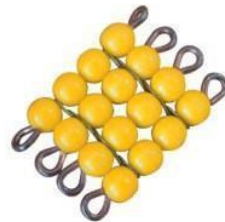




Parent Handbook

2023-2024

Toddler
Primary
Kindergarten
Elementary



58 Elm Street
Camden, ME 04843
207-236-2911 • www.camdenmontessori.org

(revised 8.28.23)

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I. SCHOOL INFORMATION

Contact information

Address: Children’s House Montessori School
58 Elm Street
Camden, ME 04843

Telephone: 207-236-2911

Website: www.camdenmontessori.org

Email: office@camdenmontessori.org

Hours of Operation

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
School Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Beforecare: 8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
Aftercare: Monday-Thursday, 3:00-5:00 p.m.
Toddler aftercare, 3:00-4:00 p.m. only
Friday, 12:00-3:00 p.m. Primary & Elementary only

Board of Directors

Evan Waters, Chair
Heather Rogers, Vice-Chair
Erin Cochran, Secretary
Audrey Aponte
Clio Berta
Liz Fuller-Wright
Hannah King
Liz Koenigsberg Lavey

Out Faculty & Staff

Yellow Door Sam Miller, Toddler Lead Teacher
Hanna Dowden, Toddler Assistant Teacher

Red Door Marga Hutchinson, Toddler Lead Teacher
Yeidy Ortiz Gonzalez, Toddler Assistant Teacher

Blue Door Marney Holmes, Primary & Kindergarten Lead Teacher
Lourdes Martinez, Primary Assistant Teacher & Spanish Teacher

Orange Door Elizabeth Barnum, Primary Lead Teacher
Colleen Henry, Primary Assistant Teacher

Jade Door Germaine Koomen, Elementary Lead Teacher
Doina Claudatus, Elementary Assistant Teacher

Jenny York, Classroom Floater & Office Assistant
Lian Martinez, Extended Day Assistant & Aftercare Teacher
Ethan Tischler, Music Teacher
Jody Curtis, Administrative Assistant
Rachel Nixon, Head of School



II. ABOUT MARIA MONTESSORI & THE MONTESSORI METHOD

"It is true we cannot make a genius. We can only give each individual the chance to fulfill their potential possibilities to become an independent, secure, and balanced human being."

—Maria Montessori

DR. MARIA MONTESSORI

Maria Montessori (1870-1952), known throughout the world as the originator of the Montessori Method of Education, was the first woman in Italy to receive a medical degree. In 1902, while working with children experiencing learning challenges, she was inspired to design a variety of learning materials which proved very successful. Her opportunity to have these materials used by a larger and more diverse group of children came in 1907 when she started a pre-school project for socially disadvantaged children in the San Lorenzo district of Rome. Her Casa dei Bambini, or Children's House, became world famous; educational observers came from many different countries to watch the young children absorbed in learning with these unusual materials. Eventually Montessori gave up her medical practice and devoted her life to training teachers, and in writing and lecturing for any adults who cared for children. Her schools, which are still flourishing, have spread to six continents. Today there are more than 4,500 Montessori schools across the United States and more than 20,000 worldwide.

The most important thrust of Montessori's educational efforts was to create a more peaceful world by nurturing the spirit of children. For this unusual approach to peace, she was nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize.

For more information about Maria Montessori or Montessori philosophy please visit:

- American Montessori Society at: www.amshq.org
- Montessori for Everyone at: www.montessoriforeveryone.com
- Daily Montessori at: www.dailymontessori.com

MONTESSORI METHOD

As Described By The American Montessori Society

Classroom Design

The design and flow of the Montessori classroom create a learning environment that accommodates choice. There are spaces suited to group activity and areas where a student can settle in alone. Parts of the room are open and spacious. You will not find the customary rows of school desks; children work at tables or on the floor, rolling out mats on which to work and define their work space. There are well-defined spaces for each part of the curriculum, such as Language Arts, Math, and Cultural Studies. Each of these areas features shelves or display tables with a variety of inviting materials from which students can choose. Many classrooms have an area devoted to peace and reflection: a quiet corner or table with well-chosen items—a vase of daisies; a goldfish bowl—to lead a child to meditative thought. Above all, each classroom is warm, well-organized, and inviting, with couches, rugs, and flowers to help children feel calm and at home.



Montessori Learning Materials

A hallmark of Montessori education is its hands-on approach to learning. Students work with specially designed materials, manipulating and investigating until they master the lesson. Beautifully crafted and begging to be touched, Montessori's distinctive learning materials are displayed on open, easily accessible shelves. Each material teaches a single skill or concept. And, built into many of the materials is a mechanism for providing the student with some way of assessing their progress and correcting their mistakes, independent of the teacher. The concrete materials provide passages to abstraction, and introduce concepts that become increasingly complex. As students progress, the teacher replaces some materials with others, ensuring that the level of challenge continues to meet their needs.

The Teacher as Guide

The Montessori teacher, child, and environment may be seen as a learning triangle, with each element inextricably linked, and a vital part of the whole. The teacher thoughtfully prepares a classroom environment with materials and activities that entice their students to learn. They may guide their students to new lessons and challenges, but it is the child's interaction with what the environment has to offer that enables learning to occur. Because the teachers aren't meant as the focus of attention, they can often be difficult to spot. Typically you'll find them sitting on the floor or at a table, observing their students as they work and making notations about their progress, or consulting with an individual or a small group.



Multi-Age Groupings

A Montessori class is composed of students whose ages typically span 3 years. Ideally, members stay with the class, and teacher, for the entire cycle, forging a stable community and meaningful bonds. It is common to see students of different ages working together. Older students enjoy mentoring their younger classmates—sometimes the best teacher is someone who has recently mastered the task at hand. Younger students look up to their big "brothers" and "sisters," and get a preview of the alluring work to come.

A Caring Community

- The Montessori classroom radiates harmony and respect.
- Members address each other respectfully and in modulated tones. There are no raised voices; no rude or hurtful behavior.
- There is a busy hum of activity, yet also a profound respect for silence.
- Students show grace and courtesy, and an interest in the welfare of others. "Let me help!" is a common classroom refrain.
- Students work together as stewards of their environment. They take turns caring for classroom pets and plants; do their part to maintain order, such as by returning materials to the shelves after use; and help keep outdoor spaces groomed and litter-free.

How to live in community, to learn independently, to think constructively and creatively: These are the lessons of the Montessori classroom that remain with its students as they make their way in the world.

III. CHILDREN'S HOUSE VISION & VALUES

LICENSED CHILD CARE FACILITY

Children's House Montessori is a licensed Child Care Facility under Maine's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Certificate of Licensure ID # 213387. All persons have the right to report any suspicion of a regulation violation. [Maine DHHS Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers](#)



*“The greatest sign of success for a teacher... is to be able to say,
‘The children are now working as if I did not exist.’” — Maria Montessori*

VISION

The Children’s House Montessori School’s vision is to provide Montessori-based education to the children of Midcoast Maine beginning at 18 months through age 9. We are committed to staying true to Maria Montessori’s philosophy of education by creating a carefully designed environment for each program, wherein children are able to grow toward independence in a social environment and to master skills and tasks at their own pace. Our teachers and supportive staff strive to provide creative and engaging classrooms and outdoor play where children are given the love, support, and guidance to thrive and ignite a lifelong love of learning.

MISSION

Children’s House Montessori School provides an educational culture that respects the child’s innate desire to learn and fosters curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking while preparing every child to become a thoughtful, independent, and compassionate global citizen.

CORE VALUES

In all that we do, Children's House Montessori School honors the tenets of respect, kindness, scholarship, fellowship, and environmental sustainability. We are committed to:

- Respect for Children, advanced by a responsive, prepared learning environment that provides for hands-on exploration, spontaneous activity, and active learning.
- Respect for the Individual, advanced by freedom within limits that allows for self-directed activity and individual progress and development that enhances the intrinsic motivation to learn.
- Respect for Community, advanced by multi-age classrooms that focus on cooperation and collaboration and build the skills of healthy interpersonal relationships among children and adults through the practice of social grace and courtesy.
- Respect for Humanity, advanced by activities that bring greater awareness and appreciation of, and sensitivity for, the people and customs of other cultures and put into action through service.
- Respect for the Natural World, advanced by direct experiences in nature and science that expand each child's sense of wonder, further an understanding of the world and the universe, and awaken an awareness of the interconnectedness and fragility of our environment.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Guided by our core values, CHMS strives to be a place where each person – whether a student, teacher, staff, parent, caregiver, or grandparent – feels a sense of belonging and respect. We recognize and appreciate our differences in culture, race, color, ethnicity, religion, age, family structure, sex and sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomics, learning style, world view, and more. Our diversity creates a rich environment that educates and supports our children on their path to maturity and global citizenship. CHMS strives to create a culture of respect in all that it does everyday– in our classroom programming, professional development, hiring, admissions, and governance practices. We empower each other to take action against injustices.

