



Montessori House for Children

Lakemont Montessori School, Inc.

July 2011 ®

Employee Handbook 2011 – 2012

Mission

Our mission at Montessori House for Children (MHFC) is to provide an authentic Montessori program, emphasizing superior indoor and outdoor learning environments, which are designed to guide and nurture each child to their fullest potential. We work as a community to foster confident, competent and socially responsible members of society.

Philosophy and Goals

Our school's philosophy is founded on the Montessori Method of Education as developed in the early 1900's in Rome Italy by Dr. Maria Montessori and which is now applied in schools all over the world.

Our primary goal is to create and sustain the highest quality Montessori environment that facilitates the child's natural tendencies towards formation of self; encompassing qualities that improve the quality of one's own life and that of humanity.

- Confidence, self-reliance and self-discipline.
- Appreciation for and respect of life's resources, human and physical.
- Understanding of multi-cultural experiences, foods, language and lifestyles which is the first step in Peace Education.

The supporting goal includes collaborative work among the school, family and community to build relationships that support the child's formation.

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Welcome to Montessori House for Children

School History

Montessori House for Children is a successor organization to Lakeview Montessori School founded in 1997 in Sugar Land, Texas. We are a private; family owned and operated non-sectarian school with an international clientele from over 34 countries.

Our present location opened June 2006. Over the past 14 years, our school has served families in the Sugar Land, Fulshear, Katy and Richmond areas.

American Montessori Society (AMS) Affiliate

Our schools have been affiliated with AMS since 1999. AMS has three levels of membership; initiate, associate and full. MHFC became “Full Member School” in June 2009. For a school to join at this level, all classroom lead teachers must hold Montessori credentials in the level(s) they are teaching. The credentials must be issued by a teacher education program affiliated with AMS, the Association for Montessori Internationale (AMI), the National Center for Montessori Education (NCME), or other programs that are also accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE).

SACS Accreditation

MHFC began the process of accreditation through Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in May of 2008 and achieved Accreditation in February 2010. The AdvancED Accreditation Process is comprehensive, evaluating all the parts of our institution. The process focuses on vision and goals, and evaluates teaching and learning, and how results are documented and resources are allocated. The seven AdvancED Standards are the foundation of the Accreditation Process and serve as a guide to continuous improvement.

Employment

Staff Recruitment

MHFC employs credentialed Montessori teachers, guides/assistants and a variety of support staff.

Montessori Teachers are offered annual contracts based on an “Academic Term”; beginning at least one (1) week prior to the first day of school and ending no later than three (3) days after the last day of school. Each new academic year requires a new signed contract.

Assistants, guides, admin and support staff are hired as “year-round” employees (unless otherwise agreed to in writing) and the employment terms are listed in an offer letter. Year-round employees are allowed to take personal time off as accrued (through PTO). Employees who require time off beyond the school policy will be asked to submit a letter that they are voluntarily leaving employment and that their return will be done through a re-hire process.

It is an ethical and professional responsibility that staff and teachers give as much advance notice as possible if it is necessary to leave their employment. This is asked for the consideration of the children in a community and one's co-workers.

There is a 90 day probationary period for new employees. Benefits such as PTO (for full time employees) go into effect after this period.

Affirmative Action and Equal Employment

MHFC is an equal employment opportunity and affirmative action organization in all areas of employment including, but not limited to, hiring, transfers, promotions, training opportunities, disciplinary actions, and termination. MHFC also takes affirmative steps to diversify its workforce at all levels of the organization. We provide equal employment opportunity without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, citizenship, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by local, state, or federal law. In making employment decision, we are committed to utilizing only those aspects, which are relevant to the job, namely: experience, education, work performance, and on-the-job behaviors. This policy applies to all areas of employment.

New Hire Requirements

All employees in contact with children are required to know and meet the requirements and practices outlined in the Minimum Standards. Each employee will be provided a copy of the Minimum Standards and is expected to have knowledge of these standards in all areas pertinent to the job responsibilities and to follow all guidelines and standards.

MHFC Requirements for all Employees:

1. Each faculty member is required to have a resume/application with three professional references on file.
2. Those new to Montessori will receive In-House training on the general philosophy of Montessori and specific community practices. All employees are expected to work within the philosophy of Montessori.
3. Lead Teachers must have Montessori Training recognized and approved by AMS.
4. Guides/Assistants must complete the "Assistant Workshop" training within their first year of employment.

