



**2023-2024**

**Parent and Student**

**Handbook**

*Handbook subject to change as needed without prior notification.*

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*“... education is a natural process carried out by the human individual, and is acquired not by listening to words, but by experiences in the environment.”*

*Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952)*



St. Joseph Montessori School (SJMS) serves the Columbus metropolitan area, providing comprehensive coeducational Montessori instruction for diverse students from preschool through eighth grade.

SJMS is a member of the American Montessori Society, is accredited by the Ohio Catholic School Accrediting Association (OCSAA) through the Catholic Diocese of Columbus, and is chartered by the state of Ohio. SJMS receives no financial support from the Diocese and is fully self-funding.

## **OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

St. Joseph Montessori School provides a Montessori Catholic learning community that honors the whole child and their immense potential.

## **OUR VISION**

To be a school of choice sought out by Central Ohio families attracted to the power of the Montessori Method of educating children applied in a diverse, engaging, and compassionate community.

## **EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

The purpose of St. Joseph Montessori School is, in the words of Dr. Maria Montessori, “to educate the human potential” by means of a scientifically prepared environment which provides a wide variety of equipment and materials, employs a multi-sensory approach to learning, and frees the child to choose activities according to individual interests, abilities and talents within certain set limits. The opportunity to participate in one’s own education provides the child a context for growing academically, socially, and emotionally. At St. Joseph Montessori School, the child’s ability to direct his/her own learning is guided by the Montessori influence of freedom with discipline.

SJMS exists as an educational alternative which values and is committed to serve a widely diverse population with varying needs and aptitudes. We believe our services must extend beyond the classroom. Educational opportunities provided for our families enable parents to reinforce and enrich the child’s learning. Staff members are offered the means and resources for professional growth and are provided an environment which encourages initiative, creativity, and collaborative decision-making. We believe that respect, cooperation, and mutual support among students, parents, staff, and community members are critically important to a child’s success in school and must be actively fostered by all participants.

## **PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE CHARACTERISTICS**

Our program is designed to achieve the following goals:

1. Students will be life-long learners.

Many of our learning activities are individualized. Each child is involved in work which holds particular interest because it is geared to his or her own pace, and the child can repeat a task as often as desired, thus experiencing a series of successful achievements. In this manner, the child acquires a positive attitude toward learning.

2. Students will be confident.

At St. Joseph Montessori School, work is planned so that each new step is built on what the child has already mastered, thereby removing the negative experience of frequent failure. Success after success builds up an individual's inner confidence and provides assurance that learning is possible. These confidence-building experiences, in turn, contribute to the sound emotional development of the adult.

3. Students will be independent.

At St. Joseph Montessori School, we give each child the gift of independence. This lets them know we value them and know they are capable. Children grow up feeling empowered and safe in their abilities to make sound choices. When we trust them, they learn to trust themselves; ultimately, they become happy and productive members of their communities.

4. Students will be curious.

In a rapidly changing society such as ours, we must all be students during our entire lifetime. Providing students with opportunities to discover qualities, dimensions, and relationships, amidst the rich variety of learning situations, we nurture the development of a natural desire to learn in such a way that the child acquires a habit of being curious-an essential element of creative learning.

5. Students will be global citizens.

Each child is involved in activities and opportunities which broaden his or her vision of the world. Through collaborative work, care of the environment, global education, and conflict resolution, the child gains an appreciation of personal and social responsibilities and acceptance of human differences.

## **SPIRITUAL LIFE**

At SJMS, children K-8 attend religion classes taught from the Catholic perspective and attend one Mass each month at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, located on the other side of our parking lot.

Our religion curriculum is The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. This Montessori-based approach to spiritual formation for children was developed through years of patient observation to understand which religious themes seemed most essential at different ages and stages of development.

In the spirit of Montessori education, classes take place in a specially prepared environment, filled with hands-on materials. This is called the “Atrium.” Within this atrium, short presentations are given and much time is devoted to the child’s personal work. In this way, each child’s own gifts and callings are respected and celebrated. The adult is a co-listener and co-learner, with the child before the Word of God.

SJMS is a Catholic School that strives to be welcoming to people of all religious backgrounds. The religious orientation of the school is varied. While Christianity is the predominant belief, other faiths, including Judaism and Buddhism, are represented in the school population. As of September 2018, slightly more than 17 percent of the students and 46 percent of the teachers are Catholic.

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of St. Joseph Montessori School. In the conduct of its official business, it only acts as a whole and does not intervene in the daily affairs of the school. The Board of Trustees has ultimate fiduciary responsibility for the School and ensures that the School’s mission and values are effectively communicated and implemented. According to the school bylaws, the principle responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are:

- Employing the Head of School
- Fiduciary health
- Policy Setting
- Fundraising
- Perpetuating the School
- Advocacy

Parents who want to stay informed about the work of the Board are invited to talk with the Head of School or attend the Board of Trustees’ meetings. Election to the Board of Trustees occurs in April of each year. A copy of the school’s organizational chart can be found in SJMS’s policy manual, policy # 1.600.0

## **FAMILY ASSOCIATION**

The St. Joseph Montessori School Family Association provides a vital and much-appreciated service to school leadership and the entire school community. The SJMS Family Association contributes to the school community in tangible ways by:

- Engaging and empowering the community to advocate for students.

- Strengthening the home and school relationship.
- Broadening and enhancing service and advocacy for all children and families.
- Building community and teamwork through volunteerism and staff collaboration.
- Providing volunteer opportunities and contributing to the welfare of our community.
- Providing funds for the annual academic enrichment activities for students.

All St. Joseph Montessori School parents, teachers, and staff are members of the Family Association. The Family Association is not specifically a fundraising organization, but it does designate proceeds from its revenue-generating initiatives for particular school programs. The Family Association also serves as the organizing body for certain school-funded activities. All parents are welcome to attend monthly meetings, and to become involved in its projects. The Family Association elects officers each April.

## **ADMISSION & REGISTRATION**

No child, whose parents desire to enroll him/her at St. Joseph Montessori School, shall be denied admission to the school on the basis of religious affiliation, race, color, gender, or ethnicity.

New applicants are considered based on the following criteria:

1. Available space
2. Siblings of currently enrolled students
3. Children with Montessori experience

Siblings of students currently enrolled at St. Joseph Montessori School will be given preference during the application process for the coming year. Children with prior Montessori experience are also given preference. All applicants must meet all requirements for admission.

### **Ages of Admission**

Children will be admitted to the toddler environment based on age (18 months-32 months) and parental philosophical alignment with Montessori pedagogy and methodology for toddler aged students. With few exceptions, a child is eligible to be admitted to Children's House if he/she is successful in self-care of toileting and is three years of age on or before the first day of school. For Kindergarten, a child is eligible if he/she is five years of age on or before the first day of September. To be eligible for first grade, according to state law, the child has to have successfully completed an approved Kindergarten program.

### **Nondiscrimination Policy**

St. Joseph Montessori School admits students of any race, color, ethnicity, national origin, and religion to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities made available to students at the school. It does not



discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, and religion in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

### **Classroom Placement**

All classroom placements are made by the Placement Committee, which is composed of the Head of School, Director of Admission, and teachers from the appropriate level. Great care is given, and a variety of factors are considered regarding the placement of all students.

Students are assigned to specific classrooms to achieve and maintain a balance of a multi-level classroom with respect to age, gender and a comfortable fit in a Montessori environment. Children will remain with their classroom teachers until they are ready to move to the next level appropriate to their educational, emotional and social needs. Under very limited circumstances, the Head of School, in consultation with the child's parents and teachers, may assign the student to a different classroom. Placement in another classroom will only be considered if it is in the best interest of the child and will minimally disrupt the operation and learning experience of the other students in the affected classrooms.

