MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF SUGAR LAND

Parent and Student Handbook

Licensed child care centers

A guide to school life, learning, and family partnership.

Parent and student policies

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School And Learning

About this handbook

Montessori School of Sugar Land (MSSL) operates licensed child care centers serving infants, toddlers, preschool and kindergarten children, and school-age children. This Parent and Student Handbook explains school operations and family responsibilities. Employee personnel policies are maintained separately in the Staff Handbook. Policies are reviewed quarterly, updated each January, and revised as needed throughout the year.

Applicable laws and Child Care Regulation requirements govern school operations. Families receive written or electronic notice of policy changes, and the current handbook is available through Family Resources. Please contact your campus office with questions.

Mission And Curriculum

Since our establishment in 2010, at Montessori School of Sugar Land we are committed to excellence in childcare and Montessori early education. As such, we provide a Montessori based prepared environment and curriculum that allows children to grow and develop as individuals while giving them the cognitive, academic, and social skills that will support their future success and happiness.

We provide care for children ranging from infants through kindergarten as well as after-school care and camps for school age children up through sixth grade. Our school day, for all of our classes, is planned to include a balance of indoor and outdoor activity, a balance of individual and group time, as well as a balance of free-play and classwork in accordance with the traditions and practices of Montessori education.

MSSL uses a developmentally appropriate Montessori curriculum with a sequence of lessons that progresses from concrete experiences to more complex skills and concepts. Planning responds to children’s interests, abilities, and ongoing progress. For each age group, planning aligns with the applicable Texas Infant, Toddler, and Three-Year-Old Early Learning Guidelines, Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, and school-age learning expectations. See Assessment of Children for progress monitoring and Accommodating Families and Children for individualized support.

Organization Of School Programs

At Montessori School of Sugar Land, we know that the proper, individualized classroom placement is important for achieving the best outcomes for our children. Our classrooms are organized by both age and developmental readiness, with deliberate overlap in the ages served by classrooms so that children can join and grow in the rooms that are right for their abilities and appropriate for their age.

● Our infant program is focused on children 6 weeks to 18 months with children generally moving up once they are walking confidently and making progress with self-feeding.

● Our toddler & transition program is focused on our students from 18 months through to 3 years and lays the foundations for their later learning while nurturing their self-help and potty training.

● Our Primary/Pre-K & Kindergarten programs operate as multi-age classrooms where children, ages three through six, are able to work within the same classroom through completion of the kindergarten year, growing continually based on their interest and readiness within a supportive classroom community.

● School-age care and camps serve kindergarten through sixth grade. See After-School Care and School-Age Camps for the daily routine and family coordination.

After-School Care And School-Age Camps

Our school-age program serves kindergarten through sixth grade. After-school care provides a supervised transition from the school day with time for homework, age-appropriate enrichment, indoor and outdoor activity, and individual and group experiences. Camps offer school-age activities during scheduled school breaks. Group arrangements reflect enrollment, age, interests, and developmental needs.

Teachers offer homework assistance as part of the after-school routine and help children organize tasks and practice independent work. Families should share assignments or learning needs with the classroom team; homework completion depends on the child’s workload, attendance, and available program time.

School-age activities may include reading, creative arts, hands-on projects, games, cooperative learning, and physical activity. Teachers adapt activities and support to individual children and coordinate with families when additional help is needed.

Transportation requires the written authorization described under Transportation and Field Trips. Notify the campus office promptly when your child will not need a scheduled school pickup or when school dismissal arrangements change. Arrival, attendance, and release follow the Drop-Off, Pick-Up, and Release of Children policy.

Screen use, including school-age homework, follows Screen Time and Digital Media Use. Enrollment options, participating schools, camp dates, and schedules are confirmed with the campus office.

The Ideals That Make Montessori Stand Out

• Teaching is rooted in a deep respect for children as capable individuals

• Multiage classes allow teachers to develop close and long-term relationships with their students, allow them to know each other's learning style well, and encourage older students to become role models, mentors, and leaders to younger students.

• Integrated curriculum is carefully structured and connects subjects within programs (e.g., history and cultural arts to maximize the opportunity for learning and builds from program to program to progress from concrete to abstract learning).

• Independence is nurtured and leads to children becoming purposeful, motivated, and confident in their own abilities.

• Peace and conflict resolution are taught consistently so that children learn to be active participants in a warm, respectful, and supportive community.

• The child creates, in a very real sense, the adult that is to be, through his/her experiences, interactions, and environments. Character development is a central focus of the AMS Montessori curriculum.

• Hands-on learning is central to the curriculum in all programs and leads to children being engaged rather than passive with their work.

• The classroom environments are responsibly and carefully prepared with multisensory, sequential, and self-correcting materials to support self-directed learning by students.

• Teachers and children and teachers and parents work together as a warm and supportive community.

• Self-expression is nurtured in all children. Children experience art, music, poetry, theater, writing, and other forms of creative arts with confidence and passion.

• Embracing the multicultural nature of our community and encouraging sharing, learning, and respect for each other and everyone's unique home cultural experiences and heritage.

Montessori learner outcomes

Independence: Is the child able to choose their own work, apply energy to that work, complete it to a personal criterion of completion, take and return the work to the place it is customarily kept, in such a way that another child will be able to find the work ready to do? Is the child able to seek help? Is the child able to locate resources to continue the self-chosen task without necessarily involving the teacher?

Intrinsic Motivation: Is the child drawn to continue working for the enjoyment of doing so? Does the child, once having achieved a particular competence, move on to revel in mastery by showing others?

Autonomy: Can the child accept or reject inclusion in another child's work or work group with equanimity? Can the child comfortably decide if they do or do not want or require another person's assistance or participation?

Confidence and Competence: Are the child's self-perceived successes far more numerous than his or her self-perceived failures? Is the child capable of self-correcting work, upon observation, reflection, or discussion? Can the child manage the available array of "stuff" with a clear sense of purpose?

Ability to Handle External Authority: Is the child able to accept the "ground rules" of the group as appropriate in his or her dealing with other children? Is the child, distant from the teacher, able to function as if the teacher were nearby?

Social Responsibility: Independent and autonomous persons are always a part of a group and must attain independence and autonomy through participation in group activity. The loss of these qualities by one of a group is a loss for all. Do students attain independence and autonomy and, at the same time, develop social responsibility?

Academic Preparation: In Montessori education, children learn the process of learning by actively engaging in the learning process. Academic preparation entails activation and cultivation of inherent powers and processes through which the learner becomes a supplier of meanings or of things-meaningfully-known. Academic skills are essential to learning and knowing, not the aim of learning and knowing. Do students acquire academic skills and apply them in learning to learn?

Citizens of the World: All children are part of both a world political system and a world ecological system. Both systems have their constitutions and all must learn to live by the letter and spirit of their laws. As a naturalist, Montessori knew about the laws of mind and of nature and understood the consequences of disobeying either of them. What are the citizenship outcomes of school experience? Are the children acquiring civic virtue? Are they acquiring dispositions to understand the natural world, to cherish it, and to live harmoniously within it?

