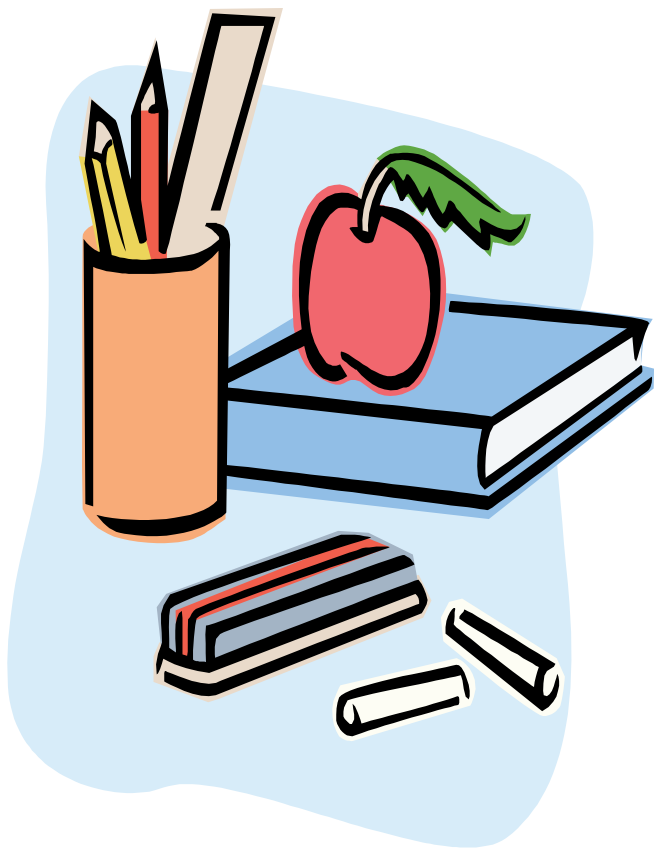


Family Handbook

2011-2012
School Year



Montessori Country
Day School

Montessori Country Day School
53 Vermont Road
Sinking Spring, PA 19608
Telephone: 610-777-3080 * Email: MCDSWyo@comcast.net
Fax: 610-777-7063 * Federal Tax ID: 23-1685175

In accordance with the philosophy and pedagogical methods of Maria Montessori, the Montessori Country Day School community, consisting of teachers, staff and parents, makes it their goal to provide quality, child-centered, individualized education for children ages 12 months through 13 years. We all work together to develop responsible, critical, confident, powerful, and caring members of society. Through the manipulation of hands-on materials, students develop independence, confidence, self-direction, self-discipline, a positive attitude toward a school and a life-long love of learning. Children enjoy freedom of movement and choice within a well-planned low pressure, child-paced, prepared environment. This environment, designed with clear and carefully defined limits, meets the needs of a multi-aged, heterogeneous grouping of students.

The Montessori Country Day School is licensed by:
Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Private Academic Schools
Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare

Our facility offers its services and admissions without regard to race, color, religious creed, ancestry, sex, handicap, age and national origin. If, as a parent, you feel that you have complaints of discrimination against you or your child, you may contact any of the following agencies to voice your concerns:

1. Office of Civil Rights
2. Department of Public Welfare
3. Department of Health and Human Services
4. Bureau of Equal Opportunity
5. Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission

Also, please feel free to contact the school office with any questions or concerns.

Director: Cindy Rusnak
Office and Finance Manager: Cathy Robinson

The Montessori Philosophy

The Montessori Country Day School is a private, non-profit, academic school. Our programs are open to all children regardless of race, creed or color. Our program is guided by the teachings of Dr. Maria Montessori. It is child centered, non-competitive and non-judgmental. The primary goal of the Montessori method is the “normalization” of the child. It is our goal to guide each student to become a well-balanced, spontaneous individual, able to utilize personal capabilities to the fullest. Some of the characteristics of the “normalized” child are:

- * Ability to concentrate
- * Sense of personal dignity
- * Independence
- * Self-motivation
- * Love of order
- * Enjoyment of repetition
- * Ability to work alone
- * Self-discipline
- * Desire for freedom of choice and movement
- * Pleasure and fulfillment in work for its own sake
- * Desire to work without need for reward or punishment
- * Obedience
- * Love of learning

Some of the key elements that guide our school’s curriculum and teaching methods are:

- * Respect for the child
- * Respect for others
- * The joy of learning is emphasized
- * Children have freedom, coupled with observation and guidance
- * Children do it themselves, with assistance as needed
- * Children are encouraged to work on a problem on their own and figure things out at their own pace
- * Self-control is important for the learning process to take place

A child’s learning experience is enhanced when parents and family work with the school community to play an active role in the educational process. Through this dynamic community, consistent learning is developed, leading to and resulting in the Montessori philosophy as “an education for life.”