Termination

By administration:

An employee may be discharged immediately due to misconduct. Letter of termination will be given to the employee in person. Actions constituting misconduct include (but are not limited to):

1. Inappropriate behavior/actions with students
2. Inappropriate behavior/actions with colleagues
3. Any serious breach of parent/child confidentiality
4. Willful violation of school policies and good practices
5. Refusal to perform work included in job description
6. Failure to notify the Director of your planned absence or failure to report to work.
7. Coming to school under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
8. False information on employment application
9. Appropriation of school or other's personal property

By employee:

Staff members will provide a letter of resignation to the administration giving at least a two-week (assistants/support staff) or thirty (30) days (lead teachers) notice of their desire to terminate employment.

Employee Practices

Maintaining a community among all staff members, by supporting and collaborating with each other, is essential to our Montessori Philosophy.

Staff as a Community:

Cooperation, teamwork, and concern for others are inherent in the Montessori philosophy which we are expected to practice. In modeling this for students, it is expected that staff will offer their time, energy and ideas to each other in a respectful manner. In addition, it is expected that staff will receive another's time, energy and ideas in a respectful manner.

Gossip:

It is important that staff relationships remain healthy, open and honest. Please refrain from gossip. You are expected to maintain the trust of your colleagues by keeping confidential matters confidential. Please refer to the table "Line of Communication" for addressing matters of concern.

Business Ethics and Professionalism

We model Montessori principles and behavior by our own practices and behavior. To this aim, staff are to reflect our culture by agreeing to the following:

- In our relationships with children, parents and co-workers - model respect, conflict resolution and continuous learning.
- If an employee resigns or is terminated, MHFC and all teachers will speak positively about the employee to children and parents and the outside world.

- If an employee resigns or is terminated, the employee will not disparage MHFC, its teachers or the families in the school community.

Due Process for Problem Resolution

There may be occasions to bring up behaviors or actions that need to be corrected and/or modified by an employee. MHFC has a protocol for addressing concerns.

- First incident, or behavior that is detrimental to a person or the reputation of the school - a meeting with supervisor to discuss concerns with written record of discussion
- Second incident, a reminder requesting immediate correction with written record
- Third incident, a written notice of termination will be given in person.

Attendance

Regular attendance is extremely important for the benefit of the child and the smooth operation of the school. Regular attendance and punctuality are the signs of a dedicated and responsible staff member.

Punctuality:

Each staff member must be prepared to meet the children at the expected time, per his/her contract. This means that personal appearance, mental preparedness, and housekeeping items have been attended to before children arrive. It is expected that employee's arrive ~ 10 minutes prior to their "scheduled time" in order to be fully prepared. It is crucial that teachers/staff are in their prospective positions at the exact time they are scheduled.

Personal Time Off (PTO):

Personal Time Off may be used for doctor visits, vacation or personal matters. In any of these cases, employees are responsible for obtaining a substitute teacher. Updated substitute lists are emailed to staff on a monthly basis. In addition, employees are responsible for notifying the school of an unplanned absence by calling the school the day before or as soon as you know you have a need. Also, a call must be made to one's classroom Lead or Assistant to inform them of your absence. For planned vacation/time off, employees are to fill out the "Time Off Request" form (located in the employee work room) and confirm with the Director that she has seen and approved it.

Please turn in vacation requests well in advance to make it possible to arrange for additional coverage if needed. **We ask that personal business such as doctor or dental check-ups, family business, etc. be arranged at a time that is not crucial to your classroom's work period.**

If an employee is absent without notice for one day, or leaves their job without notice and/or Director's approval during the day, it is considered job abandonment and the employee will be placing their job in jeopardy. Any job abandonment action that is taken by an employee will be processed by the school as a work separation action by voluntary resignation. Consideration may be given for a verifiable emergency that made it impossible for the employee to contact MHFC.

PTO formula and policy: The School accounting system keeps track of hours worked and PTO taken. PTO is calculated to be a part of an hour earned for each hour worked. The maximum PTO that can be earned per year is 10 days. Time-off requests exceeding two consecutive weeks, are outside of the School policy. Our school operates year-round and finding a replacement for extended periods of time is a hardship for the school. For this reason, effective August 1, 2011, year round employees requesting extended leave will be asked to submit a letter ending their employment with the understanding that if they wish to come back to the school it would be through the re-hire process. Any exception to this policy must be approved in writing by the School Director.

In-Service/Professional Days:

As our calendar indicates, there are in-service days throughout the academic school. In-service days are work days. As such, non-attendance would count as the use of PTO.