Some Important Aspects Of The Montessori Method

Maria Montessori developed her approach through observation of children. Her first Children’s House opened in Rome in 1907, and Montessori education has since developed internationally. The method is in the public domain; organizations such as the American Montessori Society support its continuing development. The core classroom practices are described under The Ideals That Make Montessori Stand Out, and developmental goals under Montessori Learner Outcomes.

Further reading: E. Mortimer Standing, The Montessori Method: A Revolution in Education; Rita Kramer, Maria Montessori: A Biography; Angeline Lillard, Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius; Paula Polk Lillard and Lynn Lillard Jessen, Montessori from the Start; Nancy McCormick Rambusch, Learning How to Learn.

Works by Maria Montessori include The Montessori Method, Dr. Montessori’s Own Handbook, The Advanced Montessori Method, The Absorbent Mind, To Educate the Human Potential, and The Secret of Childhood.

Uninterrupted Work Period

In keeping with the recommendations put forth by the American Montessori Society, we uphold the practice of providing an uninterrupted work time. AMS Standard 3.9 states: Schools are to allocate and protect large blocks of uninterrupted instructional time to support student learning. Optimal learning takes place during two- to three-hour blocks of time.

The purpose of long, uninterrupted blocks of work time is to allow students to freely select work, eventually becoming absorbed in work that has a particular fascination for them at this point in their development. Interruptions disturb the development of the child's focus, concentration, and opportunity to deeply delve into work. During this uninterrupted work time, teachers also have the opportunity to present lessons to the children, ensuring that lessons are given and work is explored in all areas of the classroom.

Enrollment And Tuition

Enrollment Procedures

The first step of the enrollment process is to schedule and complete a campus tour. Having toured and received initial information about the school and programs, parents interested in enrolling their child at MSSL request the required forms from the front office in person or by email to admin@montessorisugarland.com and be sent an electronic signature document to complete.

An enrollment deposit, application fee and enrollment fee may be required after enrollment paperwork is submitted. Your campus will confirm which charges apply and invoice any applicable deposits and fees through ProCare to secure the space.

The annual supply fee is $200 and is not waived.

Prior to the child's entry to the school, parents must fully complete all forms, making sure to complete every section, and submit them to the office staff for review. Students with diagnosed life threatening allergies must have a completed Allergy Action Plan on file along with any medication to be administered.

When there is not an available space for a family who would like to enroll their child at MSSL, they may submit the registration paperwork along with any required fee to be added to the waiting list. Children from the waiting list will be enrolled/offered spaces as they become available on a first come-first served basis with the exception of siblings of currently enrolled students who will have priority.

It is recommended for families to schedule an appointment to meet the teacher in the last weeks before their planned start date.

Tuition must be paid for the prorated first month prior to the first day enrolled.

Parents may update their information within the ProCare app, making any changes to their contact information on demand and with the updated information immediately available to teachers and management. Other information can be updated by emailing the office with any corrections or changes needing to be made. These changes will be promptly added to the student's file.

Up to date emergency contact information is vital to your child's safety and best interests. Parents are responsible for making updates to the emergency contact information immediately and without delays when any portion of the information changes. Parents have access to their student's profile on ProCare to make changes 24/7 through the app. Updates can also be made by email to Admin@MontessoriSugarLand.com or in person at the school office. When making changes, please call the school office to let us know to review the changes and make sure all records are up to date for your child.

Payments And Fees, Tuition, And Changes To Tuition

The current tuition and fee schedule is available at the school office by request.

Tuition rates listed on the school website and in the “MSSL Tuition Guide” are applicable for newly enrolled families and will be adjusted on an ongoing basis.

Tuition rates for enrolled families are kept constant throughout the course of their time with the school to the greatest extent possible. When rate increases will impact enrolled students, the family will be notified by email and/or ProCare at least one month prior to the new rate going into effect.

For children transitioning from one class to another, tuition rates will adjust (if applicable) after the first full month in the destination classroom.

The updated tuition for students moving between classrooms will be the lower of the current listed tuition for the classroom group and the child’s current tuition rate. This means that tuition will not increase during a promotion between classes but could remain the same in cases where the rates have increased since enrollment.

Parents are responsible for prompt payment of tuition and fees due to the school. Payment may be made in person by check or online using the ProCare app. We are no longer able to process credit cards directly on site. We prefer that families not pay using cash.

Unless otherwise agreed in writing, monthly payments are due on the first business day of the month and considered a late payment from the close of the fourth of each month.

Unless otherwise agreed in writing, weekly payments must be made on or before the Friday preceding the week for which the payment is made.

Weekly tuition plans require a deposit equivalent to four full weeks tuition. This deposit will credit to the account to pay the last four weeks of tuition provided advanced notice is given.

Unless otherwise stated in writing by school management, all tuition and fees are nonrefundable.

Late Payments, Fees, And Collections

Monthly payments made after on or after the fourth of the month are subject to a late payment fee of $30.00 to be assessed for the 4th of the month and $5.00 added for each day thereafter until payment is made. Weekly payments are due on the Friday before the week of service and considered late at the end of business on the Monday of the week of service. Late payment fees start at $30 for that Tuesday with an additional $5.00 per day thereafter.

Any balance from any combination of tuition and fees that remains unpaid after 30 days is subject to a final additional $50 non-payment fee.

Any balance from any combination of tuition and fees that remains unpaid after 60 days may be referred out to a collection agency.

Sibling Discounts

Families with multiple children enrolled are entitled to a 5% discount on tuition for additional children beyond the first. The youngest child enrolled will be counted as first for the purpose of calculating tuition and will always be at their full tuition amount.

Student Absences And Vacations

We understand that children will need to be absent from school occasionally throughout the year. Should your child be ill or staying home sick, please email the office or send a note to the class via ProCare to let us know they will be out. Similarly, if they are not sick but are missing a day for other reasons, a message letting us know they will be out is requested as well. Please note that in these cases there is no adjustment or credit to the tuition.

After six months of enrollment in good standing, families are allowed to take a limited amount of vacation per school year for which tuition will be credited or discounted. Leaves and absences other than those specifically covered by this policy will not reduce the tuition obligation for the student. Leave or absence for greater than two weeks without notice or payment may result in forfeiture of a space in the program.

To have the tuition adjusted for a vacation, advanced notice must be given in writing, stating the dates for the scheduled vacation and in accordance with one of the following options:

1. Families are entitled to up to two weeks of vacation in a school year after being enrolled in good standing for six months. Notice must be sent prior to the vacation. OR

2. Families wishing to take a single planned leave of absence per year for one month or more may do so without forfeiture of space for the year provided that their account is in good standing, written notice is submitted to the school (preferably by email to Info@montessorisugarland.com), and the tuition for the month following the student's scheduled return is paid prior to departure.

Should a student be absent for two consecutive calendar weeks without notification to the school office or for fifteen days in a calendar month, MSSL reserves the right to disenroll the student without further notice or refund of any tuition or fees paid.

Withdrawing From MSSL

To withdraw your child from care with Montessori School of Sugar Land the following procedures are required and specified in the enrollment contract:

First: with at least one full calendar month of advanced notice or payment of the equivalent in tuition and fees, provide written notice by email to the campus admin team. Please note that failure to to provide adequate notice results in forfeiture of any deposits if any. Although not specifically required, we do appreciate feedback regarding your time with us.