Arrival

It is very important that we begin classes on time. This arrival procedure will be followed throughout the school year. By following the procedures noted here, the arrivals can be expedited. Drop off time is from 8:50 AM to 9:15 AM for morning students and 12:50 PM to 1:15 PM for afternoon students. Do not drop your child off any earlier unless you are scheduled for daycare. Students will be brought into the school from your car by a staff member. Experience shows that it is much easier for the child to make the separation at the door. If you are concerned about your child's adjustment to separation, you can call the school after leaving the premises to check in on your child. A staff member or a teacher can check in on your child or connect you to a teacher in the classroom to give you an update.

NEVER leave a child at the door or in the reception area to go to the classroom alone. If you are late, you must park on either side of our front lot, walk your child into the building and notify the staff that the child is in school. Children arriving early for before school care (between the hours of 7:00 AM and 8:45 AM) must be brought into the school where s/he is signed in under the supervision of a staff person. Again, please be certain that a staff person knows of your child's arrival. If your child will be arriving outside of their regular program time, please let the teachers know in advance, whenever possible. Any parent choosing to walk their child to the multi-purpose room or classroom must park in either of the side lots at the front of the building. **CARS CANNOT BE LEFT PARKED ON THE CIRCLE! THE CIRCLE MUST BE OPEN FOR BUS ARRIVALS AND STUDENT DROP OFF!**

All students using before school care from 7:00 AM to 8:45 AM should use the front entrance. During regular school arrival time (8:50 AM to 9:15 AM) all elementary and pre-school/pre-kindergarten/kindergarten students can use either the front or back door for arrival. Toddlers arriving during this time (8:50 AM to 9:15 AM) should use the back door. Teachers are positioned at both the front and back doors during this time frame. All students arriving after 9:15 AM should use the front entrance; teachers will no longer be available at the door after 9:15 AM. After 12:15 PM, any arriving students will use the front doors. The playground gates remain closed after 12:15 PM and there will be no access to the back of the building after that time.

Bus Conduct

Kindergarten and elementary students who ride buses may only ride on their assigned buses. Students must get on or off at the stop assigned to them. All changes in student transportation arrangements are made by the parent. Therefore, it is the parent's responsibility to contact their district transportation office when there is a change in their child's pick up or drop off routine. Students are expected to follow all safety rules when entering, exiting or riding on the bus.

Dismissal

Pick up time for the morning toddler, pre-school/pre-kindergarten/kindergarten student is from 11:50 AM to 12:10 PM. Afternoon toddler, pre-school/pre-kindergarten/kindergarten students can be picked up between 3:50 PM and 4:10 PM. When picking up toddlers, vehicles will enter the driveway on the right side of the building and proceed to the front door, around the circular drive. All AM pre-school/pre-kindergarten/kindergarten students can be picked up at either the front or back door. Cars moving along to the back of the building must wait at the gate until the gates are opened at the scheduled time. Gates will only be opened during back door arrival and pick up times. Children will be escorted to and from the car by a staff member. The attending staff member will also assist the child with any materials, permission slips, notes and school work that is transported to and from school.

Each family will be given two family name signs to keep in the car. The card can be placed on the dashboard with the name prominently displayed in the window. Cards are color-coded according to the program your child attends. These cards help staff expedite the dismissal process and create an atmosphere where every staff member gets to know each student and their family members. Additional signs can be obtained from the office upon request. These may be necessary if families are carpooling or using extended family members for pick up.

Students in the full day primary and upper elementary classrooms can be picked up between 3:30 PM and 3:40 PM. To pick up your child, you can park your car on either of the two front side lots or use the circular drive-way and come to the front door. If it is necessary for your child to be dismissed early, please notify the teachers ahead of time, whenever possible. The teacher can then have your child ready for dismissal.

All flyers and classroom information will be distributed at dismissal time.

