

Montessori North School

Joy of Learning & Love of Life since 1983



Parents' Corner

First Day at School

The first day of school is an exciting, and perhaps an uncertain, day for your child. Hopefully your child will sense your support and trust in us when first joining and adjusting to the classroom setting and becoming a member of our Montessori home.

Please try not to be too alarmed if your child does not wish to leave you at first. Being away from each other, maybe for the first time, meeting new people, buying new clothes, and starting a new routine can be exciting for some and a cause of anxiety for others. It is only natural that a child would cling to the security of a parent. However, we have found that soon after the parent leaves, the child becomes focused on classroom activities and settles down quickly.

We recommend that a day or so before your child's first day at school, you talk about going to school without elaborating on the activities your child may or may not be doing. This is so your child does not develop inaccurate expectations.

On the first day of school, we ask that you bring your child to the classroom door, introduce yourself and your child to the teacher greeting you, and immediately leave, always letting your child know that you are doing so. If you feel hesitant or anxious about leaving, please be assured that our total aim is to make your child feel welcome, happy and self-confident in the Montessori environment. The less anxiety you express to your child, the better.

Please take comfort in the fact that our teachers are well trained and well experienced with attending to the care and needs of new children.

What to bring to School?

Please provide the school with following items, properly labelled with your child's name:

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Closed Indoor Shoes: Soft Velcro Shoes Work Best. No shoe-laces allowed. No Crocs allowed. No squeaky/light-up shoes allowed.

Closed Outdoor Shoes: Running Velcro shoes are best for outdoors. No shoe-laces allowed. No Crocs allowed. No squeaky/light-up shoes allowed. Please send weather appropriate shoes (like Rain boots/Winter boots) on wet days in Fall.

Extra Clothing: These will be kept in your child's bag at school. At a bare minimum, these include 3 T-shirts, 2 Pants, 3 underwear (if potty trained/training), and 3 sets of socks.

Additionally, for Pre-Casa/Toddlers, please provide the following as well:

Blanket and a **small pillow** for nap time.

Milk Bottle, only if needed for nap time. We encourage our children to drink milk from a mug at lunch time.

Diapers / Pull-ups: All pull-ups must be able to OPEN AND CLOSE FROM THE SIDE as the 'Pull-Ups' brand does. Please send a pack of diapers/pull-ups for the whole month.

Arrival and Departures

School commences at 8:30 am sharp. All arrival and departures should be punctual. Full-day children are to be picked up promptly at 3:15 pm. Half-day children not availing lunch are to be picked up promptly at 11:30 am, while Half-day children availing lunch are to be picked up promptly by 12:15 pm.

In order to allow each child a sense of independence, your participation in the arrival and departure should be brief. Please note that these are not appropriate occasions for parent-teacher conferences as the teacher must have time to prepare the classroom and to focus on your children.

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Attendance

Regular attendance is important for your child's understanding and appreciation of the Montessori method. Our regular full day hours are from 8:30 am to 3:15 pm. We offer extended care before and after regular school hours. As such, we are open from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm on most days.

Absenteeism

We request parents to email us or call the school, before classes begin, to inform the school of your child's absence or late arrival. As a matter of convenience, parents may leave a message on our phone answering service either the evening before or early in the morning.

Please note that your child's enrolment is for the whole academic year. There is no reduction or refund of fees during your child's absence from school due to illness, vacation or any other reason.

Safety

The safety of our children is top priority for us. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian when entering or leaving the school grounds and are asked to access the school through the front door only. A safety gate has been placed at the end of the walkway for each child's safety. **Be sure to close the gate behind you.**

Upon arrival, you must accompany the child to the teacher in charge who will record the attendance promptly. If the children are in the playground, please come there. When picking up your child, you must let the teacher know that you are leaving by making voice or eye contact.

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Once students have arrived at school, they are not allowed to leave the school property without permission. Any unknown or unauthorized persons appearing at the school requesting to take a student out of the school will not be permitted to do so without advanced consent of the parent or the legal guardian. As such, students will not be released to anyone other than the persons listed in the enrolment forms. In the event of any unscheduled pick-up by persons unlisted, the teacher must receive a signed letter by the parent, stating the full name of the person. We will also ask for identification.

Courtesy

At Montessori North School, we teach and encourage the Montessori child to shake hands and say 'Good Morning' or 'Good Bye' to the teacher when arriving at or departing from the school. Parents are encouraged to make it part of their daily routine in order to instil the basic foundation of courtesy and good mannerism in their children.

Toys and Personal Belongings

Leaving a parent can be a bit traumatic and a child often seeks comfort in bringing a toy or other personal belonging to the school. While toys may provide temporary security for your child, they often become ways of holding back the child from doing valuable activities at school. Toys can also become points of competition and conflict among children. Additionally, your child's valuable possession may get broken and is often misplaced or left behind to the great distress of the child. Please do not send your child to school with toys or items that may be distracting both for your child or others.

Allowing the child to bring a toy, but leaving it in the car may be a good compromise. We will try to explain that home has its special toys and the school has its special activities, which cannot be taken home.

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If a toy is brought to the classroom, the teacher will put it aside and send it back with the parent or guardian. However, the school will take no responsibility for any lost items brought to the school.

As an exception to the general rule, you may send one special toy with the child on pre-determined show-and-tell days, with prior approval from the teacher.

Treasure Chest

Our little Montessorians get so attached to their Montessori materials at school that these become little treasures in their eyes. They then innocently try to take these home with them. This is a very normal characteristic in the growing child and we address it gently.

Don't be surprised if you find a small cube, or a tiny cylinder, or counting beads, or some other cute object in their pockets while doing laundry at home. We request you to please return these to the school as many of these items are part of an expensive Montessori material and difficult to replace.

As a general rule, always check children's clothing when you take them home. If you find anything that you are in doubt of, please bring it to the school and show it to the teacher. Our teachers become very happy when you do so because they were probably searching high and low for it while preparing their classroom environment for the next day.

Children's Clothing and Shoes

Children's clothing should be practical and comfortable. Easy-to-manage clothes, which foster independence, are vital. To encourage independence, please send your children to school in clothes they can manage themselves. Please remember that we are trying to raise self-reliant children.

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Younger children should wear simple elastic waist pants. Overalls, belts and fasteners merely frustrate the children when they have to go to the washroom and often cause unnecessary accidents. When buying footwear for your child, please purchase a style which enables him or her to manage it independently. **Please avoid shoes with laces.**

At Montessori North School, we do not have uniforms. However, we request parents to avoid dressing children in clothing that depict Disney/Pixar or DC/Marvel characters, as we have seen these become points of competition and distraction among children. We request this because our aim is for children to develop their own unique personalities rather than identifying themselves with the characters portrayed on their clothing.

Label your Child's Possession: Please make it a point to clearly label your child's clothing and footwear as most children do not recognize their own clothes/jackets/shoes. The school cannot be held responsible for any lost items.

Extra clothing: You will see a hook in the hallway with your child's name labeled on it. This is where your child will keep all of his/her belongings. Accidents happen, and it would be very helpful to have spare clothes on hand. **All children must have a complete change of clothes** (underwear, socks, track pants and T-shirt) at school in case of spills, accidents and inclement weather.

Soiled Clothing: All your Child's possessions will be kept in a bag at school. Parents are able to monitor the contents of the bag whenever they wish. If clothes are sent home soiled, please send a new set of clothing the next day.

Indoor shoes: All children must have a pair of indoor shoes that stay at school. These must be non-skid running shoes or slip-on shoes. **No open toe sandals or laces, please.**

Winter time: Children will be going outside daily. They need to be dressed warmly for cold weather. In winter, please dress your child in layered clothing. Warm jackets, snow pants, hat and mittens are all part of winter attire. We advise that you use a neck warmer for your child instead of a scarf during the winter season as it is a safer alternative.

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Casa children will stay indoors when the temperature is below -10 degrees Celsius, with wind-chill included. Toddler/Pre-Casa children will stay indoors when the temperature is below -5 degrees Celsius, with wind-chill included.

Nap and Rest time

After lunch, there is an opportunity for the children to nap or rest. Cots, mats and sheets are provided for any child who needs to rest. We request the parents to send a blanket from home so the children may nap with comfort. The blankets shall be sent home every weekend for laundry.

The toddlers nap for 2 hours. The younger casa children are encouraged to nap for 45 minutes. Well rested children enjoy a pleasant dinner time and evening at home.

Children who do not sleep may be taken to the playground or engaged in quiet activities in the classroom.

Sickness and ill Health

If your child is sick or too ill to attend school, please email or call to inform the school on the day of absence. Please leave a message on the answering machine if we are not able to take your call.

Montessori North School will not allow any child to attend classes who exhibit the following:

- Fever within the last 24 hours
- Severe or phlegm-producing cough
- Thick colored nasal discharge
- Sore throat with fever and swollen glands
- Within 24 hours of beginning antibiotic treatment

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- Three or more watery stools in 24 hours
- Vomiting two or more times in 24 hours
- Body rash, especially with a fever
- Thick mucus or pus draining from the eye
- Head lice

When in doubt, look objectively at your child who isn't feeling up to par and ask yourself, 'If the situation was reversed, **would I like my child to catch this?**' Then make the decision whether or not you should bring your child to school.

Although ill children are directed to stay at home, children whose illness is not infectious may return to school when they are feeling well.

Communicable Diseases

If your child has contracted a communicable disease and you are unsure of the proper procedure, **please call York Region Health Department Contact Line at 1-800-361-5653**. The school requires a written note from a doctor stating that the child is no longer contagious before the child will be admitted back to the school.

Medication

Some children require routine medication/treatment over a period of time. At Montessori North School we will administer **prescription medicine only**, provided it can be done safely. We will not administer non-prescription medicine. Medicine must be accompanied by a written authorization of the parent. Forms are available from your child's teacher. The medication should be hand delivered to your child's teacher in the original container along with the device for dispensing it accurately.

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Observing the Classroom

To understand the Montessori classroom better, we feel it is important for parents to visit the classroom at least once a year. We request that observations do not begin until the sixth week of school as this gives the child the opportunity to adjust to the new environment.

When to come? Arrange a time with your child's teacher. A morning between 9:00 am and 11:00 am is the best time to observe the educational programmer in process.

How to observe? This is a time to sit back and watch the class, not to participate. Feel free to take notes and sit quietly in the location the teacher indicates. The length of the observation is 20-30 minutes. Afterwards if you have any questions, the teacher will be pleased to answer them.

Parent Information Nights / Workshops

Parent Information Nights, or Workshops, on the Montessori materials will be held throughout the year by the teachers for the parents. These shall cover the Montessori philosophy and the activities of Practical life, Sensorial, Language Mathematics and Culture subjects. Dates shall be given well in advance.

All workshops will be held in the evenings around 6:30 pm. We encourage parents to participate as they will get first-hand knowledge of how their children use the Montessori material in the classroom.

Parent-Teacher Interviews

We shall be conducting parent-teacher interviews in January to discuss your child's progress and answer any questions you may have. If at any time during the year you have any questions or concerns please make an appointment to meet the teacher or send us an email.

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Progress Reports

Written progress reports will be sent out in January and June.

Birthdays

Birthday celebrations are an exciting time for your child. Each birthday child is honored in the Montessori way, with a special birthday circle celebrating his or her life.

Please note that birthday party invitations **MUST** be handed to the classroom teacher for distribution at dismissal. This will avoid any hurt feelings for uninvited children.

On their birthday, children may bring in a special snack to share with others. Please check with your child's teacher regarding food allergies, as some of our children may have life threatening allergies. All birthday items brought to school are to be **NUT FREE** and be comprised of foods that contain allergy safe ingredients. Fruits and vegetable platters are a refreshing alternative to cakes, cookies and other baked goods. The serving of fruits and vegetables for birthdays also sends out an unspoken message to our children - that healthy foods are special treats, perfect for celebrations such as birthdays!

It has also been a tradition at the Montessori North School to have children present a book to celebrate their birthday. If you wish to contribute to your child's classroom in this special way, you may do so. However, it is not mandatory. This helps the child learn the joy of giving as well as receiving. Such donated books will be suitably inscribed and will become part of our permanent library collection.

If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday at school in a special way (examples: having a magician/clown etc. come in) please talk to the principal.

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Field Trips

Parents shall be informed of these trips through a letter well in advance. There will be an extra cost for these trips. Parents are always welcome to join us.

Special Visitors

We arrange for special visitors from various walks of life to visit the children throughout the year. These visits are both educational and very interactive with the children.

School Photographs

During the school year, we take pictures of the children at work and play to display around our classrooms and on our school blog. Parent consent is always obtained beforehand.

Once a year, we have an official school picture day. Parents shall be notified well in advance of the exact date.

Children's Work

All children's work will be put into their respective folders. Please keep in mind that much of the work done by the younger children is with the Montessori materials.

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Emergency Closures

Please call the school regarding school closures in case of extreme snow storms or other inclement weather. Our policy is to remain open if possible.

Fire Regulations

Smoking is prohibited at any time in the school building or anywhere on the school property. Fire drills are held monthly.

Tax Receipts

Tax receipts for tuition paid are issued for each calendar year in February of the next year.