### **Student Advancement**

It is essential for parents and teachers to work together to make decisions about the best educational path for children. Occasionally, it may be the recommendation of the school for a child to spend a fourth year at a given level. These conversations are ongoing and based on the developmental needs of the child. While the school may make a recommendation, it is the right of the parent to make the final decision.

### **Child Custody**

The custodial parent is required to provide the Head of School or the person in charge of admission with the most current certified copy of any child custody order or decree pertaining to a student. The child custody order or decree pertaining to the student should be submitted to the school within 2 weeks of enrollment. Changes in the custody order or decree pertaining to the student should be submitted to the school within 2 weeks of the change taking effect.

### **Documents & Fees**

For returning students, the due date for signed contracts and registration fees is usually in late February. See the school calendar for the specific date. Late contracts are subject to late fees and possible loss of school enrollment. Once a signed contract is received, March 31st is the last day to withdraw without financial penalty.

<u>Cancellation Date</u>	<u>Your Responsibility</u>
April 1 – May 31	25% of annual tuition
June 1 – August 18	50% of annual tuition

August 19 or later

100% of annual tuition

A non-refundable enrollment deposit and enrollment fee is required to secure each child a place for the following school year. Without it, registration will be considered incomplete and a student's enrollment will not be guaranteed.

Failure to pay tuition and fees when due shall be a reason for exclusion of a child from attendance at St. Joseph Montessori School. Children will not be admitted to class on the first day of the school year unless the first tuition payment has been received. If a child is enrolled after the completion of the first month of school, tuition will be prorated on a per diem basis.

As of the 2022-23 school year, the Board of Trustees voted to approve a new collections policy on overdue accounts:

1. One week past due a \$25 late fee will be charged to the FACTS Tuition account.
2. Three weeks past due an email and phone conversation between the parent and Business Manager occurs. Attempt is made to establish a payment plan.
3. One month past due a phone conversation between the parent and Business Manager occurs and a payment plan is solidified.
4. Six weeks past due, the First Final Notice Letter with a deadline and reminder of contract language is sent from the Business Manager to the parent.
5. Seven weeks after payment is due: If no response by Step 4 Notice Deadline: Send Second Notice Letter (by e-mail and certified mail). Date is given for exclusion of child(children) from class.
6. If no response by Step 5 the child is excluded from class and the account is turned over to a collection agency. Once tuition is paid in full, the child is reinstated.

More information about SJMS's tuition policies can be found in the school's policy manual, policy # 3.300.0 (Tuition Policy) and # 3.32.00 (Cancellation of the Enrollment Agreement.)

## **CLASSROOM OBSERVATION POLICY**

Parents and Community Members are welcome to observe the classrooms. However, basic guidelines are in place in order to keep this process as non-disruptive as possible and to maintain a productive learning environment for all our students. Below are our policies regarding observations.

### **Classroom Observations:**

- Observations MUST be scheduled (no drop-ins).
- Observers will be given an observation form. We welcome and encourage feedback and thoughtful dialogue about what you are experiencing in the classroom.
- No more than two observers per classroom per day between 9am and 11:00 am (1/2 hour observation).

- Observations will begin on the 1<sup>st</sup> weekday of October.
- Observations will be held on: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.
- Parents / Observers must have students currently enrolled OR have previously attended a tour or Open House unless scheduled by the Director of Admission or Head of School.
- There will be no observations during Thanksgiving, Winter break, and Spring Break. Limited observations will be scheduled during school-wide festivities.
- Observations will end on the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of May

**Parent/Visitor:**

Observers in the classroom can significantly change the dynamics of the students’ interaction with the environment, staff and peers. The following will assist observers in blending in with the environment and result in the least amount of disruption.

- Teachers will direct observers to an observation chair in an unobtrusive area of the classroom.
- Refrain from speaking to students and teachers. If students speak to you, a polite “hello” is appropriate and then direct them back to their work. Explain that you are here to see a Montessori classroom “in action” and you want to watch the students working.
- Let your child know before the observation that you will be present, but will not interact with them or their work.
- Obtain an observation form from the office. Use the form to record questions and/or comments to discuss later with the HOS, teacher, or Director of Admission.
- Siblings are not to be included in the classroom during observations and the office is not equipped to provide daycare.
- Absolutely no pictures or video equipment are allowed without the written consent of the Head of School.

Observations can be an important tool in seeking information and further understanding Montessori education. It is also an important tool in the education of parents to the Montessori Method and aids in partnering with teachers to provide consistent direction for your child. Observations of other children need to be kept confidential. Conversations that involve the identity of other children will be strictly prohibited for all faculty members. We appreciate your comments and impressions after your observation. Please check back in the office before departing.

**ANNUAL DOCUMENTS**

Annual registration shall be considered complete only when the following items have been received in

the school office:

1. Signed enrollment agreement
2. Enrollment deposit and enrollment fee (\$500; \$400 of which is applied towards the following year's tuition)
3. Confirmation of enrolling in Smart Tuition
4. For the 23-24 School Year, an Acknowledgement of Risk is also required.

The following forms must be submitted to the school office according to deadlines given:

- 1) Combined Permission Form (all students)
- 2) Emergency Card (all students)
- 3) Health History Form (all new students)
- 4) Birth certificate (all new CH students) - a copy is acceptable
- 5) Medical Record Form (all CH students)
- 6) Dress Requirements for graduation (all 8th Year Students)

## **TUITION ASSISTANCE**

St. Joseph Montessori School offers a need-based tuition assistance program. The money for these grants comes directly from the School from funds raised during the Annual Fund Campaign and the Spring Gala. Grants are made to families who qualify for aid on the basis of financial need. Families will be notified in mid-April after completing the online application form from a third-party partner. The application period is November through March of the current school year. Only completed applications received by the deadline are considered. Families must apply every year for tuition assistance. Generally, grants are announced by email no later than April 15. SJMS safeguards the confidentiality of all financial information supplied by applicants. However, due to the nonprofit status of the school, the grant recipients and the amounts received are listed on the school's tax return. See SJMS policy # 3.320.0 and #3.520.0 for more information on tuition assistance.

## **RECORDS**

No data shall be released about students without the written consent of the parent or guardian, except when required by law. Parents or guardians shall have access to all data, have the right to challenge the accuracy of all data, and have the right to insert into the permanent record a written rebuttal of information considered to be inaccurate.

No one but school personnel, parents or guardians, or non-custodial parents or guardians shall have access to student data without a valid court order, subpoena, or written permission of the parent or guardian. School personnel may release information concerning students for research or statistical purposes as long as the individual student's identity is protected.

### **WITHHOLDING STUDENT RECORDS**

Requests for student records shall be granted only if the student's account is in good financial standing.

### **PUBLISHING STUDENT INFORMATION**

Directory information regarding students will be released in various formats unless a parent notifies the school that such information is not to be released regarding his/her child. Directory information includes names, addresses, and contact information of students and parents, as well as classroom and grade level for students.

### **CANCELLATION OF THE ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT**

The SJMS Enrollment Agreement contains specific stipulations regarding the withdrawal of a student once the agreement has been signed by the person(s) who has legal authority over the education of the student. Any other attempt at cancellation of the Agreement is a breach of contract. The enrollment agreement for the full academic year is unconditional and no portion of the year's tuition or fees so paid or outstanding will be refunded or canceled in the event of absence, withdrawal, or dismissal of the student from the School. However, the Head of School may consider particular circumstances in the breach of contract and is authorized to reach an amicable agreement with the parties in the breach. Failing to do so, the Head of School will consult with legal counsel and advice from the Executive Committee as to the intended action. The intended action will, in most cases, result in legal action within thirty (30) days.

### **HEALTH**

Students through Kindergarten must have physical exams by a physician annually. All immunizations must be up to date to enroll new students. These forms are available in the school office or can be downloaded from the school website.

