

School in the Woods Montessori School
Parent Handbook 2017-2018

Table of Contents

Our Mission and Vision	3
Welcome and Purpose of Handbook	3
School Contact Information	3
Our Purpose and Philosophy	3
Organization and Board of Directors	5
Teaching Staff	5
Our Programs	5
Getting Ready for the First Day of School	7
Home Visits for New Students	7
Meet and Greet for New Students	7
Items to Bring the First Day of School	7
Clothing and Personal Belongings	7
Responsibility for School and Personal Belongings	8
Outdoor Policy, Sunscreen and Dressing for the Weather	8
Lost and Found	8
Snack at School	9
First Day at School	9
A Typical Day at School	9
Teacher Work Days	9
Special Activities	9
Guidance and Encouragement	10
Our View of the Child	10
Building Life Skills	10
Guidance and Encouragement Instead of Discipline	11
Guidance and Encouragement at School in the Woods	11
Support for Children Displaying Challenging Behaviors	12
Toileting in the Toddler Program	12
Drop-off and Pick-up	13
Late Arrival	14
Monitoring Children's Whereabouts Throughout the Day	14
Late Pickup	14
Unauthorized Pick-up	14
Child Not Picked Up From School	15
Attendance and Absences	15
School Cancellation	15
Keeping Children Healthy	15
Injuries	16
Medication	16
Allergies	17
Protection from Secondhand Smoke	17

School in the Woods Montessori School
Parent Handbook 2017-2018

Identifying Recalls.....	17
Visiting Your Child's Classroom.....	17
Celebrating Birthdays and Traditional Holidays	18
Resources for Families	18
Written Communications to Families.....	18
Verbal Communications and Meetings with Families	19
School Events	19
Admissions Policies	20
Parent/Infant Program (birth to 15 months)	20
Toddler Program (15 months to 3 years)	20
Toddler to Preschool Transition	20
Preschool Program (3 years to 6 years).....	20
Pre-Kindergarten Program	21
Class Placements.....	21
Re-enrollment	21
Non-Discrimination Policy	22
Children with Special Needs.....	22
Tuition and Enrollment	22
Required School Forms and Records	22
Non-Immunized Children.....	23
Media Use	23
Urgent Events Policies	23
In the Event of an Emergency	23
Missing Child Policy.....	24
Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan	24
Reuniting Families After an Emergency or a Disaster.....	24
Parent Reporting.....	24
Obligation to Report	25

School in the Woods Montessori School

Parent Handbook 2017-2018

Our Mission and Vision

Mission Statement: To cultivate a safe, nurturing and welcoming community of children, families and staff guided by the Montessori philosophy, allowing each child to grow and flourish into a confident, capable individual living in peace with others and in harmony with nature.

Vision: To develop generations of individuals who can find well being, fulfillment and success as adults by developing the skills – such as persistence, self-control, curiosity, optimism, conscientiousness, grit, zest and self confidence - that lead to the critical components of a satisfying life: to feel valued and recognized for who you really are; to approach life with passion; to find work that generates joy and becomes its own reward; to develop a strong feeling of connectedness to friends and family; and to hold a deep belief that you have something meaningful to contribute to society.

Welcome and Purpose of Handbook

Welcome to School in the Woods Montessori School! We are excited to have you and your child join our community. We have prepared this handbook as a reference for you about the school, its programs, policies and procedures. We have tried to address many of the common questions parents typically have. You will likely have more questions, so please feel free to ask any of us. We look forward to working with you and your children.

School Contact Information

You may reach us in any of the following ways.

Phone: 720.201.3929

Front Desk: info@schoolinthewoodsmontessori.org

Head of School: mpatton@schoolinthewoodsmontessori.org

Our Purpose and Philosophy

The purpose of School in the Woods Montessori School is to provide a school for young children in which the Montessori approach to education is used, and to provide parent education and teacher development in support of the growth of the young child.