Second: On or before your last day with the campus, make sure to collect your child's things.

Your Child's Day

Hours Of Service And Days Of Operation

We are open for operation from 7:00am to 6:00pm Monday through Friday, year round.

All planned closure days will be listed in the school calendar. The school calendar is available through the school office or can be found on the school webpage. Reminders, updates, and modifications to the calendar may be sent via email, the school newsletter, posted reminder bulletins, ProCare messages, and/or the school web page.

Drop-Off, Pick-Up, And Release Of Children

Student drop-off in the morning begins at school opening at 7am. Students must enter the school from the front office unless otherwise directed. Parents are encouraged to walk their children to their classroom for drop-off. Parents also may hand off to staff at the front desk during car-line hours from 7am to 9am. After that time, parents should be prepared to walk their student to class if asked. Students are expected to arrive between 7am and 9am. We understand that some mornings may have appointments, traffic, or other delays, it is important for children to arrive in a timely manner on a consistent basis. Late arrival interrupts the classroom time of the children already present in addition to the obvious losses of classroom time and activities for the late student.

Although students can be picked up at any time by their authorized persons, we do recommend pick-up in the afternoon between 2:30 pm and 6:00 pm.

Students enrolled in the "school day" option are to arrive no earlier than 8:30 am.

Parents are responsible for contactless sign-in and sign-out through ProCare. Please make sure you have location service turned on to use this feature as ProCare uses geolocation data as part of its sign-in/out validation. If you need assistance or an alternate way to complete sign-in and sign-out, please contact the office.

If any student will arrive later than 10am (even if due to an appointment or similar event), families must notify the school as early as possible in the school day and prior to arrival. This allows staff to prepare for the late student's arrival and set aside any project items or meals as needed.

Parents are encouraged to come in to their child's classroom for pick-off. Parents also may pick-up with staff at the front desk during afternoon car-line hours from 2pm to 6pm.

If a student will be out, parents are asked to send a ProCare message or an email that their child will be out.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child is picked up from the school on time. Late pickup fees will be charged and applied to student accounts.

* Half-day students must be picked up by 3 pm or be charged $10.00 per hour or partial hour.

* All students not picked up before school closing time will be charged $10.00 plus an additional $1.00 per minute after school is closed. Please note that this fee is *per student*. For example: John Doe is picked up at 6:10pm. The late fee would be $10 (base) + $10 ($1 per minute x 10 minutes) for a total of $20 added to the invoice in ProCare.

Late fees are subject to change with notice given by newsletter, email, or memorandum. Should the contract or fee schedule for your campus list a different late fee structure than the above, contact school management to confirm the applicable fee structure.

It is a state requirement for families to have at least one trusted individual, relative, or family friend listed as an emergency contact and alternate pickup for their child. Please ensure that your contact information and emergency contact information is kept up to date.

After closing, staff on site may call or message parents/guardians and emergency contact persons. In cases where children are not picked up within 45 minutes of closing or where the school has not been contacted by the parent or guardian within 15 minutes of closing, school management may contact Children's Protective Services in addition to assessing the late fees listed above. MSSL will only release children to their parent/guardian or a designee listed in the child's file or confirmed in writing by parents. Parents are responsible for maintaining an accurate authorized pick-up list with the school office and on their child's ProCare profile. To add or remove an authorized contact or pick-up, make the desired changes in your student's ProCare profile and email the office so that we can ensure the change is noted in the student's physical files as well.

In cases where custody of a child is in dispute or there is a custody agreement in place, we will follow the decisions of the court as stipulated in writing in a court order. Any other special circumstances must be discussed with MSSL management and ratified by all involved parties.

Staff will verify photo ID and authorization for any new or unknown person arriving to pick up a child prior to allowing them into the building or allowing them to depart with a child.

Parents are expected to help children remember and follow good safety rules. When on site, especially for drop-off or pick-up, parents are expected to follow, model, and encourage children to follow the following basic safety guidelines. Please note that rules are generally stated as "what we do" as research and experience show it helps children understand and internalize these messages into autonomous self-regulation.

1. "We use walking feet" - Running in the halls or parking area leads to injuries.

2. "We stay with a grownup in the parking area" - Children need to stay with or hold hands with a grownup when in the parking area.

3. "Stop , look, and listen before crossing the parking area" - Modeling and helping teach children to pause before crossing spaces where cars drive gives them the skills to know how to cross safely in future. The habit of pausing to look before crossing also gives drivers a crucial extra moment to see you and your child and stop.

Parking Area Use And Conduct

Parents, staff, and visitors are expected to be respectful of the safety and peace of others while on campus. This expectation extends to driving and conduct within the parking area.

● Keep your speed down when in the parking area. Children, staff, parents, and visitors come and go throughout the school day and could be crossing any portion of the lot. Drive like it is your loved one crossing the lot: slowly and with care to avoid accidents.

● Please be mindful of others and turn down or pause your music when in the parking area. Please also note that research published through the American Academy of Pediatrics raises concerns that children may be more susceptible to noise related hearing damage, suggesting that we all should work to keep our music turned down when our children are riding with us.

● Please leave the marked handicapped parking for their intended users. If you have any questions regarding the marked spaces, please email the campus office.

● We ask that all staff, therapists, parents, and visitors give priority on the section of parking directly across from the entry for those who are parking briefly (such as drop-off and pick-up) and use the parking along and opposite the playgrounds for longer term parking.

Clothing And Attire

Children are expected to wear properly fitting closed toed shoes so that they will be best able to play and participate freely and safely throughout the day and on all of the surfaces and areas they will have access to. Please note that flip-flops and many styles of slide-on-shoes are not permitted as they do not adequately protect a child’s feet. If you have questions about a particular design, please email the office.

Children are expected to have weather appropriate clothing each day including a full change of clothes (clothing, underwear, socks, shoes). Students must have a jacket or coat available during cooler weather as outside times will not generally be limited except for extreme heat or cold.

Uniforms are available via FrenchToast.com and encouraged for all students starting with size 2t but remain optional for the toddler and transition classes. Uniform shirts are required Monday through Thursday for students in the Primary classrooms.

At all times, students should have comfortable clothing that allows them to move and play freely. Please do not send children in items featuring action superheroes.

Transportation And Field Trips

All children are required to have authorization for emergency transportation and evacuation.

Parents will be notified in advance and in writing of any field trips. Signed release and consent will be requested for participating children at the time of notice along with notification of any costs.

Children enrolled for before- and after-school care are required to have a signed transportation authorization on file for us to pick-up or drop-off with FBISD.

Promotion Of Indoor And Outdoor Physical Activities

At MSSL, we acknowledge the value and importance of physical activity during outside play. To encourage children to engage in activity, our campuses have a variety of play surfaces on all playground areas to encourage a variety of activities and encourage enthusiastic participation.

Infant class students will have outside times (weather and comfort permitting) including stroller walks, tummy-time activities on a blanket outside, or crawling exploration on safe and appropriate surfaces.

Toddler classrooms will have thirty minutes of vigorous outdoor play time each morning and each afternoon. Primary and School-Age students (when full day) will have thirty minutes of unstructured playground time each morning and additional outside times totalling sixty minutes each afternoon (weather permitting).

