



MONTESSORI
SCHOOL *of* ITHACA

TEACH PEACE

Nurturing the hearts, minds, and spirits
of children since 1979.

Handbook
2023 - 2024

120 East King Road Ithaca, NY 14850
Phone 607/277-7335 Fax 607/277-0251
www.eacmsi.org

WELCOME

Dear Families,

From September through June, EACMSI is home to hundreds of human beings of varying sizes: students, caregivers, faculty, and staff. We make community together by establishing and reaffirming relationships. Our goal is to create a mindful and just society that allows each being to do their best work.

The protocols and expectations made explicit in this book serve as guidelines to follow as we journey forward together.

This handbook includes a brief history of our school, a description of your role as an EACMSI parent and community member, information about our policies and procedures, and Montessori educational resources. Please take the time to read through your handbook in its entirety. Even if you are a returning parent, please commit to reading through this year's revised and updated edition.

Happy reading!

Dawn Grover
Head of School

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About EACMSI

Established in 1979, The Elizabeth Ann Clune Montessori School of Ithaca (EACMSI) is a non-profit educational organization offering classes for children ages 3-15. The Montessori School of Ithaca was founded in 1979 by Andrea Blitzer Riddle and Carol Hill. In 1998, the Montessori School of Ithaca was renamed the Elizabeth Ann Clune Montessori School of Ithaca in honor of one of our most beloved students: Elizabeth Ann Clune. The incredible success and longevity of EACMSI can be attributed to Andrea Riddle's unique vision of what it means to be a school; she blurred the usual boundaries between school, extended family, and community. To this day, when caregivers enroll their children at EACMSI, the family as a whole is embraced and welcomed. As a result, EACMSI is a dynamic, deeply connected, and constantly evolving community: people of all ages come together to inspire the best in all.

At EACMSI, we prepare children for the future we envision: an equitable, just, and peaceful world.

The EAC Montessori School is a community of diverse cultures, languages, religions, and nationalities. The common denominator is an unshakeable faith in the giftedness of all people and their ability to realize their fullest potential in an environment where it is safe for them to explore with all of their senses – and to make mistakes. The Elizabeth Ann Clune Montessori School of Ithaca admits students of any gender, gender identity or expression, race, color, national and ethnic origin, and religious beliefs to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of gender, gender identity or expression, race, color, national and ethnic origin or religious beliefs in administration of its educational and admissions policies.

EACMSI is affiliated with organizations established to promote standards of excellence. These organizations assure the highest quality Montessori educational standards are being followed by our school.

Member:	American Montessori Society
Accredited by:	New York State Board of Regents (permanent charter)

School Mission, Culture, Values, History, and Traditions

Mission

The mission of EACMSI is to guide the development of students toward becoming independent, responsible, and contributing individuals.

Vision

Our vision is to create a school that is a leader in 21st century Montessori education with an engaged and connected faculty and an emphasis on academic excellence, the arts, a robust peace curriculum, cyclical community celebrations, and the inclusion of diverse learners.

EACMSI will establish the conditions (structural and interpersonal) that result in a faculty dedicated to professional growth, collaboration, and the co-creation of curriculum.

EACMSI will maintain a peace curriculum that begins in the first year of the Primary cycle and continues through Middle School. Adherence to the peace curriculum will take precedence over all other programming in order to educate students for a more peaceful world.

EACMSI will stay abreast of societal trends that impact education and adapt programming accordingly while staying true to Montessori principles.

EACMSI will deliver curricula that allow students to develop foundational academic skills, a rich understanding of their world, and the agency and expressive ability to make an impact and stretch the limits of their cognitive capacities.

EACMSI will sustain programming in the arts for all students and maintain a dynamic instrumental band program.

EACMSI will continue its commitment to educate students of diverse abilities with the understanding that all students benefit from such inclusion.

EACMSI will continue to celebrate meaningful traditions over the course of the school year.

Educational Philosophy

Our approach to educating students is based on the work of Dr. Maria Montessori. The foundation of our philosophy is the belief that “establishing lasting peace is the purpose of education.”

As members of a community that teaches respectful communication, we expect all adults to model a high level of regard and consideration for each other, *even when there is disagreement regarding an issue*. It is only through a cooperative effort between home and school that your child is assured of the highest quality education.

Open communication is essential. Please share any concerns or questions you have regarding your child.

Contact Information

General Inquiries	Front Office	admin@eacmsi.org
Your School and School Policies	Dawn Grover	dgrover@eacmsi.org
Your Child, Special Education Services, Classroom Observations	Liz Allen	llallen@eacmsi.org
Your Classroom	Teachers	www.eacmsi.org/about-eac/faculty-staff/
School Nurse	Health Office	nurse@eacmsi.org
Student Technology Issues	Patrice Jennings	pjennings@eacmsi.org
Payment of Tuition and/or Financial Questions	Lisa Smith Whitney Wiggins	lisa@eacmsi.org wwiggins@eacmsi.org
Donations, Fundraising, Events & Marketing	Wendy Houseworth	whouseworth@eacmsi.org
AfterSchool Program	Kathy Jett	afterschool@eacmsi.org
All Other Faculty and Staff	See website for emails	www.eacmsi.org/about-eac/faculty-staff/

The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring the financial health of the school. Please feel free to contact Board President Tony Simione if the need arises at tonysimione@gmail.com. All Board of Trustee information can be found at www.eacmsi.org/about-eac/board-of-trustees/.