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

As a community, we recognize that families provide children with their first opportunity to connect with other people, and create their first learning environment. We work actively to create a partnership between the school and family to create the best possible foundation for each child. Together, we are dedicated to offering our children opportunities to develop their potential as they step out into the world as engaged, competent, responsible and respectful citizens with an understanding and appreciation that learning is for life. This includes support the following Montessori principles:

- **Each child is valued as a unique individual.** Montessori education recognizes that children learn in different ways, and accommodates all learning styles. Each child is free to learn at their own pace and according to his own interests. This learning is guided and supported by the teacher as she models an attitude of valuing diversity.
- **Beginning at an early age, children are offered the opportunity to explore their world and build their independence.** Classroom design, materials, and daily routines support the individual's emerging capabilities allowing them ever-increasing opportunities to "do it myself". Children learn how to take responsibility for their choices and actions which lays the foundation for "self-regulation" (the capacity to control one's impulses and to delay gratification).
- **Students are part of a close, caring community.** The multi-age classroom re-creates a family structure. Older students enjoy stature as mentors and role models; younger children feel supported and gain confidence about the challenges ahead. Teachers model respect, loving kindness, and a belief in peaceful conflict resolution.
- **Children in Montessori environments enjoy freedom within limits.** Working within parameters set by their teachers, children have freedom of choice in deciding what materials they want to work with. Montessorians understand that internal satisfaction drives the child's curiosity and results in joyous learning that is sustainable over a lifetime.

Given the freedom and support to explore, to question, and to make connections, Montessori students become confident, enthusiastic, self-directed learners. They are able to think critically, work collaboratively, and act boldly—a skill set for the 21st century.

School in the Woods Montessori School

Parent Handbook 2017-2018

Organization and Board of Directors

School in the Woods Montessori School is a non-profit corporation governed by a Board of Directors. The Board is made up of Montessorians with past experience in the classroom and school administration, as well as community members who are interested in supporting the school and filling the role of the Board outlined in the bylaws. Each board member serves a 3 year term. Board meetings are held monthly.

Teaching Staff

The school is staffed according to licensing regulations of the Colorado Department of Human Services and guidelines from the American Montessori Society (AMS). Each classroom has at least one teacher who is certified by AMS. The other teachers may also be certified or may be interns from a Montessori teacher training program.

Our Programs

Parent/Infant Program

The School in the Woods Parent/Infant program serves families with children from pre-birth to 18 months of age. The Parent/Infant Community provides a warm, nurturing and stimulating environment that allows young children and their parents to learn together in a Montessori environment that is specially prepared for the developmental needs of infants, allowing them the opportunity to explore and learn. It also supports new parents and families by providing them the knowledge and support they need as they embark upon this new stage of their lives – being a parent!

One day a week parents and infants attend a 90-minute class together. The role of the parent during the class is to observe, support and encourage their child's natural development. This weekly class gives parents a unique opportunity to sit back and actively observe their child's developing skills. The teacher serves as a guide and model for parents and children as they explore the environment and their relationship with others. One evening a week, parents attend a 90-minute discussion session facilitated by the Parent/Infant teacher. This adults-only evening provides the parents an opportunity to learn more about the Montessori approach, discuss common parenting topics, and share questions and observations from the weekly class and family life.

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

Toddler Program

The School in the Woods Toddler Program is an environment uniquely prepared for children between 15 months and three years of age. The Toddler Community offers very young children the unique experience of self-development in a tender atmosphere of special understanding, respect and support. Toddlers begin building the foundation for who they are to become. Their character, self-esteem, purpose in life, social skills and learning processes begin to form during this stage of life. The main goals of the Toddler environment are to help the children function independently, to allow them to explore the environment and manipulate the objects in the environment freely, and to assist them in their rapid language development.

This program meets four days a week for two and a half hours each day. Classes are held in the mornings and in the afternoons. A teacher to child ratio of 1 to 5 is maintained in each class.

Preschool Program

The Montessori Preschool classroom is a carefully prepared environment designed specifically to support the three to six year old child's natural curiosity and interest in his world. It allows the child to learn in a place of beauty, order and rich opportunity. The Preschool classroom is well organized to allow children the freedom to select from a wide variety of activities that entice the young child to follow his innate drive to learn. Children are encouraged to follow their natural desire for repetition and are given lessons on new activities when they are ready.

Daily group times (called "line") present opportunities to share verbally; explore literature; experience science and cultural lessons; participate in music, movement and rhythm activities. Outdoor time is another part of each day; children develop important social skills and are provided lots of opportunities to interact with the natural world in this atmosphere of unstructured play.

This program meets five days a week for three hours each day. Classes are held in the mornings or in the afternoons. A teacher to child ratio of 1 to 10 is maintained in each class.

Pre-Kindergarten Program

For children who are in their third year of Montessori Preschool, this program gives children the opportunity to stay all day for larger project work. These children attend along with the other children in the mixed

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

age Preschool class and receive special Pre-Kindergarten lessons from one of the teachers in order to extend their learning.