When outdoor activities are precluded by weather conditions, teachers will substitute dance, calisthenics, or similar adult led activities in an indoor space. We also will adjust the timing of outside times during periods of excessively hot or cold weather to maximize the usable play time while minimizing risks associated with extreme weather.

● Playground times will be shifted within the daily schedule to earlier or later times to align with the best expected weather conditions for the day;

● Duration of playground times will be adjusted by breaking the scheduled time into shorter blocks spread out;

● And, shortened playground times will be paired with indoor physical activities to maintain the total activity time for the day.

The outdoor and indoor spaces are structured to encourage and support a variety and balance of active vs quiet play and child-initiated vs caregiver-initiated play.

● Climbers encourage child directed climbing and pretend play.

● Grass and greenspaces encourage both free play, sports, and adult structured games.

● Prepared Montessori classrooms with work available for children to self-select

● Planned lessons and activities both inside the classroom and outside.

Water Activities

Children at MSSL will routinely have access to water for play and work in small containers such as bowls or spray bottles.

Children at MSSL will occasionally have access to hoses and watering cans for the purpose of helping care for the gardens.

Children at MSSL will engage in splash or sprinkler play during summer months on planned “splash days”. Please communicate in writing if you do not want your child to participate.

MSSL will not employ pools.

If these policies are to change or be amended, specific advanced notice will be given to parents and explicit permission given by parents for their child to participate.

Animals Present On Site

At MSSL we believe that living things add value to learning environments, and we will accordingly have class pets in some classrooms. Fish or fully aquatic frogs may be present in any classroom space or common school space or added without any further notice. Other pets may include birds, insects, reptiles, or small mammals. Any school animals will not be handled by children. Any adults handling school animals are required to wash their hands immediately thereafter. Parents will be notified in writing should this policy change. Exceptions will be made for registered service animals if such accommodation is required by applicable state or federal statutes.

Family Partnership And Support

Family Orientation, Education, And Participation

New families receive orientation to school policies, daily routines, communication, health and safety, and opportunities for family involvement. Families may request additional orientation or a meeting with the center director.

MSSL shares family resources about child development, milestones, positive guidance, nutrition, oral health, physical activity, illness prevention, early intervention, and school readiness through ProCare, newsletters, handouts, learning events, or referrals.

Families are invited to classroom observations, learning opportunities, celebrations, family events, and appropriate field trips. Check the school calendar for dates. Please arrange contributions or volunteer activities with the office in advance; campus visitor requirements apply.

Families may share feedback through conversations, meetings, and surveys. Management reviews feedback to inform school improvement. Conference scheduling and routine notices are described under Parent Communication and Notices.

Parent Communication And Notices

Student daily reports and related information is primarily shared to families through ProCare on the student's activity feed and in the ProCare message feed. ProCare supports reporting of meals, naps, diaper changes, activities, photos, ouch reports, and other routine communication about a child's experiences throughout their day. Please note that as the care of and for children is a teachers first priority, updates in ProCare may be posted in the moment or at a later time during the day as time allows.

Notes of childcare happenings, planned closings, policy changes, etc. will be posted on the bulletin board in the front lobby of the school, in ProCare, via email, and/or via the school web page. We will also make an effort to send related updates and newsletters to parents via email and Friday folders. Please check with the front office regarding your email address so that it may be added to the distribution lists.

In regional emergencies, hazardous weather conditions, or other situations where the local school district has an emergency closure of campuses in our area, we will by default follow them in the initial closure. We will notify when it is safe to resume operations following the methods listed above. For unexpected campus closures, notice will be sent by ProCare and/or email.

Operational Policies are reviewed multiple times per year and updated on an "as needed" basis. Notice of changes to the Operational Policies will be conveyed to each family in writing or via email with the updated policy posted on the school web page. Once a set of changes and updates is ratified by the management team, it will be made available to families and a notice of changes sent as described.

Other written notices may be sent home or given to parents at time of pick up, emailed, sent as SMS messages, sent via ProCare message, or distributed as appropriate for the content.

MSSL will have scheduled parent-teacher conferences at least twice per year at the end of the fall semester and the end of spring semester providing families a dedicated time to discuss student progress, development, and goals. Additional meetings and conferences can be scheduled at parent or teacher request throughout the year on an as needed basis. Families are encouraged to make use of the communication tools available, meet with teachers, and stay engaged throughout the year. To preserve these important conference times while honoring and respecting the contact and exposure concerns through the COVID pandemic and beyond, the school will include phone calls and zoom meetings as conference methods to maintain bidirectional communication.

Please be mindful that privacy and confidentiality guidelines limit what information can be shared with families when other children are involved. We will always work to give transparency for your family while preserving confidentiality for schoolmates. Parents are encouraged to share any thoughts or concerns on an informal and ongoing basis by email to or meeting with the center director. Additionally, we will put out one or more parent surveys per year to collect structured feedback regarding various aspects of the school and operations. Survey responses are used to inform school operations, policies, and procedures.

Should a family require communication and notices in a language other than English, we will make a good-faith effort to have those items translated on a "by request" basis. We value having a diverse, multicultural, and multilingual campus community and will make accommodations to support our families.

Accommodating Families And Children

Montessori School of Sugar Land embraces the diversity of our community and works to accommodate families and children, providing a positive learning environment for students from a variety of cultural backgrounds, differing home languages, and differing abilities.

For children where English is not their home language, accommodations will be made including giving them visual signals and guides for activities, providing additional time to process requests and responses, and requesting a “cheat sheet” for teachers of crucial phrases in the child’s home language to assist the child through their day. Translation tools are used when needed to bridge language barriers with families to ensure that the home:school partnership is fostered for all students.

Books, materials, music, dramatic play, and classroom experiences reflect the cultural backgrounds of our families. Families are welcome to share home-language phrases and cultural experiences. Medical needs and differing abilities are considered with families so that safe, reasonable accommodations can be planned.

With parent authorization, if specific therapies or clinical supports for a student can be scheduled during the day while children are in care, those professionals can work with students in their natural classroom environment or we can provide alternate space to accommodate sessions. This includes but is not limited to speech, language, physical, occupational, or behavioral therapist visits.

Teachers and management are committed to partnering with clinical and therapy professionals including but not limited to:

● Participation in comprehensive care meetings if needed for the child’s wellbeing.

● Providing supporting documentation needed or requested by authorized clinical professionals in support of accommodations, diagnosis, or treatment for students.

Please be aware that there are many community resources available to families and children within our community and that, if you have concerns about your child’s progress, early evaluation and intervention is important for helping children reach their full potential.

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) is a statewide program within the Texas Health and Human Services Commission for families with children from birth to 36 months with developmental delays, disabilities or certain medical diagnoses that may impact development. ECI services support families as they learn how to help their children grow and learn.

For more information on ECI providers, visit: Find an ECI provider

Fort Bend ISD Child Find also has resources for evaluation and service for children under 18 years old. For more information, please visit: Fort Bend ISD Child Find

If you have any questions regarding community resources, providers for services, or regarding any desired accommodations, please do not hesitate to reach out to your center director.

