

Cardinal Montessori School

Parent Handbook

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“The secret of good teaching is to regard the child’s intelligence as a fertile field in which the seeds of everything may be sown, to grow under the heat of flaming imagination.”

Dr. Maria Montessori

Position Statement

Our philosophy begins with a belief that a child comes to us with unlimited potential and must be treated with respect and dignity as the adult they are to become. The most important qualities a child develops in our classes are self-confidence, self-esteem, intelligence, self-discipline, thinking skills, and a love of learning. Each child is taught that he/she is capable of making decisions that influence him/her and that he/she is responsible for the decisions made.

Accreditation

American Montessori Society
“Affiliated Montessori School”

National Private Schools Accreditation Alliance
“Certificate of Accreditation”

Letter from the Director

July, 2007

Dear School Families:

Cardinal Montessori School (CMS) is an active community of educators and families, agreeing with Dr. Maria Montessori that each generation of children has the possibility to transform the world it inherits.

CMS cultivates and honors a student's innate love of learning as the student prepares for a life of purpose, integrity, and academic accomplishment.

This booklet has been made available so that parents will be informed of the policies, procedures and practices at CMS. Please keep it convenient so that you will be able to readily refer to it from time to time throughout the 2007-2008 school year.

Also, starting this year, the school's handbook will be on Cardinal Montessori's web site at cardinalmontessori.com. This is a very important tool to help your family navigate through the school year! If you have any other questions regarding the school, please feel free to contact us through our web-site, telephone, or e-mail.

Lastly, CMS admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and athletic and other school-administered programs.



Erick V. Gallegos
Director

HOURS OF OPERATION

Extended Day Care (before classes):

Day care opens each morning at 6:00 a.m. and stays open until class begins at 8:30 a.m.

Class Hours:

- Primary Students (under 5 years):
Five days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
- Primary Students (over 5 years):
Five days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (except Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.)
- Elementary Students (1st - 6th grades):
Five days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (except Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.)

Extended Day Care Hours (after classes):

- Day care re-opens at 11:45 a.m. for students under 5 years of age
- Day care re-opens at 3:30 p.m. for students over 5 years of age
- Day care closes at 6:30 p.m.
- Parents picking up students at 6:30 p.m. must leave the school by 6:35 p.m. to avoid late fees (see: Early Drop-Offs and Late-Evening Pickups).

TUITION PAYMENTS

NOTE: ALL STUDENTS ARE CONSIDERED ENROLLED FOR THE ENTIRE SCHOOL YEAR. NO DEDUCTION IN TUITION OR FEES CAN BE MADE FOR ABSENCES, WITHDRAWALS, OR VACATIONS. THE MATERIAL FEE IS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH SEMESTER.

The registration fee and deposit are due with the CMS application. No student is accepted into CMS without the registration and deposit fees paid in full. The registration fee is a non-refundable payment.

The Cardinal Montessori School participates in the SMART Tuition Payment Plan. School tuition payments are mailed directly to SMART. All tuition payments are made in advance and must be paid on the due date listed on the coupon book.

School tuition is based on a 180 day school year and payable by semester or in ten (10) monthly payments.

Extended day care payments are submitted to parents (communication folder) each month and are due within ten days of receipt.

The first tuition payment is due August, or on enrollment if enrolled after August 20th. There will be an automatic late fee charged by SMART for payments received after the due date. To avoid an automatic late fee, please ensure that your monthly school payment is sent to SMART with sufficient time to be received and deposited by SMART.

If a school payment is forty-five (45) days overdue, the student will be automatically withdrawn from the program unless special payment arrangements have been made in writing with the school's director.

Signatures on the CMS Tuition Contract is a "promissory note" for tuition payments for the entire school year. All payments must be made in their entirety; even if parent or student leaves the country, goes on vacation for an extended period of time, or withdraws from the school.

Tuition for students entering the school later in the year will be based on the daily rate multiplied by the number of days remaining in the school year.

If a student is registered in the program and must withdraw due to potty training issues, regular tuition payments must be made in order to keep the child's space in school.

CMS is licensed by the state of Virginia, and state regulations require us to employ staff based on the total number of students enrolled at the beginning of the school year.