Staff Meetings:

Staff meetings are held on a regular basis; specific dates/times will be announced at the start of the school year. Plan to attend at least 2 hrs./month for these meetings (outside of the class work period). All employees are required to attend meetings specifically requesting your attendance.

School Functions:

Teachers will participate in whole school special events and classroom functions as noted in their teacher agreements. Likewise, all supporting staff are expected to show support of school through attendance in classroom related functions and are encouraged to attend school functions, fundraisers, etc.

School Closures:

In the event that school is closed due to inclement weather, school-closing information will be relayed through the school web-site, Facebook and on our school voice mail.

Compensation

Personal salary information is to be kept strictly CONFIDENTIAL.

Payroll Procedures

Pay periods are bi-weekly ending every other Friday, and pay days are the following Tuesday. Paychecks are printed or directly deposited into your account (see Pam for direct deposit).

Please note that hourly employees may not work unauthorized overtime under any circumstances. Hours worked beyond scheduled hours must be approved in writing by the Director.

The State Licensing Standards require all employees to record their time. MHFC has a time machine in the teacher workroom. This time machine will add your hours for your paycheck and record your time in and out. **Employees are responsible for the accuracy of their time card.**

Contract Labor/Substitutes

The School trains prospective employees and others interested in working at the School as Contract Substitute Teachers. If an opening in the School occurs, the opening is most likely to be filled by a person in the Substitute Teacher pool. Staff who need to take PTO use the Sub list to obtain call numbers.

Payroll Deductions

In compliance with various governmental regulations, an itemized statement of deductions are printed on your paycheck stub. Required deductions: FICA (Social Security), Federal Income Tax, and Medicare.

Benefits

Paid Holidays

Full time employees are paid for School Closings associated with major holidays. (Staff who are normally scheduled to work 4 hours per day or less are part time employees and do not receive PTO or pay for holidays (effective August 1, 2010).

PTO/Vacation

Full time employees (with a work schedule of at least 35 hours per week) earn PTO. Full time hourly employees, use PTO for time missed (ex. one hour missed = one hour used). Salary employees use PTO per day missed (or as outlined under attendance). PTO is a benefit that can be used for sick days, vacation, doctor visits etc. Except for illness or emergency, it is expected that PTO time be requested in writing, in advance to the Director who does the scheduling for the school.

Emergency Leave

For full time employees working more than 35 hours per week, funeral leave for a death in the employee's immediate family will be paid on the basis of 3 days for out-of-state funeral and 1 day for local funeral.

Health Benefits

Full time employees are eligible for accident or dental insurance paid by the School. In addition, cafeteria choice policies are available through Aflac and are paid for through employee's payroll deductions.

Memberships

MHFC will purchase individual membership for all Lead Teachers to either AMS, AMI or NAMTA.

Personnel Policies

Role of the Adult

The adult is a key element of the Montessori environment. The role of this adult is not like the teacher in a traditional environment, however – whose role is to teach the children. The role of the adult in a Montessori environment is to facilitate the child to teach himself by following his own internal urges that will lead him to take what he needs from the things and people around him. The adult's role includes, but is not limited, to the following:

- Preparation of Self – lends to modeling appropriate behavior, language and attitude.
- Preparation of classroom materials; outdoor & indoor
- Observe the child; follow the child
- Create peaceful atmosphere through clear, consistent expectations and positive guidance/discipline

Always support the efforts of child who is concentrating.

Montessori Guidelines for the Teachers and Aids

- Always talk softly, never raise your voice.
- Always handle a child gently and with respect, never handle with physical harshness.
- Speak to the child only when necessary.
- Do not offer help unless necessary, assist the child to do for himself.

- Allow the child to clean up after himself (unless broken glass is involved).
- Do not talk to a child from across the room. Always walk to the child and talk at their level.
- Encourage the child to walk to you to talk.
- Help to ensure that the directress (teacher) isn't interrupted by another child.
- The adults must be as "passive" as she possibly can. Move about as little as possible, encourage "self-help" for the child.
- Always model slow and careful walking and proper carrying of materials & furniture.
- Encourage children to return work to its proper place on the shelf. *Before doing so, the child must push in their chair.
- Enlist an older child's help before doing a "task". Ex. tying a child's shoe.
- Always respect the child's dignity; be firm yet polite.
- The assistant/aid does not give lessons.
- The assistant might see a child moving about the class aimlessly, unable to choose work. She should approach the child and assist him in finding work of interest.
- If a child misbehaves or disrupts the class activities. Sit him away from the group and encourage him to return once he has decided act respectfully.
- Classroom and living animal maintenance is very important. Remember to water plants, dust shelves and provide routine maintenance as needed to ensure a clean and attractive environment.