“The needs of humankind are universal. Our means of meeting them create the richness and diversity of the planet. The Montessori child should come to relish the texture of that diversity.” – Maria Montessori



IV. CODE OF CONDUCT

All members of the CHMS community are expected to model the Montessori tenets of respect and kindness when communicating with each other. Parents, caregivers, children, teachers, staff, and Board members are asked to:

- Practice grace, courtesy, and truthfulness when communicating with each other.
- Resolve conflicts in-person through peaceful, mature, and respectful dialogue.
- Speak directly and transparently with kindness, rather than back-channeling.
- Listen for understanding, allowing space for different perspectives.
- Discuss school-related issues directly with the teachers or Head of School.
- Address concerns about school policies with the Head of School.
- Use email only for scheduling or logistical communications; please schedule a meeting for sensitive conversations.

V. CHILDREN'S HOUSE PROGRAMS

PROGRAMS

Children's House offers Toddler, Primary (including Kindergarten), and Elementary programs during the school year, from September to June.

TODDLER, 18 months to 3 years

Enrolled for 2, 3 or 5 days per week

Half day (8:30-12), Monday through Friday

Extended day (12-3:00), Monday through Thursday (napping)

The toddler program is guided by Montessori teachers who offer space to nourish curiosity and an ability to learn about the world through observation, exploration, and discovery. The program provides an opportunity for children to explore and play in a carefully prepared environment with challenging and stimulating materials designed for their developmental needs. *The toddler program adheres to a 1:5 staff-to-student ratio, with a maximum capacity of 12 children per classroom at any given time.*



PRIMARY, 3 to 6 years

Ages 3 and 4: Enrolled for 3, 4 or 5 days per week

Half day (8:30-12), Monday through Friday

Extended day (12-3:00), Monday through Thursday (rest time, arts, music, movement)

Ages 5 and 6 (Kindergarten): Enrolled for 5 days per week

Full day (8:30-3:00), Monday through Thursday

Half day (8:30-12), Friday

The primary program is guided by Montessori teachers using Montessori materials in a classroom designed to offer choice for hands-on exploration following each child's interests, learning style, and pace. The program provides a balance of promoting independence and concentration while learning friendship skills and the joys of feeling part of a harmonious group. *The primary program adheres to a 1:10 staff to student ratio, with a maximum capacity of 24 children per classroom at any given time.*

ELEMENTARY PROGRAM, 6 to 10 years

Enrolled for 5 days per week

Full day, Monday through Thursday (8:30-3:00)

Full day, Friday (8:30-1:30)

The elementary program integrates a multi-faceted curriculum – including biology, botany, geography, geology, music, art, math, language, and geometry – that is framed by Montessori's theme of cosmic education presented through the five great lessons. This program also recognizes and supports the social needs of children at this developmental stage. Through collaborative problem solving, children develop

the qualities necessary for leadership including empathy, respect for differences, responsibility, self-confidence, and satisfaction based on internal rather than external rewards. *The elementary program adheres to a 1:13 staff to student ratio, with a maximum of 30 children per classroom.*

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

Before-School and After-School Care

Before and After-School Care is available on a contracted basis to enrolled families.

- Before-School Care, Monday-Friday, 8:00-8:30 a.m., Primary and Elementary students
- After-School Care
 - Monday-Thursday, 3:00-5:00 p.m., Primary and Elementary students. Pick up at 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. *Toddlers 3:00-4:00 p.m. only*
 - Fridays, 12:00-3:00 p.m., Primary students. Pick up at 1:30 or 3:00 p.m.
 - Fridays, 1:30-3:00 p.m., Elementary students. Pick up at 3:00 p.m.

Before-School and After-School Care programs are not available on snow days, vacations, or when school has a delayed opening or ends early due to a planned event.

Drop-ins are welcome for Before-School or After-School Care as space is available and by prior arrangement in the office with 24-hour notice.

Summer Camp

CHMS offers a summer program for children ages 2-9 years. Information about the summer program is made available in the winter.



VI. ADMISSIONS & SPECIAL NEEDS

ADMISSIONS

Children’s House Montessori considers all children ages 18 months to 9 years for admission. The school welcomes families and children of all races, ethnicity, religion, family structure, sex and sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomics, learning style, and world view.

Families wishing to be considered for admission are requested to come in for an informational interview and tour the school. This first visit is for *adults* only. Following the tour and application, a second visit allows the teacher to meet with the student candidate (Primary and Elementary) and talk with the parents. To be considered for acceptance, a family must apply and pay a non-refundable application fee.

Admission priorities include: returning students and siblings of students at Children’s House. Please note: because a complete Montessori education is built on a series of three-year cycles from preschool through the elementary program, admission to the elementary program without prior Montessori experience is considered only after careful discussion with parents.

Once the school determines acceptance, a child’s classroom placement is determined by the Head of School and the teachers. Parents are required to complete all pertinent forms and pay the appropriate fees and deposits to ensure enrollment of their child.



SPECIAL NEEDS

The Children’s House Montessori School is not a clinical school, and therefore it has limited resources and expertise in working with children with special needs. The decision to admit a child who has been diagnosed with special needs by an appropriate professional is on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Head of School and the Lead Teacher of the prospective classroom. If a student is admitted with an acknowledgment of special needs, staff may recommend a referral for additional resources such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and/or counseling. Specialists working individually with a child may come and work with the child at CHMS, in or out of the child’s classroom. If this is the case, the teachers will help coordinate scheduling. In all cases, the school works in close partnership with a child’s family in order to best meet each child’s unique needs. The parent(s) are responsible for paying for specialists’ services.

Note: Some students may need greater accessibility or more support services than CHMS can provide. If this is the case, the child’s teacher and Head of School may recommend to the family that the child transfer to a different school that can better serve their child’s needs. See “Special Needs & Referrals for Development Screening.”

VII. TUITION & WITHDRAWAL

TUITION POLICY

The Board of Directors sets annual tuition rates. See *Tuition Schedule & Policies* in the Appendix. The school year is considered continuous from September through June, and Children’s House parents/guardians are obligated to make tuition payments for the entire school year. The school uses FACTS Tuition Management. Tuition is divided into equal payments – annual, semi-annual, quarterly, or monthly – as agreed upon in the FACTS Enrollment process. All payments for the year are completed by March. Allowances are **not** made for phase-in, illness, or vacations.

In order for Children’s House to meet its financial obligations, tuition must be paid promptly. A late fee will be assessed by FACTS for payments that are 30 days overdue. In the event of default in the payment of any installment outlined in the agreed upon Enrollment Contract, the student may not be allowed to continue classes until payments are completed. If the school is required to initiate legal proceedings to enforce this agreement, the parents/guardians will be held liable for the school’s legal costs, including reasonable attorney fees as stated in the Enrollment Contract. The Head of School will consider extenuating circumstances, however, communication prior to this process will be required.



WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Withdrawals from Children’s House must be requested in writing to the Head of School at least 30 days in advance of the final date the child(ren) will attend. The school’s budget and operation depend on tuition fulfillment by all parents/guardians, as outlined in their Enrollment Contract and the Tuition Refund Plan. If a family has elected to pay monthly or quarterly, this is for their convenience only and does not nullify the obligation to pay the required tuition amount in timely installments. If a family withdraws their child for medical or non-medical reasons, 60% of unused tuition will be refunded.

TERMINATION

In the rare event that a child is not yet ready or suited — in the opinion of the school — to benefit from the program in which s/he is enrolled, Children’s House reserves the right to terminate enrollment after a trial period. The length of the trial period will be determined by the Head of School and Lead Teacher and will be communicated in writing to the parents or guardians. Parental failure to comply and/or work with a cooperative spirit with the school and with the stated policies of Children’s House may be grounds

for termination of the student's enrollment. When a child's enrollment is terminated, either by the parent or the school, the school will make an attempt to:

- Prepare the child for leaving the school in a manner consistent with the child's ability to understand.
- Provide parents with all necessary access to their child's records and referral information.
- Be supportive with regard to the child's future placement.
- Regardless of the outcome of this effort, the notification of and reasons for termination will be given to the parents in writing.