Getting Ready for the First Day of School

Beginning the school experience is a big step in life. It can be fun and exciting to some children and a bit scary to others, as all children handle new situations differently. A day or two before the first day of school you should talk with your child in general terms about the fun you know he or she will have in learning new things or being with other children. It is important that your child sense that you are comfortable with this new step in their life. Prepare your child by letting them know that you will be leaving and that you will come back at a certain time.

Home Visits for New Students

If your child is new to the program they are entering in the fall, a teacher will contact you during the first week of August to set up a time for a home visit before the start of school. The visit provides you, your child and the teacher the opportunity to begin your relationship in familiar surroundings. Home visits usually last about 30-45 minutes. A letter with more details about how to prepare for the home visit will be mailed during the summer.

Meet and Greet for New Students

An informal gathering will be held at school the week prior to the first day of classes. This is an opportunity for both the parent and child to visit the school and the classroom together. Invitations will be mailed during the summer.

Items to Bring the First Day of School

A letter will be mailed to all students during the summer that itemizes what each child should bring the first day of school. These are items that will need to be purchased to leave at school for the duration of the school year.

Clothing and Personal Belongings

We encourage you to dress your child in comfortable clothing that is easy for your child to manage and change on his/her own. When indoors, your child will be sitting on the floor, working with water and paints and eating snack and as a result, their clothing may get very dirty.

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

Please send your child to school in shoes that fit and are appropriate for climbing, running and walking. Cowboy boots, sandals and party shoes are difficult for these types of activities. Slip on and Velcro fastened shoes are recommended for children who cannot yet tie their own shoes.

Please do not bring toys, gum, candy, money or food to school. Such items distract from classroom activities, can lead to difficulties in sharing, and can get lost or broken.

Each child has a cubby for storing their personal belongings such as backpacks and outerwear.

Responsibility for School and Personal Belongings

School in the Woods Montessori School recognizes that during the normal use of materials at school, children may damage, break or lose school materials. In these situations, the school will repair or replace the item without additional compensation from the families. Similarly, it is recognized that any personal items that the child brings to school may be damaged, broken or lost. The school assumes no responsibility for the child's personal items or belongings. Families will assume responsibility to repair or replace the item without compensation from the school.

Outdoor Policy, Sunscreen and Dressing for the Weather

Daily outdoor time is important for young children. The children will be outdoors daily when the air temperature is over 20 degrees Fahrenheit. Please send your child in clothing appropriate for the weather (e.g. rain coats and rain boots; winter coats, gloves or mittens and snowboots; sunhats and other sun protection).

Please send your child to school with sunscreen already applied. We will reapply, if authorized, if the sunscreen has been washed off. School in the Woods uses Coppertone WaterBabies 45 sunscreen. When the temperature is above 95 degrees Fahrenheit, the children will be kept inside or in the shade outside.

Lost and Found

Lost articles may be reclaimed at the "Lost and Found" basket located in the classroom. Please be sure names are clearly and permanently marked on clothing and other items so they can be easily identified and returned. On the last Friday of each month unclaimed items will be donated to charity.

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

Snack at School

Each child will have an opportunity to bring snack to share with their entire class. A letter with suggestions of what to bring will be sent home in August. Monthly schedules will be sent out by each classroom. Each child will be assigned approximately one day every two weeks. It is expected that all children have been transitioned from a bottle to a cup before they are admitted.

First Day at School

On the first day of school, give your child a friendly goodbye, only once, and leave him or her in the care of the teacher. Even if your child should cry, which often happens, the quicker the separation, the sooner tears will disappear. The child should feel your confidence in leaving him/her with the teacher.

A Typical Day at School

No class day is exactly the same, but there are several general activities that occur each day:

Arrival/Outdoor Play – The children are greeted at the gate by their teachers and have free play outside until arrival time is over.

Work Period – The children have the option to work independently in the classroom, or with a classmate. During the work period, they may also choose to have snack, and use the toilet.

Group Time – This time is used for singing, rhythm instruments, gross motor activities, reading books and birthday celebrations.

Dismissal – The children end their session outside, coming out shortly before pickup time to allow some additional time for outdoor play.

Teacher Work Days

Generally, one day each month is designated as a teacher work day. No classes are held on these days. The purpose of these days is to allow time for the teachers to meet, prepare new materials, work on new or revised programs, and to put out new materials in the classrooms. These teacher work days are on the calendar you received with your enrollment packet.