Guidance and discipline

The following guidelines are followed by our staff:

1. Redirect the child to an activity or work that is appropriate and meaningful.
2. Use consistency.
3. Allow for natural consequences to take place that are understood and logical to the child, ex: Cleaning up after a spill.
4. Recognize and encourage concentrated and appropriate efforts.

5. Teachers serve as a role model for all appropriate behaviors and actions. **Do only what you want them to learn from you.**
6. In all cases maintain discipline guidelines set forth in the Department of Human Services "Minimum Standards"
7. Corporal punishment, verbal abuse and sarcasm are not allowed.

We encourage our parents to mirror these basic behaviors at home, to make for consistent environments in your child's main areas of life. While a parent is on school grounds, the above mentioned guidelines must be followed.

Protocol for behaviors that disrupt the community

In nearly all cases application of the foregoing guidelines will suffice. However, if the behavior of a child is not positively affected by this approach, the following procedures will be followed:

First occurrence: parent/teacher conference to discuss a plan of action involving the triangle: parents, teacher and child.

Second occurrence: parent, teacher and director conference to discuss further options available to help the child.

Third occurrence: It may be determined that the school does not meet the needs of the child and an alternate education setting is suggested.

The school reserves the right to terminate the attendance of any student or family whose presence is considered by the school to be detrimental to the best interest of the school.

Professional Development

As a school we strive to provide the best education possible. In order for us to accomplish this goal, we all must maintain our current credentials, expand our own knowledge base, and remain up-to-date on the current and best educational practices and theories.

It is the employee's responsibility to ensure all required training is up-to-date. Failure to do so will result in temporary suspension until minimum requirements are fulfilled.

MHFC administration will provide the opportunity to meet the minimum amount of state required training through "in-house" training; including workshops, faculty meetings, observations, and video/library (self-instructed) resources.

It will benefit not only the staff but also the quality of the school for staff members to be affiliated with these organizations: AMS, AMI, NAMTA, and NAEYC. By using these organizations as informal resources, we can continue to grow in our understanding of children and current educational research and trends.

Professional Days:

In support of professional development, Lead teachers are permitted two (2) paid professional days for attending conferences, workshops or conducting school observations. **To receive certification, pay and/or reimbursement, the employee must submit 2 documents: 1) certification of attendance, 2) personal goals for implementing information obtained to better her/himself and/or the classroom/school environments. These documents are due no later than 1 week from the date of “professional development”.**

Montessori Training

Lead Teachers:

The Lead Teachers of each class will be Montessori trained and certified by a MACTE affiliated training center. If a lead teacher is not trained and certified, he/she must be in the process of doing so. Upon the start of employment, the lead must complete this process within two years.

Assistants:

The Lead will communicate to his/her assistant(s) and intern(s) initially and continually throughout the year concerning use of materials, classroom procedures, classroom management, observation, and Montessori philosophy.

In addition to the training received from the Leads, the administration will provide meetings for all assistants (and other support personnel as deemed appropriate) up to 24 hours/year that focus on the Montessori philosophy and practices, early childhood development, positive guidance and discipline, etc. All assistants will be required to attend the “Assistant Workshop Training” within their first year of employment.

Performance Evaluations

The performance of all staff members will be evaluated at least two (2) times per year ~ January and April. The purpose of each evaluation is to assist the staff member in identifying his/her gifts and challenges and recognizing ways to strengthen gifts and overcome challenges. In conjunction with the evaluations, each staff member will create an Individual Professional Development Plan that is tied directly to his/her mid-year evaluation and salary increases.

General Business Policies

Employee Records and Confidentiality Policy:

Employees are responsible for keeping the office records up-to-date regarding all required information, CPR/1st Aid/SID certification, continuing education/training, current contact information, yearly W-4 updates, etc.

All confidential information concerning past and present employees, students, and parents are to be maintained in strict confidence. Staff and administrators are never to share or discuss personnel information without clear and prior authorization of the Director.

Personal Phone Calls:

Personal phone calls should be kept to a minimum, before and after “school”. Please advise people who find it necessary to call you at work, to call at your lunch/break time or after dismissal time. All calls, unless emergencies will be taken as messages so as not to disrupt you or the children.

Children may only use the telephone for calls within the building when permitted by the classroom teacher.