If Children's House terminates a student for any reason, 70% of the student's unused tuition will be refunded.

VIII. ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is critical to ensuring a positive experience at school. The Montessori classrooms work to develop consistent routines and a strong sense of community. Frequent absences can impact learning/academic growth and social development. Also, when a student is absent, the transition back to the classroom can be challenging for the individual, as well as for their classmates and teachers. The State of Maine requires children ages 6 years+ to attend school while it is in session.

Guidelines:

- When a child is absent, the parent/guardian must notify the Office before 9:00 a.m. and state the reason for the absence.
- A student's absence is excused when the absence is due to reasons of personal health, including the child's physical, mental, and behavioral health.
- Excused absences related to personal health that exceed 10 consecutive days (two weeks) require a doctor's note.
- If a student has 5 consecutive or 7 cumulative unexcused absences, a meeting between the teacher(s) and the parent(s) will be scheduled to discuss the reason behind the absences and come up with solutions to establish regular attendance routines.
- Please notify both the child's teacher and the Office, well in advance, regarding any planned extended absences of more than 3 days; if you are planning a family trip outside of the school's vacation weeks and have a child in the Elementary program, please make arrangements with your child's teacher to continue their learning while they are away.

Excessive absences from school can, in some cases, be considered child neglect. As mandated reporters for the State of Maine, CHMS teachers and administrators are required to report excessive absences to the Maine Department of Health and Human Resources.



IX. TRANSITIONS & SEPARATION

If a parent/guardian has concerns about a child's transition to school, they are encouraged to share them with the child's teacher or another parent. (It is best not to share concerns with or in front of a child.) Families should feel free to call the school the week before school starts to talk with the child's teacher.

Some tips and considerations:

- Good feelings are contagious! If you are genuinely enthusiastic about school starting, your child will be too. Conversations about what to expect are helpful.
- Children do best when parents do not linger at drop off, especially at the beginning of the year. (The staff know this from years of experience!)
- Create a brief, simple and consistent goodbye ritual. Some examples include waving goodbye from a particular spot, a funny hand shake, a silly rhyme, or a special hug.
- Stay positive! While saying goodbye in the morning, it is helpful to be mindful of your words, voice, facial expressions, and body language.
- If your child cries when saying goodbye, you can assure them that their teachers will take good care of them and that they will have fun with their friends.
- Remember, keep goodbyes short and follow established goodbye routines; children do best with consistency. "I love you, and I'll pick you up right after school."
- Note: If you and your child may benefit from other strategies not listed here, teachers are ready to brainstorm ideas to support you.

Teachers are always available to help with goodbyes. Please communicate clearly to the teacher when you are ready for help. We do not want to interfere until needed. If you leave when your child is crying, please know that we will be there to comfort and reassure your child, helping them ease their way into the group. You are always welcome to call and find out how your child is doing. We don't want you to worry all morning. A parent's worry usually lasts longer than the child's. If your child becomes inconsolable or seems ill, we will call and let you know.

X. DROP OFF & PICK UP

READY TO GO

Children should be dressed and ready to go when they leave home. This includes jackets, hats, and mittens in colder weather! If extra time is needed upon arrival at school, parents/guardians should park and walk their child to the school gate.

PARKING

Parking spots are available on the left side of Pleasant Street. The school parking lot may have spaces available as well. When parking for drop off or pick up, parents/guardians must accompany their children between their vehicle and the school gate.



DROP OFF, 8:30-9:00 a.m.

Teachers greet parents/guardians and children at the school gate between 8:30-9:00 a.m. each morning. To help ensure a safe and smooth transition for the children, the staff ask that parents/guardians:

- Refrain from cell phone use while in the car line and at the time of drop off.
- Pull your car to the right side of the street to allow other vehicles to pass.
- Pull your car as far forward as possible, to the end of Pleasant Street if possible.
- Wait in the car until you reach the school gate or beyond.
- Do not leave your car in the line to walk your child to the gate.
- The school's neighbors need to be able to enter or exit their driveways at all times. Please do not block driveways or the school parking lot on Pleasant Street.
- To help with an easeful transition to school, please drop your child off at the gate.

Students enjoy outdoor play to start the day. When teachers and children enter the school building around 9 a.m., all exterior entrances are locked. Please ring the doorbell for entry if arriving later.

LATE ARRIVALS, after 9:00 a.m.

Arriving on time benefits children and helps ensure a good start to the day. Tardiness is disrespectful to the child, the teacher, and other students in the classroom.

- If you will be arriving after 9 a.m., please notify the Office in advance by email or phone; otherwise, your child will be marked absent.
- After 9 a.m., please bring your child to the Office and sign them in per DHHS rules; a staff member will bring your child to their classroom at an appropriate time to minimize disruption to the teacher and other students.
- If a family is consistently late bringing their child to school, a meeting between the parent/guardian and the teacher(s) will be scheduled to come up with solutions to establish punctual attendance.

EARLY PICK-UP

We understand that children sometimes need to leave school for appointments or family events. Please be mindful to schedule appointments after-school whenever possible.

- Please notify the Office in advance of your child's early pick up time.
- When you arrive, please come to the Office and sign your child out per DHHS rules. A staff member will go to get your child in their classroom.
- If you return to school that day, please come directly to the Office to sign your child back in per DHHS rules; a staff member will bring your child to their classroom at an appropriate time to minimize disruption to the teacher and other students.
- Note: Students may not be dismissed by older siblings.

PICK UP, 12:00, 3:00, 4:00 or 5:00 p.m.

Punctuality instills trust in a child. It also shows respect to the teachers who need to move on to the next part of their day.

- Pick up your child(ren) promptly at 12:00, 3:00, 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. (Fri: 12:00, 1:30 or 3:00 p.m.)
- If you will be arriving late for pick up, contact the Office in advance.
- If you are more than 10 minutes late, your child(ren) will be brought to the Office, and CHMS will charge a late pick up fee of \$20 for every ten minutes after the hour. If you are late due to an emergency, the school will waive the fee.
- Per DHHS rules, the school cannot release a child to any individual who is not specified on that child's "Release and Excursion Form." Any additions or changes to the release form must be made in writing, except in unusual circumstances when a temporary arrangement may be made by phone call and a follow-up form is completed promptly in writing.
- Please note that the work day for staff ends on the hour.

XI. CHILD SAFETY & SECURITY

WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

Children's House follows Camden-Rockport Elementary School (CRES) for school cancellations, delayed start, and early release due to winter weather conditions.

- If CRES is closed due to winter weather, CHMS will be closed.
- If CRES has a delayed start, CHMS will always have a 1-hour delay (drop off: 9:30-10 a.m.)
- Early release times will vary and will be communicated.

Children's House school closings or time changes will be announced as follows:

- Via the CHMS Remind app
- On the Children's House website (www.camdenmontessori.org)
- Via an all-school email

Note: Some CHMS families drive from quite a distance and/or from inland locations that may have different road conditions in the winter. If school is open but road conditions en route are unsafe, the staff encourage families to prioritize safety and not drive to Camden until conditions improve.

CHILD SAFETY FORM & RELEASE PERMISSIONS

CHMS students are required to have a Child Safety Information Form on file, designating persons authorized to pick up and transport the child. Only the child's parents and those persons listed on the form may pick up a child without written permission from the parents. Any additions or changes to the release form must be made in writing, except in unusual circumstances when a temporary arrangement may be made by phone call and a follow-up form is completed promptly in writing. This form further authorizes the school to take the child on walking trips in the vicinity of the school.

SCHOOL ENTRANCE SECURITY POLICY

In order to maintain a secure and safe environment for our children, the school's doors are locked after students come inside at 9:00 a.m. If you arrive late, please ring the doorbell, and we will let you right in. When the children return outside for playtime, pick-up, or dismissals, the doors will be unlocked to enable quick inside access if needed.

FIRE DRILLS

During the CHMS school year, fire drills occur once per month. In the beginning of the year, they are announced and later in the year some may be unannounced, in preparation for a real emergency. In the case of an actual emergency, each classroom will evacuate according to the evacuation diagram posted in each room. This diagram includes a meeting place outside the building where roll call will be taken to ensure all students and staff exited the building safely.

EVACUATION FROM CHMS DUE TO THREAT

In the event of an evacuation, a safe destination for evacuation has been established at the First Congregational Church, which is across the street at 55 Elm Street. Parents will be contacted via phone or the 'Remind' App once all students are accounted for.