Special Activities

School in the Woods Montessori School does not provide transportation for children – either to/from school or to special activities. We may occasionally take a walking excursion around the neighborhood. These excursions will generally be to a neighborhood public park or other public

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

space. It will not typically involve activities which require an admission fee. If there are any costs associated with these excursions (e.g. the purchase of a snack while out), these costs will be funded by the school and will not result in an additional expense to the families.

Guidance and Encouragement

Our View of the Child

At School in the Woods Montessori School, our approach to “discipline” starts with our view of the child:

- The developing child learns most effectively by interacting with the social and physical environment.
- The child is a unique individual worthy of our complete understanding and respect.
- Each child has a basic right to fully develop his potential.
- The classroom should support the child's ability to act and think for himself — to become independent.
- Children are social beings who want to belong to a social group which includes their peers and the adults in their lives.
- Young children are actively developing their self-image and their self-concept.

Building Life Skills

Based on this view of the child, our goal is to provide children the opportunity to develop “life skills” which are the abilities children need to function as productive citizens and healthy individuals. These “life skills” include:

- Attachment: “I have grown-ups who cherish me and keep me safe”.
 - Affiliation: “I can have a friend and be a friend”.
 - Self-regulation: “I can manage my strong emotions and am in control of my behavior”.
 - Initiative: “I am constantly growing, changing, and learning new things”.
 - Problem Solving: “I can solve problems and resolve conflicts”.
 - Respect: “I have unique gifts and so do others”.
- (Adapted from: [Beyond Behavior Management](#), Jenna Bilmes. St. Paul, Minnesota: Redleaf Press.)

If a child feels discouraged about his/her ability to build life skills, “misbehavior” may result. This requires guidance and encouragement from adults.

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

Guidance and Encouragement Instead of Discipline

Young children make tremendous strides in brain development, thinking processes, communication of ideas and feelings, motor skills, self-concept development and social awareness. They are engaged in a process of “total development”.

Lack of experience and limited ability to understand the needs of others makes it difficult for children to always act within the adult defined boundaries of acceptable behavior. It is helpful to view “misbehavior” as an opportunity to help children learn acceptable alternative behaviors.

Recently, a growing number of educators have come to consider the term “discipline” as controversial. It is often confused with “punishment” — which by definition means pain and suffering. Instead, the terms guidance and encouragement are preferred. They involve:

- Empowering children to perform productive activities.
- Sincere acknowledgement of a child’s efforts and progress.

Guidance and Encouragement at School in the Woods

This approach is implemented through a comprehensive process:

- Prepare the environment so that it is developmentally appropriate for the child, it provides engaging activities, and it reduces the need to say “no”.
- Establish expectations based on three basic rules: Keep ourselves safe; Keep our things safe; Keep each other safe. We model this behavior for the children.
- Communicate requests in positive terms (“Keep your feet on the floor”) rather than negative terms (“Don’t climb on the table”).
- Give attention to the behavior we want to encourage. Misbehavior is often just a request for attention from the child. If we notice appropriate behavior, misbehavior is no longer necessary.
- Model the language we expect the children to use. For toddlers, we provide the language needed at the point in time when it is necessary.
- Careful observation to understand the reason for the particular behavior. Understanding why a child is behaving in a particular way helps us determine an appropriate response.
- Use a non-punitive approach to handling misbehavior. Provide the child two acceptable choices, and then provide a logical consequence if they make a choice that is not one of the two acceptable choices. “You may choose to go down the slide feet first, or you may choose to play somewhere else.” If the child chooses to

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

go down the slide in a dangerous way (not one of the choices), he “chooses” to play somewhere else.

Support for Children Displaying Challenging Behaviors

We strive at all times to strengthen our relationships with children and their families. Teachers receive ongoing professional development which helps them to identify and support the individual needs of the children enrolled in our programs. Working in collaboration with families, we are able to provide each child with the specialized care s/he may need within our classrooms.

In the event that a child is displaying challenging behaviors that are not readily addressed by the teachers, the staff may ask parents for a special meeting to help determine the best course of action. When a situation develops that makes a child's needs difficult for staff and parents to adequately address, the family will be given information about how to access an Early Childhood Mental Health specialist. We maintain a working relationship with a mental health specialist who is available to assist with this process.

If the child is a danger to themselves or to other children, we may ask that the child be removed from the program for a specified period of time. Once a plan of action is identified in consultation with a mental health professional, we will monitor the plan carefully when the child returns to our program. It is only as a last resort that we would ask you to remove your child from our program.

In the event that it is agreed that our program is not a good fit for your child, we may request that you withdraw your child from our program; however, we will give you one month's notice to find alternative arrangements.