Classroom curriculum support may include repeated lesson presentations, adapted materials, visual supports, adjusted pacing or grouping, individual or small-group instruction, and changes to the learning

environment. Teachers and families discuss significant accommodations and review their effectiveness.

Assessment Of Children

In a proper Montessori classroom, observation and assessment of children is an ongoing and continuous process. As children progress through the sequence of work, teachers will maintain records of what items have been presented, are being practiced, or have been mastered.

Teachers monitor for progress relative to expected developmental milestones using informal assessments on an ongoing basis and using formal assessment checklists at least once each semester.

Teachers share developmental and academic progress during the conferences described under Parent Communication and Notices. Families may request information about the curriculum, their child’s progress, learning resources, or accommodations at any time. If observation or assessment identifies concerns, teachers discuss them with the family and recommend resources and next steps.

Guidance, Individualized Plans, And Discipline

In early education, the goal of discipline is to teach the child how to best manage their own behavior, make choices, and handle routine situations. When patterns of challenging behavior are observed, collaboration and communication between home and school are crucial for understanding the behavior and guiding the child towards safe and purposeful activities.

MSSL believes in inclusive schooling for children with learning, cognitive, neurological, or sensory processing differences and will accept children into care so long as our environment will be a positive experience for them and that there is adequate support to ensure the quality of their and their classmates' learning experiences.

The initial and primary form of discipline in the classroom is redirection and a focus on things that 'are a choice' or ‘purposeful activity’. This helps children learn what they should do as a matter of routine. We will also employ techniques using discussion, perspective taking, student rule-making, individual contracts, or a purposeful brief separation from an activity or “calming down moment” not to exceed one minute for each year of the child's age. Behavioral incidents are noted in the student’s activity feed on ProCare and/or discussed directly with families.

Ongoing or day-to-day conversations regarding behavior and progress will primarily be between the lead teacher and the family via ProCare messages. Phone conversations and in-person meetings can be requested by parents, teachers, or management as needed to ensure open communication and coordination of care and strategies being implemented.

For support or ideas on how to handle discipline issues at home, our families are invited to meet with the school director for ideas or to consider some potential solutions that may work in their family situation.

For conduct outside of the expected limit testing of early childhood in degree or frequency, we may require a conference between school administration, classroom teachers, and the child's parents or guardians to examine the situation and establish a shared plan for helping the child.

In exceptional cases where we are otherwise unable to aid a child in learning to work within acceptable boundaries of conduct, we will meet with their parents and or guardians to discuss clinical evaluation and treatment options or, as a last resort, placement elsewhere in the community.

MSSL has the right to suspend, immediately dis-enroll or require documentation of clinical evaluation and services as a condition of continuing enrollment for reasons of conduct or behavior that: compromises the safety of the school environment, is unresponsive to routine classroom intervention strategies, or is otherwise determined by MSSL staff and management to warrant clinical evaluation, diagnosis, or intervention. As each child and family situation is unique, action plans, if any, will be individualized to the child and classroom.

Health And Nutrition

Health, Immunization, Illness, And Exclusion

All children enrolled at MSSL must have a statement of health on file from the child's health care professional stating that they are able to participate fully in the school's routine activities or stating what medical accommodations are required for the child's well being.

Current vaccination records and related documentation must be submitted to the school office prior to a student's first day and updated annually. MSSL follows TxHHS and FBcHHS guidelines and documentation requirements for student vaccinations.

For children with a medical exemption from portions of the standard vaccination plan or families for whom medical treatment or diagnosis conflict with the tenets and practices of their religion or system of belief, an affidavit specifying the reason for exemption must be provided.

Students with diagnosed severe allergies must have a completed Allergy Action Plan on file along with any medication to be administered if a reaction occurs.

If a child becomes ill, an update will be put into ProCare and/or a parent/guardian or designee will be contacted directly. Based on symptoms shown, the child may be kept separate from the other children until the parent arrives. We will also, as a courtesy, inform parents of signs of illness, unhappiness, or discomfort on the part of children that do not require their removal from care. Parents are expected to be able to pick up sick children in a timely manner and to keep them home until they meet the return criteria detailed later in this section.

Children must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school. Parents observing signs of illness over weekends are asked to keep their child home according to the same criteria used by the school: Children with a fever of 100.4F or higher, two or more bouts of vomiting, two or more loose or uncontrollable bowel movements, abnormal breathing, mouth sores, or other signs of illness need to be excluded from care. To be considered fever free, the child cannot be on a fever reducing medication.

Children four years and older must have documentation of vision and hearing screenings on file at the school. Licensing provides specific procedures for members of certain groups who may be exempted from

portions of this standard.

In accordance with Texas Health and Human Services requirements, Children enrolled at MSSL are expected to participate to the extent of their ability in all aspects of the program including indoor and outdoor activities, active play, and classroom activities. Adjustments to a child's participation in any portion of the classroom group's activities requires both (1) a written notice from the child's medical provider that clearly states the activity limitation(s), the period the limitations are to be in place, and adequate detail to make accommodations; AND (2) approval of the accommodation request by the center director.

If there are medically necessary exceptions required to any portion of school policies they must be requested in writing with appropriate documentation and approved by MSSL management.

Health Checks

MSSL does not routinely conduct health checks or "body checks" for students. Unless the need for routine documentation of their health and person is deemed necessary for protecting their well being. Care is taken to respect the child's body autonomy and modesty.

Medication

Medication may be administered by school staff under certain provisions and will be signed off by the administering staff member on the medication log as the confirmation of administration. Medications may only be administered by the school staff if all following conditions are met:

1) Medication must be in the original labeled container and labeled with the child's name.

2) There must be a valid prescription including the child's name, dosage, and schedule.

3) Medication must be signed in by the parent/guardian at the front desk including exact doses and times for the medicine to be given.

We cannot administer medicine prescribed to another person or with illegible or absent labeling. Dose amounts and dose times must be listed explicitly on the medicine form for staff to administer. Entries stating "as labeled", "as marked", "as needed" are not valid and we will be unable to administer.

Please note that MSSL does *not* keep an unassigned epinephrine auto-injector on site. Students with allergies that can cause anaphylaxis must have their own epinephrine auto-injector to be stored in the school office. The school will request a new epinephrine auto-injector should the one held for a specific student expire. Parents must supply the school with an "in date" auto-injector in a timely manner whenever the previous one expires or is used.

Medical Emergencies

In the case of a medical emergency the school’s director or acting designee will evaluate any injured or ill child and use their best judgment to determine the appropriate response or care to provide. Parents will be notified by telephone if their child needs to be picked up for any reason, including injury requiring emergency services, or as a courtesy in some other minor situations. If the injury can be appropriately handled on site with basic first-aid only, the child will be cared for immediately by school staff and their parents notified by report. Injuries of greater severity or requiring more extensive care will receive initial first aid on site while waiting for parents or other emergency response to arrive. In some instances, the school may contact EMS first and the parent second. Initial contact as well as documentation of emergencies may be via the ProCare app, Phone call, written form, or by email at the discretion of the management team member or designee handling the situation.