The Evacuation Procedure is as follows:

- In the same formation used to exit the school building, teachers will lead their classes to the First Congregational Church across the street at 55 Elm Street.
- Students and faculty will gather in classroom groups in the main hall of the church.
- Teachers will take attendance for their classes.
- The Head of School will check with teachers to make sure everyone is accounted for.
- Teachers will wait for directions from the Head of School or emergency personnel.

A mobile CHMS backpack, which contains all students' Medical Emergency Profiles and Child Safety forms, as well as parent contact phone numbers, is carried by the Head of School or another designated staff member.

FIELD TRIP PROTOCOLS

During the year, classrooms take field trips to enrich their learning experiences. All trips are chaperoned by teachers and/or parents. The date, time, and destination of field trips are announced in advance, with the exception of walks in town to the park or library. All children must have a signed permission form on file at the school before participating in an off-site field trip that involves transportation by car.

CHMS must follow the state laws to transport children. Children must meet all the following conditions to ride without a booster seat:

- The child must be over 4'8"
- The child must weigh 80 lbs.
- The child must be at least 8 years old
- Children ages 8-10, that meet the height and weight requirements, may ride without a booster only if the seat belt fits properly---the seat belt must lie across the upper thighs, not the stomach; the shoulder belt should lie across the chest and shoulder, not across the neck or face.

Copies of driver's license and proof of insurance will be needed for parent drivers. Parent drivers should drive directly to and from the field trip with no stops in between. Drivers should also refrain from using cell phones while transporting children, except in an emergency. Each adult will be responsible for designated children. If a parent/guardian needs to bring a sibling on a field trip, they should check with the teacher leading the field trip first.

PLAYGROUND GUIDELINES

CHMS is committed to creating a play space that is physically and emotionally safe, creative, and fun for all children. Therefore, Montessori principles in the classroom, based in trust and respect for every child, extend to the playground. Playground guidelines:

- Respect other living things
- Engage in inclusive and safe play
- Equipment guidelines:
 - Ladders: Climb up ladders
 - Slides: Slide down slides, one at a time, feet first
 - Monkey bars: only for use by children who can get on and off independently; only for hanging and swinging (do not climb on top)
 - Pyramid circle swing: maximum of 2 Primary/Elementary children at a time
 - Picnic tables: sit on benches (no standing or sitting on benches or tables)
 - Tires: stacked 2-3 high only, depending on the tire size (child's head must be visible)
 - Swings: walk well away from swings to avoid injury
 - Rockapotamus: maximum of 6 toddlers at a time
- For chasing games, consent of person being chased is required
- Use sand, sticks and wood chips on the ground only (not on picnic tables)
- Respect fences for protection and refrain from using as climbing structures
- Respect trees as nature; refrain from climbing
- Stay off the basement bulkhead doors
- Be supervised by faculty during school hours and parents/guardians before or after school
- Let adults open and close gates when school is in session and at/after dismissal
- Notes: Subject to change to meet the safety needs of all children at CHMS



CHILD'S SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH

All CHMS staff are trained in CPR and First Aid and are prepared to administer assistance as needed. All incidents of note, regardless of seriousness, will be reported to the child's parent/guardian in the form of an Accident or Incident Report. In the event of serious injury or death, appropriate medical personnel and parents/guardians will be contacted immediately, and the Maine Department of Health and Human Services will be contacted within 24 hours. See also IX. Health: Medical Emergency Response below.

CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT POLICY

Children's House Montessori School is legally obligated to make a record of incidents of emotional or physical harm and to report any suspicion of child endangerment outside of school. All CHMS faculty and staff are trained Mandated Reporters to the Department of Health & Human Services. Staff receive training at least once every four years.

CHMS follows child abuse reporting requirements as determined by Maine State Law. The responsibilities of the CHMS staff in cases of suspected child abuse are as follows:

1. Immediately report suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the Head of School
2. Upon consultation with the Head of School, report suspicions to DHHS
3. Cooperate in investigations (DHHS and local police must be present during an exam of a child suspected of being abused.)
4. Support the child
5. Support the family as the case indicates

If any CHMS staff member suspects another staff member of abuse and/or neglect of a child, they should immediately report their concerns to the Head of School. If a staff member suspects the Head of School of abuse and/or neglect, they must contact DHHS at 1-800-452-1999.

When reports of suspected abuse or neglect are made in good faith, reporters are immune from civil or criminal liability for the act of reporting or participating in the investigation or proceeding. DHHS will respect a reporter's request for confidentiality to the extent possible; the identity of reporters will not be revealed unless required to protect the child from serious harm.

XII. HEALTH POLICIES

IMMUNIZATION POLICY

As of September 1, 2021, the Maine Department of Health and Human Services requires:

- For admission to kindergarten: diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis, measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella
- For admission to preschool: above list plus Haemophilus influenza type B (HiB), pneumococcus, hepatitis A, and hepatitis B

Enrolled students must provide proof of immunizations. Exemption from immunization requirements are limited to medical reasons. The child's physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant must provide documentation (per vaccine) that immunization is medically inadvisable. CHMS must maintain a list of all unimmunized persons, regardless of age. In the event of a disease outbreak as defined by CDC reporting

standards, a child not immunized must be excluded from the school in accordance with CDC guidance or until the child receives the necessary immunization or proof of immunity is on record.

ILLNESS POLICY

CHMS's concern is for the well-being of **all** the children at school. Parents/guardians should take the time to observe their child's health each day. Families are expected to help prevent the spread of contagious diseases at school Please keep your child(ren) home if they have:

- Had a fever of 100.4 or above during the previous 24 hours
- Vomited or had diarrhea during the previous 24 hours
- Symptoms that indicate illness such as lack of energy, sleeplessness, loss of appetite, severe congestion (non-allergy related), coughing, shortness of breath, fever, chills, aches, headache, sore throat, ear pain, etc.

In addition to these guidelines, parents should be aware that an unwell child may be uncomfortable participating in the daily activities of school. This can affect everyone's day and often requires the constant attention of a teacher. If a child is not well enough to play outside, they are not well enough to attend school. The school is neither licensed nor equipped to care for ill children. If a child becomes ill while at school, they will be isolated from the other children and a parent/guardian will be called to arrange for the child to be picked up. If, at the time of morning drop off, a teacher considers a child to be too ill to attend school, they will not be admitted to the class.

Remember that when illness is accompanied by a fever, your child may not return to school until their temperature has been normal (less than 100.4) for 24 hours without the use of medication.

NOTIFICATION OF EXPOSURE

If a child in school has a contagious illness (e.g. COVID, strep throat, RSV, chicken pox, etc.), the CHMS school community will be notified by means of a "Medical Notice" email. This will indicate the specific illness and classroom in which it has occurred.

COVID-19 POLICY

Subject to change at any time based on updated CDC guidance.

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html

www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus/general-information.shtml#exposure

Masking: Masks are optional for CHMS students and staff, except as outlined below.

Stay home when sick: Any student or staff member with COVID-19 symptoms must stay home. Symptoms include: *coughing, shortness of breath, fever, chills, aches, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, congestion, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea.* If you suspect that you have COVID-19, it is recommended that you isolate until you have test results.

Exposure to COVID-19: If a student or staff member is exposed to a known COVID-19 case at home or school, CHMS requests that you monitor for symptoms and stay home if sick. For anyone who is exposed and remains asymptomatic, masking and testing are optional to attend school. For those who plan to test, CDC recommends testing on days 5, 7 and 9 after exposure.

Note: “**Exposed**” means someone who was less than 6 feet away from an individual with COVID for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. For example, three separate 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes.

Test results:

- **NEGATIVE:** If a medical professional or a test determines that your child is negative, they may return to school when symptoms are no longer present after 24 hours, without medication.
- **POSITIVE:** If a medical professional or a test determines that your child is positive, please:
 - Contact the school immediately; CHMS recommends that you contact your pediatrician too.
 - Begin isolation, regardless of vaccination status.
 - **Day 0 is the day of symptom onset or the day of a positive test, if asymptomatic.**
 - **Your child must stay home at least through Day 5.**
 - Your child should wear a high-quality mask if they need to be around others.
 - **On Day 6, if your child is fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication and their symptoms are improving, your child may end isolation and return to school, wearing a high-quality mask through Day 10.**
 - Toddlers, and others unable to mask, who have tested positive should stay home through Day 10.
 - Regardless of when your child ends isolation, it is best to avoid being around people who are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19 until at least day 11.