For transportation questions, please contact your local school district.

Ithaca:	607-274-2128
Lansing:	607-533-4608
Newfield:	607-564-9955
Dryden:	607-844-4221
Trumansburg:	607-387-5610

Email Policy

Classroom teachers are available via email. Please feel free to reach out to them directly if you have questions or concerns. Teachers will do their best to respond within a 24-hour period. If your query is more urgent, please contact the main office (admin@eacmsi.org) to facilitate a timelier response.

Our teachers go above and beyond in their dedication to their students. It is vital that their weekends and vacation days are sacrosanct. *School policy precludes teachers from responding to messages between 4 pm. on Fridays and 6 am. on Mondays.* If there is an emergency over the weekend, please contact Dawn Grover (dgrover@eacmsi.org) and Liz Allen (lallen@eacmsi.org).

Please know that Dawn and Liz have asked to be copied on any correspondence regarding a student. In most cases, this will be a passing “cc” just to keep them informed about topics of interest to caregivers and teachers. In some cases, it is useful background or input to a topic that might require more attention. Please copy Dawn and Liz on such correspondence and expect to see a “cc” in a reply from a teacher, as they are included in all significant correspondence.

Our Website

Check our website (www.eacmsi.org) regularly, as it is one of the primary ways we will communicate what is happening at school. Look for detailed information about all of our programs and different events that happen throughout the year. Navigate to “MyEAC” to find all the things necessary for the school year. This password protected page includes class lists, required forms, this handbook, health and wellness information, monthly newsletters, and our school calendar.

Social Media

We encourage you to “Like” our Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/eacmsi>) and follow us on Instagram ([instagram.com/eacmsi_/](https://www.instagram.com/eacmsi_/)) to stay abreast of daily life at EACMSI.

Things You Should Know About Our Levels

As children form and develop, they take from the environment what is needed for self-construction; the child is driven by an inner need to learn about themselves and their world. They want very much to develop their intelligence and to become independent and responsible. Each Montessori classroom is a well-prepared environment designed to support the child’s need for learning and growth. It is a “child’s house” where there are carefully designed materials to meet the child’s natural interests. The atmosphere is positive, supportive, and noncompetitive. The classroom has five distinct areas (Practical Life, Sensorial and Movement, Language, Math and Geometry, and Cultural (Science, Geography and History)) that provide developmentally appropriate experiences for the child. You can learn more about our core programs at www.eacmsi.org/eac-classroom-levels.

Primary Level (Half Day, Full Day & Extended Day): Children in the first years of the Primary cycle are considered either Half Day or Full Day students depending on the length of their school day (ending at noon or 3 pm). Children in the final year of the Primary cycle are considered Extended Day students. Extended Day is a transition class to prepare students for Junior Level.

Junior Level (Lower Elementary): The program at the Junior Level rests on the foundation prepared in the Primary Level, where the child’s inquiring mind gathers names and facts. “What” and “where” were the interests. Now the child’s mind begins to function in a new way. “Why”, “how”, and “when” become the consuming interests, and all the names and facts acquired before are used by the child to become more proficient in language and math skills. Junior Level launches our Cosmic Curriculum, the integrated study of humanities and the sciences. We give the child a vision of the whole universe so they may discover their place within.

Upper Level (Upper Elementary): The program at the Upper Level continues to feed our students' curiosity, their desire for social interaction, and their energy for research and exploration. Studies are integrated across disciplines that include geography, biology, history, language, mathematics, science, music, and other forms of artistic expression. Engaging as contributing members of a respectful

community, they learn to question, think critically, and take responsibility for their own learning—skills that will support them in later education and in life.

Middle School: The Middle School program combines rigorous academic offerings with rich hands-on experience on campus, in the greater Ithaca community, and beyond. The goal of our program is to assist the adolescent in awakening and defining their adult self through meaningful work amidst a community of learners. We guide young people on their journey toward becoming empowered, independent, and contributing adults. The Adolescent Program is designed with the developmental characteristics and needs of the early adolescent as its foundation.

Tuition and Fee Management at EACMSI

EACMSI partners with FACTS Tuition Management for the processing and collection of school tuition and fees. We are using FACTS Premier Integration so that our families can see and manage all of their student information and school billing in one place: *FACTS Family Online*. You can review your account history, change or add a payment method, print invoices, set up automatic payments or make an immediate payment from *the Financial section of FACTS Family Online*.

Tuition payment plans are set during the registration/enrollment process.

You can make payments over the phone with the assistance of a FACTS Customer Service Representative. Live agents are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call toll free to make a payment at (866)441-4637. Payments made by phone or your *FACTS Family Online* account are posted the same day they are received.