Personal use of electronic devices:

Use of cell phones, MP3 players and video games are prohibited while in care of children.

Computers and Lap Tops:

School computers are for business purposes only. Front office computers are reserved for admin; the work room and back office computers are available for employee use.

Use of personal laptops is permitted during business hours, (for business purposes only) so long as that employee is not being considered in child/adult ratios to meet minimum standards.

Dress/Appearance

Our dress and appearance serve as a model for children, a symbol of our personal maturity, **and a statement of our professionalism**. Understanding that your profession requires you to be active, work on the floor and outside; we suggest dress as professional as possible while still maintaining the flexibility needed. Please adhere to these guidelines:

- Have short, natural nails (health & safety reasons), very limited jewelry, limited amount of perfume/lotion and no visible tattoos.
- Refrain from media related clothing/accessories (school policy for children also).
- Refrain from “weekend attire” torn clothing, frayed pants, rubber flip flops, etc.
- Refrain from revealing cloths i.e. exposing midriff, shorts that are more than 3

inches above the knee, or showing cleavage (front or back).

Smoking is prohibited within all MHFC facilities and on all school grounds.

Babysitting, Birthday Parties and Transportation of Children

MHFC has a policy of no babysitting and no transporting of children by staff/teachers. This is for the protection of teachers, staff and school.

School policy is against teachers attending birthday parties, as this creates favoritism and diminishes the professional boundaries that exist between teacher and family.

Staff/teacher gifts to children are discouraged. Gifts will be given from the “school” rather than from a teacher.

Guidelines on Facebook and Social Networking Websites

Social media (such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogs, etc.) bridge both the work and personal life of employees – and thus, some cross-over and conflict of responsibilities may occur. The school’s interest is in defining the educational and work-related contexts of social media, for the protection of our employees, students, families and the public image of MHFC.

To maintain the professional relationship between parent and teacher, staff are strongly discouraged to “friend” current parents or students.

Key Principles

In essence, employees interacting on-line with colleagues, students, parents, and alumni is no different than interacting with these individuals or groups face to face – i.e., we are required to maintain the principles of respect, dignity, prudence, and professionalism and concern for the safety and protection of children in all interactions.

- Understand that employees are accountable for their postings and other electronic communications that are job-related – particularly online activities conducted with a school e-mail address, or while using school property, networks, or resources, or while discussing school related activities.
- Recognize that adult behavior is used as a model by our students; social media activities may be visible to current, past, or prospective students, parents, colleagues, and community members; serving as a role model is a critical aspect of their work at the school; and thus they must exercise appropriate discretion when using social networks (even for personal communications) when those communications can reflect on their role at the school
- Adults have responsibility for modeling appropriate behavior.

Please be aware that the school considers discretion and prudent judgment in social networking activities to be a serious matter with regard to protecting the

school, its image, its families, its students and employees. As such, violation of this policy may lead to corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

All confidential school information must be protected. Pictures of children may ONLY be posted if the parents have signed a release waiver (this list will be posted on your cork boards). **Children’s names must be omitted on any public venue.**

Employees must refrain from using social media or blogging sites for personal use during work hours.

Communication

It is extremely important to the success of each child and to the trusting relationship that we are developing with our parents, that we maintain an open line of communication (see below). In the event that an assistant/guide must communicate with a parent, it must be with the consent and approval of the Lead Teacher or Director.

Matters relating to....	Contact...
School mission and goals, faculty, curriculum, academic counseling, safety and security	School Director Barbara Walleck barb@montessorihouseforchildren.com
School policies and procedures, staff recruitment (employee orientation, training, records), maintain compliance with all State and School standards.	Training Director Melissa Schlicht melissa@montessorihouseforchildren.com
Tuition payment and billing, expense reimbursements, check requests, building and grounds maintenance.	Business Manager Pam Nelson pam@montessorihouseforchildren.com
Admissions, Attendance, Student Records, School Access Cards/Codes, parent contact updates	Admissions Director: Myriam Vasquez myriam@montessorihouseforchildren.com
Child’s progress, classroom activities, class procedures and communications	Classroom Lead Teacher firstname@montessorihouseforchildren.com
General questions or communications Liaison between parent committees & school (Norma Angula)	School Receptionist Norma Ortega (morning) Therese Cardoza (afternoon)
Urgent matters pertaining to before/afterschool care	Before/after school supervisor Neelofur Surty

School Communications (newsletter, web site, Facebook) and marketing	Social Network/Communications and Marketing Ashley Nelson www.ashley@montessorihouseforchildren.com
Ensures food quality, food preparation,	School Cook Mary Russell

Communication with Parents:

Information about the child that is anything less than complimentary or positive must never be communicated within earshot or presence of the child.