WITHDRAWALS FROM SCHOOL

During the school year, if CMS determines that it is in the best interest of the student and the school to terminate a student's enrollment immediately, then the school will base the tuition payment on the daily rate and charge the student a daily rate to the date of dismissal.

If a situation arises regarding withdrawal that warrants a conference between teacher and parents, the teacher will notify the parents and a conference time will be set.

Moreover, if, during the school year, Cardinal Montessori School determines that a student or parent(s) presents a distraction, threat to other students, parents, faculty, or themselves, the school director reserves the right to ask that they be removed from the program immediately.

Parents will be responsible for tuition payments through the end of the month, if a student is requested to be withdrawn for behaviors not conducive for a school environment.

ADMISSION

***NOTE: SCHOOLS THAT DO NOT HAVE A COPY OF STUDENT'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE WITHIN ELEVEN DAYS OF THE START OF SCHOOL ARE REQUIRED BY VIRGINIA STATE LAW TO REPORT THE STUDENT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF VIRGINIA SOCIAL SERVICES.**

The following forms must be completed prior to admittance:

- A CMS Application form with a one-time non-refundable \$250.00 registration fee
- A \$150.00 Deposit that will be applied to the first month's tuition payment
- CMS Extended Day Care Application form
- CMS Emergency Medical form
- CMS Immunization and Medical form signed by a physician
- Birth Certificate-Required by the State of Virginia*
- CMS Tuition Contract – signed
- The SMART agreement – *signed*

It is very important that the information provided on the school application, by the parents or guardians, be legible and current. This means that any forms that are filled out should be printed or written clearly and legibly.

If you change home or work addresses or phone numbers the school must be notified in writing of the new information as soon as possible. The state of Virginia regulates that the school must have current information for each child at all times during the school year.

Montessori is an individual program. New students may be phased into the classroom at any time during the school year, if space is available.

There is a four week trial period for each newly enrolled student at the school. This allows time to evaluate the student's readiness and maturity for school. It is our desire that your child's school experience be a positive one.

Therefore, the school reserves the right to request withdrawal of any student who is found by the staff to be not yet ready for school (Note: All students must be toilet trained).

ENTRANCE TO SCHOOL

The entrance to and exit from the school will be through the front door only. Parents who park at the church parking lot, adjacent to the school, and use the side-gate entrance to enter and exit the school must use the front door entrance.

Parents or students will not enter the building through the rear parking area, except for school staff. Parents who do not have security access and all visitors must ring the front door bell for entry into the building.

Security pass numbers are not to be shared with anyone including other parents. Each family has their own separate security code. No parent or guest may park in the faculty parking area located in the back of the school and enter through the school's back door or gate.

CLOSING THE GATE AND FRONT DOOR

The outside gates must be closed each time a parent or adult enters or exits through the gate. The security and safety of our students depends on closing the gate each and every time it is used. The front door must also be closed and secured.

If a parent sees a student while the parents are lagging behind, talking or tied up with another adult, please do not open the gate or front door. Please open the gate or front door for your children only.

The secondary front gate is for additional security and safety, but can only augment security and safety if closed consistently. Security codes are not to be shared with other parents or anyone else.

Please do not turn off the front door alarm. Historically, we have had parents or students that do not like the sound of the alarm and shut down the alarm at the switch.

Remember, the alarm is one security component that the school has incorporated to provide security for our students. Parents who shut down the alarm will run a risk of compromising the school security and may endanger students.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Students must be signed in by an adult (18 years or older). Parents are not allowed to just drop their child off near the front gate or parking area and drive away. Children must be escorted into the building and signed in by the adult.

All students must arrive in his/her classroom by 8:30 a.m.. Again, parents must "sign" their child in and out every day with their initials.

If a student is not signed out during the school day, then a day-care expense will be charged to the parent with a 6:30 p.m. pickup time. No student will be dismissed to anyone other than a parent or person designated on the child's application or without written parental authorization.

The staff reserves the right to request personal identification. Please provide the office or staff with written authorization if another person is to pick up your child.

Important: To expedite arrivals and dismissals for students each day there is a twenty-five minute window before and after classes each day. Parents can drop students off after 8:05 a.m. or pick students up prior to 3:55 p.m. without incurring a day-care expense.*

Students who arrive prior to 8:05 a.m. or are picked up after 3:55 p.m. will be charged a day care expense from the time of their arrival to dismissal by a parent sign out. It is important to sign students in and out.

