

Dryden Montessori School Parent Handbook 2011-2012

This handbook should be used as a resource for parents, to answer questions that may arise during the course of the year. Please familiarize yourself with the policies and procedures of DMS. Any further questions can be directed to Marianne.

Dryden Montessori School
4 Thresher Place
Freeville, NY 13068
607-327-3063
<http://www.drydenmontessori.com>
Fall 2011-2012

About the school

DMS provides a Montessori program for children ages 3-6 to our community. With this program we seek to develop the child's natural rhythm of becoming physically and mentally independent, self confident, deeply respectful of the world around them and to awaken in them the excitement of learning and discovery. We offer the child a unique opportunity to interact with a beautifully prepared environment in a nurturing home based setting. The environment is equipped with Montessori materials and art instruction. The facility includes two charming classrooms and a large grassy and wooded yard with plenty of area to run and play.

Admission

Children at DMS are admitted if there is an appropriate opening in the program. Then after the school has received a completed application form, an interview meeting with the director and tour is scheduled. DMS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, nationality or ethnic origin. We are committed to creating and maintaining a balanced learning environment for your child that is consistent with the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori. In the event that our program doesn't meet the needs of a child, DMS reserves the right to ask that the child be dismissed from the program. However all attempts will be made to meet the needs of each child as long as they are consistent with the teaching philosophy of DMS methods.

Enrollment

Enrollment at DMS is binding for the entire school year. A child is officially enrolled in the program upon receipt of a completed application form, a completed enrolment form and enrollment fees. If both parents and school director agree that DMS is not appropriate for the enrolled child, the child may be withdrawn without any further financial obligation. If DMS decides that the program is not appropriate for the enrolled child the family is relieved of any further obligation. If a parent should decide to withdraw their child before the completion of the school year for any reason, 60 days written notice must be given to DMS. The parents remain financially responsible for the tuition for the remainder of the school year, until the position has been filled, and the program is able to replace the income represented by that tuition.

Tuition Policy

Tuition is due in (10) monthly installments due on the 15th of each month beginning with September tuition, which is due on the 15th of August. Failure to make an installment payment within 30 days of its due date gives DMS the right to declare the entire unpaid balance of the annual tuition immediately due and payable.

Class Policies and Procedures

Independence plays an important role in any Montessori program. The child has a strong inner drive towards independence, and once acquired, it leads to self-esteem, and the confidence to explore further and discover. This exploration through a prepared environment is how the child creates his intellect. Independence begins at the threshold of the classroom and so we ask that the children enter alone and take care of their belongings unassisted by parents. We also ask that during pick-up this independence is respected and encouraged by parents. It is important that all children arrive by 9:00. This is when we begin our morning meeting. This is a very important social and learning event, and it is beneficial for all of the children to begin the day with the same rhythm and routine.

Arrival and Departure

Arrival: 8:45-8:55 am

Half-Day Departure: 12:00 noon

Full- Day Departure: 3:20- 3:30

Late Pick up Policy

At DMS we greatly enjoy the children and their families but we also have other commitments to the school. Our program ends at 12:00 noon for half-day children, 3:30 for full day children and 4:30 for aftercare (Unless other aftercare arrangements are made). Please arrive promptly by these times. At noon, we need to prepare for lunchtime and at the end of the day, the teachers need to prepare the classroom for the next day. Occasionally we have scheduled appointments that require staff to leave promptly.

We understand that occasionally situations arise when you cannot be on time. Should a situation arise (i.e. car trouble, weather etc) in which you are not able to pick your child up at dismissal time, **we do ask that you telephone us to let us know at least 15 minutes before scheduled pick-up.** This will allow us to inform your child of the schedule change and alter the end of day transition plan for them. If late pickups occur more than once in the absence of extenuating circumstances, late pickups will be recorded in the log and a late fee will be charged on your monthly statement. Many childcare facilities have this same policy.