Students:

Lead Teachers are responsible for providing consistent communication to the parents regarding their child’s adaptation to the classroom. This can be either verbal or written.

Curriculum Open House:

Each classroom will conduct at least two open houses during the school year. The purpose of one open house is to provide the parents with an opportunity to understand the Montessori philosophy and how that relates to the specific classroom, i.e. procedures, curriculum, classroom management. (Theory)

The purpose of the other open house is to provide an opportunity for the children to show the parents how the Montessori philosophy is practiced in the specific classroom, i.e. procedures, curriculum, and classroom management. (Practice)

Additional open houses are encouraged and appreciated.

Family Enrichment:

Family enrichment is an integral aspect of the success for the Montessori Method. In an effort to sustain the parents in this “way of life”, staff will help plan and implement parent education programs each year. This will include workshops, round table discussions, curriculum nights, and written material. Staff will collaborate and attend events as scheduled at the beginning of the year.

Parent Memo:

As part of the school-wide community, each classroom will submit to the Administrator an article for the School Newsletter throughout the year. Due dates will be announced at staff meetings or through a memo.

Parent/Teacher Conferences & Progress Reports:

Each Lead Teacher will schedule parent conferences and prepare progress reports two times a year (Oct. and April). The objective of the first conference/report is to establish rapport with the parent, exchange information on basic learning habits and social/emotional developments. If the child is having difficulty adjusting to the

classroom, this is an opportune time to make suggestions and acquire a plan for improvement.

The objective of the second is not only to report on the progress over the past year but also to set goals for the coming year. Parents of children who are eligible for kindergarten the following year need to be aware of the benefits of completing Montessori for the first plane of development and to be aware of the tuition assistance program that may be available.

Teachers are required to provide the school with a current copy (October and April) of each child's progress report; these records remain on school property at all times and become a part of the child's permanent records. Additional copies may be made for teacher's records.

Additional conferences may be scheduled at any time throughout the school year at the request of the parent or the teacher. The Head of School reserves the right to sit on any and all conferences. The Head of School is also available, upon request, to sit in on conferences.

Confidential Matters

In compliance with Federal Law, all private matters pertaining to the school should be kept confidential. At no time should the records of a student or the personal business records of a family be discussed with people outside of school, unless the parents have given a release to us. It is important in our relationships with the parents that they can be assured that private information is kept confidential.

In addition, the personal information of all staff members should be kept confidential. Personal information, such as phone numbers and home addresses, shall only be provided to others with the expressed permission of each staff member.

Communicating Information to Administration

It is extremely important that administration be aware of matters involving parents, students, and teachers, i.e. academic or social difficulties, child and room management, conferences, and school-related functions.

The teacher should record verbal communication and emails with parents especially if communication is repetitive and involves an academic or social difficulty. This will provide a timeline and additional reference for administration when and if a difficulty arises.

Lesson Plans will be turned in to the Director monthly. The scope of the lesson plans should cover weekly group lessons (whole and small) and individual notes / observations on children (through daily journaling). They should reflect what has happened; therefore, turned in after the month. Additionally, documentation of students'

individual lessons and progress must be current and available to the director at all times.

Email:

All Lead Teachers are required to relay their preferred method of communication to the parents at the beginning of their association (i.e. Parent Orientation) and to check in with that method daily. If your preferred method is e-mail, see the business office for an e-mail account to be set up for you if you do not have a school e-mail address already. For your privacy, do not give your home e-mail address to parents.

Attendance:

Weekly attendance sheets will be in the lead teachers' box each Monday; assistant teachers are to use these sheets to take attendance and to communicate daily information (different person picking up child, incident report, dirty clothes, produce/laundry schedule, etc.) Lead teachers will be provided a yearly attendance book. Please record any absences, late arrival, unusual/disruptive behavior (indicating any reasons if known), and record of parent communication. Attendance books are to be kept at school and used for the entire year. Assistants will inform admin of absences by 9:30 am.

Health and Safety

Emergency phone numbers and school address/number are located beside every phone in the building.

First Aid, CPR and Safety Training

As teachers and staff who are with children on a daily and continuous basis, we are the first line of responsibility for their safety and security. As we prepare the school environment and work, safety is our first consideration.