ALL CHILDREN WILL BE DISMISSED TO A PARENT OR GUARDIAN ONLY! ANY OTHER ARRANGEMENT REQUIRES A PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT BY THE PARENT. PICK UP PERMISSION SLIPS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE DOOR AND IN THE OFFICE. IDENTIFICATION WILL BE ASKED FOR FROM THE PERSON PICKING UP THE CHILD. This policy is mandated by state regulations and there can be NO EXCEPTIONS! Please use the space provided on the Parental Consent and Release Form to list family members and friends designated by you to pick up your child. Please let them know that they will be asked for photo identification until all attending staff members are familiar with them.

Late Pick-Up Charge

The importance of picking up children on time cannot be stressed enough. The children are often fearful and being late is disruptive to the educational program and the teachers' schedules. Therefore, a charge of \$6.00 will be imposed for any part of a 1/2 hour. If you arrive after your scheduled pick up time, you will be charged. If you arrive after the close of school at 6:00 PM, the rate increases to **\$1.00 PER MINUTE LATE**. If something happens to deter you from arriving on time, please call the school. In certain emergencies (inclement weather, traffic accidents, etc.) the charge will be waived.

Daycare Extra Hours

Lunch Daycare

Lunch daycare can be added to toddler, pre-school, pre-kindergarten and half day kindergarten students' schedules. Scheduled lunches must be arranged with the office before the first of the month and paid with the tuition on the first day of the month. NOTE: Scheduled lunches cannot be changed or exchanged. A missed lunch is non-refundable and cannot be made up on another day or another month. Scheduled lunch daycare for pre-school/pre-kindergarten/kindergarten children is \$10.00 for 12:00—1:00 and for toddler children, \$11.00 for 12:00—1:00.

You may also make arrangements to stay for lunch daycare on a drop-in basis. You must contact the office and have this approved and paid for by the day it is used. Drop-in lunch daycare for pre-school/pre-kindergarten/kindergarten students is \$11.00 for the hour and for toddler children, \$12.00 for the hour. Any lunch daycare that is not scheduled and paid for with the monthly tuition amount on the first of the month is considered drop-in and costs \$11.00 or \$12.00 per hour depending on the age of the student.

AM and PM Daycare

Scheduled AM or PM daycare hours are scheduled at least a month in advance and are paid with the tuition on the first day of the month. Scheduled daycare is non-refundable. Missed days cannot be changed or exchanged. It cannot be made up on another day or another month. Scheduled AM or PM daycare is \$10.00 per hour for pre-school/pre-kindergarten/kindergarten and elementary students and \$11.00 for all toddler students. Service is available from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM and from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM.

Daycare is also available on a drop-in basis. The cost is \$11.00 per hour for all pre-school/pre-kindergarten/kindergarten students and \$12.00 per hour for all toddler students. Drop-in daycare must be scheduled with the office and paid for by the day service is provided. Service is available from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM and from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Any daycare that is not scheduled and paid for with the monthly tuition amount on the first of the month is considered drop-in.

Extra Hours Programs

Montessori Country Day School's primary function is as an education facility, not a daycare. For this reason, we cannot offer drop-in hours as much as we might like. Each toddler, pre-school/pre-kindergarten/kindergarten session is planned to run for 3 hours. Any drop-offs or pick-ups during this time are disruptive to the program. For this reason, we can only offer extra hours on a session basis. Parents who find themselves in need of extra care on an emergency basis may have their child stay for the morning or afternoon session if space allows. Staying for an extra session must be pre-approved by the office. Payment must be made in advance.

If space is available, the AM pre-school/pre-kindergarten/kindergarten student or toddler student may stay for a PM session. The cost will be \$33.00 per session or, if the lunch hour is included, \$44.00 per session for pre-school/pre-kindergarten/kindergarten students. The cost for toddler students is \$36.00 per session or \$48.00 if the lunch hour is included.

If space is available, a PM pre-school/pre-kindergarten/kindergarten student or toddler student may stay for an AM session. The cost will be \$33.00 per session or, if the lunch hour is included, \$44.00 per session for pre-school/pre-kindergarten/kindergarten students. The cost for toddler students is \$36.00 per session or \$48.00 if the lunch hour is included.