Acceptance of a student is at the discretion of the Head of School. If a pre-existing illness is concealed by the student, parent, or guardian, the Head of School may suspend or terminate the enrollment of the student. If a medical evaluation by a physician is recommended by the Head of School, reports will be returned to the Head of School within one week.

The school employs a registered, certified school nurse through the State of Ohio, Department of

Education. The nurse utilizes her skills to identify student health problems and to handle emergency situations. The nurse also coordinates school and community health resources. Some of the nurse's general services are:

1. Determining health status
2. Providing screenings and referrals for health conditions
3. Maintaining constant communication with the Head of School and teachers regarding health problems

See SJMS policy # 5.600.0 for more information.

## **MEDICATIONS**

Any student needing to take prescription medication or over the counter medication during school hours MUST have a signed Medication Authorization Form from the parent or guardian AND a properly completed physician's statement. The medication will be held in the nurse's office until such time that it is to be administered. Regardless of their age, students may not keep any medications with them and may not self-administer without supervision. School personnel may not give over-the-counter medications unless prescribed by a doctor and the medical form is completed and signed by a physician.

No verbal orders can be taken. Any changes in medication must also be in writing from a physician. All medication must be in the container in which it was dispensed by the prescribing physician or licensed pharmacist.

The possession and use of nonprescription, over-the-counter medications during school hours is discouraged, but if health conditions require, students in Middle School (grades 7 & 8) may possess a small amount of nonprescription medication for their own use. This medication may not be shared with other students. The medication must be in the original labeled container (i.e. please do not send your child to school with a plastic bag of pills). The school nurse and school personnel are not permitted to administer OTC medication without the written authorization of an authorized prescriber.

## **Sunscreen**

For students in Children's House: Parents can write a note requesting sunscreen be applied to their child. Parents will supply sunscreen. For students in Lower and Upper Elementary: students may use and possess sunscreen provided by their parent only. Sunscreen cannot be shared with another student. He/she will be independent with the application of the sunscreen. The student is to notify his/her teacher before applying sunscreen

Due to allergies and asthma, only lotion sunscreen may be applied at school - **NO SPRAY** sunscreen is permitted!

## **Lip Balm/Chapstick**

In Children's House, teachers will apply non-medicated lip balm/chapstick with written permission from a parent. Parents will supply the lip balm/chapstick. Students in Lower and Upper Elementary may use and carry their own lip balm/chapstick.

## **2023-24 SICK POLICY**

Students who are ill should be kept home to help control the spread of germs. Sick children expose other students and staff members they encounter. This is disruptive to the educational process and to other children and their families.

Please follow the guidelines below to help keep our school safe and healthy:

- 1) Please report to the Office Manager if your child has a communicable disease. Children are expected to remain home during the communicable period of the disease as indicated by your healthcare provider. Please provide a note from the healthcare provider upon return or a parent note that includes diagnosis, date of diagnosis, date of first symptoms, date of expected return, and best contact number for parent or guardian.
- 2) If your child shows these signs of illness, they must remain home (or will be sent home from school):
  - Fever - Fever is defined as having a temperature of 100.4 F. A child needs to be fever-free for a minimum of 24 hours without the help of fever reducing medication before returning to school.
  - Diarrhea, stomachache and/or vomiting - The student must remain home for 24-48 hours after stomachache, diarrhea, or vomiting has stopped. The child should be feeling better and food intake should have returned to normal before returning to school.
  - Difficulty breathing - Student should stay home until he or she is feeling better and his or her activity level has returned to normal.
  - Sore Throat - Student should stay home if he or she has a red throat, swollen glands, and/or difficulty swallowing.
  - Loss of Taste and Smell - Student should seek medical evaluation.
  - Uncontrolled cold symptoms interfering with the student's ability to learn (i.e., persistent coughing and/or persistent/active runny nose) - Student should stay home until symptoms are improving and he or she can participate in class.
  - Other symptoms - Students exhibiting symptoms such as extreme fatigue, body aches and/or headache, and/or are not able to participate in class should stay home until

recovered and/or see their healthcare provider.

- Additional symptoms that require absence from school include:
  - unusual skin rash
  - pink eye
  - Yellowish skin or eyes
  - Untreated infected skin patch(es)
  - Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
  - Stiff neck

In the event a child becomes ill during the school day, the parents will be called. If the parent(s) cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be called. Students should be picked up within 30 minutes of notification.

**PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IF ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS ARE EVIDENT IN THE MORNING.**

A child must be excluded from school until sufficiently recovered from the illness. If your child has a fever (over 100o), diarrhea, and/or vomiting, he/she must be excluded from school for at least twenty-four hours and is symptom free without the use of fever reducers. If you are in doubt about the appropriate time of return, contact your physician, the school nurse, or office personnel to discuss the matter.

## **COVID-19**

### **COVID-19 Symptoms**

Students may not report to school if they have any of the following symptoms:

1. Cough/ difficulty breathing
2. High fever > 100.0
3. Headache
4. Sore throat
5. Chills – described as body shakes
6. Muscle aches
7. Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
8. New loss of taste or smell
9. Exposure to person with COVID



## **HEAD LICE**

Head lice are a very common condition in school age children. While they do not pose a health threat, they are a nuisance to get rid of. The most common symptom is itching of the head along the back of the neck and ears. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the Ohio Department of Health strongly discourage classroom or school-wide screening due to the lack of evidence of efficacy. The school nurse does selectively check children for lice upon teacher or parent request. Please contact the nurse with questions or concerns.

Our community is filled with students active in communities and events throughout Columbus and these exposures are beyond our control at school. Families can help prevent transmission of lice by head checks and frequent laundering of bedding, coats, hats etc. Teach your child to avoid head to head contact and sharing of hats, brushes and combs.

## **FLU**

All forms of the flu can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, we take steps to reduce the spread of the flu at SJMS. We want to keep the school open to those students functioning in a normal manner during the flu season. Students will be reminded to use proper hand washing and disinfection procedures to prevent the spread of various communicable diseases such as flu. If a flu outbreak should occur at SJMS, we may take additional steps to prevent its spread, such as:

- Conduct active fever and flu screening of students and staff as they arrive at school
- Make changes to increase the space between people, move workspaces, cancel field trips
- Dismiss students from school for at least seven days if they become sick

## **ALLERGIES/ SEVERE ALLERGIES/EPINEPHRINE INJECTORS**

SJMS has many students with severe food allergies. For some students, even trace amounts of an allergen can cause a life-threatening anaphylactic reaction. Although the school does not restrict foods that may be allergens, please be aware that there are children with severe allergies attending the school. Individual classrooms may have restrictions.

Parent/guardian responsibilities:

- Notifying the school nurse and teacher of any life-threatening food allergy on or before the first day of each school year, or as soon as the allergy is diagnosed.
- Bringing an epinephrine auto injector to school with the signed food allergy action plan on the first day of school. All medications should be delivered to the nurse.
- Providing the school with any medications prescribed and a supply of “safe snacks” for use

by their child.

- Parents of children with life-threatening food allergies are responsible for notifying bus transportation providers.
- Completing a food allergy action plan with a physician who specializes in allergy treatment.

A food allergy action plan will be developed for students with severe food allergies. The food allergy action plan will address the actions to be taken to reduce exposure at school, and what actions will be taken in the event of exposure. The action plan will be shared with appropriate school staff.

Ohio law allows a student to carry an epinephrine auto-injector with them during the school day. Permission to carry an epinephrine auto-injector is on the form section of the website. The physician must indicate that the child is able to self-inject using the auto injector. Parents please provide a back-up auto injector to the nurse on the first day of school.

## **RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER AN ILLNESS OR INJURY**

If a child has suffered a severe accident and/or illness that has caused an extended absence from school, the parents should communicate with the School Nurse and administration to develop a “Return to School” plan. This plan will include any doctor recommendations, medications required, limitations (physical education and/or outdoor activities), and adjustments to school curriculum/learning.