COVID-19 outbreak: If CHMS experiences a COVID-19 outbreak, the school will work with the CDC and our consulting pediatrician to determine best policies and practices at the time, in accordance with state and local recommendations.

MEDICATION POLICY

If a child must have medication (prescription or non-prescription) administered at school, we require:

- a *Permission to Dispense Medication Form* (provided by the school office) must be completed and signed by the parent
- the medication must be in its original container with the medical provider’s prescription
- the medication and instructions should be given directly to the child’s teacher or Office and not sent in a lunch box or backpack

Note: Parents must inform CHMS of any medication a child is taking, regardless if it is administered at school or at home, so that staff may inform medical providers in the event of an emergency.

ALLERGIES

All students who have allergies will be required to have an *Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan* signed by their medical provider and on file at the school. Any emergency medications will require an up-to-date *Permission to Dispense Medication Form* and action plan from the prescribing medical provider. All staff receive yearly training in Food Allergies, Epi-Pen Administration, and Anaphylaxis. In the event of life-threatening allergies, families will be notified of food allergies in their child’s classroom.

FIRST AID RESPONSE

CHMS staff are trained in CPR and First Aid. The school will notify parents of any first aid procedures

administered beyond a “comfort” band aid. An *Accident Report* outlining the intervention will be kept in the child’s file. No medication or treatment other than that described above shall be given to students by CHMS personnel. This includes over-the-counter pain relievers or antibiotic creams. This provision is to prevent possible harm to students in the event of allergy or improper administration.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

In case of serious illness or injury, CHMS staff will make every effort to reach the child’s parents, guardians, or designated emergency contacts. In addition, the school’s Consulting Physician and/or the child’s doctor may be contacted. Isolation from the class in case of illness, and first aid measures in case of injury, will be instituted. 911 may be called, and if necessary, the child may be transported to the Pen Bay Medical Center Emergency Room, unless otherwise noted on the *Child Safety Information Form*. To cover the contingency of severe injury or medical emergency, in the rare instances when parents cannot be reached, and where time may be a critical factor, CHMS has on file the parent’s release of liability.

CHANGES TO STUDENT HEALTH

We recognize that children sometimes develop sensitivities or allergies as they grow, or require adjustments to their diet or medications. If your child experiences a change of this nature, we request that parents/guardians complete a *Change to Student Health Form* which is available in the office. This will alleviate any confusion by providing a definitive course of action that can be individualized to the student and shared with the teaching staff.

HEALTHCARE CONSULTANT

CHMS retains a healthcare consultant (local pediatrician) who approves the school’s health care policies and first aid procedures, and is available to the administration for consultation on health care issues.

DRUG FREE & TOBACCO FREE CAMPUS

Children’s House is dedicated to providing the children in its care, parents, employees, and visitors with a safe and healthy environment that is free of the harmful effects of drugs, alcohol, and secondhand smoke. CHMS recognizes that vaping, smoking and the use of tobacco products, drugs or alcohol on its grounds is detrimental to the health and safety of everyone. Therefore, Children’s House Montessori School is a 100% drug-free and smoke, vape, and tobacco-free campus..

XIII. SNACKS, LUNCH & NUTRITION

NUT-FREE SCHOOL

CHMS is a nut-free school. In order to keep students with life-threatening allergies safe, please avoid all peanuts, tree nuts, and nut butters in snacks, lunches, and birthday treats. Please check labels to avoid foods from facilities that process nuts.

SNACKS

Each classroom establishes a snack routine so please check in with your child’s teacher. In general, suggested snacks include fruits, cheeses, vegetables, hummus, wholesome crackers, etc. Drinking water is available in all classrooms at all times. In the best interest of children, CHMS asks that children not bring snacks that are high in salt, sugar, or artificial dyes.

LUNCH

Children enrolled for the full day bring their own lunches. Lunch should be simple, nutritious, and wholesome, such as a sandwich, vegetable, and fruit. Please do not send sugary sweets or granola bars. Lunches should be packed in non-breakable containers and be well-labeled. The school cannot be responsible for heating foods for lunch.

XIV. CLASSROOM GUIDELINES

DAILY SCHEDULE

Each classroom has a general schedule of activities posted in their classrooms. A general day consists of a morning circle, snack, a work cycle, lunch, outside time, and afternoon which can consist of quiet reading, rest time, group projects, specials and then dismissal.

CLOTHING

Children should dress for school in clothing that is comfortable, provides independence, is easy to get in and out of, and is appropriate for the weather. Please send rain gear when appropriate, as well as a hat, a warm coat, mittens, snow pants, and boots in winter. All clothing should be labeled with the child's name. All children should bring a spare set of clothes, as well as a pair of "indoor" shoes or slippers to be kept at school and worn in the classroom. These items should be simple to not distract children from their work; please avoid animal shapes, blinking lights, commercial logos, etc. Children's belongings are stored in the classroom's designated "cubbies," labeled with their names.

SHARING

Books, artifacts, photographs, etc. are always welcome in the classroom. In general, toys, stuffed animals, and jewelry are a distraction, and parents are asked not to send them.

NON-COMMERCIAL

We strive to create an atmosphere that is commercial free. Please help us by not bringing in backpacks, clothing, and lunch boxes that feature commercial characters or messages.

TOILETING

Toilet learning is an important part of the Toddler classroom. Parents should check with their child's teacher about how to best facilitate toileting for their child. In the older programs, children are expected to be able to use the toilet on their own on a regular basis. We understand that accidents happen, but the Primary classrooms are not set up to accommodate diapers.

NAP TIME/REST TIME

In accordance with DHHS guidelines, all Toddler and Preschool children who stay longer than three hours are required to be given the opportunity for rest. Parents should supply a small blanket for their child's use at nap/rest time. Children may also bring a transitional object such as a stuffed animal, if they like. The classroom storage space for nap items is limited so try to keep items small. Parents are responsible for laundering items weekly.



BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are celebrated in the classrooms in several ways:

- A birthday poster with pictures of your child may be sent to school with the child.
- A “birthday walk” is a ceremony to celebrate and remember each year of the child’s life. Parents are invited to attend.
- Children can bring a birthday snack to be shared with their classmates that has a low-sugar content such as fruit kabobs, yogurt with fruit, or carrot cupcakes with cream cheese frosting.
- A tradition at Children’s House is donating a book to the class in honor of the child’s birthday with an inscription inside “This book was donated to the CHMS in celebration of ___’s birthday”. This has been a way for the children to leave their own legacy, as well as build the school library.
- For children who have a summer birthday, a celebration will be arranged during the school year.

We ask that private birthday party invitations be passed out outside of school and that these parties not be talked about at school so as to avoid hurt feelings of any children not invited.

XV. STUDENT ASSESSMENT & RECORDS

ASSESSMENT

Children’s House utilizes formative assessment practices in evaluating student progress. Formative assessment is the method of general everyday observations and monitoring. Each child’s interests and progress are individually observed, assessed, and recorded. The teacher makes notations about the presentation, practice, and mastery of lessons, as well as closely monitoring which materials the students are using and any challenges they are facing. Formative assessment tells the teacher if a student needs additional instruction and practice, or if they are ready to move on.

Also, many of the Montessori materials have a built-in control of error, which gives the child immediate feedback on their progress. The control of error allows a child to self-correct their mistakes and continue practicing without adult intervention. This form of low-stakes assessment gently guides the child to mastery. The child has control of their own learning, building self-esteem and self-worth along the way. They know from the materials when they are ready to move on.

Additional assessment tools used by CHMS teachers and students include: observation, written work, checklists, development assessment, narrative report, portfolios, classroom presentations, student-led conferences, and narrative reports.

Student assessment also informs the needs for professional development, parent education, improvements to the environment, and other improvements.

CONFERENCES

The school conducts at least two parent-teacher conferences during the school year, scheduled in the fall and spring. Additional meetings with teachers may be scheduled by appointment.

STUDENT REPORTS

Elementary parents receive two written reports, one in the fall and one in the spring, which identify strengths and areas for growth. Primary and Toddler parents receive a written report in the spring.

STUDENT RECORDS

A student's record is privileged and confidential information and will not be released to anyone who is not directly related to implementing the child's program without the express permission of the parent. The school will notify the parents/guardians if a child's record is subpoenaed.

The child's parents/guardians may have access to the child's record at reasonable times. Access to the child's record shall be made available within two business days after the initial request. The parent/guardian's written permission, including signature, must be evident in the child's file to permit the school to release the child's record. A written request, including signature, from the school or person to whom the information is disseminated or released must also be retained in the child's file. CHMS will release a student's records only when the student's account is paid in full as specified in the Enrollment Contract.