General Payment Policies

As a private, non-profit school, we count on our tuition to pay our monthly bills. Our budget is based on the generation of tuition dollars to pay for utilities, rent, supplies and teachers' salaries. It is important to pay tuition on time; monthly tuition is due on the first of the month for June and then from September through May of the school year. If a tuition payment is not received by the 5th of the month, you will receive a reminder letter. The letter will state that if the tuition due is not paid by the 10th of the month, your child will not be permitted to return to school on the next school day after the 10th. If alternate arrangements need to be made, you must contact the director to work out a payment plan.

You will receive a monthly reminder for your tuition payment. These reminders will go out the last week of the month prior to the payment due date. Receipts must be requested from the office.

Tuition is based on a 180 day school year calendar. The annual tuition is divided into ten monthly payments that are equal in amount. Full tuition is due even if your child is sick or on vacation. This payment is necessary to hold your child's "slot." If you choose to withdraw your child from our program anytime during the school year, you will not be obligated to pay the remainder of your child's annual tuition. You will not, however, be refunded any portion of tuition already paid to the school. If you choose to have your child re-enter the program sometime again during the school year and there is a "slot" available for the student, you will be obligated to pay an additional \$50.00 registration fee before starting again.

Medication

Based on regulations set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare, the Montessori Country Day School has established the following policy regarding administration of medication required by children attending the school.

1. Any prescription or non-prescription medication may be accepted only in an original container. This container must be labeled with the child's name, the drug name, the dosage required and/or a prescription label stating the instructions for administration.
2. All prescription and non-prescription medication brought into the school must be shown to the front door receptionist. The receptionist will assist the parent or guardian in completing the PA State Medication Log stating the child's name, the name of the medication, the requirement for refrigeration, the amount of medication to be administered, the date and time of administration and the signature of the parent giving permission to administer the medication.
3. Children under the age of 2 years must have written instructions from their physician for the administration of any prescription **AND** non-prescription medication.
4. If any of the above criteria are not met, the medication will not be administered.
5. The staff will dispose of any medications remaining at the school for more than one week.

NEVER SEND MEDICATION IN A CHILD'S LUNCH BOX. THIS INCLUDES VITAMINS. NEVER SEND INDIVIDUAL PILLS OR ANY MEDICATION IN WITH YOUR CHILD. ALL MEDICATION MUST GO FROM PARENT TO A MONTESSORI COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL STAFF MEMBER. COUGH DROPS ARE CONSIDERED A MEDICATION; THEY ARE NOT TO BE SENT TO SCHOOL FOR USE BY ANY STUDENT.

If your child requires the use of an Epipen to counteract allergy reactions, the parent must follow the procedures above before leaving the Epipen with the school. The Epipen must have written instructions from the child's physician noting the symptoms of a reaction and when the medication is to be administered.

Illness

MCDS advises parents to keep their child home from school if the child exhibits any of the following symptoms: vomiting, diarrhea, fever over 100 degrees, swollen glands, sore throat, eye discharge, unusual skin eruptions or persistent coughing. The staff reserves the right to send children home when we feel their illness is detrimental to the individual child or the well-being of the class. For example, children with eye infections, thick nasal discharge, diarrhea, vomiting and undiagnosed rashes will be sent home and will be readmitted when the condition has been resolved. If your child has been absent for three or more days, a doctor's note is mandatory. Regardless of the number of days of absence, a doctor's excuse must be submitted for any of the following: streptococcal infections, impetigo, scabies, scarlet fever and infectious mononucleosis.

Staff should also be informed in the case of injuries such as a broken arm or in surgeries (tonsillectomy, tubes in ears, etc.) where activity restrictions are made by the physician. Students with head lice or nits will be sent home from school and cannot return to school until they are lice free and nit free.

Based on the criteria of the American Academy of Pediatrics, a fever of 100 F or more is indicative of illness. Children and staff who have flu-like illness must remain at home and away from others until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 F or greater) or free of signs of a flu-like illness **WITHOUT USE OF FEVER REDUCING MEDICATIONS.** Symptoms of a flu-like illness include: fever/cough, sore throat, body aches, headache/chills/fatigue, diarrhea/vomiting. Please understand that these precautions are taken for the welfare of your child. Please cooperate with us by keeping sick children at home.

We have instituted the use of an illness notification slip. If there are 2 or more cases of a virus present in your child's classroom or cases of a communicable disease such as strep throat or bacterial conjunctivitis, your child will be given a slip of paper to take home indicating the problem and the number of children affected in the classroom.