Late Fee schedule per child:

\$5 within the first 10 minutes

\$1 each additional minute

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in abiding by this policy.

Sign in/Sign out

As per OCFS recommendation, we have a sign in and sign out sheet to record attendance. This sheet will be posted at the door or just inside during inclement weather. We ask that you sign your child in and out daily. A teacher will be present to greet you and your child at the door on arrival and to dismiss your child on departure. It is our policy that no child will be able to leave with anyone other than a parent unless prior arrangements have been made and there is a signed permission slip identifying who will be picking your child up.

Separation

It can be difficult for parents and young children to separate especially in a setting that is new and unfamiliar. DMS is happy to work with parents to make this transition comfortable for them and their child. We encourage parents to visit with their child before the child begins the program and to begin a gradual phase in period that is considered variable depending on how well the child is adapting. Once beginning the program however, we have learned by experience that a quick and positive good-bye outside the front door is the easiest on the child. Children can easily sense when a parent is hesitant and uncertain and will respond to this with anxiety and worry. It is important that your child receive the message – both verbally and in body language that you are happy and confident about leaving them at DMS. They will respond by feeling comfortable in forming a bond of trust with the staff and environment. If you experience a difficult separation, please call us at regular intervals to get reassurance that your child has settled well.

School Closing Policy

DMS follows the Dryden city school districts calendar and operates under the same closing policy (see calendar). All school closings will be announced on local radio (WVBR, WHCO, WTKO, WQNY, and WEOS), as well as local TV station channel 10 News. **There are no tuition credits for school closings.**

Fire Drills

DMS will conduct random monthly fire drills. Teachers will ensure that all students exit the house safely and quickly and gather at safe designated areas. We will alternate leaving by both exits. Please update the blue emergency card when needed and have an emergency plan for picking up your child.

In the event that our building must be evacuated the staff will proceed to one of three home locations next to the school and you will be telephoned and notified of this situation. We will be able to be reached on the office cell phone at all times. (607-327-3063)

Health Policies

DMS follows the State of New York guidelines for dealing with illness in our program. These guidelines will be strictly followed to ensure the well being of all the children. Please do not send your child to school if they are or have just recently been sick. It is our priority to protect the health of the children under our care, and of course, our own health. It is very stressful to a child who is ill to be away from his home environment, and immediate loved ones. A sick child will recover more quickly when at home. DMS is not licensed or equipped to care for sick children. If a child becomes ill while at school, he will be moved to a quiet comfortable area, offered liquids, and comforted by the staff. Parents will be called to arrange for the child to be picked up. Please review our Health Exclusion Policy carefully as this will be strictly followed.

DMS does not yet administer medications to children. If your child needs to receive medication while at school, we ask that you make arrangements for a designated person to come to the program to administer the medication.

In the event that your child requires emergency medical attention, we must be able to reach a parent or emergency contact at any time of the day. In the event that a parent/contact cannot be reached, or that the emergency does not allow for the time to gain consent, Emergency Medical Services will be called. Please make sure that all emergency information is up to date. **Parents must inform the DMS staff if their child has received any medication in the past 24 hours.**

Note: *Currently there are no children in my program who have special healthcare needs that require me to give them medication. Special health care needs are defined by the ADA and are based on individual assessment. As required by the ADA, I will make reasonable accommodations based on the ADA guidelines. If the situation merits, I will develop a plan, which will keep me in compliance with ADA guidelines and OCFS childcare regulations. This may include but will not necessarily be limited to: if a child in my care requires a course of medication which must be given during program hours I will request that the parent/other assigned approved individuals will come to the program to administer the medication; If a child in my care develops a serious condition that requires the regular, or episodic, or possibility of*

necessitating administering of medication during program hours DMS will request that the parents provide a list of two or more individuals in addition to themselves who can be called upon to administer the medication. The staff at DMS will draw up an agreement with the parents, which will outline an emergency plan in the event that no individual can be contacted to administer the medication.

Health Exclusion Policy

When the illness or child's reaction to it requires more than the staff can provide or compromises the health and safety of others:

- Oral temperature above 101 degrees F, auxiliary temperature over 100 degrees F
- Persistent diarrhea
- Undiagnosed rash
- Vomiting two or more times in a 24 hour period, or any vomiting accompanied by symptoms of dehydration or other signs of illness.
- Constant runny nose that is not caused by allergies especially when the nasal discharge is yellow or green.

Until a medical note requires inclusion — signs and symptoms of illness such as lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, persistent abdominal pain, discolored urine, refusal to eat/drink, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing or other unusual signs.

Immunization Policy

Other than children who are enrolled in kindergarten or higher, no child will be admitted to DMS unless we have received a written statement signed by a health care provider verifying that the child is able to participate in our Montessori Program, currently appears to be free from contagious or communicable disease, and is receiving health care, including appropriate health examinations in accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics schedule of such care and examinations. This documentation must state that the child has received age appropriate immunizations in accordance with NYS Public Health Law.

Any child not yet immunized will be admitted to DMS if the immunizations are in process and the parent gives us specific appointment dates for subsequent immunizations. Any child who is not immunized due to parent's genuine religious beliefs will be admitted to DMS upon furnishing a written statement to this effect.

Any child missing immunizations may be admitted to DMS if the parent can furnish a letter from a physician licensed to practice medicine provides us with a written statement that such immunizations may be detrimental to the health of the child.

Other than the above exceptions, all children enrolled at DMS must be up to date with their immunizations in accordance with the current schedule for immunizations by the NYS Health Department.

The DMS staff are mandated reporters *"In accordance with the provisions of sections 413 and*

415 of the Social Services Law, the Group Family Provider, assistant or substitute must report any suspected incidents of child abuse or maltreatment concerning a child receiving child care to the State Wide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment or such a report to be made when the provider has reasonable cause to suspect that a child coming before them in their capacity as a provider of Group Family Care is an abused or maltreated child. Such a report must be followed by a written report within 48 hours, in the form and manner prescribed by the office to the child protective service of the social services district in the county in which the child resides". (OCFS Regulations for GFDC license 416.2)

Sick Child Policy

If a child becomes ill while attending the Montessori Program at DMS:

- The child will be moved to a quiet comfortable area away from the other children within eyesight of the provider.
- The parents/emergency numbers will be notified immediately to come to fetch the child.

The provider will obtain medical advice from the child's pediatrician if new symptoms appear or the condition worsens before the parent arrives. If a fever is present the provider will provide the child with clear fluids until the parent arrives. The providers at DMS will not administer medication. The parents will be required to come to our facility to administer medication to their child.

Emergency Procedures

The caregiver will provide emergency care by obtaining advice from the child's pediatrician and/or calling 911/local emergency number. If the child needs to be transported to the emergency medical provider this shall be done by the Director of DMS (Marianne Pyke), and the rest of the children will be in the care of the Assistant, and one of three neighbors who have agreed to be "on call" in such a case. Upon the advice of the child's pediatrician/emergency medical service appropriate first aid will be administered to the child before the transportation of child to medical facility/arrival of medical emergency services. A fully equipped and regularly maintained First Aid Kit in the classroom will facilitate first aid.

Daily Routine

8:45-9:00 Arrival.

The children are greeted by a teacher and a volunteer "greeter child". They then enter into the foyer to organize their belongings and change into indoor shoes/slippers.

9:15 Morning Circle.

Welcoming the children, material & art presentations, songs and rhymes.

9:00-11:45 Work period

The children move freely throughout the prepared environment choosing materials and activities, having snack or engaging in food preparation. They enjoy choosing from the different areas of learning (Practical Life, Sensorial, Math, Language, Cultural, Art/Music). The teachers offer lessons and guide the children as they work and interact

with each other. Throughout the course of the morning, the children are invited to attend two group lessons that might include a welcome, calendar, weather, songs, poems and a lesson. Through the week more formal lessons are presented in the areas of Art, Spanish, Yoga, Music and Rhythm and Cultural themes. During inclement weather the children have access to the open and airy Gym room which allows them to move freely, jump, dance, build large block constructions, and many other large group activities.