Unassigned Epinepherine Auto-Injectors

MSSL does not maintain or utilize unassigned epinephrine auto-injectors. Children with allergies requiring epinephrine must have their prescribed epinephrine auto-injector to be kept in the office along with a copy of their allergy action plan.

Infant Sleep And Care Practices

MSSL is committed to maintaining a safe environment for our youngest students. Our school utilizes compact cribs that follow federal safety standards. To review documents regarding crib safety under Title 16 parts 1219 or 1220; or compliance under TXDFPS section 746.2409, please contact the office.

All staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at MSSL will follow these safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/SUIDS) AND Parents are strongly encouraged to follow the relevant portion of these best practices for sleep at home:

* Always put infants to sleep on their backs unless there is a medical reason to the contrary. At the school, you must per state regulations provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional [§746.2427]. Place infants on a firm mattress, with a tight fitting sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for full size cribs and for non-full size cribs [§746.2409].

* For infants who are younger than 12 months of age, cribs should be bare except for a tight fitting sheet and a mattress cover or protector. Items that should not be placed in a crib include: soft or loose bedding, such as blankets, quilts, or comforters; pillows; stuffed toys/animals; soft objects; bumper pads; liners; or sleep positioning devices [§746.2415]. Although these items are traditional baby shower gifts, they have been found to reduce the safety of infants, should not be used at home, and will not be used at the school. Also, infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing [§746.2429]. Do not use sleep positioning devices, such as wedges or infant positioners. The AAP has found no evidence that these devices are safe. Their use may increase the risk of suffocation

[§746.2415].

* Ensure that sleeping areas are ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult [§746.3407(10)]. If an infant needs extra warmth, use sleep clothing such as sleepers or footed pajamas as an alternative to blankets [§746.2415]. * Place only one infant in a crib to sleep [§746.2405]. Evacuation cribs may be shared during fire or emergency drills.

* Infants may use a pacifier during sleep. But the pacifier must not be attached to a stuffed animal or the infant’s clothing by a string, cord, or other attaching mechanism that might be a suffocation or strangulation risk [§746.2415]. If the infant falls asleep in a restrictive device other than a crib (such as a bouncy chair or swing, or arrives to care asleep in a car seat), move the infant to a crib immediately, unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional [§746.2426].

* Our campus is smoke-free. Smoking is not allowed in Texas child care operations (this includes e-cigarettes and any type of vaporizers) [§746.3703(d)d)]. We encourage families to make their infant’s spaces smoke-free as well.

* Actively observe sleeping infants by sight and sound [§746.2403]. If an infant is able to roll back and forth from front to back, place the infant on the infant's back for sleep and allow the infant to assume a preferred sleep position [§746.2427].

* Awake infants will have supervised “tummy time” several times daily. This will help them strengthen their muscles and develop normally [§746.2427].

* Do not swaddle an infant for sleep or rest unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant’s health care professional [§746.2428].

Additionally, per minimum standards §746.501(9) for the safe sleep policy. parents will review this policy upon enrolling their infant at Montessori School of Sugar Land. A copy of the policy is posted in the classroom in addition to this version provided in the parent handbook.

Additionally, parents can review information on safe sleep and reducing the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/SUIDS) at: AAP safe sleep information

* Bottles may never be warmed directly with a microwave as they heat unevenly and create dangerously hot spots in otherwise cool milk. Bottles are typically warmed in a bottle warmer.

Meal Service And Nutrition Education

MSSL offers meal service included as a part of our program at no additional charge. Our meal plan includes breakfast, lunch, and snacks for all of our students. Each day we will have a vegetarian alternative for the main entree. The menu will be posted on the bulletin board in the school lobby, emailed to families on request, sent with the monthly newsletter, and/or posted on the school web page.

To support our ongoing commitment to providing great, nutritious, and enjoyable meals for students; our schools are participating in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This program provides the school additional resources for our meal service and meal planning. Please be aware that as part of our

participation in this program, parents will be asked to provide or verify certain demographic information for their households and children. The school menu is structured on a monthly basis rather than a weekly rotation to avoid repetition of items as much as possible. Recognizing that fresh produce is far healthier than processed and canned, our menu and ordering process is based on sourcing fresh fruits daily and fresh salads and vegetables whenever possible. Meals and snacks follow the applicable CACFP meal patterns.

Cleanliness of food service and food contact areas is critical for the safety and health of students and staff. Tables and chairs used by students, as well as food preparation spaces used by staff, are cleaned and sanitized before and after each meal or snack. Students and staff must wash their hands properly before and after meals or handling food.

If children have any allergies or special dietary requirements, parents must contact the office to discuss any options available for possible accommodation. Staff check allergy information for new children prior to giving them ANY food or drink.

As nut allergies are a significant concern for many families, our menus are planned to avoid the use of nuts and nut products. When sending items from home for their child, parents may not send peanut or tree nut products.

For children with severe or life-threatening allergies, a written action plan bearing both parent and health care provider signatures must be on file with the school. Please meet with the management team so that we can work together to develop a solid and personalized plan.

Parent feedback regarding the menu is always welcome by email to info@MontessoriSugarLand.com

In addition to serving nutritious meals to children, the classroom curriculums include lessons and content regarding nutrition and balanced diets based on information from the US Department of Agriculture, Texas Department of Agriculture, and MyPlate.gov

For additional information and resources, the following websites include a wealth of information for your reference and support: MyPlate nutrition resources Nutrition.gov USDA nutrition resources Texas early childhood family resources

Spaces For Nursing Mothers

MSSL supports breastfeeding and provides a comfortable, reasonably private space with an adult seat in a Learning Center office. Nursing mothers are welcome to feed their child and provide expressed breast milk for use in care. Staff follow safe labeling, storage, and handling procedures. Ask the campus office to arrange the space or obtain breastfeeding resources.

Bug Repellent And Sunscreen

MSSL staff will apply bug repellent and sunscreen for children once each afternoon if it has been provided by a parent or guardian. Parents are expected to apply repellent and sunscreen in the morning. Bug repellent and sunscreen must be out of reach of children at all times and have your child’s name clearly displayed. These items may not be left in a student’s bag or cubby and must be given to the teacher to store.

Staff Vaccinations And Health Practices

Under current law and regulations, MSSL may not make or hold any vaccination as mandatory for employment unless that requirement is directly from state or county regulatory authority. Should regulations change regarding vaccination requirements, this policy section may be modified, redacted, amended, or updated without specific or advanced notice.

Staff at Montessori School of Sugar Land are recommended and encouraged to stay current on all vaccinations, especially their annual flu shot.

To help safeguard the health of our children, MSSL holds our staff to the same illness and exclusion criteria as our students, including mandatory absences for fever and signs of illness. Staff who are ill must notify management immediately, so that proper measures may be taken to schedule a substitute and otherwise assure that infection does not spread to children or other staff. Doctors notes are required for return from extended illness related absences. Additionally, staff are required to follow the sanitation and handwashing procedures outlined in the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care.

Technology And Privacy

Screen Time And Digital Media Use

Children under three years of age have no screen time, videos, or similar visual media use at MSSL. Audio devices may be used for classroom music, dance, and related activities.