Payments are due on or before your payment due date. If payment is not received by the due date or there is an outstanding balance on your account, a \$40 late fee will apply. A fee of \$30 will be applied to your account for any failed payment processed via auto-debit, phone, web, or paper check. Your bank may also impose additional fees.

If you have questions or concerns about your tuition payment plan, please contact Lisa Smith or Whitney Wiggins.

School Cancellations and Delays

If the Ithaca City Schools are closed for bad weather, then we are also closed. If the Ithaca City Schools are on a 2-hour delay, we are also on a 2-hour delay - doors will open at 10:30 am, and there will be no morning band practice.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival:

Arrival is from 8:30 - 9 a.m.

School district buses arrive at our school between 8:30 and 9:15 am and drop students off at our two different building locations. They will be greeted by an assigned adult at the different locations.

Individual car drop off:

Drivers, please remember: You may not pass a school bus with blinking lights or park in the Fire Lane along the curb of all three buildings under any circumstances as it is against the law. All three of our driveways are one-way circles, so please follow the traffic pattern.

Primary and Extended Day, Junior Level, and Middle School Arrival

Students are welcome in classrooms beginning at 8:30 am. Classes begin at 9:00 am.

Students will be welcomed at the front door of the main entrance by a school administrator. Students may get out of the car at the curb in front of the main entrance, or caregivers can park and walk their student(s) to the main entrance.

Since our front hallway is our Primary students' coatroom, we ask that caregivers remain outside the main door at drop-off. Once stepping through the doors of our school, the students are entering their prepared environment, and their school day begins. Should your student have difficulty coming into school, a staff member will assist your student and will attend to their needs in a caring and encouraging manner. Caregivers best support these transitions by projecting confidence in their student's ability to separate and be independent. You are encouraged to call us if you have any concerns about your student's transition to school.

Dawn, Liz, and our office staff are always available to answer questions, deliver a message, or hear a concern. Feel free to come into the main building to ask to speak to one of them.

Upper Level Arrival

Our Upper Elementary program is housed at 117 E. King Rd., across the street from the Main Building.

Drivers are asked to pull up as far as possible in the driveway of 117 E. King Rd. to drop students off. *Caregivers are asked not to accompany their children into 117 E. King Rd.* **You may not pass a school bus with blinking lights or park in the Fire Lane under any circumstances, as it is against the law. Our driveways are one-way circles, so please follow the traffic pattern.**

Late Arrival:

Main Building:

Upper Level: Students are welcome in classrooms at 8:30 a.m. for a quiet work time. Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. **If an UL student arrives after 9:15 a.m.,** please drive the student to the front door of 117 and call the front office (607-277-7335) instead of ringing the doorbell. Office staff will call the classroom to have a staff member let the student into their classroom door.

Dismissal:

Dismissal is from 3:10 - 3:30 p.m.

General information:

- Keeping our students safe is critical. PickUp Patrol is our online system for caregivers to communicate default dismissal plans and changes to the school. Changes can be entered from a smartphone, tablet, or computer days, weeks, or even months in advance and at any time up to 2:15 pm on the day of the change. For dismissal changes after 2:15 pm please call the school office at 607.277.7335. The end of the school day is a busy time, so please plan accordingly and limit exceptions to emergencies if possible.

Early dismissal (Before 3:10):

- For UL students in 117 E. King Rd.: Once you have arrived at 117 E. King Rd, please call the main office at 607.277.7335 and the student(s) will be dismissed from the building.
- For all other students: Once you have arrived at the front doors of the Main Building, please call the main office at 607.277.7335 and the student(s) will be dismissed from the front doors.

Bus Dismissal:

- School district buses will arrive at EACMSI at 3:05 pm and depart by 3:20 pm from the Andrea B. Riddle Center for Music, Movement, and Art (ABR Center) parking area.

Dismissal for Primary and Extended Day Students:

- These students are dismissed between 3:10 pm and 3:30 pm from the main entrance. After you park in the designated areas and arrive at the front door, one of our staff will call the student(s).

Dismissal for Junior Level Students:

- Each Junior Level class will dismiss their students from their outside classroom door. Either pull up to the curb closest to your student's classroom and stay in your car to receive your student or park in the designated parking and meet your student at their classroom door.

Dismissal for Upper Level Students:

- These students are dismissed from 117 E. King Rd between 3:10 pm and 3:30 pm. Please pull your car as far forward as possible in the parking circle. The student(s) will be sent out to you. It is important to leave promptly so that other vehicles can move forward.

Dismissal for Middle School Students:

- These students are dismissed from 122 E. King Rd (ABR Center) between 3:10 pm and 3:30 pm. Please pull your car as far forward as possible in the parking circle. The student(s) will be sent out to you. It is important to leave promptly so that other vehicles can move forward.

Students who are not picked up by 3:35 pm will be brought to our AfterSchool Program and a \$25 fee will be charged. There will be no exceptions. Please make every effort to be on time at the end of the day.