Hand washing

Washing hands often, with soap and running water, is one of the easiest and most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Children and adults must wash hands before snacks and meals, after toileting and after diapering. The use of hand sanitizer as a means of washing hands is prohibited with children. Regulations from the Department of Welfare stipulate that hand sanitizer use by a child can only be permitted with signed parental permission.

Allergies

Please make sure that the staff is aware of any allergies (especially food) that your child may have. There is a space for this on the registration form.

Immunizations

Please provide a note from your child's doctor informing the school of immunizations given during the school year. The Department of Health requires proof of immunizations or a letter of exemption prior to a student starting school.

Clothing

The goals of our school include encouraging independence, order and neatness in children. We are also firm believers in learning by doing. Please dress your child in suitable clothing that will not interfere with creativity and exploration. Choose clothing that your child can manipulate fairly easily. Shoes should be functional with non-skid soles so that your child can run, jump, skip and climb. “Wheelie” shoes (shoes with wheels in the soles) are not permitted at the facility. If your child chooses to wear “crocs,” clogs or any open back shoes, they will be restricted from using the playground equipment.

Outdoor Clothing

State regulations require that children be taken outdoors daily. Please dress your child in a coat, sweater, etc. suitable for playing outdoors. This includes boots, mittens and hats during the winter. **LABEL ALL** coats, jackets, sweaters, boots, etc. We reserve the right to label clothing if it is necessary. Experience has shown that lost clothing was not clearly labeled. We do have a Lost and Found box in the lobby that contains unlabeled items that we find throughout the school year. On occasion, please check the contents, even if you do not suspect that you have lost anything. There have been many surprise finds!

Spare Clothing

Accidents happen. We require each child to bring in a spare set of clothes (underwear, shirt, pants and socks) in a labeled zip-lock plastic bag to be kept at the school for these occasions. If your child is sent home wearing extra clothing, we ask for your cooperation in laundering and returning the clothing promptly. You may also choose to check the clothing periodically and exchange it for seasonally appropriate items. If your child is in the process of learning to use the bathroom independently, please send several changes of clothing. Until your child gets into the toileting routine, multiple clothing changes may be needed to get through the day.

Lunches

All children staying between 12:00 PM and 1:00 PM are required to bring their lunch. We have no facilities to prepare hot lunches. Please label all lunch boxes, thermos bottles and lids. Ice packs are not permitted in lunch boxes. All lunches are refrigerated until the student's scheduled lunch period.

Snacks

Every morning and/or afternoon, your child will be provided with a snack. Again, if your child has specific food allergies and/or dietary restrictions, please notify the teachers. Spring water is available at all times in each classroom.

Families often volunteer to provide a special snack for their child's class. Children enjoy taking responsibility for serving their classmates. Please make arrangements with your child's teachers if you would like to provide snack. Snack sign up calendars are posted on the private part of the website, www.montessoricountryday.com, and are there for your convenience.

Please remember that we are encouraging children to develop good eating habits at a young age. Although an occasional "sweet" item is not harmful, we encourage parents to make healthy choices when providing a snack for the classroom. Please look below for a list of suggestions which have proved to be popular when served to the children.

Snack Suggestions

Rice cakes

Assorted vegetables (carrot sticks, celery sticks, cherry tomatoes, cucumber slices, red and green pepper slices, snow peas, etc.) served with or without dip

Fruit kabobs

Assorted fruits (orange slices, whole or cut up apples, cantaloupe, kiwi, watermelon, bananas, etc.) served with or without dip

Mini muffins

Cheese cubes

String cheese

Crackers or bread sticks

Raisins and/or other dried fruit

Bagel chips

Yogurt or applesauce

Hard or soft pretzels

Pickles

Popcorn

Communication

Your child's classroom teachers will keep you informed of activities, special projects, etc. by sending notes home with your child, or by sending information via email. Monthly calendars, event flyers and other pertinent information are available on our website, www.montessoricountryday.com. We also have a facebook page, www.facebook.com/MCDSchool, where information is posted on a regular basis.

It is difficult to relay a great deal of information at pick-up time. We have many families coming through the driveways in a short period of time. If you would like to have further communication with the teachers, please feel free to call the school or write a note. Teachers will get back to you as soon as they are able. At Meet the Teacher night, your child's teachers will give you additional information about contacting them, along with a schedule of available times they may be able to meet you.