For children age three and older, any screen activity must be brief, supervised, age-appropriate, and connected to planned educational goals. Screens supplement hands-on learning and do not replace Montessori work, physical activity, social interaction, or other required activities. Non-homework screen time is limited to a total of one hour per child per day at the center.

Screen time is prohibited during meals, snacks, naps, and rest. Content must exclude advertising and violence. Devices and screens are turned off when not in use. Announcing a special event does not waive these requirements; entertainment-only movies are not part of the screen-time program.

School-age children in before-school, after-school, and camp programs may use approved devices for homework. The one-hour limit does not apply to school-age homework; other academic screen activities remain subject to the daily limit and the requirements above. Teachers supervise device use and may suspend access when it is not used appropriately.

Families may discuss media-use questions or concerns with the center director.

Personal Communication Devices

Students may not have or use personal communication devices including cell phones, tablets, smart watches, or other devices capable of telecommunication or digital communication. School or classroom technology use is addressed in the following section.

Exceptions are made for specific uses including those required for individual education programs, section 504 plans, or similar plans authorized by a directive from a qualified health care provider due to a documented medical need. To claim or use any of these exceptions, documentation must be provided to the office in advance.

If you have questions regarding a specific device, please contact the school office by email.

Any student personal devices that are not under a qualifying exception may be confiscated by school staff and held in the campus office until returned to a parent or guardian during an in-person meeting.

Any student with a personal device that is not under a qualifying exception will face age appropriate disciplinary action taking into account: the age and developmental level of the child, the context in which the device was present or in use, the child's conduct or demeanor at the time, and any other relevant information present.

Campus Camera Systems

All families, employees, and visitors are to be aware that our campuses may have cameras or video recording systems in place for training and security use in any portion of the campus. These are closed systems that do not allow for remote viewing by parents. This limitation is to maintain the security and privacy of our students and families. Families wishing to review camera footage are welcome to come to the office to view real-time cameras or footage of a previous day while it is available.

Available footage including a parent's child may be reviewed during operating hours. Footage from student-accessible areas is typically retained for at least one week. Parents may not copy or retain recordings depicting a child other than their own.

Confidentiality

MSSL confidentiality policies limit the release of personally identifiable information regarding students to their parent/guardian or to specified agencies or entities when required by law.

MSSL will not release student directory information or parent contact information without explicit instruction to do so from the parent/guardian.

Student records are available to parents of that student for review on a by request basis.

Family Rights And Responsibilities

Parent Rights

Parents at MSSL campuses are granted the following rights under the Texas Human Resource Code Chapter 42 Section 42.04271 and with additional rights extended by school policies.

Parents or guardians for enrolled students have the right to enter and examine the campus during our hours of operation without advanced notice and are invited to come in often.

Parents or guardians for enrolled students have the right to review the child care facility's publicly accessible records.

Parents or guardians for enrolled students have the right to receive inspection reports for the child care facility and information about how to access the facility's online compliance history.

Parents or guardians for enrolled students have the right to obtain a copy of the child care facility's policies and procedures.

Parents or guardians for enrolled students have the right to review, at the request of the parent or guardian, the facility's staff training records and any in-house staff training curriculum used by the facility.

Parents or guardians for enrolled students have the right to review the child care facility's written records concerning the parent's or guardian's child.

Parents and guardians have the right to request access to available video including their child. See Campus Camera Systems for viewing procedures and confidentiality protections.

Parents or guardians for enrolled students have the right to have the child care facility comply with a court order preventing another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the parent's or guardian's child.

Parents or guardians for enrolled students have the right to be provided the contact information for the child care facility's local Child Care Regulation office, and/or to file a complaint against the child care facility by contacting the local Child Care Regulation office.

Parents or guardians for enrolled students have the right to be free from any retaliatory action by the child care facility for exercising any of the parent's or guardian's rights.

Questions, concerns, or grievances may be discussed with the director by phone, email, writing, or in person. See Parent Access and Campus Visitors for visiting procedures, Campus Camera Systems for footage access, and Parent Communication and Notices for conferences.

Parent Responsibilities

With the introduction of the ProCare app in January of 2022, many processes that are crucial for communication and records keeping have moved onto that platform. Parents are responsible for installing the app, turning on notifications so that they can receive messages and urgent updates, and keeping the information in their student's profile up to date. Invoices, payments, and receipts will also be accessible via ProCare.

Authorized pickup information in your student's ProCare profile must be kept up to date to facilitate the rapid and safe release of children.

Parents are responsible for making sure their child has their necessary items with them each day.

Parents are responsible for following the guidelines in the illness policy and keeping children home when they are ill, sick, or showing symptoms of illness. By everyone adhering closely to the letter and spirit of the illness and exclusion policies, we make the school a healthier place and keep all of our children safer and healthier all year long.

See Clothing and Attire and Infant Sleep and Care Practices for daily clothing, supplies, and rest needs. Keep personal belongings clearly labeled; send diapers, wipes, and any required ointment for children who are not toilet trained, and a water bottle as recommended by the classroom team.

Toddler, Transition, and Primary children should bring a blanket for nap time. Infant sleep items must follow Infant Sleep and Care Practices.

Parent Access And Campus Visitors

Parents of actively enrolled students are welcome to visit campus any time their child is present and have access to the spaces used by their child. Parent's rights to observe their child, the center's program activities, the building, premises, and equipment will not be curtailed unless explicitly ordered by an appropriate legal authority. Other campus visitors must check in with the school office.

During times when flu, COVID, or RSV spread is elevated, we encourage parents to visit the office to utilize the campus camera system to view classrooms as a way to minimize exposure risk while maintaining visibility and transparency.

Prospective families wishing to tour the campus must sign up for a tour via the school website. Tours are generally conducted in the later portion of the morning and at the end of the school day just after closing. If you need to schedule a tour outside of the times offered on the website, please email Admin@MontessoriSugarLand.com.

Vendors, deliveries, and repair technicians on site must sign in with the front office and will be given instructions and access as appropriate for their specific activities. Whenever possible, these visits will be scheduled outside of the school's operating hours.

University students, Houston Montessori Center students, and prospective parents conducting classroom observation periods must schedule in advance with the school office, provide all requested documentation

prior to their visit, and sign in with the school office on the day of their visit.

Please note that any person, including parents, who will spend time in a classroom as a volunteer or observer must either have a completed background check on file with the campus or meet HHS requirements for background checks for therapists and other professionals working with children.

Contacting Child Care Licensing

Parents may request the latest inspection report and Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers from the center director or school office. Minimum Standards and public compliance records are also available through Texas Health and Human Services: Texas Child Care Regulation and compliance records

If you would like to contact Texas Child Care Licensing, their contact information is:

Texas Child Care Licensing - Houston Office: 1330 E. 40th, Houston, TX 77022. Phone: 713-287-3238. Texas Child Care Regulation and compliance records

Texas Child Care Licensing - Rosenberg Office: 1110 Ave G, Rosenberg TX 77471. Phone: 713-287-3238. Fax: 512-276-3044. Texas Child Care Regulation and compliance records

Preventing Abuse And Neglect Of Children

Every MSSL staff member completes one or more hour(s) of training on preventing, recognizing, and reporting maltreatment, abuse, or neglect of children. These staff trainings are included as part of our annual in-service series. Parents or others who would like further information on the subject are encouraged to contact the school director or take advantage of online training resources including: DFPS child abuse reporting training CDC child safety resources

Texas law requires that school staff report any suspected abuse or neglect of any child by any party to the protective services hot-line at 1-800-252-5400 immediately and no later than 24 hours after first having reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect. We also require staff to also report any suspected abuse or neglect to Management immediately. MSSL staff will cooperate with all legal requests from DFPS and law enforcement investigators. MSSL staff will not release any information about any investigation of any child except as required by regulations. Teaching staff will not discuss any aspect of any investigation with any outside party or parent. Reporting to management does not replace or delay the staff member’s personal duty to report to the appropriate authorities.