Training will be provided for the specific skills listed below. The ability to practice what has been taught will be the responsibility of each of us. We will:

- Obtain certification/keep current certification for CPR, First Aid and SIDS/Shaken Baby (as required).
- Know what supplies are available in the first-aid cabinet and first-aid kits and how to use them
- Plan a procedure with our co-workers for who calls for help and who stays with the group in the event of an accident.
- Know how to evacuate the school in case of fire.
- Know how to prepare for tornado or hurricane alert.
- Know the school policy for admitting visitors and how to direct a person who wants to visit the school.
- Know the school policy for sick children

- Know the responsibilities and procedures for reporting incidents of child abuse or neglect.
- Immediately report unsafe conditions that can not be self corrected to the front office.

Illness or Injury

State licensing requires parent notification in the event of injury, incident or illness. The report must be completed to the fullest detail possible and given to the parent at the time the child is picked up from school.

Incident/Illness Reports

These reports are for the protection of teacher, child and school. Always ask for help if you need assistance to fill out the report or think you might not have adequate time to do it right.

When should an accident report be filled out?

- Illness that requires children to leave the school.
- “Incidents” such as leaving a child outside/inside.
- A cut, bruise, scratch, scrape, bump, splinter/s, or any other type of mark on the body.
- Report injuries that may not have left a mark on the body such as a child falling or being, as a mark may show up a later time and we want the parent to know what the situation was and how it was handled.
- Report bites of insects or humans.
- Report sand in the eyes.
- Report any situation where first aid was administered.
- Make a written report whether the injury was minor or major.

Staff are required to take a picture of any injury occurring at school that requires parent notification. Camera is located on top of the first aid kit and is reserved for this purpose only.

Sickness

Upon morning arrival and greetings, each child should receive a morning health check. When you suspect illness, don't hesitate – send the child to the office for further review.

Medication:

Medication may be administered ONLY if a medication permission form is completed and signed by the parent or doctor, whichever is required.

Sick Child:

If a child has symptoms of a communicable disease, a fever of 100.4, or cannot participate comfortably, please notify the office to call the parents or emergency alternate to come and get the child.

Prolonged absence: Parents should call the school when their child is sick, but if after three days they have not, the child's teacher should call the parent. If you are notified that the child may withdraw, notify the office immediately.

Lice:

Look for signs of infestation: children scratching their hair, especially near the base. Check for nits. If nits are present, isolate the child, notify the office who will call the parents, and arrange for contaminated fabrics to be cleaned.

Authorization for Releasing a Child

Names of those authorized to take a child other than parents are listed in the child's student file in the Reception Office. Any changes to this must be submitted to the Reception Office by the parent or, in case of emergency, by phone call from the parent.

If we do not have the person's name on the child's file card or a temporary authorization, then we must call the parent to get their permission to release the child. A written note given to us by the person arriving to pick up the child is not acceptable written authorization.

If you are ever in doubt, call office for authorization – Never let a child go with an unfamiliar face. The front office will check child's file for authorized pick-ups and match pick up with a driver license.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted monthly. Procedures to follow include:

- Know your exit route (primary & secondary) and "safe meeting place".
- While children line up to evacuate the building, the teachers:
 - Check restrooms.
 - Take attendance book & gate key.
 - Count children before exiting the building
- Once at your "safe meeting place", re-count to ensure all children are accounted for.

Evacuation plans for each room are on the wall by each exterior exit door in the house. Study and know this plan.

Emergency Preparedness

Severe weather drills are conducted every 3 months. Severe weather drills are announced through the phone/Intercom system. Teachers are to take attendance books and a flashlight to the predetermined "safe zone". EC 1,2,3,4 and Toddler 1 children go to the restrooms, Toddler 2 and 3 classrooms meet in the kitchen.

Visitor Policy

We have a security system that includes electronic door access to the lobby and a personal PIN code assigned to each parent to sign in/out their child and gain entry into the school interior. Parents will have code access.

Prospective families and visitors can be admitted through the lobby and escorted by admin for a school tour and/or observation.

Reporting Child Abuse

The law requires all citizens to report suspected child abuse. If you notice anything suspicious, or hear a child relate any fears, please report this to the Director immediately. Please document a child's' behaviors, action, reactions, conversations, etc., when suspicious of this type of situation. The phone number for "Children Protective Services" is listed on the list or resource and emergency numbers by each phone in the school.

General "House-Keeping"

Office Equipment:

The office equipment is available for staff to use for classroom needs only. Please use our equipment with care.

Copier:

Use of copier for school needs is permitted. Please be judicious in regards to how much paper is used. Personal items are discouraged. If the need to copy personal items is pressing, please receive approval from Administration.