Meet the Teacher Nights

Each classroom's teachers will hold a Meet the Teacher night in September. At this event, teachers will review classroom rules and procedures and expectations for students. Parents will be given a basic overview of the curriculum followed by a brief question and answer period. PSO activities and opportunities for volunteering will also be presented.

Tuesday, September 13, 2011, 6:00 to 7:00 PM—Primary and Upper Elementary classes, Linda & Jenn's and Kathy & Sondes' PreS/PreK/K classes

Wednesday, September 14, 2011, 6:00 to 7:00 PM—Toddler classes, Cindy & Mary's and Ellen & Maria's PreS/PreK/K classes

Progress Reports and Conferences

Most parents are concerned about their child's adjustment to school and are curious as to their growth. In toddler and pre-school/pre-kindergarten/kindergarten classes, initial progress reports are distributed the first week of November. General observations of each child's strengths and weaknesses are noted. Two to three goals are noted. Parents are asked to list their expectations for the child. Primary and upper elementary students and parents are given a conference time. 15 to 20 minutes are allotted to discuss student progress. In February and June, more detailed reports are distributed. Again, there is an opportunity for parents to list goals and expectations.

Staff members are always happy to talk to you about your child. Other formal conferences may be scheduled on an as-needed basis. It is difficult for teachers to discuss major concerns at arrival or dismissal times. Teachers are willing to communicate with parents on the telephone or via email. Please call the school to set up an appointment with any staff member.

Procedures for Entering the Building

Except at designated arrival and dismissal times, all entrances and exits are locked. All visitors to the building must enter through the front glass doors. There is a staff member behind the front reception desk during school hours. If the front door is locked, visitors must wait until the receptionist opens the door. At times, this person may be called to assist a child in the bathroom. Please be patient if the receptionist is not right at the door when you knock. Someone will come to allow you access as soon as possible.

Upon entering through the front doors, all visitors will be asked to sign in. Please do so in the designated notebook. Upon completion of business, the visitor must return to the front desk and sign out in the notebook.

Parent Observation

We have an open door policy for parent observations. First, check in at the reception area where you will be given guidelines that we ask you to follow to help preserve the normal classroom routine. We request that you do not schedule observations for the first month or two of school so that children can get acclimated to routines and classroom procedures.

Guidelines for Volunteering at MCDS

To help keep our students safe and to adhere to mandated procedures and regulations, all volunteers are required to obtain a ***Pennsylvania Criminal Background Check*** and a ***Child Abuse Clearance***.

Copies of these application forms can be obtained at the school. The completed forms, along with a check for \$20.00 made payable to MCDS, should be returned to the office for our submission to the Pennsylvania State Police Department and the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare. Police clearances will be sent directly to the school. Once returned, a copy of this is submitted with your completed child abuse clearance form. This approved clearance is mailed directly to your home. Once received, please bring the form to school. All information will be treated as confidential.

This procedure only needs to be completed once for the time period in which your child is continuously enrolled at MCDS.

Parent Support Organization (PSO)

The Parent Support Organization was formed to encourage parents to become involved in their child's educational program. We count on volunteers for many of the activities planned during school hours. In addition, there are activities that take place outside the hours of the school day. The success of these events depends on the volunteers we get from our school families. There are many opportunities to help; please be sure to read over the volunteer form and note the ways you can be a part of your child's school experience. Your gift of time and talent help to make our school an enriching and exciting place to learn.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors meets 9 to 10 times per year. Parents and community members serve on the board for a two-year term. All financial and policy decisions are made by this governing body. All questions or discussions involving these matters should be brought to the Board at a meeting. If you are interested in serving as a member, you may contact the president or the school office. We are always looking for interested parents to attend board meetings or serve on committees. If you have a concern or question that you feel has not been properly addressed by a teacher or the school director, please feel free to contact a Board Representative. They will work to help answer any questions and/or address concerns to the Board.

Please mark the calendar with the dates of the Board meetings for the 2011-2012 school year. Everyone is invited and welcome to attend. The meetings are held on Monday evenings at 7:00 PM in the Upper Elementary classroom at the school.