## **SAFETY**

St. Joseph Montessori School subscribes to all safety procedures as outlined by all federal, state, county, city, and concerned authorities, including, but not limited to, OSHA (Occupational Safety & Health Administration) and the Life Safety Code of the National Fire Protection Association. St. Joseph Montessori School requires diligence and care of its employees and students. Negligence or disregard for safety procedures, as outlined below, on the part of a student, may result in disciplinary action, including separation from St. Joseph Montessori School. School Guidelines have been developed and are communicated to students to insure their safety during school hours.

Safety procedures include the following:

1. Fire drills are conducted monthly. Tornado drills are conducted monthly, March through June. Evacuation, lockdown, and other safety drills occur throughout the year as well. Specific emergency plans are posted for evacuation routes and procedures for fire/weather alerts.
2. Incident reports are completed when an accident or injury occurs.
3. If neglect or abuse of a child is suspected, the local Children's Services agency is notified.

4. Children are not released to any adult if there is a question about their identity or reliability to care for the child.
5. All children are directly supervised at all times.
6. A Crisis Management Plan has been formulated to address other potential safety issues. The plan is distributed to all staff members and a copy is filed in the school office. You may ask to review this plan. Our lockdown safety procedures will not be shared with the public.

## **ASBESTOS HAZARD EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACT**

Consistent with the requirements of the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act or “AHERA” (40CFR Part 763) the Columbus Diocese Schools is required to inspect for Asbestos Containing Building Materials (ACBM) and develop an Asbestos Management Plan for each school. This is to:

- o Ensure that workers and building occupants, organizations, or parent teacher organizations, are informed at least once each school year about inspections, response actions, and post response action activities, including periodic re-inspections and surveillance activities that are planned or are in progress.
- o Ensure that short-term workers (e.g. phone repair workers, utility repair workers, or exterminators) who may come in contact with asbestos in a school are provided information regarding the location of asbestos containing building materials (ACBM) and suspected or assumed ACBM.

Some Diocese of Columbus school buildings contain known or suspected asbestos containing building materials and are subject to periodic surveillance every six months:

Each of the school buildings were re-inspected in 2018 and an Asbestos Management Plan has been provided. The plan is available in the school office. This notice is provided as the annual notification required by AHERA.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

When road conditions are dangerous for travel or temperatures are dangerous for students to be outside, many schools, including SJMS, shall remain closed. Since St. Joseph Montessori School is part of Columbus Catholic Schools, we are closed when announcements on TV and radio indicate that Columbus Catholic Schools are closed. All emergency school closings, early release, or delays will also be communicated through REMIND, FACEBOOK, AND EMAIL

If public schools cancel due to transportation issues related to weather, they do not provide transportation to non-public schools that remain open. If Columbus Catholic Schools are open, then we are open. If public schools are closed and Columbus Catholic Schools are open, then parents are responsible for providing transportation on that day. However, if the school district in which you reside is

closed, we trust your judgment in deciding about your child(ren)'s attendance.

In the unlikely event that we must close for a reason other than weather, for example heating problems, we will announce by school name.

**Note:** Visit [sjms.net](http://sjms.net) or call (614) 291-8601 for the most up to date closing info. SJMS will enroll every family to receive text messages from Remind. You may go in and opt-out if you wish to not receive notification from Remind.

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

If severe weather necessitates that the school close early, the school office will send an email to all who have provided an accurate email address and a text message via Remind. It will also be posted on the school website. This message will inform parents of closing times and any special plans for the day. In this situation, parents of all students will be contacted. If we are unable to reach either parent, we will call alternate pick up contacts indicated on your Emergency Contact form. If schools close early, we urge you to pick your child(ren) up as soon as possible so that students get home safely and our staff can be relieved at the earliest possible time.

## **PROTECTING CHILDREN**

All staff and volunteers must have a BCI background check on file with Columbus Catholic Diocese and must attend a presentation of "Protecting God's Children." No exceptions to the policy will be made based upon the level of contact with children and youth, the time of day or night of the event, or the duration of the activity. Please see the Office of Catholic Schools, Diocese of Columbus policy numbers 4110.0 and 4110.1 for greater details. Visit [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org) or contact the school office for more information on the Protecting God's Children presentation.

## **GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL/CLASSROOM VISITORS**

To ensure appropriate access, minimize disruption to the learning environment, and safety of the school, St. Joseph Montessori School's guide lines on school and classroom visits should be implemented at all times. Visitors are identified as anyone who is not employed by St. Joseph Montessori School including parents/guardians, other family members of currently enrolled students, alumni, contractors and vendors. Visitors also include volunteers during, before, and after school, Trustees, and Family Association. All visitors are required to register in the front desk. They must fill out the sign-in sheet and obtain a visitor's badge.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **For Parents**

To be successful, every independent school needs and expects the cooperation of its parents, who understand and embrace the school's mission, share its core values, and fully support its curriculum, faculty and staff. When joined by a common set of beliefs and purposes, our school and our parents form a powerful team with far-reaching effects on our children and our entire community.

Working together, parents and teachers exert a strong influence on children to become better educated; they also help them to mature by modeling adult working relationships based upon civility, honesty, and respect. In practice, the greater impediment to effective teamwork between an independent school and its parents grows out of misunderstandings about the school's decision-making processes.

Parents can best support the school through a climate of trust and respect by communicating concerns openly and constructively to the teacher or administrator closest to the problem. Efforts by parents to lobby other parents will be viewed by the school as counterproductive. While parents may not agree with every decision made by the administrator, in most cases, the parent and school will find common ground to continue a mutually respectful relationship. In extreme cases, however, an impasse may be so severe that the parent cannot remain a constructive member of the community. In such cases, both the parent and the school should consider whether another school would be a better match for the family.

Parents with concerns about the school or with decisions made by the administration or faculty are encouraged to inquire about and follow the school's grievance process as described in this handbook. Because, in schools such as ours, trustees often interact with the school community, the Board has adopted a firm practice of directing parent concerns to the Head of School. The rule of thumb for all parents is to keep open lines of communication with the faculty and administration.

### **For Students**

One of the secrets to success in the Montessori classroom is freedom within the limits of very clear ground rules. In other words, freedom comes with responsibility. This responsibility applies to self, as well as, the greater community. Every classroom's ground rules will vary but the essence is the same.

1. Respect for oneself
2. Respect for others
3. Respect for the environment

So the children have concrete instructions, the following expectations have been established. These expectations are stated in a positive manner so the children know precisely how they should conduct themselves.

## **Student Code of Conduct Expectations**

The school's Code of Conduct Expectations is as follows:

1. Respect other people's bodies, space, and possessions.
2. Respect the environment.
3. Use only polite, kind words.
4. Use a calm, soft voice when speaking.
5. Wait patiently and quietly until it is your turn to speak.
6. Use all materials properly.
7. Walk in the classroom, hallways, and other areas of the building, and to and from special subjects.
8. Use proper manners in the restrooms.
9. Use proper table manners when eating lunch and no chewing gum on school premises
10. Follow playground guidelines to ensure safe and respectful play.
11. Avoid plagiarism, defined as taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own

## **MONTESSORI METHOD OF DISCIPLINE**

Dr. Montessori held that true discipline comes more from within than without and is the result of steadily developing inner growth. Discipline in the Montessori environment is not something that is done to the child; nor is it a technique for controlling behavior. Our concern is with the development of internal control, which enables an individual to choose the right behavior because it is right for him or herself and right for the community. It is never assumed that a young child understands what it means to be kind or respectful. A great amount of time and energy is focused on lessons that demonstrate socially acceptable behavior. Children do not automatically know how to be a friend, how to express anger, or how to solve problems. These special skills are taught within lessons. They are presented through demonstration and then practiced through role playing and modeled by teachers and older students. They are the foundation of the classroom as they set a tone of respect and kindness.

