

Arrival

It is very important that we begin classes on time. This arrival procedure will be followed throughout the school year. Students are to be driven to the front or back doors, as shown on the map. Drop off time is from 8:50 am to 9:10 am for morning students and 12:50 pm to 1:10 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, call the office when you get home, or park your car and come in after class has started. (Avoid being seen by your child.)

NEVER leave a child at the door or in the reception area to go to the classroom alone. If you are late, you must walk your child into the building and notify the staff that the child is in school. Children arriving early for daycare must be signed in at the front reception area and escorted to the multi-purpose room in the morning and to a lunchroom in the afternoon. Again, please notify the staff of your child's arrival. If your child will be arriving outside the regular program times, 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!**

Dismissal

Pick up time for the morning toddler, preschool, pre-k and kindergarten student is from 11:50 am to 12:10 pm. Afternoon toddler, preschool, pre-k and kindergarten students can be picked up between 3:50 pm and 4:10 pm. For 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 preschool/pre-k and kindergarten students can be picked up at either the front or back door. Vehicles will enter the driveway on the right side of the building and proceed to the back of the building or go around the circular drive to the front 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.

During student orientation days, 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. This will 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 SLIPPS 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 member and friends designated by you to pick up your child.

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.

Special Emergency Information

In the event of an emergency:

1. Keep your radios tuned to **WEEU 830 AM, WRAW 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.

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, e-mail 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 information you want included in the directory.

School Closings

If there is a snow delay or cancellation, announcements will be made on the following radio stations:

WEEU 830 AM
WRAW 1340 AM
WRFY 102.5 FM

These stations announce school closings clearly and consistently every 15 to 20 minutes. They will announce "Montessori Country Day School in Gouglersville." You may also call the school; a message will be posted on the machine by 6:30 AM.

If there is no announcement, classes will be held as scheduled. Daycare may be canceled with classes being held as regularly scheduled, the entire day may be canceled or morning sessions may be canceled with afternoon sessions being held as regularly scheduled. In the event that a severe storm develops in the morning, parents of afternoon and full day students should listen to the radio for early dismissal information.

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

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.

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.

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.

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

Extra Hour Programs

MCDS's primary function is as an educational facility, not a daycare. For this reason, we cannot offer drop-in hours as much as we might like. Each toddler, preschool, pre-kindergarten and 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 preschool, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten student or toddler student may stay for a PM session. The cost will be \$24.00 per session or, if the lunch hour is included, \$32.00 per session.

If space is available, a PM preschool, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten student or toddler student may stay for an AM session. The cost will be \$24.00 per session or, if the lunch hour is included, \$32.00 per session.

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 of 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 PILLLS OR ANY MEDICATION IN WITH YOUR CHILD. ALL MEDICATION MUST GO FROM PARENT TO A MONTESSORI COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL STAFF MEMBER.

Illness

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. Please understand that these precautions are taken for the welfare of your child. Please cooperate with us by keeping sick children at home.

Please notify us immediately of any communicable disease or illnesses that your child has been exposed to.

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.

Immunization

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.

Progress Reports and Conferences

Most parents are concerned about their child's adjustment to school and are curious as to their growth. In toddler, preschool, pre-k and kindergarten classes, initial progress reports are distributed in 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. Please call the office to set up an appointment with any staff member.

Communication

Your child's classroom teachers will keep you informed of activities, special projects, etc. by sending notes home with your child. Monthly calendars, event flyers and other pertinent information will be sent home with your child on a regular basis.

All flyers and bulletins should be read closely. Flyers containing information to be used throughout the school year should be saved for future reference. This is how we inform parents of upcoming events and requests.

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 noon time.

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 teacher. 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 teacher if you would like to provide a snack.

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 to 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 fruits

Bagel chips

Yogurt or applesauce

Hard or soft pretzels

Pickles

Popcorn

Clothing

The goals of our Montessori School include encouraging order and neatness in children. However, 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.

Outdoor Clothing

State regulations require that children be taken outdoors daily. Please dress your child in 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 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.

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 \$4.00 will be imposed for any part of a ½ 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, preschool, 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 preschool, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten children is \$6.00 for 12:00 to 1:00 PM and, for toddler children, \$6.50 for 12:00 to 1:00 PM.

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 is \$8.00 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 \$8.00.

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 \$6.00 per hour for preschool, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and elementary students, and \$6.50 per hour for 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 \$8.00 per hour for all 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 and costs \$8.00 per hour.

Parent Observations

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.

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 18, 2007, 7:00 to 8:00 PM – Toddlers, Primary and Upper Elementary classes Meet the Teachers Night

Thursday, September 19, 2007, 7:00 to 8:00 PM – Preschool, Pre-k, Kindergarten classes Meet the Teachers Night

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.

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.

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. All parents are welcome to serve on the board and/or attend the meetings. 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. 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 2007-2008 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.

Dates of Board Meetings

Monday, September 17, 2007	Monday, February 18, 2008
Monday, October 15, 2007	Monday, March 17, 2008
Monday, November 19, 2007	Monday, April 21, 2008
Monday, December 17, 2007	Monday, March 19, 2008
Monday, January 21, 2008	

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