A parent/guardian has the right to amend a child's record, by adding information, comments, data, or other relevant material. The parent also has the right to request the deletion of material, from the child's record, that the parent feels is objectionable. To amend a child's record, the parent/guardian has the right to a conference with the Head of School to make his/her/their concerns known. The school shall respond within one week after the conference with a decision concerning the amendment, stating the reasons for the decision. If the parent/guardian's request is acceptable, action will be immediately taken.

XVI. RIGHTS, BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE & SPECIAL NEEDS REFERRALS

RIGHTS OF THE CHILD PER DHHS LICENSING RULES

- Children must be free from emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Each Child has the right to freedom from harmful actions or practices that are detrimental to the Child's welfare, and to practices that are potentially harmful to the Child.
- Each Child has a right to an environment that meets the health and safety standards in this rule.

- Each Child must be provided Child care services without discrimination to race, age, national origin, religion, disability, sex or family composition.
- Children must be treated with dignity, consideration and respect in full recognition of their individuality, including the use of developmentally appropriate practices by the Child Care Facility.
- Each Child has the right to the implementation of any plan of service that has been developed for that Child in conjunction with community or state agencies by the Child Care Facility.
- Each Child has the right to Developmentally Appropriate activities, materials, and equipment.
- Children with disabilities have the right to reasonable modifications to Child Care Facility policies and practices.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE METHODS

At Children’s House, we strive to provide a loving, secure, and supportive environment that encourages self-discipline, respect, and safety for each person as well as the space we share. Understandably, challenging behaviors arise, and they often provide meaningful learning opportunities. When behavior guidance is positive, children establish trust and learn to survive in a positive way. CHMS teachers are trained to use various techniques to redirect a child's challenging behavior including encouragement, positive reinforcement, positive discipline, conflict resolution, and natural consequences for actions.

A child having difficulty controlling his/her/their behavior is:

1. Redirected
2. Encouraged to discuss their feelings
3. Directed to a quiet place until they feel better

CHMS classrooms utilize a Peace Corner. This is a comfortable area in which the child may relax, calm down, feel and/or understand his/her/their feelings, or try to resolve a conflict with another child. The child may choose to go to the peace area by themselves, may be encouraged to visit the area by a teacher, or, in the case of conflict resolution, by another child.

In the event of unsafe physical or verbal behavior, or a persistent problem, a child may be removed from the classroom or playground for a period to collect themselves and to give the staff an opportunity to help resolve the situation.

In the event of significant or persistent disciplinary problems at school, an *Incident Report* will be completed and discussed between the CHMS staff and the parents. If the behavior patterns continue and interfere with the child’s progress in the CHMS learning program, the lead teacher will follow the steps outlined below under “Special Needs & Referrals for Developmental Screening.”

The following negative discipline methods are prohibited at CHMS: infliction of physical pain; name-calling, threatening, ridiculing etc. deprivation of any form; isolation; imposition of cumulative or delayed consequence; physical restraint outside of appropriate safety standards.

SPECIAL NEEDS & REFERRALS FOR DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

CHMS recognizes and values the academic potential of students of diverse learning abilities. Although our program is not designed specifically for students with learning disabilities or attention difficulties,

some such students can experience success when supported by an open and cooperative teacher-student-parent-professional relationship. On a case-by-case basis, Children's House will assist in the referral process for that child.

In the event that a child is exhibiting learning challenges or behavior patterns that interfere with their progress in the CHMS learning program, the following steps will be taken:

1. The teacher informs the Head of School, in writing, of observations regarding learning discrepancies or behavior patterns that interfere with the child's progress in the CHMS learning program, as well as any strategies already used to support the child and any observations/outcomes.
2. The teacher informs the child's parent/guardian about preliminary observations and next steps, as well as inquires about any similar challenges/patterns at home.
3. A CHMS support team is established including the lead teacher, another faculty member, and the Head of School.
4. Team members document formal observations which are then reviewed and evaluated in a team meeting, with next steps regarding testing/evaluation determined.
5. *If outside diagnostic testing and/or evaluation is **not** recommended*, the team drafts a plan that will be implemented by the CHMS teaching team to facilitate student improvement and success (see PLP components below for guidance); a meeting is scheduled with the parents/guardians, the lead teacher, and the Head of School to discuss the observations and review the plan; the plan is shared with all staff that interact with the child, including assistants, beforecare, extended day, and aftercare staff.
6. *If outside diagnostic testing and/or evaluation is **recommended***, the lead teacher drafts a written recommendation to the parents and a meeting is scheduled with the parents, the lead teacher, and the Head of School to discuss the options for diagnostic testing and evaluation (e.g. speech, language, cognitive, fine/gross motor, social/emotional, behavioral):
 - Children ages 18 months through 5 years. Developmental screening services are offered for free through Midcoast Regional Child Development Services (CDS). Referral forms can be found online at www.maine.gov/doe/cds/referrals. Phone inquiries: 877-770-8883.
 - Children in Kindergarten through Elementary. Developmental screening services are offered for free through Five Towns School District.
 - CHMS maintains a list of referral agencies and professionals who may be enlisted to observe and make recommendations. Written parental consent is required before any referral is made. See *CHMS Resources for Families* in the Appendix.

Note: While waiting for testing to be scheduled/take place, an interim plan is put in place to best support the child and the classroom.

After outside testing and/or evaluation is completed, a copy of the results must be reviewed by the CHMS support team, parents/guardians, and the professional who conducted the testing. The team will evaluate the test results and any accompanying recommendations to determine what support and accommodations are needed to best serve the student:

- a. If the support team determines that the student’s needs **can be served by CHMS**, a formal Personal Learning Plan (PLP) will be developed and implemented with input from parents, and guidance from the diagnostic professional. The PLP will consist of:
 1. Student strengths and areas of challenge
 2. Specific objectives and goals
 3. Teaching strategies to be implemented to meet the goals
 4. Accommodations made for the student
 5. Measurement methods and frequency to determine progress
 6. Roles and responsibilities of the teaching team
 7. Communication plan for monitoring student progress and the PLP’s effectiveness

The plan is shared with all staff that interact with the child, including assistants, beforecare, extended day, and aftercare. Should the parent elect not to participate in the PLP, the Head of School may deny further participation at CHMS for the child.

- b. If the support team determines that the student’s needs will be **better served in a different educational setting than CHMS**, recommendations will be made at that time.

Note: CHMS is not staffed with a special education department, nor does the school diagnose or evaluate students for learning differences or special needs.

XVII. PARENT COMMUNICATION & VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Children’s House welcomes families from all ethnic backgrounds. The primary language we communicate in is English and our secondary language is Spanish. If a family communicates more comfortably in another language, they should let the school know. CHMS will make every effort to incorporate that language and culture into school materials and make communications accessible in that language.

EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS

Parents/guardians should make sure the office has their most current email address on file. All-school updates and reminders will be sent via email.

SCHOOL NEWS

The newsletter comes out twice a month and includes upcoming events, reports by teachers about what has been happening in each classroom, and of course, wonderful photos of the children as they experience, explore, and develop bonds with each other and their teachers. Parents/guardians should make sure the office has your email address, and we invite you to share emails of grandparents and other family members who might enjoy receiving the newsletter. Also, visit and “like” the school’s Facebook page (Children's House Montessori School, Camden Maine) for news and photos of events.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is vital to a child's success at CHMS!

CONTACT THE OFFICE

[236-2911](tel:236-2911) or office@camdenmontessori.org

- For urgent communications
 - For updates re: late arrival, early pick up, program schedule changes, or Before- and After-Care
 - For setting up a meeting with your child's teacher; a note will be given to your child's teacher
- Note: To help support the teachers' focus on your child's classroom experience and respect their time, please do NOT copy teachers on the above topics if you email. Thank you!*

CONTACT YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

yellowdoor@camdenmontessori.org, reddoor@camdenmontessori.org,
bluedoor@camdenmontessori.org, orangedoor@camdenmontessori.org,
jadedoor@camdenmontessori.org

Teachers encourage questions and are generally available before- and after-school for a phone call or in-person meeting. Please reserve your teacher communication for classroom topics related to your child's learning, social emotional development, etc., including updates from home that could affect your child's day so we can best support them. Teachers check their email daily but are unable to respond to emails during school. *Teachers will acknowledge your communication within 24 hours during the week.* Note: teachers are generally available to return messages Monday-Thursday between 8:00-8:25 a.m. or 3:15-3:45 p.m. and on Fridays between 8:00-8:25 a.m. or 1:30-3:00 p.m.