The goal of the Montessori classroom, no matter how old the student, is the development of skills necessary for a productive and fulfilling life. The best of the academic curriculums are useless if the child does not develop inner discipline, integrity, and respect for others and oneself. The young person who faces the world of tomorrow armed with self- confidence and self-discipline is far more likely to achieve success and happiness. They will be prepared to meet any challenges that the "real world" may present and will hopefully bring to that world a bit of the peace and joy they experienced in the Montessori

environment.

This portion was adapted from an article by Mary Conroy & Kitty Williams-Bravo first published in Tomorrow's Child magazine

## **SJMS DISCIPLINARY METHODS**

State of Ohio requirements mandate that we include some specific information about our disciplinary methods. As described above, all of our discipline procedures are guided by respect for the child and his developmental stage. Logical consequences are implemented when there is non-compliance with expected behavior.

We do not, at any time, participate in any of the following:

- Abuse or neglect a child, allow anyone to abuse or neglect a child while at SJMS, nor will we allow any form of corporal punishment
- Place a child in a locked room or confined area
- Subject a child to profanity, threats, or verbal abuse
- Discipline a child for failure to eat or sleep, or for toileting accidents or withhold from a child food, rest, or toilet use
- Subject a child to techniques that result in shame, humiliation, or fright

In Children's House (extended care included), it is our goal to provide a safe learning environment for each child. We will work closely together with families to guide their child's social and emotional development and set them up for success. Please read carefully the following sections in our school handbook:

- Code of Conduct for Parents and Student Code of Conduct Expectations
- Montessori Method of Discipline
- SJMS Disciplinary Methods
- Consequences for Not Complying with Expectations: Children's House

In addition to the guidelines stated in the handbook, we will follow the protocol listed below:

- Incident/accident reports will be used to document and communicate incidents.
- For any child that threatens or injures another on purpose, or requires ongoing one on one attention/assistance of a teacher for an extended period of time, thus, taking away time spent with the rest of the class, the teachers may determine that the child's needs will be best served outside of the school setting for a period of time. The following can occur in any particular order as

determined by the staff. It is possible that a single incident may result in multiple actions listed below:

1. Phone call to parent
2. Child sent to Student Services
3. Child sent home
4. Meeting with parents
5. Collaborative Student Action Plan written. After three behavior incident reports occur in a two week period of time parents are included in the Student Support Team process.
6. Referral for professional evaluation

A student will be dismissed from SJMS if the needs of the child cannot be met through this process and/or the safety of those within the environment is at risk.

## **STUDENT SERVICE PROTOCOL**

### **Learning Differences & Special Needs**

St. Joseph Montessori School is a Catholic Montessori community committed to a learning environment that respects the uniqueness of each child in reaching his/her full potential. Teachers and administrators work with families in an effort to provide a successful social, emotional and academic experience for all children throughout their time at SJMS. We recognize that children have varied learning needs, and at times may require additional support in certain areas. We are committed to working with children with learning challenges and diagnosed disabilities to the best of our ability so that they may have a fair and reasonable opportunity for success.

In determining the supports and accommodations that can be provided, SJMS will consider the extent to which the accommodations may affect the classroom environment or the nature of the program, the reasonableness of a requested accommodation, whether its financial or resource costs create an undue burden on the School and its personnel, and the cooperation of the parents in supporting St. Joseph Montessori School's recommendations. The School's behavioral expectations of the students will not be altered, though academic objectives may be modified when it is deemed to be in the child's best interest. The School may make recommendations for parents to seek support from outside professionals, and the School reserves the right to evaluate test results and to review testing conducted by outside parties.

Parents, teachers and administrators work together to create and facilitate a Student Action Plan during the Student Support Team (SST) process, facilitated by the Student Services Manager. An SST may be



requested by teachers or parents by contacting the Student Services Manager.

Teachers, parents and the Student Services Manager will meet regularly to review and adjust the plan that has been developed to determine progress. While SJMS is committed to supporting all of its students, the School may determine that a child's needs would be better served in a different setting.

The School provides a Student Support Manager to support students who would benefit from remediation in developing academic skills. When the parent and/or classroom teachers agree that a child would benefit from those services, a recommendation is made, and a Student Support Team process begins with an initial meeting, development of a Student Action Plan which includes goals and strategies that will supplement their child's programming.

## **Discipline**

The goal of discipline is to help a child learn the skills they lack to achieve belonging in appropriate ways. All children should be treated with kindness, friendliness, patience, and respect. We want the children to develop a positive self-image and respect for themselves, others and the environment. The School believes that by treating the children with fairness and respect, they will react in kind.

Faculty shall establish guiding principles according to the School's guidelines to maintain an orderly, productive, respectful, and peaceful environment and consistently expect all children to adhere to them. Our guiding principles are basic and faculty should spend considerable time teaching them and review them often with children:

- Respect others.
- Respect the environment.
- Respect myself.

## **Consequences for Not Complying with Expectations**

The consequences for non-compliance with the Code of Conduct Expectations vary according to the child's state of development as outlined on the following pages.

Toddler and Children's House Consequences:

1. Verbal redirection is given
2. The child is removed from the group until he/she is comfortable returning to the class community.
3. The child is removed from the classroom with a teacher's help until he/she becomes comfortable returning to the classroom community.
4. A teacher may hold the child until he/she can comfortably resume classroom activity.

Serious misconduct is cause for suspension and/or expulsion. Serious misconduct is that which disrupts the academic atmosphere of the school; endangers fellow students, teachers, or school officials; damages property; or flagrantly or repeatedly violates regulations or policies of the school. For such serious misconduct, the Head of School may immediately suspend the student from school. The student may be sent home during the school day provided that the student's parent or guardian has been notified.

Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary & Middle School Consequences:

1. Positive reminder of the expectations is given.
2. The student is provided a separate space to work until his/her behavior is acceptable.
3. Problem solving is conducted with the child and he/she is reminded of the expectations and why they were formulated. This may include a "Think About It" form which allows the child to brainstorm cause, effect, and move towards solution.
4. A logical consequence that is related to the broken expectation is issued.
5. Child is removed from the classroom until he/she is able to behave appropriately.
6. If the child's behavior is persistently disruptive to the whole, then the parents are called in for a conference.
7. If three or more action plan behavior incidents are recorded in a two week time frame then SJMS and our Student Service Manager will work with parents to create an Action Plan for your child. Third year students and older may be asked to be part of the Student Support Team process.

If the developed Action Plan does not produce the desired result, in consultation with the parent, and, assuming administrative approval, one or both of the following may be recommended:

1. A counselor is consulted, per Head of School's approval, for further recommendations.
2. If the Montessori program is not beneficial to the child and/or the child is not able to adjust to the program, the child may be asked to withdraw.

Beyond these consequences, serious misconduct is cause for suspension and/or expulsion. Refer to SJMS Policy #5.114.6 regarding these matters.

## **HARASSMENT**

Harassment is any conduct, whether verbal, physical, written, or electronically transmitted or in display of pictures or objects, that embarrasses, denigrates, causes emotional distress, or shows hostility toward

a person for any reason, including race, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin, age, disability, or other protected characteristics. School bullying is a type of bullying that occurs in any educational setting. For an act to be considered bullying, it must meet certain criteria. This includes hostile intent, imbalance of power, repetition, distress, and provocation. Bullying includes physical intimidation or assault, extortion, oral or written threats, electronically transmitted acts, teasing, putdowns, name-calling, threatening looks, gestures or actions, cruel rumors, false accusations, and social isolation. See SJMS Policy # 5.420.0 for more information on harassment.

Students have a right to attend school in a safe environment that is free of harassment, intimidation, or any threat to personal safety. It is the policy of SJMS to maintain an environment that is free of forms of harassment and intimidation for students, teachers, and other staff members, specifically unsolicited and/or unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct.