AfterSchool Program

Our AfterSchool program is an engaging and fun program available to students at EACMSI. Each student's readiness and individual needs are taken into consideration for acceptance into the AfterSchool program. The AfterSchool program begins at 3:30 pm, and students are to be picked up promptly by 5:30 pm. Families must register their child(ren) in advance for regular attendance and may register for up to 5 days per week. For additional days beyond your regular schedule, if we can accommodate the student(s), a daily use rate of \$25.00 per day per student will be charged. Please be aware that the program may be full on a given day that you need it. **Requests for drop-in AfterSchool care should be made directly to the office as early in the day as possible.**

The AfterSchool Program for Primary, Extended Day, and Junior Level students begins with a snack and includes time to play outside followed by relaxed activities indoors.

The AfterSchool Program for Upper Level and Middle School students is a combination of relaxed activities and a homework club. During the first hour, from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., students have a snack and time to play outside. During the second hour, students fulfill homework requirements or read quietly.

When a student has broken a rule during our AfterSchool program, they are asked to correct the behavior. If unable to do so, or the behavior is recurrent, the student will be asked to miss a day of AfterSchool in order to work with caregivers on behavior shaping. If the problem persists, the student may be asked to leave the AfterSchool program.

In the event of all-staff professional development meetings, we will NOT offer AfterSchool care. If we schedule an event, notice will be given two weeks in advance.

Attendance

We expect that students will attend school on a daily basis, and we do expect students to be on time. Our academic day begins at 9 am and finishes at 3:00 pm. Excessive absences or tardiness are disruptive for students and the classroom. Indicating to students that daily attendance at school is required teaches them to respect and value their education. Promptness shows students that you value their work time and allows them a calm start to their day.

The first six to eight weeks of school are very important times when relationships are formed and a foundation for the year is set. Transitions into new classes can be difficult for students and caregivers. Each student transitions differently, and this early time is essential to the student's feelings of confidence and comfort in the new environment. **Absenteeism during the first weeks of school should be avoided as it can add to the transition challenges.** Attendance during the last weeks of school is also optimal. Many important activities that are tied to the curriculum happen throughout the last month of school.

Physical Health

A productive school experience requires a minimum level of physical and mental health that allows students to engage with the experiences offered by our program.

The Ithaca City School District provides us with a school nurse. If there is a problem concerning a student's health, the parent/guardian is encouraged to contact the Health Office. The School Nurse will be glad to help in any way possible.

Should a student become ill or injured at school, the parent/guardian will be called, and they are responsible for seeing that the ill child gets home safely. **All caregivers/guardians need to have a plan to pick up and care for sick children.**

Do not send a sick child to school. If your child is not well enough to participate in recess, they should not come to school.

Students will be excluded from school when:

- the student has a fever (oral temperature of 100 or greater).
- the illness prevents the student from participating in school activities.
- the student requires more care than the school staff can provide.

When your child is ill, it is helpful for you to report their diagnosis to the School Nurse. The Ithaca City School District has a policy that prohibits students from attending school with a communicable disease or condition. If you have a question about whether your child can be in school with a specific diagnosis, please contact the Health Office. In the event of serious illness or injury, the School Nurse can help coordinate your child's educational needs and plan for a safe and successful re-entry into school.

Remote School will be offered on a case by case basis for Junior Level, Upper Level, and Middle School students. There will be no remote school for Primary and Extended Day students.

Mental Health

There are times when a student's mental health challenges can significantly affect their functioning as a student in our environment.

While the underlying cause(s) of mental health concerns are relevant to treatment and the journey towards wellness, it is the behavioral manifestations of the distress, rather than the root cause, which determine the viability of school attendance.

Behaviors of concern include but are not limited to, high levels of personal distress, acts of aggression/violence towards self or others, destruction of school

property, non-compliance, disruption to the regular delivery of curricula, other behaviors that threaten or compromise the well-being of the classroom community, and/or chronic school absence.

During these periods, students may need extra support, increased supervision, or an alternate space to decompress. Depending on the age, placement, and specific concerns regarding the student in question, these accommodations may not be possible at EACMSI.

Should a student require the comprehensive services available in a therapeutic setting, EACMSI is no longer an appropriate placement; we lack the resources to meet the needs of students during such times.

Since our Upper Level and Middle School programs are highly experiential and collaborative, students must be able to engage with and access the curriculum. Likewise, the experiential nature of these programs makes recreating them at home with a tutor and textbook challenging. Students on leave may miss significant curriculum and require additional time to complete their studies.

The EACMSI Administrative Team, in conjunction with classroom teachers, will determine, on a case-by-case basis, if EACMSI continues to be an appropriate placement or if a leave of absence is warranted.