Toileting in the Toddler Program

We are here to support your family in this developmental process. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either of the toddler teachers. They are happy to provide information and support.

At school, children are changed standing up, to reduce dependency and helplessness, and to enable the child to explore undressing and dressing as well as use of the toilet.

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

As early as 6 to 9 months of age, children may begin showing interest in the toilet, and sitting on a potty chair. They notice the adults in their lives spending time in the bathroom, and they want to emulate the adults around them.

Sometime between 9 and 15 months of age, whenever the child has become comfortable with sitting on the potty more than once a day, the child may begin to occasionally void and stool on the potty. It is during this timeframe that the child also often begins acknowledging when s/he is wet or has had a bowel movement.

Anytime between 12 and 24 months of age, the child will find a routine that keeps him/her dry most of the day with some regular reminders from adults. It is also during this timeframe that the child begins to show interest and ability to dress and undress him/herself.

Toddler teachers will notify you when your child begins to occasionally void and/or stool on the potty. They will keep you updated on your child's progress, and will communicate with you when they feel your child is ready to begin wearing underwear to school. We recommend a transition straight from diapers to underwear, avoiding the use of pull-ups.

Drop-off and Pick-up

Park and walk your children to the gate designated for their class. Pick up your child from the same gate at dismissal. One of your child's teachers will meet you at the gate. Your promptness in dropping off and picking up is appreciated.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Arrival Time</u>	<u>Dismissal Time</u>
AM Toddler	8:30 am	11:00 am
PM Toddler	12:30pm	3:00pm
AM Preschool	8:15am	11:15am
PM Preschool	12:15pm	3:15pm
Pre-Kindergarten	8:15am	3:15pm

The safety of your child is our principle concern. Please follow these guidelines:

- All children must be signed in and out each day.
- Do not allow your child to walk to or from the gates unattended.

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

- Never leave your child at the gate, in the yard, or in the class unless a teacher is present and you have signed your child in.

Late Arrival

Please walk your child into his/her class and sign your child in. If your child's class is away on a walking field trip, your child will remain with the Head of School until the class returns to the facility.

Monitoring Children's Whereabouts Throughout the Day

Once your child is signed in with the teachers, attendance is verified throughout the day to ensure that all children are accounted for. As transitions are made from outside to inside and vice versa, one teacher leads the group and another teacher follows the group to ensure all children make the transition safely. Teachers will confirm the correct number of children have made the transition once everyone is inside/outside. Teachers also monitor the number of children on the playground to ensure knowledge of each child's whereabouts.

Late Pickup

In consideration of your child and the staff, please be prompt in picking up your child. Please call the school if you have an unexpected delay. A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged for any child picked up 10 minutes after the designated dismissal time.

Unauthorized Pick-up

Children are to be released only to those designated in writing by the child's parent or legal guardian. These designations are made on the Contact Information Card that is part of your enrollment packet. A photo ID is required of anyone picking up a child who is unfamiliar to the staff. The name on the ID will be checked against the authorized list provided by the parent/guardian.

If an authorized person arrives to pick up the child and is suspected to be under the influence of a controlled substance, staff will offer to contact another authorized person for pickup.

If someone attempts to pick up a child who is not authorized by the parents, the Head of School will be immediately notified. The Head of School will contact the child's parents, and if necessary, the police.

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

Child Not Picked Up From School

In the event that a child has not been picked up, the teacher will contact the parent and request immediate pickup. If a parent cannot be reached, we will follow the call order on the child's Contact Information Card. A message will be left for the parents to inform them of the procedure that was followed, and where their child will be. If the teacher is unable to reach a parent or other authorized person, the child will be placed in the care of the Head of School. The school has on hand at all times extra snacks for children who have not been picked up after closing, and will provide age appropriate activities for the child until the child is picked up. If the parents or other authorized persons do not pick up the child before 6:00pm, the Head of School will contact the police to place the child in the custody of Social Services.

Attendance and Absences

To best benefit from our program, we encourage you to have your child attend regularly, and to arrive on time at the beginning of his/her session. Please report absences to the Head of School.

School Cancellation

In the case of severe inclement weather, school will be cancelled. Cancelled school days will not be made up. Closings will be announced via broadcast email to all families. In general, we will adhere to Denver Public Schools severe weather closures. We do not follow school delay schedules.

Keeping Children Healthy

State licensing regulations do not permit our school to care for sick children. In order to safeguard the health of all children to the best of our ability, we ask that you comply with the following guidelines provided by the Colorado Department of Human Services.