Conduct that constitutes sexual harassment is prohibited. Sexually harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Offensive sexual, verbal, or physical flirtations, advances, or propositions
- Display or circulation of sexually explicit or suggestive graffiti, writing, pictures, or objects
- Spreading rumors about or categorizing others regarding sexual activity.

Adults who experience what they believe is harassing conduct, must bring it to the attention of the Head of School. A complaint should be filed in writing, and in the case of harassment involving a student or students, the parents or guardians of the respective students shall be duly notified. In the event that an individual alleges harassment by the Head of School, the individual may file a complaint with the Board of Trustees.

All complaints will be promptly investigated, and the person initiating the complaint will be advised of the outcome of the investigation.

A student who believes he or she has been sexually harassed (or a parent who believes that their child has been harassed) should immediately report it to a responsible school official. Where it is determined that harassment or bullying has occurred, the school will take immediate disciplinary action. The response shall take into account the ages of the individuals and circumstances. No retaliation against anyone who reports harassment will be tolerated. Any knowingly false charges of harassment or bullying made for the purpose of harming a person's reputation will have very serious consequences, which may include, depending on the circumstances, termination of participation in programs, suspension, or expulsion.

## **BANNED SUBSTANCES**

Possession and/or use of drugs of abuse, weapons, or instruments of violence are considered serious infractions and are addressed as outlined in SJMS Policy # 5.500.0.

## **BEHAVIOR OUT OF SCHOOL**

While we do not attempt to regulate the private lives of our students during non-school hours, we do have a concern with conduct that may bring discredit or harm to the name of the school or the reputation of the student body. Consequently, inappropriate behavior, at or away from school, that reflects an absence of moral standards or a violation of the law may result in disciplinary action by the school. A student may be subject to disciplinary action for any conduct that is detrimental to the common good; is threatening, harmful, or offensive to other students and staff; or is of such a nature, as to jeopardize the good name of the school.

## **ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE**

The length of the school day is six and three-quarter hours, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. for pre-K through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The length of the school day for MS Students is seven hours 8:10 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. These hours include lunch and recess.

### **Carpool (Arrival & Departure) Time**

Arrival time for students toddler through 6<sup>th</sup> Years is between 8:10-8:30 am. Arrival time for Middle School students is 8:00 – 8:10 a.m. Afternoon carpool time for all students is 3:15-3:35 p.m. There is no need for you to get out of your car if you are just dropping off or picking up your child.

If you need to come into the school at carpool time please park on the street or in a designated parking spot, not in the carpool lanes.

At times, members of our community use the parking spaces in the third row on the South side of the middle parking island. Be aware that if you park in a spot on this side, your car may get temporarily blocked in.

Remember at St. Joseph Montessori School we are striving to develop independent self-directed students. We are asking that after the second week of school, Toddler and Children's House children should be walked to class by our Middle School "buddies" and Elementary children can walk themselves to class. Not only is this important for your child's self-esteem, sense of independence and success, it is security best practices. People coming in and out of the building are hard to monitor. PLEASE help us in keeping our school a safe, student centered learning environment.

If you wish to speak to your child's teacher, morning arrival is NOT the time to do so. Teachers are busy preparing their Montessori environments and greeting children. Please email them with a meeting request. They will return the email within 24 hours.

### **Arrival before School:**

All toddler through 6<sup>th</sup> Year children arriving before 8:10 a.m. are expected to go to the Before School Care location. All Middle School students arriving before 8:00 a.m. are expected to go to the Before

School Care location. You will be billed accordingly for this before school service.

### **Departure after School:**

At the 3:15 p.m. dismissal time, simply pull up in the line of cars. Staff members will see to it that your child is called and brought to your car. **PLEASE do not exit your car.** This slows the dismissal process and again, creates dependence for your child. Young children can, with practice, buckle themselves into a seat belt. Any carpool child not picked up by 3:35 p.m. will be taken to the after school care room until transportation arrives. You will be billed accordingly for this after school service.

### **Tardiness**

Toddler through 6<sup>th</sup> Year students who arrive after 8:35 will be recorded as tardy. All MS students that arrive after 8:30 a.m. will be recorded as tardy. In the event that your child is late, bring him/her to the office.

**Do not take your child to his/her classroom. The buzzer system is a disruption to the learning environment for other children.** Teachers have been told to politely ask you to proceed to the office after 8:35 am. Thank you for respecting this policy and the learning environment for ALL children. Once you sign in, your child will be escorted to class by an office staff member and the appropriate attendance recorded.

Any student arriving after 8:35 am must be signed into the office by a parent. Please park your vehicle and buzz to gain entrance into the main building. The Office Manager will gather children in the vestibule to walk them to class.

Several studies have shown that school tardiness has a negative impact on learning outcomes. By the mere nature of arriving late and missing school hours, students receive fewer hours of work time within the environment and instruction than the students who are in class when school begins. But not only does a student who is consistently arriving late to school establish bad punctuality habits and begin their day in a disorderly fashion, their tardiness also disrupts the learning of other students in their environment.

Researchers have found that students who are frequently late to school often miss out on important opening announcements and academic activities such as organization, planning, building connections with peers, and time management of their day in a Montessori classroom. Teachers can become frustrated as late students disrupt their instruction. The tardy student may require reteaching of what they have missed. Tardy behavior negatively affects the overall classroom environment. Please be considerate of our entire community.

### **Absence**

A record of attendance and tardiness shall be maintained for every student. The law requires that this be retained as part of the permanent record of the school. If your child will be absent, please call the office

by 8:45 a.m. with the appropriate information. We ask that you call the office each day of the absence. Please be aware that the school is justified in refusing promotion to any student who is absent twenty-eight days during the year. Parents may be required to provide a doctor's excuse for the dates of absence.

No child will be dismissed from school during class hours without a written request from his/her parents, or, in the case of emergency, without absolute assurance of their approval. The person picking up the child must come to the school office and sign out the child.

Any pupil showing symptoms of a communicable disease shall be dismissed from school by the Head of School after notification of the parent(s)/guardian(s).

### **Extended Vacations**

Attendance at school on all class days is important for each child's development. It is assumed that parents will keep children out of school only for valid reasons. If you are considering a vacation during the school year, you should consult the classroom teacher(s) concerning the anticipated effect on your child. Children who miss school for an extended vacation cannot expect teachers to provide special assignments, examinations, or individual assistance beyond the normal classroom procedures.

There will be no reduction in tuition or extended day charges for children who are out of school for extended periods of time because of illness or vacations.

## **ACADEMICS & THE SCHOOL DAY**

### **Student Progress**

Reporting to the parents on the progress of each child will be emailed quarterly. Teacher conferences will be conducted by teachers at least twice a year with an optional phone conference in April. Additional conferences may be arranged when needed at the discretion of the teacher or the parent.

### **Enrichment Programs/Special Subjects**

There are a variety of enrichment programs that are offered at our school.

**Art:** Art is an inherent piece of the Toddler and Children's House curriculum and is integrated into their daily classwork. At the Children's House 3rd year level, SJMS students begin taking weekly 45-minute art classes with an introduction to Art Basics. New art opportunities are presented as they move up to Upper Elementary and Middle School. All students are exposed to a variety of materials. Art Studio, independent work time, is provided for Upper Elementary and Middle School students who need art materials to complete presentations of learning that tie to classroom curricula.

**Foreign Language:** In levels Children's House through 8th Years foreign language (Spanish) is included in

the curriculum.

**Library/Media Center:** With over 10,000 holdings, St. Joseph Montessori School's library is designed to support the Montessori curriculum and foster a love of reading and learning in every child.

**Music:** Our music program reaches all levels. Our Music teacher travels to the classroom for Toddler and Children's House and students. Third year Children's House-8 go to the music room for music. Upper Elementary and Middle School also have choir and the optional to join band and Handbell Choir.