Parents and caregivers to a child who may have experienced abuse or neglect or is a victim of abuse or neglect should make a report to the hotline at 1-800-252-5400 immediately. If you feel there is or may be immediate danger to yourself or the child, contact emergency services using 911. As parents and caregivers, the safety and well being of children must be our highest priority.

Texas Gang-Free Zone Notification

Texas DFPS requires that all parents be informed that the area within 1000 feet of the school is a designated gang-free zone and that certain gang related criminal activity may carry additional penalties within this area.

Fraternization

Although we encourage families and staff to build strong relationships to ensure the best care for our children, there are limits that the school places on interaction between staff and families. These limits are placed to protect all parties involved. Families are not to hire or contract present or former MSSL staff as babysitters or in any other capacity without explicit written permission from the center director. Families and staff are to remember that their professional relationship within the school supersedes any and all other relationships and accordingly, social interaction or contact outside of the school should be minimized or conducted in a professional manner.

Weather And Emergencies

Inclement Weather

We are well aware that the weather in our area can be unpredictable. When temperatures are above 95F or below 45F we will adjust and limit playground times to protect children from extreme temperatures. Please note that recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics and from the CDC emphasize the need for daily outdoor activity even when temperatures drop past freezing. During periods of thunder or rain, we will have alternate activities rather than use the playground and climbing spaces. Should the weather be severe enough to constitute an emergency, we will follow the procedures outlined in the Emergency Situations section of the school policies.

Emergency Situations

Evacuation plan maps are posted throughout the building for quick reference and as a supplement to these written policies. For actual emergency situations (not drills), notice will be sent to families and Child Care Licensing by email and/or phone. Please note that with ProCare accessible by mobile device, records in the app will be used for attendance and emergency contact information.

During any emergency requiring evacuation of the school, the main phone number for the school will be remotely routed to the mobile phone of the senior staff member on site and additional contact phone numbers emailed to families, staff, and child care licensing along with the emergency notification announcement. Information will be available through both campuses main numbers (281-277-2702 for Austin Parkway/Lakefield, 281-778-9780 for Sienna) during evacuation and relocation.

Fire Drill

In the case of fire or fire drill, children will be evacuated according to the posted evacuation plans to the designated meeting point.

● Lakefield Campus: Exit the building to the curb between the building and parking area. In an actual evacuation, students will proceed through the hedge and to the field behind the building.

● Sienna Campus: Students will exit the building and proceed to the southern end of the playground under the trees.

Severe Weather

For severe weather or other causes to shelter in place within the school, the children will gather in the designated room and remain there until the hazard has passed or we evacuate/relocate the children. Parents who arrive while we are sheltered in place are strongly advised to join us and remain until the hazard has cleared.

● Lakefield Campus: the designated shelter location is the main commons room.

● Sienna Campus: the designated shelter location is located in the central hallway.

Hazardous Persons Drill

During a lockdown or hazardous person situation or drill, the goal is to keep the situation as calm and safe as is possible until help can arrive. Each classroom receives training on how, when, and where to shelter their children and secure their classroom space. Staff will move children to the designated safer space and shelter until signaled with an “all clear.”

Evacuation And Relocation

Should a hazardous situation require evacuation and relocation, parents will be notified by phone (and email if possible) of the cause, destination, timing, and any other relevant information. Unless otherwise noted, the relocation site for MSSL campuses will be as follows:

● The Austin Parkway Campus will relocate to the Montessori School of Sugar Land, Sienna Campus located at 8900 Sienna Ranch Rd, Missouri City Tx.

● The Sienna Ranch Campus will relocate to the Montessori School of Sugar Land, Lakefield/Austin Parkway Campus located at 4502 Austin Parkway, Sugar Land Tx.

Evacuation maps are posted throughout the building. Management brings family and agency contact information, emergency care and transportation authorizations, and backup attendance records. Communication procedures are described under Emergency Situations.

In the event of any of the above emergency response scenarios (With notation for standards compliance): 1A, 1C) The primary responsibility for staff is moving children in a safe and orderly manner to the appropriate designated safe area while maintaining an accurate attendance count for the group under their supervision. In the case of a shelter in place scenario, staff must pay special care to closing doors and staying away from exterior glass and walls. In the case of lock-down, care must be taken to keep the children as calm and quiet as possible so as not to broadcast the shelter location of the group.

1B) Evacuation will be implemented by having children walk with teachers to the designated location(s) based on the nature of the drill and non-walking children traveling by fire/evacuation crib following the crib

manufacturer’s recommended occupancy and use. When relocation to our alternate site is required, children will be transported using the school’s multi-purpose activity bus to transfer children. Those requiring 5-point harnesses will be prioritized into harnesses already in place in the bus and any additional positions deployed for the duration of the emergency transfer process. Infants will be transferred using rear-facing seats as available per trip.

1F) Teachers will continue using their written class rosters to maintain accurate attendance including the time children are picked-up until all children are released from care or returned to routine operation. Additionally, office and management staff will bring the parent and staff time-clock tablets with them to the evacuation or relocation site so that redundant records can be maintained.

3B) Emergency Care Authorisations for all children and emergency transport authorisations for all children will be available on-tablet for use during evacuation, on cloud backup for use after relocation, and as a hard-copy folder to travel with management during evacuation, shelter, and relocation events.

3C) Children will be tracked by an electronic class roster with time in and time out logged in the app by staff and parents throughout the emergency. Parent sign-out will be completed using the tablet based parent system typically used (and brought with us) or if it should fail for any reason, on paper sign-out logs with time, parent name, and their sign-out code number.

4) During evacuations, relocations, shelter in place, and lock-down situations children still require continuing care. An evacuation kit will be maintained containing key information, supplies, and resources. Shelter locations will be stocked with books, toys, and crucial supplies to facilitate continued care until the emergency is past. In the case of relocation, or extended evacuation leading to relocation, our alternate site is a fully operational school with supplies and resources on hand to support the addition of our students until they can be reunited with families. A Hazardous person lock-down situation poses the greatest hurdles for continuing care as quiet containment of the group in the safest possible space becomes the primary objective for the period of time until help arrives and the all-clear can be given. Provisions are present for diaper and potty needs at the designated lock-down locations. Flashlight and books and similar quiet, teacher managed distractions will be kept as well.

5) Release of children and reuniting families will be implemented by communicating the current location of the children to families and signing out children from the teacher in charge of the group and designated supervisor on site.