When the weather permits, the children enjoy the “outdoor classroom” to have snack, water based activities, nature walks and exploration, outside art, books and stories under the trees, flower and vegetable gardening, and outdoor picnic lunches.

11:30-11:45 Clean up.

The children clean up the prepared environment, have a circle gathering and prepare for outdoor play.

12:00 Noon dismissal for half day children

11:45-12:30 Playtime Recess

12:30-1:15 Lunchtime

Hands are washed and the children enjoy lunchtime together.

1:15 Story time.

1:30-3:00 Naptime / afternoon work period.

The younger children settle down for a nap in our quiet cozy nap room, while the older children choose activities from the prepared environment.

3:00-3:30 Wake up, clean up, outside play time, then 3:30 dismissal

3:30-4:30 Aftercare Program

Observations

Classroom observations will begin in October. In keeping with the Montessori protocol, we ask that you remain seated, and refrain from engaging in conversation or activities with the children. The prepared environment is a very special place and has been carefully designed to meet the developmental needs of the children and facilitate their journey towards independent self directed learning and discovery. The presence of parents moving freely through the room can be distracting and can interfere in the atmosphere of independence and concentration in the classroom. We ask that you limit your observation to 20 minutes. The teacher will be happy to meet with you after school to discuss your observations and to answer any questions you may have.

All visitors must sign in and out in the DMS Visitors Log, and include the reason for the visit.

Snack/Lunch

A daily nutritious snack of fruits and/or vegetables is provided by DMS and prepared by the children. Water is our beverage. This snack is available to the children throughout the day. In any Montessori program, the focus is on healthy development of the whole child –spirit, intellect and physical well-being. Nutrition and healthful living is a big part of our program.

Please send in a nutritious lunch with your child if they are to stay all day. Please include protein, grains, fruits and vegetables. Candy and highly processed or highly sugared foods are poorly tolerated by young children and are strongly discouraged. We can refrigerate and/or heat up lunches if required. We will send home uneaten portions of your child's lunch to help gauge his/her daily nutrition.

Please prepare a child friendly lunch that your child can manage on their own.

Outdoor play

The children will go outside to play each day except in the case of extreme cold, extreme heat, heavy rain or stormy conditions. Light rain or drizzle will not prevent us from going outside. Please ensure that your child has the appropriate clothing to for outside play on any given day. Each child should have a complete change of clothes at school at all times which should correspond to changes in growth and seasons. If a child is not able to go outside he should not come to school. We do not have the staff to supervise children inside and outside at the same time.

Clothing

We ask that you send your child in clothing that they can manage independently, and in which they can comfortably play and explore. Messy art projects will be part of each day, and in any Montessori classroom there is a lot of activity involving water. Although smocks will be worn we cannot prevent the soiling of clothes. All clothing and belongings should be clearly labeled. Each child must have a pair of inside shoes and a pair of outside shoes each day.

Naptime

Napping children should have a blanket and pillow at DMS each day. These will be sent home periodically for washing. Our program provides nap mats.

Materials

The Montessori materials are irresistible to young children! Sometimes charming little pieces/object find their way to the child's home. Should this occur please inform us (this could prevent many hours of searching the classrooms) and return the object the next day.

Birthdays

At DMS each child's birthday will be celebrated with the tradition of the Montessori Birthday Walk and the reading of the classic "On the day that you were born". We also suggest that you

send in pictures representing each year of your child's life for the construction of a simple timeline. The celebration of your child's birthday could also include a donation to the class library in your child's name. Proper nutrition is very much a focus of our program and we do ask that you refrain from sending in sugary treats (cupcakes, birthday cake) for your child's birthday celebration. We suggest that you send in a healthful snack for your child to share with his/her friends on their special day, and parents are, of course, welcome to join us. No party favors, hats or balloons please.