Board Meeting Dates

Monday, September 19, 2011

Monday, October 17, 2011

Monday, November 21, 2011

Monday, December 19, 2011

Monday, January 16, 2012

Monday, February 20, 2012

Monday, March 19, 2012

Monday, April 16, 2012

Monday, May 21, 2012

In addition to the above dates, there is typically a Strategic Planning meeting in June or July.

Fundraising

Tuition does not cover the full cost of educating our students. Charitable contributions and fundraising events are crucial in providing excellent programs, equipment and materials for our students and faculty.

- Kidstuff Coupon Book sales generate monies for classroom jobs.
- Our annual spring Gala is our major fundraiser that contributes to our operating budget.
- Scholastic Book Fair sales generate the money to purchase reading materials for our classrooms and the library.

We have been the recipient of many generous donations over the years and we thank all for their contributions, great and small. Our community of parents, grandparents, families and surrounding businesses allows us to be responsive to the needs of our diverse student population.

Family Fun Nights

Many working parents often feel left out of daily events. Therefore, we have set aside two evenings during the school year for you to visit your child's classroom. This is a very special time for your child to share all of his/her favorite jobs with you. Prior to these events a flyer will be sent home with your child. These dates will also appear on the calendar.

Education Evenings

Education involves parents as much as it does children! These evenings are planned for adults to discuss topics that involve their children's education. Lectures, teacher demonstrations, speakers and discussion groups provide the inspiration for active learning for parents.

Student/Parent Directory

A directory is given to all of our MCDS families. On this list are classroom parents or guardian's names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses and the child's name. It is useful for birthday parties and carpools. Under no circumstances is this list to be used for commercial purposes. Please complete the directory information sheet with the information you want included in the directory. The directory is the means for parents to communicate with each other outside of the regular school hours. The directory will be posted on the private part of the our website, www.montessoricountryday.com. Only those who have log-in names and passwords will be able to access this information.

Curriculum Content

The most basic principle of Montessori education is freedom of choice and self-determination. The pursuit of these ideals leads to self-respect, security and creativity. These attributes contribute to self-knowledge—the recognition of one's innate potential and an awareness of our unique gifts and talents.

Once the individual achieves self-respect, s/he has the ability to truly accept and respect others. Here at Montessori Country Day School, we are dedicated to the principles of acceptance and respect and provide a multitude of materials and experiences to promote these principles.

These lessons in respect will include the use of many materials encompassing various cultures, races, religions, occupations, genders and ages. Our goal is to provide the children with a broad spectrum of the attitudes, beliefs and traditions of people all over the world. During holidays, children will be exposed to a variety of practices and customs. We encourage parents, family members and friends to share their customs, cultural experiences and family practices. Teachers will use their discretion to determine which materials best represent the interest of students in the classroom.

Cubbie Use

The cubbies are your child's way to store work that will be taken home. They are also an easy way for the school to distribute flyers, calendars and notifications of school wide events. **THE CUBBIES ARE NOT TO BE USED FOR OTHER PURPOSES. If you wish to have your child put party invitations in cubbies, there must be an invitation for every member of the class. Otherwise, invitations must be sent through the mail. All other information, handouts, etc. must be approved by the school director FIRST.**

Personal Treasures

Our classes at MCDS function differently from a daycare or nursery school. Toys such as guns, dolls, cars, jewelry, etc. are not to be brought to school. Such items become a distraction and often become broken or lost. Please be sure your child leaves all these personal treasures at home. So that your child can concentrate on the materials provided, all items coming to school will be placed in your child's cubby.

At the teacher's discretion, children may bring selected items to share with the class. These items should be cultural items, nature items or items pertaining to the sound of the week. Your teachers will cover classroom specifics at their Meet the Teacher Night.

Field Trips

The children usually take field trips during the school year. When trips are announced, your permission and participation will be requested. Persons wishing to help can contact the office when the flyers go home. Toddlers **MUST** be accompanied by an adult and transported in cars.

School Closings

An easy way to check our open or closed status is to simply call the school at 610-777-3080. If the school is closed, there will be a message on the machine by 6:00 AM on the morning of the closure. You can also access our facebook page, www.facebook.com/MCDSchool, or our website, www.montessoricountryday.com, where messages will be posted about school closings. We will also send out an email to all known school email accounts. Information will also be available at the following locations:

WFMZ 69 News ~ Continuous crawl at bottom of screen on Channel 69 and the AccuWeather Channel from 5:00 AM to 10:00 AM or access <http://www.wfmz.com>

**NBC News 10 ~ Information will air from 6:00 AM through the Today Show
Or access <http://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/weather/school-closings/>**

FOX43 WPMT TV ~ Information will air from 5:00 AM and continue throughout the morning or access <http://www.fox43.com>

Note to parents: The weather at your home may be worse than the conditions at the school.