Medication

All medications given at school (prescription, non-prescription, homeopathic, etc.) require a licensed medical provider's order. Our school nurse will administer necessary medications to students during the school day. In order to do so safely, caregivers requesting this service must provide the following:

- Completed medication form signed by a licensed healthcare provider
- Signed request by caregiver requesting medication be administered as instructed by healthcare provider
- Medication must be in its original labeled container (must match information on medication order)
- Signature acknowledging date medication is received along with name, form, and amount of medication
- Long term medications must be renewed annually
- The caregiver must bring the medication to school and give it directly to the nurse

Immunizations

NYS law requires physician verification of specific immunizations for legal entry into any NYS school. Current immunization guidelines are available from your local healthcare provider and our school nurse. They can also be found online at www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/schools/school_vaccines/.

EACMSI requires that people aged 5 and older vaccinate for COVID-19 and remain up-to-date as recommended by their family's physician.

Exceptions to these requirements are as follows:

- A certificate signed by a physician licensed in NYS stating the specific reason or condition why immunizations(s) are detrimental to the child's health (medical exemption) and submitted to ICSD for approval.
- Medical exemptions must be renewed annually.
- Physician's certification that the child has had the disease or serological proof of immunity.
- Students who are exempt from immunizations will be excluded from school in the event of an outbreak of disease for which the student is not immunized.
- Religious exemptions are no longer accepted in New York State.

Further Health information can be found at www.ithacacityschools.org under Health and Wellness.

Safety

In accordance with NYS regulations, our school has an all-encompassing safety plan that is reviewed annually and updated yearly. We continually monitor and evaluate best practices to strengthen our plan.

The plan addresses evacuation and lockdown for all our buildings. Our students, faculty, and staff participate in evacuation drills. Our faculty and staff participate in lockdown drills without students. Students are given developmentally appropriate lessons designed specifically for them to be able to follow instructions during a lockdown experience.

Nutrition

Due to students with life threatening allergies, our classrooms are peanut and tree nut free.

Please read labels carefully and note that even non-nut foods may be contaminated if processed in a plant where tree nut or peanut products were prepared.

All students must bring a lunch, beverage, snacks, and a labeled water bottle to school. Please include any necessary utensils. Students will be required to bring home all lunch leftovers. We encourage caregivers to pack food in reusable containers. *Candy, gum, and soft drinks are not permitted.*

Footwear & Labeling

Each student needs to have a pair of indoor shoes to wear in the classroom. We do not recommend slippers for this purpose in case of winter evacuation drills. In addition, students need outdoor shoes or boots for recess play and outdoor physical education sessions. Crocs, clogs, and flip-flops, or any open-toe shoes are not permitted for recess or gym.

Please label lunch boxes, hats, mittens, sweaters, jackets, shoes, etc. with the student's name. This enables them to recognize their own things and ensures that they get returned if misplaced.

Recess Wear

- **We will be going outside, rain or shine. Waterproof coats and pants are recommended when it is wet.**
- **All temperature determinations take wind chill into account.**
- **We recommend students wear face protection when the temperature is below 20 F.**

Required Recess Clothing

Below 0 degrees F:	Indoor recess
Over 0 degrees F:	Outdoor recess for everyone (including light rain)

0 – 30 F:	Down or heavily lined coat, hat, waterproof gloves/mittens, snow pants, insulated boots
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30 – 40 F:	Down or heavily lined coat, hat, gloves/mittens, snow pants (if sledding or sitting in snow), boots (if snowy or ground is wet)
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40 – 50 F:	Coat for warmth and rain protection, hat and gloves, boots (if conditions are wet - water, mud or snow), outdoor shoes for paved surfaces, gravel or stone
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50 – 60 F:	Coat for warmth and rain protection, polar fleece, sweatshirt, or sweater with one layer Outdoor shoes for paved surfaces, grass or stone
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Independent Toileting

At EACMSI we recognize that even young students are highly capable beings. All students at EACMSI are expected to be independent with toileting. This includes using the toilet exclusively for bathroom needs and then independently wiping, flushing, and washing hands.

While your child is learning to wipe thoroughly, a nightly bath or shower can help ensure cleanliness. **Students may not use diapers or pull-ups at school.** Any discomfort from wetness or stickiness when wearing cloth underwear provides a “control of error” when accidents occur, reinforces toilet use, and is the best way for the student to gain mastery.

Parents should help children choose from clothing that promotes independence (avoid overalls, difficult buttons, and buckles, and opt for elastic waistbands). In addition, please have several clothing changes and bags for soiled clothes available at school.

If your child has an accident at home, handle it matter-of-factly and expect your child to be actively involved in changing their dirty clothes, wiping their own body, and cleaning the area that was soiled. If caregivers do all the work in the process, they are limiting the development of independence and important personal skills. With an expectation of the child’s involvement, they will begin to take ownership of the process themselves.

Naptime

Students in Full Day Primary rest or nap daily after lunch. Small blankets and pillows are provided. Blankets will be sent home weekly to be washed. Students are welcome to bring a stuffed animal or blanket for a nap. This item will be stored with other sleeping materials or in the student’s cubby during non-sleeping times.

Personal Celebrations

Primary and Junior Level classes celebrate a student’s journey around the Sun by carrying the globe around a symbol of the Sun. The family can share photographs, artifacts, or stories about the child through their life. Caregivers and sibling(s) are welcome to join their child for the celebration.