Students who stay for after school activities (piano, violin, Girl Scouts, etc.) are considered at school and will be charged for the entire time spent after school, unless their parent is physically in the building for the entire activity time.

***NOTE: THIS PROCEDURE IS TO HELP ALLEVIATE PARKING CONGESTION DURING PEAK ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL TIMES AND NOT TO BE MISUSED AS FREE DAY CARE. NOTE: THIS TWENTY-FIVE MINUTE WINDOW DOES NOT APPLY TO THE 11:30 AM PICKUP. STUDENTS WHO STAY AFTER 11:30 FOR LUNCH AND PLAY WILL BE CHARGED EXTENDED DAY CARE STARTING AT 11:30 AM.**

EARLY DROP-OFFS AND LATE-EVENING PICK-UPS

Our school facility opens at 6:00 a.m. and closes promptly at 6:30 p.m. daily. Students at the school prior to the open and closing times will be charged an early or late fee of \$2.00 per minute.

Please remember that prior to 6:00 a.m., the school facility may be occupied with staff, administrators, or cleaning personnel, but that does not mean the school is adequately staffed to accept students prior to 6:00 a.m. or after 6:30 p.m.

Parents who pick their children at 6:30 p.m. or later, must leave the building by 6:35 p.m. to avoid a late pick-up charge. There have been several times that parents will linger in the school hallways or classrooms after the school is officially closed. Parents who need to talk after 6:30 p.m. should have their conversation outside the school building. The late-time fee stops when the student and parent leave the building.

TARDINESS

This is very important and we frequently have problems with students and parents who are consistently late for school. Please remember that arriving late to school is very disruptive to all of the student, teacher(s) and the class in session. All students, no matter what age, must be at school and on time every school day (prior to 8:30 a.m.).

There is no flex-time or late-time at the school! Parents who are chronically late or routinely pick up their child early from school will be asked to reevaluate their child's educational goals with the school's director. If Cardinal Montessori School determines that it is in the best interest of the student and the school to terminate a student's enrollment, the school administrator reserves the right to ask the parent to remove the student from the program.

Students arriving late to school must be escorted to their classroom door by an adult. No student will be dropped off at the gate or parking lot and enter the building alone without a parent.

The adult is responsible to make sure the master teacher acknowledges the students late arrival and presence in the classroom. Please do not linger outside the hallway or around the classroom door after dropping off your child.

PARENT'S HANGING OUT

Please remember that between 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., any parent outside the classroom door will interrupt the morning session and other children's school day. Parent conversations by the door, near the office, or windows distract the children and teacher in class. If you must "hang-out," please locate the congregation at the end of the hallway near Mr. G's room.

NAP/SLEEP TIME

Nap/sleep guidelines:

Students less than four years:

- Nap 1:00pm to 3:00pm (at least thirty (30) minutes quiet time)

Students greater than three, but less than five years:

- Nap is option-supervised play 1:00pm to 3:00pm

Students that are five years or older:

- No nap

ABSENCES AND ATTENDANCE

Parents are to notify the school when a student will be absent for more than three consecutive school days. Any communicable diseases must be reported to the school immediately.

All students are expected to attend school on a regular full-time basis (5 days a week). Regular attendance is necessary for maximum student achievement in school. In addition, punctuality and dependability in meeting assigned responsibilities are personal behavior habits valued in our society.

All students who are five and older are expected to remain for the entire school day unless excused for illness or medical appointments. Absences and tardiness are recorded and placed in a student's academic record.

Generally, Prince William County and surrounding counties have an absent-retention rule that is strictly enforced. Thus, to help students develop desirable behavior patterns, as well as maximize their classroom learning, CMS requires that students be punctual everyday.

PARENTAL OBSERVATION

The Cardinal Montessori School has a liberal open-door policy on parental visits. However, we request that you call the office to schedule extended class observations or visitations. Parents should not abuse the open-door policy, by consistently spending the day or part of the day at the school, lingering in the class, bathrooms, hallway, or playground.

Parents who linger outside in the hallway or want to be with their child in the classroom may interrupt the classroom and other children's school day.