School Closings (cont.)

Do not feel that you must come to school just because we are open. If weather conditions worsen during the day, you are more than welcome to come in early to pick up your child. Our students' safety and health are our first concern.

Special Emergency Information

In the event of an emergency:

1. Keep your radios tuned to **WEEU 830 AM, WRA 1340 AM or WRFY 102.5 FM** for advisory information. Please do not call the school for information, as we must have the lines open for emergency calls.
2. Students will remain under the supervision of school personnel until parents/designated adults can pick them up. As always, your child will be released to adults so designated on the Emergency Consent and Release form.
3. In an extreme emergency situation, many parents may be unable to reach school by phone or vehicle. A child may be released to an individual upon oral designation of the parent only if a staff person can verify the identity of the individual.
4. Office personnel will be alert to directives from the Berks County Emergency Management Agency.
5. In the event we must evacuate the building and it cannot be reoccupied, we will transfer students to the nearest available safe shelter. A posting on doors will indicate the new location of the students.
6. In the event that children need to remain with us, we are prepared to house students for up to 48 hours, if necessary. We have adequate supplies of food and drinking water for the children and staff for that time period.

Above all else, parents and staff must remain calm in all situations. As role models to our children, it is important to think clearly, carefully follow procedures and directives and act in a responsible, safe and orderly manner.

Zero Tolerance Sexual Abuse Policy

The Montessori Country Day School prohibits and does not tolerate sexual abuse in the school or in any school-related activities. Any employee, volunteer, family member, board member, student or victim of abuse who has reason to believe that a child enrolled in the school has been abused is required to report suspected child abuse to ChildLine as mandated by the Child Protective Services Law. ChildLine can be notified at 1-800-932-0313. No employee, volunteer, student or third party, no matter his or her title or position, has the authority to commit or allow sexual abuse.

Discipline Practices

Our classrooms provide a defined environment with clear limits. Classroom rules are communicated clearly and followed consistently. The classroom promotes mutual respect and a conscious teaching of peace and kindness. Students develop self-discipline and an internal sense of purpose and motivation.

Discipline is not punishment. To discipline is to instruct or guide. Rules are reviewed with the children. Adults are role models of appropriate and acceptable behavior. If there is a problem with the child's behavior, rules are again reviewed with that child. Consequences of the behavior are also discussed and the child is given alternate, appropriate means to resolve a conflict, express feelings and voice opinions. Children are asked to repeat back and demonstrate acceptable behavior. Children are encouraged to "use their words." A child is never "good" or "bad." A child's behavior is either "acceptable" or "unacceptable."

If a child continues to utilize unacceptable behavior, s/he may be asked to take a chair, slightly away from the group. The child is asked to sit quietly and regain self-control. When the child demonstrates this, s/he is invited back to the group.

The three basic rules we follow in the classroom are:

1. We respect each other.
2. We respect the materials.
3. We do purposeful work.

Biting

Most of the time, biting is a rare event. Children learn quickly that biting is not acceptable. Although not an acceptable behavior, biting is a "typical" behavior for non-communicative toddlers. However, children who bite frequently, present significant risk to others, or show developmental delays or behavior problems create more of a concern to their peers and the classroom environment. The circumstances surrounding each child's behavior will be considered and parents will be included in a discussion of possible solutions.

Bullying

Here at MCDS, we value and appreciate each student and teacher. We teach tolerance and respect. Children practice the skills necessary for positive conflict resolution.

"Negative" bullying behaviors are not considered acceptable and include, but are not limited to: name calling, teasing, mocking, threatening, intimidating/embarrassing someone, spreading rumors, purposefully excluding someone, physical aggression, gossiping, taking or ruining someone else's property and cyber bullying. Everyone has the right to be heard, but not at the expense of another. Students, teachers and parents are all responsible for helping one another learn and practice the "art of getting along!"

**WELCOME TO MCDS! WORKING TOGETHER WILL PROVIDE THE BEST
SCHOOL EXPERIENCE FOR YOUR CHILD!**



2011-2012 School Year