Rather than sharing a sugary treat, your child may choose a small gift for the school as a way of sharing their special day with classmates. The gift can be a book, a plant, or anything the class can use. Check with the classroom teachers for

ideas. Our hope is that this will make the day a meaningful event. We ask that party invitations not be distributed at school.

Upper Level students celebrate informally by offering appreciations of one another.

Classroom Observations

Classroom observations occur weekly, beginning in mid-October through the beginning of May. Caregivers are encouraged to make an appointment to observe their children in action and any other levels of interest.

Conferences/Report Forms

Formal reporting for all levels consists of three progress reports, in November, February, and June. Student progress reports will be available electronically prior to parent-teacher conferences. Caregivers have two conferences, Fall and Spring.

Please reserve the conference dates as printed on our school calendar.

Conferences will not be rescheduled.

Toys/Games/Cell Phones

We request that students come to school without toys, electronics, games, and cell phones. **“Dress up” clothing, costumes, and accessories are not permitted at school.** We encourage students to bring objects of interest related to ongoing projects in the classroom. Weapons, play or real, are not permitted.

Families who choose to allow cell phones or electronic devices must instruct students that these are to remain in the student’s backpack, be turned off, and may not be used while the student is at school. As we do not allow students to text or contact their family with personal devices during school hours (even when on field trips), please reinforce school rules and let the teachers know/speak with the student should this occur. **“Smart” watches, like other electronic devices, must remain in the student’s backpack throughout the day.**

Technology

EACMSI is committed to educating students to be fully responsible citizens. Developmentally appropriate and responsible use of technology requires great care and thought. Students in our Extended Day through Middle School programs are introduced to and educated in the responsible use of technology. Before EACMSI students use school technology, including Chromebooks, desktop computers, and

tablets, caregivers and students are required to sign and return a Responsible Use of Technology Policy.

Data Privacy

We do not share or sell your personal information. Information is only shared with our contracted partners to facilitate/manage the day-to-day operations of the school (FACTS).

School to Home Connections: Developing Independence

Optimal development occurs when youth are given the ability to participate in the workings of life around them. With participation, they recognize their capabilities and their value as part of the whole. This is the beginning of citizenship.

Encouraging independence is fundamental to the Montessori approach. At school, carefully designed classrooms allow students to develop competence in caring for themselves, others, and their surroundings. You can prepare your home in similar ways, responding to the different developmental needs of your young person.

Young people's involvement in chores at home is important. Duties assigned to them are those that can ultimately be managed successfully with guidance and support from adults. Once a task is understood, young people will complete their chores independently, with minimal oversight from adults. Specific duties become more substantial and complex as the individual matures.

School to Home Connections for Primary Students:

Primary-aged students can partner with their families with the following responsibilities at school and at home:

3 to 4 Years

- Prepare a snack / sandwich; wash fruit and vegetables
- Set the table / clear the table / wipe table
- Blow nose / brush teeth / wash body and hair (using travel bottles may minimize waste)
- Clean face
- Choose clothes / get dressed with little help
- Pack + carry bag / backpack
- Put on coat / shoes
- Water plants / tidy toys into baskets and/or return to shelf

- Sort socks + clothing by color / fold laundry / fold socks
- Make toast / Scramble eggs
- Make bed
- Feed pets
- Help with recycling

5 to 6 Years (plus above...)

- Sweep, vacuum and wash the floor
- Dust and polish
- Wash, bath, shower
- Put dishes in the dishwasher
- Empty dishwasher, stack dishes on the counter
- Make a simple meal
- Rake leaves
- Prepare lunch for school
- Carry in firewood

What does independence look like for a Junior Level Student?

By the time a student joins the Junior Level, we expect they will...

- Be responsible for their own belongings (carry lunch box/backpack from car or bus and appropriately store in cubby).
- Enter school independently.
- Be able to change clothes and shoes of all seasons independently.
- Use respectful behavior as they move through the school (greet people you see, use please and thank you, use quiet voices and calm bodies - caregivers are great role models!).
- Eat respectfully with others and clean up after themselves when done.
- Manage their work and belongings in their cubbies and in the classroom, being mindful that our shared space is maintained for all by all.
- Have the ability to make choices throughout the day with the guidance of their teachers.
- Work to solve problems prior to asking for help.
- Listen to and follow directions.

Junior Level aged children can partner with their families with the following responsibilities at school and at home:

- Vacuum, dust, and polish
- Water plants
- Sweep / wash the floor
- Load / unload dishwasher
- Wash dishes by hand
- Set /clear the table
- Make bed, clean room
- Make a simple meal
- Make own lunch and snacks
- Rake leaves
- Feed and care for pets
- Laundry- sort, wash, dry, fold, put away
- Change sheets
- Clean tub / shower
- Compost
- Take out garbage
- Unload groceries from the car
- Weed and garden

What Does Independence Look Like for an Upper Level Student?