**Physical Education & Health:** Toddler and Children's House focuses on both gross- and fine-motor development. Third year Children's House through 3rd years focuses on large muscle activities which build strength, coordination and spatial awareness. While 4th through 8th years emphasize organized sports, games, teamwork and sportsmanship. All Health classes integrate fitness, nutrition, safety, and lessons on human body systems related to physical education lessons.

**Religion:** The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is the religious education program provided to students based on Maria Montessori's principles of the Prepared Environment, respect for the child's capacities, and patient observation of their developmental readiness.

Sacrament Preparation: Catholic Sacramental preparation classes are available, by parent request, for First Eucharist, First Reconciliation, and Confirmation. The actual reception of all Sacraments occurs in the child's parish church, however, we celebrate the students and the Sacraments they received at a Commemorative Mass and Reception that takes place near the end of each school year.

**Summer Learning Camps and Clubs:** St. Joseph Montessori School offers eight weeks of Summer Learning Camps at the following levels; Toddler, Children's House, Lower Elementary, and Upper Elementary/Middle School and a variety of afterschool clubs. Attendance at either is optional. It is recommended that families register early for Summer Learning Camps and Clubs. These enrichment opportunities are outstanding for children and many fill quickly. Look for information in early to mid-February for Summer Learning Camps and throughout the school year for various clubs. Any family with an unpaid outstanding balance from a previous school year will be required to make payment in full before registering for Summer Learning Camps and/or Afterschool Clubs.

## **Homework**

Homework expectations vary at each class level. The purpose of home- work is to expand the child's acquisition of knowledge and skills. In keeping with Montessori learner outcomes, the children are expected, at times, to develop their own creative learning experiences and to build on the foundation of their classroom presentations. Children's House third year students may have a small amount of homework. This work may include small leveled readers as the children begin their emerging reader journey. Elementary students may have ten to ninety minutes per school night, depending on the age of the child. See your child's teacher for more specific details on homework. It is expected that **all children** will read or be read to at home.

## **SUGAR POLICY**

According to the American Health Association; Children between two and 18 should eat fewer than six teaspoons of added sugar per day. That's about 25 grams of sugar or 100 calories. Children and teens should limit their intake of sugar-sweetened drinks to no more than eight ounces weekly. St. Joseph Montessori School will serve snacks with fewer than 8 grams of added sugar (this does not include natural sugars found in fruits). Parents who wish to provide a snack for their child's Birthday may do so as long as it meets the St. Joseph Montessori School sugar policy.

## **LUNCH & RECESS**

Parents should provide their children with a healthy packed lunch each day and two cloth napkins. Children's House teachers provide milk to all students for snack and lunch. It is expected that parents will provide a well-balanced meal that includes fruits, vegetables, proteins, and grains. Please refrain from sending candy in children's lunches. All lunches should meet the sugar policy requirements.

It is each student's responsibility to bring their lunch to school each day. If a parent brings lunch or has one delivered during the day, we ask that you drop it off in the office and clearly label it. If a student has no lunch their teacher will have a limited supply of healthy choices in the classroom. Parents will be emailed that lunch was provided for their child and parents may be charged \$3.00 if providing a lunch becomes an ongoing trend.

Recess is an important activity for all students. Weather permitting, students will play outside every day. We consider this to be vital to the physical and social development of the child. For this reason, please do not ask us to make an exception for your child.

## **EXTENDED DAY CARE**

Extended Day includes Before and After School Care. Both programs adhere to our Montessori philosophy.

Our Before and After School Care provide fun, recreation, and relaxation to those children who stay for a longer day. The younger children enjoy supervised arts and crafts, enrichment programs, and story time, while the LE, UE and MS students may complete homework assignments and/or enjoy outdoor games and activities. The program serves approximately 100 children.

Extended Day can be contracted or used on a drop-in basis. Parents will be billed at the end of each month for drop-in service. We encourage you to contract for this service to ensure continual care. However, if you wish to use drop-in care, arrangements must be made through the school office. We must maintain an acceptable student/teacher ratio and drop-in care will be approved each day only up to the maximum number. The earlier you contact us, the greater the possibility of approval.

**Early Morning Care is from 7:30 - 8:10 a.m. After School Care is from 3:15 - 6:00 p.m.**

A nutritious snack is provided during After School Care. The school closes at 6:00 p.m.; therefore, no child may be left beyond 6:00 p.m. If the child remains at SJMS beyond 6:00 pm there will be a charge of \$1.00 per minute billed through your Smart Tuition account.



## **COMMUNICATIONS**

### **School Inspection Reports**

In an ongoing effort to maintain transparency and to comply with state law, copies of the school's State of Ohio inspection reports for pre-school and school age childcare programs may be obtained through the school office.

### **Communicating with Parents**

All personnel at SJMS work diligently to communicate with parents throughout the year regarding your child's progress and general school information or events. Please cooperate with us by promptly returning/responding when requests are made.

It is both costly and time consuming to mail everything. Therefore, some communication may be emailed. Please check your email account frequently. At times your child will receive notes/flyers/announcements to bring home. Please arrange a system with your child to ensure that you receive these communications and check regularly with him/her regarding his responsibility for this important task.

### **Friday Notes**

In an effort to be more responsible stewards of the environment, St. Joseph Montessori School will communicate with parents either via email or through postings on the school website (sjms.net). The school attempts to keep emails to a minimum with a weekly update called "Friday Notes." There are times however, when midweek updates will be necessary and you will receive additional email message(s). It is the responsibility of the parent to provide a current email address and notify the office if correspondence is not being received. Reminders, permission forms, classroom newsletters, and news from the Board of Trustees and the Family Association are also on the school's website.

## **GRIEVANCE OR CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

A grievance is defined as a complaint that is raised following an action or decision that is considered unfair or inappropriate. The procedure for filing a grievance is in the St. Joseph Montessori Policy Manual. Before airing a grievance, it is imperative that all parties involved familiarize themselves with the Grievance Process in its entirety, especially the principles and special considerations. The grievance process is the framework by which parents/guardians and students can resolve their grievance with teachers and staff.

- The first step is to discuss the grievance with the teacher or staff most directly involved. This approach, also known as the informal process, is the preferred method.
  
- If you and the teacher or staff involved in the grievance do not reach an amicable resolution, bring your grievance to the attention of the Head of School.

You will need to document the grievance and come to a meeting prepared to discuss your concern. This

approach is known as the formal process. Depending on the nature of the issue, the Head of School will give a final ruling.

If your grievance is with the Head of School then it may be submitted in writing to the SJMS Board of Trustees for their review. Please be aware that the Board of Trustees can only review and decide on certain matters. See the SJMS policy # 8.500.0 for more information on grievances.

## **BABYSITTING/NANNYING**

St. Joseph Montessori School faculty is comprised of professional licensed teachers and trained aftercare staff. To avoid conflict of interests or potential liability concerns, no faculty is allowed to babysit, nanny, or be employed by a current St. Joseph Montessori School family.

## **TOPICS THAT ARE CLASSROOM SPECIFIC**

Rules for items in this section are general guidelines. In some levels or classrooms, the rules for these items may vary slightly. Please read classroom newsletters or discuss these items with your child's teacher.

### **Snacks and Birthday Treats**

Healthy eating and good nutrition are hallmarks of Maria Montessori's philosophy, so it is best to opt for healthier alternatives. When possible, consider allowing your child to assist in preparing the snack or birthday treat. Treats need to have less than 8 grams of added sugar as stated on the SJMS Sugar Policy in this Family Guide.

Be sure to check with your child's teacher regarding the day you wish to celebrate your child's birthday. It's possible that 2 or 3 other children will have a birthday near or on the same day. Scheduling them ensures that your child's birthday gets the individualized attention it deserves.