Please do not send your child to school if you feel the illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in school activities, including being outside. Please do not send your child to school if the illness results in a greater care need than the teachers can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.

Please do not send your child to school if he/she has had any of the following within the past 24 hours:

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

- Fever over 100 degrees
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Green or yellow runny nose
- A persistent cough
- Rash that has not been evaluated by a medical professional
- Abdominal pain
- Sore throat or red and inflamed throat
- Upper Respiratory Infection
- Mouth sores
- Lethargy, irritability, loss of appetite or extreme sleepiness
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Any communicable disease

If your child becomes ill at school, he/she will be isolated from the other children and you will be notified promptly and asked to pick up your child as soon as possible. If your child develops a communicable disease, please notify the school so that we may notify other parents. A child must be free of symptoms for 24 hours prior to returning to school. **In most cases, a child sent home for illness should not return to school the following day.** If a child has been on an antibiotic, they should be on the medication for 24 hours before returning to school.

Injuries

First aid will be administered for minor injuries. All accidents/injuries will be reported on an injury form and given to parents.

Medication

State licensing and insurance regulations restrict the administering of medication. We administer medication for emergencies only. All medications given to us to administer to children must have annual parental permission and doctor's orders for each medication prescribed. For children under 2 years of age, the orders will need to be renewed according to the American Academy of Pediatrics well child exam schedule. This information must be documented on the Physical Exam Form and Health Care Plan. All medication will be administered by trained and delegated staff and in accordance with the prescribed directions and will be documented in our medication log book. All medication will be stored in areas inaccessible to children at all times. If a medication is expired or left over, those medications will be returned to the parents. In the event that parents can no longer be reached, the

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

medication will be properly disposed of. Emergency medications will be stored in an area that is easily accessed by staff, but inaccessible to children.

Allergies

Please inform us of any allergies your child may have. This should be done by returning the Healthcare Plan form that was included in your enrollment packet along with any emergency medication prescribed by your child's healthcare provider. Any over the counter medication must be labeled with the child's name and prescribed dosage; prescription medication must have the pharmacy label present. All forms and medications must be on file in order for a child to begin school. Please notify us of any changes as they occur.

Protection from Secondhand Smoke

School in the Woods Montessori School recognizes that exposure to secondhand smoke presents a health risk to children. As a result, the school does not allow smoking on the premises at any time, whether it be teachers, visitors, or families.

Identifying Recalls

School in the Woods Montessori School monitors the Consumer Product Safety Commission website on a weekly basis to identify any toys, equipment and furnishings that may have been recently recalled. If school materials are identified as being recalled, they will be removed and/or replaced within a week.

Visiting Your Child's Classroom

During the first six weeks of school, we ask that parents refrain from coming into the child's classroom. Continuing the daily routine of separation at the gate is an important part of helping your child feel comfortable at school. This is a time during which all the children are still settling into the classroom routine without the distraction of a visitor. After the first six weeks of school, you are welcome to spend time in your child's class, either to visit your child or to volunteer for a specific activity or project. We also welcome grandparents or older siblings to come for a visit.

Due to the limited amount of space in our classrooms, we try not to schedule more than two visitors at one time. For this reason, please call

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

the Head of School to schedule your visit. All visitors must sign in and out with the Head of School.

Celebrating Birthdays and Traditional Holidays

Birthdays are celebrated in a low-key style at school. Your child will be assigned to bring snack on their birthday. A special treat for birthdays such as a very small cookie, mini muffin or banana bread can be included along with the normal snack. Please avoid cakes, cupcakes or anything else with a large quantity of sugar. Do not send party favors or candy. On the day a child is celebrating at school, there will be a special ceremony during the class group time. We invite parents to come and bring pictures for each year of the child's life.

Please do not distribute party invitations at school, instead please mail them. This helps avoid any disappointments for children who may not be invited. We also ask that you not send your child to school with a gift for another child. This may cause hurt feelings and confusion.

School in the Woods Montessori School does not typically celebrate holidays such as Halloween or Valentine's Day. We feel that these holidays can be overwhelming for small children. Instead, we offer a calm, predictable place for children to help them cope with the excitement of the holidays.

Resources for Families

The school has a parent library which contains books on parenting, Montessori education, and recent research in the field of early childhood education. Parents are invited to check out books for a three week period.

Written Communications to Families

The school has many publications to help facilitate communication with families:

- School Calendar – In the spring prior to the start of a new school year, we publish a brief calendar which includes all school holidays or other days when there will be no school.
- School Directory - A publication containing names, addresses, phone numbers, email address and general information will be distributed in September. The school Directory is to be used for school matters only, never to solicit business.