To foster the development of self-reliance, students are expected to:

- continue the work of learning to organize and manage their time and work – including understanding the components of what is necessary to complete both short and long-term assignments.
- organize their belongings to be prepared for meeting daily requirements (including monitoring the weather to be prepared with appropriate outerwear.)
- develop a plan for completing missing and/or past due work.
- communicate concerns about work and/or social/emotional issues to a teacher.
- balance school expectations with extra-curricular activities.

To Support Your Upper Level Student:

- Review the student's assignment book each day as a way to stay connected to their school experience.
- Over the weekend, review the upcoming week with the student so they can understand any constraints, lessons, and/or family obligations that might impact their ability to complete required homework.

- If the student needs to speak with a teacher about a concern, talk them through how they might do so if they seem reluctant (you can then send a quick email alerting teachers).
- Please allow the student to do their own advocating, with your support.

Upper Level aged students can partner with their families with the following responsibilities at school and at home:

- Dust and polish
- Water plants
- Sweep / vacuum / wash the floor
- Load / unload dishwasher
- Wash dishes by hand
- Set /clear the table
- Make bed, clean room.
- Make a meal
- Make own lunch
- Rake leaves
- Feed pets
- Laundry- sort, wash, dry, fold, put away
- Change sheets
- Clean tub / shower
- Compost
- Take out garbage
- Mow lawn
- Unload groceries from the car
- Weed and garden

What Does Independence Look Like for a Middle School Student?

To foster the development of self-reliance, students are expected to:

- continue the work of learning to organize and manage their time and work – including understanding the components of what is necessary to complete both short and long-term assignments.
- organize their belongings to be prepared for meeting daily requirements (including monitoring the weather to be prepared with appropriate outerwear.)
- develop a plan for completing missing and/or past due work.
- communicate concerns about work and/or social/emotional issues to a teacher.
- balance school expectations with extra-curricular activities.

To Support Your Middle School Student:

- Encourage the student to check their assignments daily.
- If the student has a concern, encourage them to share it with their teacher. Talk them through how they might do so if they seem reluctant. Feel free to send a quick email alerting teachers.
- Please allow the student to do their own advocating, with your support.

It is important for Middle School aged students to participate at home, so they recognize they are needed and valued. Their responsibilities can involve:

- Household cleaning and upkeep: tidy, dust, sweep, mop, and vacuum
- Bathroom cleaning
- Laundry: sort, wash, dry, fold, put away
- Participate in planning and cooking for the family on a regular basis
- Setting the table, cleaning dishes
- Creating a shopping list and helping with the shopping
- Unloading groceries and putting them away
- Participating in planning a family trip
- Lawn care and garden maintenance (plan a garden)
- Care and maintenance of pets
- Take out garbage, recycling, and compost

Restoring Justice...

“Although it is quite true that man [sic] as an individual can improve and that society can be based on principles of justice and love, all of us are aware that these goals do not constitute a reality just beyond our grasp, but rather an aspiration whose fulfillment lies far in the future.”

Dr. Maria Montessori

Primary Through Upper Level:

EACMSI lives by three all-encompassing values:

- Respect yourself
- Respect others
- Respect the environment

The goal of the EACMSI discipline protocol is to:

- Balance the freedom and responsibility of the individual with the need for cooperation, consideration, and goodwill within the group.
- Provide an environment where young people will experience encouragement, affirmation, and community, as well as expectations of personal responsibility.
- Ensure each student’s physical and psychological safety.
- Enable each student to develop a high standard of moral integrity through gradual growth in self-discipline and personal responsibility.
- Nurture each student with loving firmness, respect, and equity.
- Grow students into mature, responsible citizens and members of society.

In the event that a student fails to meet the expectations above, the following describes our usual approach and protocol when working with students as they develop and internalize self-discipline:

During the first 6 weeks of school, all students are systematically taught how to meet expectations specific to their developmental stage and experience. During this time, teachers teach, re-teach, re-direct and facilitate.

If, after this intensive instruction, students are unable to respect the rules of the classroom, we ask them to pause all activity until they are able to follow the directions being given.

If misconduct continues, the child is supported in uncovering the multiple perspectives involved in the situation, as well as the impact of their behavior on the others involved. Support is given to resolve any harm done.

If misconduct persists, caregivers are asked to partner with the School to remedy the situation.

Grave (significant, consequential) acts of physical aggression will not be tolerated. During such times, students will be asked to leave school for the rest of the day. Students and caregivers meet with the Administration prior to being welcomed back into the community.

Middle School:

Footsteps towards becoming a moral member of the human race...

Our Middle School program is a practice ground for young people who are about to launch into the wider world. We want them to experience the workings of a mindful and just society and to carry forth the moral precepts that allow true collaboration and social cohesion to manifest. We hope to instill a framework for addressing issues of justice. “What is the just thing to do here? How do we address the needs of this community in light of the common good? How do we do so with honesty, integrity, and engagement in the problem-solving process? How do we find empathy and understanding in the midst of this issue?”