### **Party Invitations**

Unless you are inviting an entire class to an event, party invitations should be delivered via the U.S. Postal Service and not sent to school for children to deliver. This protects the feelings of children who are not invited. Please use our Student Family Directory for family contact information.

### **Cell Phones**

When children are at school, the first mode of communication between parents and their children should always be the school office. While student use of cell phones is strongly discouraged, medical issues may require that a student brings a cell phone to school. If this is the case for your family, the following procedures apply:

- Cell phones must be on silent during school hours.
- Cell phones may be used only with staff permission.
- Cell phones should be used only while in the school office so as not to disturb classroom activities.

Note: The school accepts NO responsibility for lost/missing cell phones that children voluntarily bring to school. If the rules pertaining to cell phone use are not observed, phones will be confiscated by a staff member and returned to the parent or guardian at the end of the day.

Faculty has been asked to not share or communicate via personal cell phones with parents. Teachers will be contacting parents via school phones, email, or handwritten note. It is important to protect work life balance for our hard working faculty.

### **Use of MP3 Players, Portable Game Devices, Tablets, Smart Watches, & Other Toys**

iPods and other MP3 players are not allowed in the classrooms unless they are an integral part of the lesson or assignment.

Portable electronics are not permitted in the classroom. At lunch and recess times, students should be developing important social and physical skills. For these reasons, portable electronic devices should remain at home. If a student is observed using a device during class or in aftercare, the device will be placed in the office for a parent to pick up at the end of the day.

Children's House classrooms allow cuddly friends for napping and relaxation time, however, in general, students should not have toys in the classroom. Some levels have specific rules governing share time and what can be used during recess. At no time should violent toys or toys that encourage violent play be brought to school. Check with your child's teacher(s) for guidelines regarding toys in the classroom.

Note: The school accepts NO responsibility for lost/missing MP3 players, portable game devices, or other toys that children voluntarily bring to school. If the rules pertaining to these items are not observed, the item will be confiscated by a staff member and returned to the parent or guardian at the end of the day.

### **Classroom Social Media Pages**

Room Parents, Parents, and Teachers may not establish their own social media pages on behalf of the classroom without prior authorization from the Head of School. Classrooms that wish to establish a page will be expected to follow school social media guidelines, will be assigned an administrative partner to work with, and must agree to promote the school's mission and vision at all times. Use of the school logo is prohibited without prior authorization. At any time, the School may request that the page be suspended or terminated, and the classroom is expected to comply.

## **MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS**

### **Building Usage**

Procedures for assigning meeting rooms, establishing clubs, or recurring meetings at SJMS require paperwork to be submitted to the office in advance of the event for approval. The goal of the procedure is to ensure that the facility is being used appropriately, all safety and liability concerns are considered, and to avoid overbooking.

Groups or Clubs that have recurring meetings with regular members should submit The Club/Group Annual Sign-up Form at least two weeks prior to the first meeting. As rosters change during the year, an updated list of participants is required. Once a group or club receives approval The Meeting Planner and Room Reservation Form found in the office or on the website should be submitted to the school office.

Individuals requesting a one time meeting should also submit The Meeting Planner and Room Reservation Form to the office for approval. Requests are considered no later than five business days prior to the event. This form communicates the specific needs of the event to the appropriate staff members (tables, chairs, audio/visual equipment, etc.) and ensures the school staff and facilities can meet the needs of the event.

### **Combined Permissions**

Parents have the right to refuse to be listed in the school directory and can opt out of it by writing a letter to the Head of School. Letters are required to be submitted to the Head of School the same day the enrollment agreements are due to be effective the following year. It is important to note that the school does not release directory information to any outside sources. It is furnished only to SJMS Board, staff and families.

This form covers other permissions, as well, such as walking field trips, grandparent information, and data from the Emergency Medical Forms. Please be sure to read this form carefully so that the school can properly adhere to your preferences.

### **Dress Code**

Students should be neat and well-groomed. All students are expected to wear clothing that is clean, in good condition, appropriate for school and weather conditions. In winter, boots, hats, and gloves should be worn for outdoor play. When purchasing outerwear, especially for younger children, keep your child's independence in mind. The SJMS Dress Code applies to all school events including performances and graduation ceremonies. Students in violation of the dress code will not be permitted to participate in school activities.

Other clothing guidelines include:

- Students are not permitted to wear hats in the building.
- T-shirts with logos or writing must be inoffensive (may not depict violence, profanity, illicit

behaviors or sexual innuendo).

- For safety reasons, flip-flop sandals are not permitted at any time of the year.
- Immodest and revealing clothing is not permitted.
- No extremely oversized pants or shorts. Pants and shorts must be worn above the hips - no sagging.
- No strapless tops or dresses. Tank tops must have a strap width of at least one inch. No bare midriff clothing of any kind. No spaghetti strap tops. No "see through" apparel, extremely short skirts / shorts, short skirts with slits or long skirts with slits past the mid-thigh. Skirts and shorts must have a length past the student's fingertips.
- No apparel that is judged to be too revealing and distracts from the educational environment.
- No underwear showing! This includes any other type of clothing that resembles underwear.

Each child in toddler through 8<sup>th</sup> Years should also always have a pair of rubber soled shoes at school for physical education classes.

All Toddler through Children's House students should have a change of clothing marked with the child's name and plastic bags for unexpected emergencies. We know toileting is the toddler's big work. Toddler teachers will communicate regularly with parents when accidents in toileting occur. Exchange of soiled clothing and clean clothing is an ongoing necessity of toilet learning. No matter how old your child is, an accidental fall in the mud or a nasty spill at lunch is always a possibility. So, while it is not a requirement, it may be a good idea to send a spare set of clothes for older students as well. These clothes should also be marked with your child's name.

### **Appropriate clothing for graduation:**

- No spaghetti straps or strapless dresses.
- No plunging necklines.
- All dresses must be fingertip length or longer.
- Shoes should be appropriate for walking on slippery floors, stairs, and the stage.
- Dress shoes should be worn, no sneakers.
- Shirts should be button down, collared shirts.
- Ties are not required but recommended.
- Long pants should be worn, no shorts.
- Parents must sign the 8th Year Graduation Attire Agreement.

### **Fundraising Guidelines**

All fund raising activities on behalf of SJMS are coordinated and approved by the Director of Development, Marketing, and Project Management. Any group wishing to engage in a fundraising activity at SJMS must submit a Proposal Form for Fundraising Activity to the Development Office for approval thirty days prior to the start of the activity. The form can be obtained in the development office or on the school's website. Upon the completion of the activity, a standardized financial report is required to be submitted to the Board. The report should detail the revenue, expenses, and net profit of

the activity.

### **Gift Acceptance**

SJMS accepts gifts that agree with the vision, mission, values and reputation of the school and that meet applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations. Gifts that necessitate a change in policy may be denied. More information on acceptable gifts can be found in the SJMS policy manual, policy #3.600.0. Parents are welcome to give gifts to teachers and staff members, however the office will not collect money for group gifts. Parents must find other arrangements for doing so. The office will gladly hold cards for any occasion in the office for parents to come in and sign.

### **Technology & Acceptable Use**

St. Joseph Montessori School has numerous technological resources. Since most of the computers at the school have access to the internet, we have a filter to protect our students from many inappropriate websites. Internet safety is taught in each classroom. Each student and his or her parent is required to read the rules for acceptable use and sign a compliance form before the child is allowed independent access to the school's computers. The school's website can be accessed at [www.sjms.net](http://www.sjms.net). It includes many helpful links for our families and the general public. It also alerts you to school closings, and it informs you about upcoming school events and other school-related news.

### **Transportation**

On days when transportation arrangements for your child are different from the routine procedure, parents must notify the office and teacher with a written note. This is especially necessary if a child is accompanying a friend home or if an adult other than the child's parents is picking him/her up. Please clarify all after school arrangements with your child before he/she leaves for school in the morning.