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

- School Newsletter – The school publishes a monthly newsletter which contains information on upcoming events, class needs and topics of interest.
- Class Newsletters – Each class maintains a Facebook page which provides highlights what is happening in that classroom and shares articles and other information of interest.

The school does not distribute fliers or announcements for outside events. All communication to the school community must be approved by the Head of School.

Verbal Communications and Meetings with Families

We consider communications with parents to be an important part of building a relationship with your child. We have many mechanisms in place for communication both formal and informal:

- Six Week Phone Calls – Sometime after the first six weeks of school, you will receive a phone call from one of your child's teachers. The teacher will share information with you about your child's adjustment to school and will answer any questions you may have.
- Parent/Teacher Conferences – Formal parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. No school will be held on these days so that we may concentrate on visiting with you about your child. Conferences are about twenty minutes long and both parents should attend if possible. The spring conference will have a written report.
- Changes at Home – If something happens at home or in your child's life which is significant or may be disruptive, we would like to know as soon as possible. Adults often underestimate the effects of seemingly small changes at home like a move to a new bed, a parent's trip, unusual medication or just a bad night's sleep. We often observe behavioral changes at school and can help a child more effectively if we understand more about their home situation. Your communication to us is important and is confidential.
- Concerns/Questions – We encourage you to call whenever you have a question or concern.

School Events

The following events are scheduled each year. Specific dates, times and details will be published in the monthly school newsletter prior to the event. Anytime a parent is unable to attend, another special friend or relative is welcome to attend in their place.

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

- Back to School Nights – This evening meeting is for parents only and will feature a media presentation of your child at work. A potluck dinner is usually held before the presentation.
- End of School Picnic – The end of each year is celebrated with an all school picnic in a local park, or hosted by one of the families. This picnic is for the entire family. Families bring their own picnic dinner. There is no rain date scheduled for the picnic.

Admissions Policies

Parent/Infant Program (birth to 15 months)

A child is eligible for the Parent/Infant Program who is:

- Younger than 15 months on August 31 (for fall enrollment), this means their first birthday falls after May 31.
- Younger than 15 months on December 31 (for winter enrollment), this means their first birthday falls after September 30.
- Enrollment is dependent upon space availability.

Toddler Program (15 months to 3 years)

A child is eligible for the Toddler Program who is:

- 15 months by August 31 (for fall enrollment), this means their birthday falls before May 31.
- 15 months by December 31 (for winter enrollment), this means their birthday falls before September 30.
- Enrollment is dependent upon space availability; classrooms are balanced based on age and gender.

Toddler to Preschool Transition

- A child who is 2 years 9 months on or before August 31 moves to the Preschool Program in August at the beginning of the school year. This means their third birthday falls before November 30.
- A child who is 2 years 9 months on or before December 31 moves to the Preschool Program in January after returning from the December holidays. This means their third birthday falls before March 30.
- Enrollment is based on space availability; classrooms are balanced based on age and gender.

Preschool Program (3 years to 6 years)

A child is eligible for the Preschool Program who is:

- Three years of age on or before November 30 (for fall enrollment)
- Three years of age on or before March 30 (for January enrollment)

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

- Independent with the process of toileting
- Enrollment is dependent upon space availability; classrooms are balanced based on age and gender.

Pre-Kindergarten Program

A child is eligible for the Pre-Kindergarten Program who is:

- Four years and six months on or before September 30 (for fall enrollment), this means their birthday falls before March 31.
- Preference will be given to children who are in their third year of the Preschool program (not counting years in the Toddler Program); for some children this will be their Kindergarten year, for others, this will be the year before Kindergarten
- Enrolled in the Preschool Program
- Enrollment is dependent upon space availability; classroom is balanced based on gender.
- Any mid-year placements will be considered based on space availability

Class Placements

While we try to accommodate preferences, we cannot guarantee placement within a particular class. Balance of age and gender and the needs of each child are all considered in placement.

Priority for placements:

- Currently enrolled children in each particular program
- Currently enrolled children who are eligible to transition
- Siblings of returning children
- Siblings of currently enrolled children who are not returning
- Siblings of alumni
- General enrollment

A waitlist is created when there are more children eligible to enroll or transition than there are spaces available.

Please call the school with any questions regarding class placement or enrollment.

Re-enrollment

Re-enrollment forms are sent out in January for the upcoming school year.