In other words, the EACMSI Middle School is a practice ground for grappling with social norms, rules of respectful conduct, and consequences for misconduct. When students of this age cross social, moral, or institutional boundaries, it is an important moment, and the School will act diligently on behalf of any hurt parties *and on behalf of the future of the transgressor.*

Middle School students are expected to adhere to the EACMSI code of conduct while engaged as a student on and off-campus: **Respect yourself, respect others, respect the environment.**

The following will be considered major infractions:

- Academic dishonesty
- Harassment - persistent and unwelcome statements or threats that are verbal, written, or physical
- Intimidation -provoking fear in another
- Sexual harassment -repeated unwelcome sexual advances and/or any other inappropriate verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature
- All forms of sexual activity
- Any form of weaponry at school
- Consumption of drugs or alcohol at school

The School considers each case of major misconduct individually, with a clear sense of the particular circumstances surrounding the event. The determination of consequences is made by the Administration in consultation with Middle School faculty.

Consequences for major infractions range from suspension to expulsion.

Montessori Terminology

Dr. Maria Montessori introduced many new terms and concepts to describe how children grow and learn. Here are definitions of some widely used Montessori words and phrases.

Absorbent mind – From birth through approximately age 6, young children experience a period of intense mental activity that allows them to “absorb” learning from their environment without conscious effort, naturally and spontaneously.

Concrete to Abstract: The classrooms are filled with hands-on materials as Dr. Montessori believed that knowledge proceeds from the hand to the brain. Each material presents an abstract concept, such as addition or scientific classification. As the student works with the concrete material, the abstract idea begins to form. The student no longer needs the material, having internalized the concept, and is now ready to proceed with abstract work.

Control of error – Montessori materials are designed so that children receive instant feedback as they work, allowing them to recognize, correct, and learn from their mistakes without adult assistance. Putting control of the activity in children’s hands strengthens their self-esteem and self-motivation as well as their learning.

Cosmic education – The body of work that is the curriculum for the elementary child is called the Cosmic Curriculum. This encompasses subject matter most typically taught as separate disciplines, such as Geography, History, Geology, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, and Physics. The purpose of the Cosmic Curriculum is first to give the child a vision of the whole universe and then to provide opportunities that allow them to discover how the universe works and their place in it.

Cycles of Activity: Work initiated by the child will naturally follow a cycle to its end, which is signified by the return of the material to its proper space. The teacher honors this natural completion by allowing the child to work uninterrupted. The basic concept behind the cycle of activity is that it allows the child to become absorbed in work and complete the task to satisfaction.

Grace and courtesy – Children are formally instructed in social skills they will use throughout their lives, for example, saying “please” and “thank you,”

interrupting conversations politely, requesting rather than demanding assistance, and greeting guests warmly.

Montessori – The term may refer to Dr. Maria Montessori, founder of the Montessori Method of education, or the method itself.

Normalization – A natural or “normal” developmental process marked by a love of work or activity, concentration, self-discipline, and joy in accomplishment. Dr. Montessori observed that the normalization process is characteristic of human beings at any age.

Normalizing event – Within the prepared environment of the Montessori classroom, children experience a normalizing event every time they complete a basic work cycle, which includes 1) choosing an activity, 2) completing the activity and returning the materials to the proper place, and 3) experiencing a sense of satisfaction.

Planes of development – Four distinct periods of growth, development, and learning that build on each other as children and youth progress through them: ages 0 – 6 (the period of the “absorbent mind”); 6 – 12 (the period of reasoning and abstraction); 12 – 18 (when youth construct the “social self,” developing moral values and becoming emotionally independent); and 18 – 24 years (when young adults construct an understanding of the self and seek to know their place in the world).

Practical life – This Montessori term encompasses domestic work to maintain the home and classroom environment, self-care and personal hygiene, and grace and courtesy. Practical life skills are of great interest to young children and form the basis of later abstract learning.

Practical life activities – Young children in Montessori classrooms learn to take care of themselves and their environment through activities such as hand washing, dusting, and mopping. These activities help toddlers and preschool-age children learn to work independently, develop concentration, and prepare for later work with reading and math; older children participate in more advanced activities.

Prepared environment – The teacher prepares the environment of the Montessori classroom with carefully selected, aesthetically arranged materials that are presented sequentially to meet the developmental needs of the children. Well-prepared Montessori environments contain appropriately sized furniture, a

full complement of Montessori materials, and enough space to allow children to work in peace, alone or in small or large groups.

Socialization – The process by which the individual acquires the knowledge and dispositions that enables them to participate as an effective member of a social group and a given social order.

Work Cycle – Through years of observation from around the world, Dr. Montessori came to understand that children, when left in freedom, displayed a distinct work cycle that was so predictable it could even be graphed. In Montessori schools, children have open, uninterrupted time to choose independent work, become deeply engaged, and repeat works to their own satisfaction.

Work – Purposeful activity. Maria Montessori observed that children learn through purposeful activities of their own choosing; Montessori schools call all of the children's activities "work."