Laminating Machine:

Please check out/return laminator from work room (near Pam's office). It must be unplugged and turned off after use due to the extreme temperature.

Paper Cutter:

Is located in the teacher work room; it should never be left unattended around children. Always store out of children's reach.

Telephone Calls:

The phone line needs to stay open in the event of emergencies, prospective parents calling and current parents calling. Please keep personal calls to a minimum and use the 3rd line. Please endeavor to answer incoming calls by the 3rd ring, since it is always more desirable for a parent to reach a live voice rather than a machine.

Messages for teachers will be either posted on the classroom door or put in her mail slot, so as not to disturb the class.

Materials:

The Lead Teacher is responsible for maintaining the appropriate progression of Montessori materials and re-stocking consumables throughout the year. When needed, the classroom teacher will order or make new materials. Personal items or materials

used in the classroom remain the property of the Teacher. Materials purchased by the school or made with items purchased by the school remain the property of the school.

Ordering Materials:

Due to normal wear and tear, certain items will need to be replaced. When new or replacement materials are needed or wanted in the classroom, the Teacher will fill out the appropriate Order Form. This form, along with the corresponding catalog, will be turned in to the Director for her review, then passed to the business office for purchase. In general, Montessori materials are purchase bi-annually; August and December.

Reimbursement:

Lead teachers are given the budget guidelines for their classroom purchases. They and their assistants are to keep track or purchases and remain within the budget. For items not purchased on-line, staff members can purchase locally and be reimbursed.. To receive reimbursements, such items must be approved by administration prior to the purchase. Once approval is given and the items purchased, please turn in your purchase slips with your name on them to the business office. Your reimbursements will be processed within 5 business days.

Re-stocking Consumables:

The Administration will maintain a current supply of the items listed below. Please take these items as needed from their storage locations. **If you see that we are running low, indicate a need for re-stocking on the order form (located in the work room). Re-orders are done on a monthly basis.**

Storage Locations (approximate):

Dry Storage:

- Toilet paper rolls:
- Toilet paper for dispenser:
- Kleenex
- Paper Napkins
- Wet Wipes
- Gloves for diapering
- Trash Bags
- Essential Oils (for cleaning and room deodorizer)

Pam's Office (wire racks)

Additional storage in R/R at the back exit.

Wet Storage/Cleaning Products:

- Hand Soap
- Natural Cleaning Products
- Multi-Quat (sanitizing solution)

Mop Closet

- Bleach
- Clothes Detergent
- Utility Sink

- Laundry Area
- Laundry Area
- Laundry Area

Office supplies

Employee medical supplies, pencils, pens, tape, staples, batteries, thumbtacks, Xerox paper, white-out, sharpies, notebooks, label machine, etc.

Metal Supply Cabinet**Art Supplies**

Paint, brushes, watercolors, watercolor paint, paint brushes, construction paper, etc.

Metal Art Cabinet**End of Year Inventory:**

All shared materials (not currently on the classroom shelves) must be **neatly returned and organized** to the common storage area (in the teacher workroom) for inventory purposes. The Lead Teacher is responsible for returning the materials and ensuring the classroom cabinets/storage areas are emptied and/or organized and for the accuracy of the completed inventory for his/her classroom.

School Environments:

Staff members are responsible for the neatness, cleanliness, and organization of their classrooms or work areas. This includes windowsills, sinks, counter tops, cupboards, tops of coat racks, and the space directly in front of your door. Please keep these areas clear. We are trying to reduce the unwanted stimuli the child receives. By keeping external order, we help the child to internalize order.

If we care for the environment, so will the child.

Repairs:

The Lead Teacher is responsible for maintaining the environments, which includes notifying administration when repairs are needed. Please record the requests for repairs in writing and place in Pam's box. The requested repairs will be prioritized and planned for the next maintenance day. When possible the requested repairs will become part of the Environmental Clean-Up work schedule.

Pets:

Lead Teachers are responsible for the care of classroom pets throughout the year, including the summer. Parents may offer to care for class pets over the summer or on weekends.

Any pets or pet supplies (cages, food, toys, bedding) purchased by the school or a parent, remains the property of the school.

Employee Signature Page for MHFC Policies and Standards

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I received, read, understand and agree to adhere to the policies/standards within:

- Employee Handbook
- Social Networking Policy
- Positive Discipline & Guidance
- Texas Minimum Standards for Childcare/School Centers.

Employee Signature

Date: