothing should interfere with it. The teacher or assistant will help the child to join into classroom activities.
- Goodbyes at school should be part of a normal, everyday routine every child goes through. Separation should be sweet and brief, with reassurance about the planned pick-up time.
- Parents should encourage their children to make friends with the teachers and look forward to being at school without feeling guilty or disloyal to a parent. Often, when a child cries or says he does not want to come to school, it is because his parents are in doubt or feeling guilty over their decision to send him to school. These are normal feelings for a parent, but a child can easily sense when his parents are feeling vulnerable. Try your hardest to keep a positive attitude at drop-off time.

Extended Day: The extended day program hours are from 3:45 pm until 6:00 pm. Our staff cannot come in earlier than 7:00 am or remain later than 6:00 pm, as our insurance does not cover us past these hours. Please plan to arrive within these limits. All students who are picked up late will be sent to the extended day program. There will be a \$10 charge for occasional use.

Please keep in mind that to maintain our student/staff ratios in the extended day program, we cannot always accommodate unexpected students. All students enrolled in the extended day program will be offered a variety of extracurricular activities including: art, crafts, music, drama, dance, and physical education. These classes are taught by different teachers from our school, parent volunteers, and guest teachers. Activities will frequently change, at the discretion of the teachers and volunteers. Parents are invited to share their talents and interests with the children by leading or assisting with the extended day program at any time during the year.

Section 5: Parent/School Connection

We value frequent, timely, and open communication with you about your child. We will use many media to communicate with you (phone, email, newsletters, written notes, conferences, progress reports, etc.). Please let us know if you prefer one form of contact over the others.

Newsletter: A school newsletter is published monthly, containing information about upcoming events, as well as announcements regarding members of the One World community. Most questions that are asked by parents are usually answered in the monthly newsletter. Any contributions must be submitted to the director at least a week before the first of the month. The newsletter is distributed to the oldest child in each family, and is also posted on our website: www.1worldmontessori.com.

Google Group: An internet group has been created for parents and teachers to discuss upcoming events and to answer everyday questions that a parent may have. There is a link to this group on our website, under the “Parent Info” tab.

Emails: From time to time, the school will email parents about upcoming school events, deadlines, or special notices. The school director will also use email to send notifications to parents about reportable illnesses, such as strep throat, in lieu of paper notes. Please make sure the school has an up-to-date email address on file for each parent.

Classroom Observation: All parents are invited to observe their child in class. However, we do not recommend parent observation until your child has adjusted to being at school, or at the beginning of the school year, when we have new students. Please let the office know ahead of time, in order to avoid overcrowding in the classroom. Pick up and sign the observation guidelines form in the office prior to observation.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: Parent/teacher conferences are conducted 3 times per year—October, January, and April. There is no excuse good enough for missing these conferences, as the teachers are willing to be very flexible in working around your schedule. Your child deserves for you to attend these important meetings. Sign-up sheets will be available a week prior to conferences on the door of your child’s classroom.

Parent Education Nights: Parent education classes are held each month, usually on the last Thursday. On busy months, we may not have a parent

meeting. Various aspects of Montessori education and philosophy are discussed at these meetings. If there is a topic that you are interested in learning about, please let the Director know. Childcare will be provided at these classes for children big enough to play on the playground. Classes typically begin at 7:00 pm and last about an hour.

Handling Parent Concerns/ Complaints Procedure: If a problem exists, One World wants it corrected as quickly as possible. This can only be achieved if it is identified immediately. Parents are asked to refrain from discussing their concerns with other parents, instead following this procedure:

- Parents with concerns should first discuss them with the lead teacher of their child's class. Other staff members have been asked to avoid discussing any concern with a parent that has not been addressed by the classroom lead teacher.
- If the classroom lead teacher cannot resolve the concern independently and to the satisfaction of the parent, within 24 hours the lead teacher will bring the matter to the attention of the Director.
- If a parent brings a concern to the Director without first consulting the lead teacher, the Director will ask the parent to confer first with the lead teacher.
- If the lead teacher is unable to arrive at a solution, the lead teacher should ask the parent to schedule a conference with the Director.
- If the Director is unable to arrive at a solution satisfactory to the parent, within 24 hours the Director should bring the matter to the attention of the Owner. For convenience and expediency, the Director may ask the parent or teacher involved to present the matter to the Owner.

Section 6: Health Policies

Illness or Injury: In case of illness or injury while at school, parents will be contacted immediately. Parents are asked on the Application for Admission for emergency contacts. If necessary, the sick child will be transported by ambulance to the hospital. Current immunization papers or an authorized alternative must be maintained while the child is enrolled.

Children with a diagnosed bacterial infection may return to school 24 hours after beginning treatment with antibiotic medication, if they are able to participate normally in the program. Should your child contact a contagious illness, please notify the school immediately so that other parents

can be notified to the possibility of exposure. Guidelines issued by the Texas Dept. of Family and Protective Services dictate readmission criteria. Contact the offices or see website at: www.dfps.state.tx.us for details. All classroom staff are trained in First Aid and CPR.

We ask that parents keep their child home on days that the child has:

- Inflamed eyes or ear, or a heavy discharge from either
- A rash
- A temperature over 99 degrees (child must be fever-free for 24 hours before they may return to school)
- An upset stomach or vomiting
- Any contagious disease, i.e. chicken pox
- A contagious bacterial infection, i.e. strep throat
- Any condition which requires him/her to stay inside during playtime or prevents him from participating in routine activities
- A runny nose or cough

Medication: Our staff will administer medication no more than once a day. All medication must be furnished in the original prescription container, with an appropriate dispenser, marked with the child's name, date, and directions for use, placed in a labeled plastic ZipLock bag, and handed to a staff member with a fully completed Medication Authorization form. The director can supply you with this form, or you may print it from our website. **The school and its staff accept no responsibility or liability for any error or omission regarding administration of medication.**

Section 7: Personal Items

Show And Tell: We encourage children to bring objects of educational value to school for show and tell on Fridays. Some examples of appropriate items for show and tell are: plants, flowers, shells, nature and science objects, tapes, books, current newspaper articles, and pictures. We ask for cooperation from the parents in seeing that toys, money, jewelry, or other valuables stay at home. The school cannot be held responsible if items are lost at school. We also ask that Barbies, Disney toys, action figures, Legos, and other such fad items not be brought to school. These items only cause trouble, as the children cannot play with them during the school day, and they are easily lost or broken. Cowboy boots, guns, holsters, gum, and candy also fall into this category. Live animals may be brought to school, with permission from the Director. State Licensing must be notified if any live animal being brought to the school.

Lost and Found: A lost and found box is located in the school's kitchen. Any items left in the lost and found box for over a month will be donated to Goodwill. Any coats left for over a month will be donated to Coats for Kids. **Please clearly label all clothing and jackets with your child's name before bringing them to school.** We cannot be held responsible for loss of clothing.

Clothing/Toys: Children's clothing should not be an obstacle to their enjoyment of the activities at school. Their clothes should allow them to run and climb and play freely. Certain accessories are a distraction to children at school such as: jewelry, purses, hats, sunglasses, toys, and money. These items are better left at home. We have chosen to have the children in Primary classes wear uniforms at school, in order to avoid distractions and competition among peers (not required for our pre-primary students). Uniform skirts for the girls are available from www.buckheaduniforms.com. Any style that comes in 2M plaid is acceptable. Both girls and boys wear white polo-style shirts, which may be purchased at the store of your choice. We recommend www.landsend.com.

Boys wear khaki pants, which can also be purchased at the store of your choice. Soft-soled shoes should be worn to enable your child to effectively participate in activities which will develop coordination. Hard leather-soled shoes, cowboy boots, flip flops, and sandals can be hazardous on the playground, as well as defeat the purpose of these activities. **Shoes with closed-toes are required.** Socks or tights should be worn with shoes. Try to avoid sending your child in shoes or clothing that he cannot undo or do by himself.

We ask that all children keep an extra set of clothing, socks, and underwear, labeled with his or her name, in their cubby. This way, if your child ever needs a change of clothing, it is available.

Toys are not allowed at any time in the classroom. This is to avoid lost possessions and hurt feelings. The children who nap at school may bring one small stuffed toy from home to sleep with, but they will not be allowed to play with it at any other time.

Section 8: Food and Nutrition

Breakfast: Breakfast is not served at One World Montessori School. The children's work at school is directly affected by the nutritional quality of their meals. Please provide your child with a nutritious breakfast each morning. A high-protein breakfast that includes a generous portion of eggs, meat, cheese, nuts or legumes is essential to the child's development, learning and enjoyment at school. This is both the universal experience of our teachers as well as the findings of well-respected public health research studies. A child who has not had a high-protein breakfast is not ready to come to school. Read the labels of the foods you buy, and avoid sugar, corn syrup, artificial sweeteners or coloring, artificial flavoring, and other additives. Most nutritionists believe that these substances interfere with the child's ability to learn and to have acceptable behavior. Good nutrition directly affects a child's health, concentration, and behavior. We suggest that each parent read Sugar Blues by William Duffy for more information.

Lunches: Please bring a lunch box clearly labeled with your child's name. Please try to send a plain-colored lunchbox that does not contain any fad-based images (Spiderman, etc.). It is also a good idea to include a reusable freezer block to keep any perishables fresh. Unless otherwise requested, lunches will not be refrigerated, but a microwave is available for quick heat-ups. To avoid any confusion, it is best to write "Please Heat" or "Please Refrigerate" on the food container. If sending soup, please provide a thermos. When sending juice, please ensure it is sugar-free and 100% juice. Our school has a strict no sugar policy. Do not send candy, gum, soda, or sweets. If a teacher sees these items in a child's lunchbox, the item will be sent home. Here are a few possibilities for the lunch that you and/or your child may pack:

(lunchboxes are not required to contain sandwiches)

- Cheese
- Nuts
- Peanut butter with celery
- Cottage Cheese
- Tuna Salad or Egg Salad
- Beans/Chili
- Meat slices or cubes
- Chicken wings

- Hard-boiled egg
- Yogurt (provided it is sugar free and dye-free, and not runny or messy)
- Quesadilla
- Leftovers from dinner
- Soybeans/Tofu
- Fruit
- Rice
- Vegetables

Ideas for sugar-free treats:

- Raisins
- Popcorn
- Granola bar
- Cheese and crackers
- Jell-o
- Fruit Leather
- Sunflower Seeds
- Dried Fruit

Caution: “Lunchables” and other pre-packaged lunches are not only quite expensive, but also extremely high in sodium and fat, and the children cannot usually open them by themselves. We have also noticed that for some reason these items promote competition and jealousy between the children. If you must send Lunchables, please put them in a separate container that your child can open.

Please tell your child’s teacher and the Director if your child has a special diet due to religious reasons or food allergies, so that we may take that into account when planning for snacks and special events. These restrictions will be posted in a prominent place in the classroom.

Snacks: Healthy, organic snacks are available to the children at all times. Some of our activities involve food preparation such as carrot or apple slicing, baking bread, or cracking nuts (providing that no children are allergic). There will be a snack table in every classroom where the child may serve himself a snack once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Children will be taught the proper way to do this during their first days of school. Parents are welcome to donate a snack to the classroom, provided they are sugar free and nut-free. Paper products such as paper towels, cups, and napkins are always welcome.

Celebration of Life: One World Montessori School has a very special way of celebrating birthdays. In this ceremony, called the Celebration of Life, the

birthday child walks around the “Earth” one time for every year he has been alive. A poster with pictures from each year of the child’s life is shown to the class, and a short paragraph (usually written under each picture) is read as the child walks, describing a few things of importance that happened in each year of his life. Children love to hear about what their friends were like as babies. You may want to add a little information on how your son/daughter came to be at our school.

Example:

First year: John was born in Austin, Texas on December 12, 2003 at Seton Northwest Hospital. He was a happy and healthy baby. During the summer, he went to visit his grandparents in Denver, Colorado. He took along his favorite toy, a brown bear named Paddington. He started crawling at 6 months of age.

Second Year: When John was one years old he stood up and walked to his dad. For his birthday, his cousins came to town to share his birthday cake. He made a huge mess with the icing. He made friends with the next-door neighbor’s dog, Spot.

And so it continues for each year. We appreciate the time and effort the parents spend on creating these beautiful posters and paragraphs. Parents are also welcome to bring a special snack (sugar-free, of course) for the class on their child’s birthday. We recommend an ethnic dish, popcorn, or a fruit tray. Some parents even choose to bring a gift for the class, such as a book or a plant, on their child’s birthday, but this is completely voluntary.

Section 9: Policies and Procedures

Policy on Sexual Harassment: Any instance, report or observation of sexual-oriented misconduct, whether physical or verbal, from one child to another must be brought to the attention of the Director immediately. The Director will document and file the details, then proceed according to the state licensing requirements. The incident will then be filed separately from the student’s regular file, in a secure place for confidential reference only, and purged after three years.

Policy on Child Abuse: One World Montessori School is required by law to report any apparent incidence of child abuse or neglect defined as “non-accidental infliction or threat of infliction of physical, emotional, or mental harm to a child.” *“Any person having cause to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse*

or neglect shall report to any local or state law enforcement agency, and in addition, reports shall be made to (1) the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services; or (2) the agency designated by the court to be responsible for the protection of children.”

All such reports must contain the name and address of the child, the name and address of the person responsible for the care of the child, and any other pertinent information.

Non-Discrimination: One World Montessori School does not discriminate. Children and staff of all races, nationalities, and religions are welcome. The school respects cultural diversity and incorporates it into the daily curriculum. OWMS is an equal opportunity employer.

Withdrawal from School: When you enroll your child in our school, we assume that he or she will be enrolled for the full school year. We plan the hiring of our staff and organize our activities around the number of students enrolled. If an occasion arises in which you must withdraw your child from the program, please notify us in writing at least 30 days in advance. If your child’s space cannot be filled immediately from the waiting list, you will be responsible for your child’s tuition for the next 30 days.

Changes to the Handbook: The school may change any policy contained in the parent handbook at the school’s discretion. Parents will be notified in writing of any changes.

Section 10: School Closings

Vacations and Holidays: One World Montessori School follows the Leander ISD calendar, with the exception of their Staff Development Days, Summer Vacation, and Bad Weather makeup days. We offer a summer program from June—August. Please notify us by May 1st if your child will be attending our summer program. If your child will not be attending the summer camp, we require \$250 to hold your child’s spot over the summer. If your family plans on taking a vacation at any other time during the school year, please notify us in advance. In order to save your child’s spot, you will still be required to pay his or her regular tuition.

Severe Weather Closings: If severe weather conditions make travel hazardous, school may be postponed, closed early, or cancelled. Our school makes this decision independently of the surrounding school districts. The decision will be announced on K-EYE 42 (channel 5 on cable). Early

morning closings will be announced after 6:00 am. There will be no make-up days or refunds offered for severe weather closings.

Section 11: Conclusion

One World Montessori School was established for the sole purpose of providing the very best care and education for young children, and to help parents achieve their highest goals in education of their children and in their family life. It is our goal to follow the tradition of Maria Montessori to the best of our abilities. Parents are expected to become informed of her teachings through study, observation, and attendance at parent meetings. We have found that children develop and learn at increased rate when their home life mirrors that of their school life. One World Montessori is an exceptional school. If your child is enrolled here, it is not by accident. You are probably a parent who is not satisfied by the norm, and you hopefully have looked at many different schools to find the one that is best for your child. We hope that you will feel a “spirit” here that will differentiate One World Montessori from other schools that you have observed. We represent something that is collapsing in society: being different. People who are strong in their beliefs and who are leaders in their homes, schools, community and society are not followers. We are loyal to the Montessori methodology of education which helps the child to learn to discipline himself, to protect himself, and to progress at his own pace. We care about academic success and the enthusiasm for learning. We care about manners, courtesy, community, human kindness, and service to others. We support respect for elders, and above all, respect for parents and teachers. One World Montessori School thrives on word-of-mouth referrals, and we are proud of our good reputation. We thank you for entrusting us with your child. We promise to do our best in contributing to his or her success and happiness.

Typical Daily Schedule (Primary)

8:15—8:30 Outside play and arrival time

8:45—9:00 Morning Circle time

9:00—11:00 Montessori work time and morning snack*

11:00—11:45 Lunch

11:45—12:30 Outside Playtime

12:30—12:45 Prepare for Naptime (restroom, drinks, etc)

12:45—1:00 Story time

1:00—3:00 Naptime

3:00—3:30 Afternoon Snack

3:30 Full Time Dismissal

3:45—6:00 Extended Day

*Small groups have Spanish on Fridays at this time