Please respect these guidelines:

- Teachers are not available for in-depth conversations at drop off or pick up as they are concentrating on the students' needs. Teachers also do not want to speak about concerns in front of the children. Please refrain from bringing up sensitive topics at drop off or pick up.
- Please do not text teachers. Teachers are focused on the children during the day and on their own families and lives in the evening. If for some reason you have a teacher's personal cell number, please do not use it for school communications. Please use one of the other options offered above for communicating with your child's teacher. Thank you.

CLASSROOM VISITS

Parents/guardians are invited to visit the school. They may set up a time by calling the office or speaking with the teacher. This is a wonderful opportunity to see first-hand how a Montessori classroom works. During these observations, each classroom has a visitor's chair that the visitor may sit in to observe. *Out of respect for the child's work cycle and concentration, visitors are asked to sit quietly and watch the children work rather than engaging them in other play or activity.* Parents should also be aware of the teacher's need to be with the children during class time, and may set up a time with the teacher if they would like to discuss something you notice during your visit.

PARENT WORKSHOPS

Parent Workshops are held throughout the year to help parents better understand the Montessori philosophy and curriculum, learn more about what their children are doing in the classroom each day, and learn new parenting tips including bringing Montessori philosophy into the home.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Children's House hosts special gatherings and events throughout the year to celebrate our wonderful community. These may include All School Picnics, Parent Coffee Gatherings, the All School Peace Walk in honor of International Peace Day, Stone Soup Lunch, Holiday Gatherings, Concerts, Special Persons Night, Parent Teas, Cultural Studies Open House, and the Annual Auction. (All dependent on public health.)



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Parental involvement is vital to the sense of community at CHMS. During the year, there are many opportunities for parents to be involved in the classrooms and in all-school events.

- Classroom Parent: Each classroom asks to have 1 or 2 parents who would be a liaison between the teacher and the parents of that classroom. The Classroom Parent might be asked to contact other parents to help during a school event or welcome a new family to the classroom. Being a Classroom Parent is a huge help to each teacher and to the school!
- Moving Days: Parents are invited to help the teachers move their classroom materials between Oakland Park and Elm Street in the fall and spring, as well as help with Oakland Park swing set up and mud kitchens. Moving days are a hands-on way to pitch in— bring your children along and enjoy meeting other families!
- Fall & Spring Clean Up Days: These activities can include raking wood chips, weeding, pruning, or adding sand to the sandbox on the playground. They are always a fun way to help, along with getting to know other families in the school community.
- The Annual Auction & Other Fundraisers: These events are organized largely by parent volunteers and include many opportunities, from finding donations and services within our community (or donating your own!) to organizing the school's CLYNK program at Hannaford.
- The Parent Library is found in the office. It includes a collection of books and magazines about Montessori education, parenting, and other topics of interest to parents. Parents are welcome and encouraged to borrow these resources.

XVIII. OTHER POLICIES

PHOTO RELEASE

All parents/guardians receive a Photo Release form for each child to complete and sign. CHMS may wish to use photographs and videos of students on the school's website, weekly e-newsletter, Facebook page, local news media (such as Village Soup or Camden Herald) and in educational publications and marketing materials (both internet and print). Any such photographs would highlight the student(s) either

demonstrating learning techniques or participating in approved school activities. Please note: It is CHMS policy that children are not identified by name. The exception is local news media (Village Soup/Courier Publications) which requires names in photos of small groups of up to 4 students. Larger group photos will be unidentified.

ACCEPTABLE INTERNET USE POLICY (ELEMENTARY)

Use of the school's Internet is in support of education, research, and the curricular objectives of CHMS. A copy of the Acceptable Internet Use Policy is available in the office.

STATEMENT OF USE

This Parent Handbook is provided as a service and a guide to the CHMS Community and does not create or confer any binding contractual terms or obligation. CHMS reserves the right to unilaterally change, replace and/or delete any provision contained in this handbook.

XIX. GOVERNANCE

The Children's House Board of Directors is responsible for the long-term vision and stewardship of the school, in alignment with the school's mission and Montessori principles. The Board has four major responsibilities:

- Ensuring the fiscal health of the school by overseeing the budget and annual tuition level development
- Providing leadership in fundraising activities and representing the school as ambassadors in the community and at school functions
- Developing strategic plans and policies which guide the school's future direction
- Hiring the Head of School and evaluating his/her/their management of day-to-day operations

All officers of the Board, including the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer, are elected by the Board at its annual public meeting in January. Board members serve the Board for a term of three years.

Individual board members do not represent any one constituency of the community. The Board of Directors is expected to consider all sides of issues facing the school and make the most informed decision from this broad perspective.

(In revising this Parent Handbook over the years, we'd like to thank Cornerspring Montessori, Damariscotta Montessori, Kingsley Montessori School, Aiden Montessori School, and the American Montessori Institute.)

APPENDIX A



Children's House Montessori School 2023-2024 Calendar

AUGUST

Thursday 8/31 **Parents' Back-to-School Night via ZOOM**
7:00-7:30 pm
(Attendance Required/Adults only)

SEPTEMBER

Monday 9/4 **NO SCHOOL** – Labor Day holiday

Tuesday 9/5 **Open Classroom visits at Oakland Park**
10:15-11:00 *Primary Group A*
Toddler Group 1
11:15-12:00 *Primary Group B*
Toddler Group 2
12:00-1:00 *Elementary*

Back-to-School Picnic at Oakland Park
5:00-7:00 pm

Wednesday 9/6 **Phase In – Day I**
8:30-12:00 *Primary Group A & Elementary*
8:30-10:00 *Toddler Group 1*
10:30-12:00 *Toddler Group 2*

Thursday 9/7 Elementary has regular schedule, 8:30-3:00
Phase In – Day II for Primary & Toddler
8:30-10:00 *Toddler Group 1*
10:30-12:00 *Toddler Group 2*
8:30-12:00 *Primary Group B*

Friday 9/8 Elementary has regular Fri. schedule, 8:30-1:30
Friday Toddlers & Primary only (dismiss at 12)

Monday 9/11 **Regularly Scheduled Classes begin**
Includes all am & pm programs

Friday 9/22 **Peace Walk (all school)**, 11:00-12:00

OCTOBER

Tuesday 10/3 **School Photos** with Amy Wilton

Thursday 10/5 **School Photos** with Amy Wilton

Friday 10/6 **NO SCHOOL** – Professional Development

Monday 10/9 **NO SCHOOL** – Indigenous Peoples' Day

Friday 10/20 **NO SCHOOL** – Moving Day: OP to Elm St

Monday 10/23 **NO SCHOOL** – Moving Day: OP to Elm St

Tuesday 10/24 **PARENT WORKSHOP**

Tuesday 10/31 **Pajama Day/ Mystery History Day**

NOVEMBER

Friday 11/10 **NO SCHOOL** – Veterans' Day (observed)

Monday 11/13 **NO SCHOOL** – Parent Conferences all day

Friday 11/17 **Parent Teacher Conferences** in PM

Tuesday 11/21 **Stone Soup (all school)**, 11:45-12:00
Noon Dismissal all students

Wed-Fr, 11/22-11/24 **NO SCHOOL** - Thanksgiving Vacation

DECEMBER

Wednesday 12/6 **Special Person's Events**
4:00-5:40 pm

Friday 12/15 **Cocoa & Carols (all school)**, 11:45-12:00
Noon Dismissal all students

12/18-1/1 **NO SCHOOL** - Holiday Break

JANUARY

Tuesday 1/2 **School Resumes**

Monday 1/15 **NO SCHOOL** - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Wednesday 1/17 **PARENT WORKSHOP**

Fridays 1/19 & 1/26 **Elementary P/T Conferences** in PM

FEBRUARY

Monday 2/12 **Looking Ahead, Primary & K**
3:15-4:15 pm

Tuesday 2/13 **Looking Ahead, Elementary**
3:15-4:15 pm

Friday 2/16 **Noon Dismissal all students**

2/19-2/23 **NO SCHOOL** - Winter Vacation

Thursday 2/29 **Special Person's Events**
4:00-5:40 pm

MARCH

Friday 3/8 **NO SCHOOL** – Professional Development

Wednesday 3/20 **PARENT WORKSHOP**

Monday 3/25 **NO SCHOOL** – Parent Conferences all day

Friday 3/29 **Parent Teacher Conferences** in PM

APRIL

Friday 4/12 **Noon Dismissal all students**

4/15-4/19 **NO SCHOOL** - Spring Vacation

MAY

Friday 5/3 **NO SCHOOL** – Moving Day: Elm to OP

Monday 5/6 **First day at Oakland Park**

Thursday 5/16 **Jade Door Spring Picnic**

Friday 5/17 **Yellow Door & Red Door Spring Picnics**

Thursday 5/23 **Blue Door & Orange Door Spring Picnics**

5/30 & 5/31 **Elementary P/T Conferences** in PM

Monday 5/27 **NO SCHOOL** - Memorial Day

JUNE

Friday 6/7 **Last Day of School at Oakland Park**
Family Celebration (all school), 11:00-12:00
Noon Dismissal all students