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

Non-Discrimination Policy

School in the Woods Montessori School admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies and other school-administered programs.

Children with Special Needs

The admission of a child with special needs must be in compliance with the American Disabilities Act, and a reasonable effort will be made to accommodate the child's needs and to integrate the child. School in the Woods Montessori School will accept children who are eligible to be mainstreamed. Acceptance will be determined on availability of spaces.

Tuition and Enrollment

School in the Woods Montessori School is a non-profit institution dependent upon tuition payments for the majority of operating funds. Students are accepted for the school year. Parents assume responsibility for tuition payment in full, even if the child leaves prior to the end of the school year. No reduction in the yearly charge can be allowed for absence, withdrawal or dismissal during the school year.

The school year is August to June. Tuition is based on a 10 month school year. Payments may be made in full or in monthly installments. Two months tuition (pre-payment of May and June) is due after acceptance and prior to the start of the school year. Dates vary based on enrollment date. The remaining payments are due on the first of the month starting in September.

Please see our website for current tuition rates.

Required School Forms and Records

We are required by state regulations to keep certain information about your child on file. You received the following forms as a part of your enrollment packet. These forms must be returned by the start of school, and must be kept current throughout the year as information changes. If you are having difficulty completing forms before the start of school,

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

please notify us as soon as possible. The Colorado Department of Human Services requires new forms each year the child attends school.

- Emergency Authorization Form (must be notarized)
- Authorized Pickup/Contact Information Card
- Immunization Card
- Physical Exam Form/Healthcare Plan:
 - An annual exam is required for children over 2 years of age
 - Children under two must have an exam twice a year
- Enrollment Contract (due April 1)
- Direct Withdrawal Authorization Form (due with the Enrollment Contract on April 1)

If you need blank forms, please call the school.

The staff keeps individual student records, which provide information for conferences. All records are confidential and can only be released to a third party with written permission from a parent or guardian.

Non-Immunized Children

School in the Woods Montessori School does not require children to be immunized in order to enter the program. It is possible that some children may be admitted whose parents have declared a medical, religious or personal exemption to immunizations, or whose children are on a delayed immunization schedule.

Media Use

Televisions or videos are not used at School in the Woods Montessori School. Children may listen to music on a CD player during circle time/line time each day. Teachers will limit the amount of time that children listen to music to occur only during circle time and to no more than 3 pre-recorded songs per day.

Urgent Events Policies

The Colorado Department of Human Services regulations require that the school publish the following policies.

In the Event of an Emergency

In the event of a medical emergency, every attempt will be made to reach the parents. We will follow the call order specified on your child's emergency release form. Please complete the form in its entirety. The emergency sheet must be notarized.

School in the Woods Montessori School Parent Handbook 2017-2018

Missing Child Policy

In the event that a child is missing, and the class is away from the school, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Teacher calls police
2. Teacher calls the school
3. Teacher or school contact the parents

Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan

In order to ensure the safety of children in our program, School in the Woods Montessori School has a written plan for responding to all emergency situations, to include, but not limited to: tornados and fires. Fire Drills are conducted on a monthly basis, and several times a year we conduct other drills to ensure that all staff and children are familiar with the drill procedure and that their conduct during a real emergency is a matter of established routine.

The written plan also accounts for children with disabilities and those with access and functional needs (such as toddlers who may need additional help during an evacuation) and addresses how these children are included in the emergency plan.

Reuniting Families After an Emergency or a Disaster

In the event of an emergency or disaster such as flood or fire which results in evacuation of children to an alternate site, children will be transported to Virginia Village Library. Once all children have been safely moved to the alternate location we will make contact with parents to come pick up their children. We will attempt to make contact with parents first and will then utilize the other numbers identified on your Contact Card.

Parent Reporting

If you wish to make a complaint or have a concern regarding the school, you may call a Denver County licensing specialist at 720-865-5392, or the Colorado Department of Human Services at 303-866-5958. Complaints can also be mailed to the Colorado Department of Human Services at 1575 Sherman Street, Denver, CO 80203.

If you would like to obtain the Rules Regulating Family Child Care Homes, please see www.coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.com and click on Early Care and Learning, and then on Child Care Licensing and Administration, and then on Family Child Care Homes. There you will find a link to these rules.

**School in the Woods Montessori School
Parent Handbook 2017-2018**

The Secretary of State website can be found at: www.sos.state.co.us

Obligation to Report

The school is obligated by law to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect. The child abuse hotline is 1-844-264-5437.