Home folders -

Communication at drop off and pick up times can be difficult. The teachers are focusing on greeting and supervising the children and transitioning them into the classroom, and the parents are often under time constraints. Your child's home folder is quite simply a mailing system between parents and the teachers. The contents of the home folder will go home with your child each day. ***Please check your child's folder each day.*** Many days may go by without any correspondence, but it may periodically contain important information about your child's day, upcoming events, calendar amendments, or teacher requests. This folder is also a means for the parents to communicate to the teachers any questions or concerns they may have. The folder may simply contain a note from a parent requesting a phone call from the teachers sometime during the day, or a note communicating relevant information about your child which would be helpful for the teachers to know (the child did not sleep well etc). The teachers will check these folders each day and request that you do the same.

Show and Tell

Every Friday, the children are encouraged to bring or tell something of interest from their home to share with the other children. This is a wonderful opportunity for children to practice communicating to a group about something that is important to them. Objects to share should be educational and promote imagination (a book, model of an animal, seashell, rock etc). ***Store bought and electronic toys are not suggested at DMS with the exception of special stuffed "friends" for naptime.***

Field Trips

During the course of the year we will be going on field trips to local areas of interest. You will be informed of these events in a letter that will be sent home in your child's home folder. Parents will be asked to drive on these occasions, and will also be asked to act as chaperone for the children that they are driving for the duration of the field trip. Teachers will not be driving the children.

Classroom Discipline

In every Montessori classroom, the discipline policy revolves around respect: for oneself for others and for the environment. Gentleness, kindness and respect are virtues that are being constantly emphasized in the classroom, and the children are reminded and encouraged to practice them. The teachers also are consistent models of appropriate behavior in the classroom. If a child is not responding to the teachers request to act in a respectful manner, they will be asked to stay quietly by the teachers side for a short while, and then invited to return to their activity if the child is able to demonstrate self control. This is **not** called a "time out". It is an

opportunity for them to de-escalate and calm their energy and emotions. Then, they begin again so they may attempt a successful resolution. The teachers will ensure that the child fully understands why there was concern over his/her behavior, and has an opportunity to discuss, share and collaborate in a solution. In the event of a persistent/extreme problem, the parents will be notified and requested to attend a conference to discuss the situation and invited to collaborate in resolving the problem.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences will be held in fall and spring (see calendar). A written evaluation of your child's progress will be provided at the spring conference. The teacher will be happy to arrange a conference at any time during the course of the year at your request.

Health Services and Acupuncture

Marianne also offers the services of pediatric and adult health care utilizing a combination of Western and Traditional Chinese Medicine. As a Licensed Acupuncturist and Registered Nurse she can provide services of medical evaluations and treatment using either acupuncture or herbs or both to her patients outside of classroom hours. Preschool aged children rarely need to have actual acupuncture done, but often respond well to acupressure & massage. Children's care usually consists of an evaluation, diagnoses, and development of a treatment plan that involves any of the following; acupressure, massage, diet alterations, schedule and or environmental changes and herbs. The fee for children's treatment is included in the tuition, unless there is a complicated medical condition requiring multiple weekly visits. Parent treatment is also offered at a discounted rate of 25.00/visit. All medical services are provided outside school hours.

If parents elect to utilize these medical services for themselves or their children, a medical chart will be created which then becomes actual medical records and will be treated as confidential documents according to the HIPPA (health information patient practice act) regulations and guidelines. An acupuncture brochure is available for more information.

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Please sign and return:

Dryden Montessori School

I have read the 2010-2011 DMS Parent Handbook, which outlines the policies and procedures of Dryden Montessori School. I fully understand these policies and procedures and agree to abide by them.

Name _____

Date _____