Calendar dates are subject to change. Check online for updates:
www.camdenmontessori.org/calendar

APPENDIX B
CHILDREN'S HOUSE
MONTESSORI
SCHOOL

Resources for Families & Children, 2023-2024

Child Development Services

Gail D. Page, LCSW
Director, Midcoast Child Development Services
Free screening for 0-5 years; services
91 Camden Street, Suite 108
Rockland, ME 04841
www.maine.gov/doe/learning/cds
207-594-1924

Five Towns CSD

Karen Gorris-Hicock
Assistant Director, Student Special Services
Free screening for 6 years and up
22 Knowlton Street
Camden, ME 04843
karen.gorris-hicock@fivetowns.net
207-236-7812

Pen Bay Pediatrics

PT, OT, Speech, Hearing & Counseling
15 Anchor Drive, Suite 104
Rockport, ME 04856
207-301-6380

Two Bees Speech

Natalia Guaqueta-Tyler, M.A., CCC-SLP
P.O. Box 0023
West Rockport, ME 04865
twobeesslp@gmail.com
www.twobeesspeech.com/
207-619-2925

Turning Point Pediatric Therapy Network

Ashley Juat, MOT, OTR/L/Clinic Owner
25 Stone Street, Suite 101
August, ME 04330
info@turningpointot.com
www.turningpointot.com/
207-582-8400

Camden Whole Health

Alicia Snow, APRN-FNP
91 Elm Street
Camden, ME 04843
aliciasnow@rocketmail.com
www.camdenwholehealth.com
207-322-8726

Courtney Hale, PhD, ABB

Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychologist
225 Commercial Street, Suite 203
Portland, ME 04101
chale@courtneyhale.com
www.courtneyhale.com
207-450-7898

Vick Willey, PhD, Psychologist

71 Elm St, Ste 1
Camden, ME 04843
207-230-1177

Ed O'Brien, LCSW, MSW

62 Bayview Street
Camden, ME 04843
207-706-4025

David Kelly, LCPC, art therapist

17 Masonic Street
Rockland, ME 04841
207-466-6327

Kella River, LCSW, LADC, MT

91 Camden Street, Suite 213
Rockland, ME 04841
207-691-1500

Beverly Slade

Coaching for adults and couples
207-236-3366

APPENDIX C



2023-2024 Tuition & Fee Schedule

TODDLER

	Tuition	TRIF
Toddler Morning, 8:30-12		
5-day (M-F)	\$ 7,681	\$253
3-day (M-W)	\$ 5,548	\$183
2-day (Th-F)	\$ 3,840	\$127
Toddler Extended Day, 12-3		
4-day (M-Th)	\$ 3,073	\$101
3-day (M-W)	\$ 2,420	\$80

PRIMARY

	Tuition	TRIF
Primary Morning, 8:30-12		
5-day	\$ 7,565	\$250
4-day	\$ 6,609	\$218
3-day	\$ 5,735	\$189
Primary Extended Day, 12-3		
4-day	\$ 3,043	\$100
3-day	\$ 2,748	\$91
2-day	\$ 1,988	\$66

KINDERGARTEN

	Tuition	TRIF
Kindergarten, M-Th, 8:30-3		
Fri, 8:30-12	\$ 10,584	\$349

ELEMENTARY

	Tuition	TRIF
Elementary, M-Th, 8:30-3		
Fri, 8:30-1:30	\$ 11,111	\$367

Activity & Materials Fee

Toddler	\$ 75
Primary Kindergarten	\$ 125
Elementary	\$ 225

Late Pick Up Fee

\$20 for every 10 minutes after the pick up time

BEFORECARE

Ages 3+

Monday-Friday	8-8:30
5-mornings	\$ 647
4-mornings	\$ 534
3-mornings	\$ 411
2-mornings	\$ 287
Drop-in fee	\$15

AFTERCARE

Ages 3+

Monday-Thursday	3-4p	3-5p
4-afternoons	\$ 1,069	\$ 2,030
3-afternoons	\$ 821	\$ 1,560
2-afternoons	\$ 573	\$ 1,089
Drop-in fee	\$15	\$25

Friday	12-1:30	1:30-3	12-3
Full yr	\$ 348	\$ 348	\$680
Drop-in	\$15	\$15	\$30

Tuition Assistance

Financial aid is available. Please apply through the Grant & Aid portal in your FACTS Tuition account.

Multi-Child Enrollment Discount

Families who enroll two or more children during the same school year will pay full tuition for the oldest child enrolled, and each additional child will receive a 10% discount.

Enrollment Fee

\$650 per child. Includes the Tuition Refund Insurance Fee plus a deposit towards your child's annual tuition. The Fee is non-refundable after August 1, 2023.

Tuition Refund Insurance Fee (TRIF)

The Tuition Refund Plan is required for all tuition accounts not paid in full by August 1, 2023 and recommended for all. Fee is 3.3% of annual tuition.

See next page for 2023-2024 Financial Policies.

2023-2024 Financial Policies

In order to deliver the best possible program to your child, it is important that CHMS receives tuition payments in a timely manner. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

1. **Children's House welcomes all families. Tuition assistance is available.** You may apply through the Grant & Aid portal in your FACTS Tuition account.
2. **Families who enroll two or more children** during the same school year will pay full tuition for the oldest child enrolled, and each additional child will receive a 10% discount.
3. **The Enrollment Fee is \$650 per child for all students.** It includes the Tuition Refund Insurance Fee plus a deposit towards your child's annual tuition. The Enrollment Fee is due at the time you complete FACTS Enrollment. The Fee is non-refundable after August 1, 2023.
4. **All families are required to create a FACTS Tuition account for online, auto-payment of tuition.**

FACTS offers four Payment Plans to choose from:

- a. Pay in Full: August
- b. Monthly Payments: August through March. *Note: If a monthly plan begins after August, tuition will be billed in equal monthly payments as determined by the start date of the plan.*
- c. Semi-Annual Payments: August and December
- d. Quarterly Payments: August, October, January, and March

Note: FACTS charges a nonrefundable enrollment fee, either \$25 or \$55, depending on the plan.

All tuition payments are due on the 1st or 15th of the month, regardless of the Payment Plan.

5. **Once you complete FACTS Tuition, CHMS will set up your 2023-2024 Service Agreement in your FACTS account.** Your Enrollment Fee will be credited towards charges in this Agreement.
6. **The overhead expenses of CHMS do not diminish with the departure of students during the year. All families are unconditionally obligated to pay tuition for the full academic year.** No portion of said tuition, paid or outstanding, will be refunded or canceled even in the event of absence, withdrawal, or dismissal, after August 1, 2023, except as specified in the Tuition Refund Plan.
7. **In view of this unconditional obligation, the Tuition Refund Plan is required for all Payment Plans not paid in full by August 1, 2023 and strongly recommended for all.** The Tuition Refund Insurance Fee is 3.3% of annual tuition and does not cover the full amount of the tuition which may be owed to the school in cases of withdrawal. Any amount not covered is the responsibility of the party or parties specified in the Service Agreement. *The Tuition Refund Plan coverage is: 60% of your child's unused tuition will be refunded if you withdraw your child for medical or non-medical reasons, or 70% of your unused tuition will be refunded if CHMS dismisses your child for any reason. This may result in a refund or substantially reduced balance due, depending on your family's payment plan.*
8. **Non-Transferability of Tuition & Fees** – Annual tuition fees are not transferable to another child's tuition, registration fees, tuition refund insurance, or other fees.
9. **Accounts in Arrears** – Delinquent payees may be asked to withdraw a child from CHMS during the school year. A student's enrollment will not be accepted from a parent or guardian whose payments of tuition and fees are in arrears from the previous school year.
10. **Release of Records** – The school will release a student's records only if and when the student's account is paid in full.