It is important to note that parent visitation rights with their children, set by the legal courts, are not meant to, and usually do not extend into the student's classroom or school day.

Parents are invited and encouraged to observe the class on our annual celebrations of "Mother's Day" and "Father's Day." Parents who repeatedly abuse the school's open-door policy will be asked to, in the best interest of the student and the school, terminate the student's enrollment.

The school administrator reserves the right to ask the parent to remove the student from the program if the open-door policy is abused.

Parents who observe a class must understand that children often do not behave in the same way when parents are present. Some may become very shy, while others may want to show everything they can do. In order to get the best picture of the class, and to be less disruptive, we ask that you sit in the chair provided and interact with the students as little as possible.

OPEN COMMUNICATION

In order to have open communication between the parents and staff, parents must bring concerns, questions or general observations to the attention of the staff. If you do not bring your concerns to the attention of the teachers or school director, we cannot address and rectify issues.

Parents may access the school through our web-site, e-mail, written note, or by phone. The school director will make himself available to parents before, during, and after school.

Please do not call the school and ask to speak to the teacher or other staff members during class hours. Parents who need immediate attention or have questions, may always ask for Mr. G and he will be available at all times during the school day.

COMMUNICATIONS FOLDERS

During the school year, the faculty and staff will communicate to the parents concerning upcoming events for their child using a "Communication Folder." *The "Communication Folders" are outside each classroom door and should be checked each day by the parent(s).*

Teachers also use the "Communication Folder" to allow parents to communicate to them. These communication folders are a tool and a convenience for the parents and teachers.

The folders may also contain personal and/or confidential information; *therefore, all parents need to honor and respect other families' confidentiality. All contents should be checked and removed from the folders daily.*

The folders are for school use only (the exception to this is for birthday party invitations).

Parents using the communication folders for party invitations must include all children in the class. Historically, it is difficult for the teacher or director to explain to a child or parent why the child was not invited to a party.

Please be considerate to all students and parents.

COMMUNICATION WHITE BOARD

The white "Communication Board" located near the sign-in desk allows the school to remind parents of upcoming events. The board will have two or three upcoming events posted and will be updated periodically with new information.

The web page will also have a calendar of events (www.CardinalMontessori.com). Any parent who would like to post a note on the board must get permission from the director. Please print notes with a "dry-erase" marker only.

NEWSLETTER

During the school year, Cardinal Montessori provides a monthly newsletter. The newsletter updates parents on upcoming events, new or changed school policies, and/or special interest news. Newsletters will be placed in student's communication folders.

IMPORTANT EVENTS

Teachers should be made aware of any important events in your child's life, such as births, deaths, divorce, serious illness of a parent or sibling, extended visits from relatives, absence of a household member, impending surgery, etc.

Many events like these may trigger unusual behavior in a child and keeping the teacher informed allows him/her to deal with the child in an informed manner if problems arise. All such information will be kept in strict confidence.

PARENT CONFERENCES

All parents should attend Parent/Teacher conferences. Parent conferences are scheduled in October, February and May. A list of available dates and times for your conference will be posted outside each classroom or you may choose a reasonable time and date suitable for your schedule and agreeable with the teacher.

PARENT MEETINGS

During the school year, parents will be invited to attend several meetings. These meetings may be morning or evening presentations to keep you up-to-date on what is going on in the classroom and school. We ask that you take an active interest in your child's education by attending meetings and learning more about the students' day.

PARENTS CALLING STUDENTS AT SCHOOL

Parents are strongly encouraged, unless there is a true emergency, not to call their child during the school day to "chat" with them. Parents calling students during the school day are disruptive to the classroom and can hinder students' learning. Students are not allowed to carry mobile phones or beepers at school.

PARENTS CALLING TEACHERS

Situations may arise when parents request to talk with teachers during the school day concerning their child. Unfortunately, it is difficult to pull teachers out of the class during instruction time for any period of time.

If you desire to talk to your child's teacher during the school day, please call and leave a message with the school secretary. The teacher will return your call during his/her first available break.

If you have an emergency situation and/or the teacher does not return your call within the day, please call to notify the school director.

The director will always be available to parents who need to talk concerning their child and/or the school.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Each parent is a vital part of the school organization as a whole. If you have time to volunteer or offer a service to the school, please let us know. Available opportunities include organizing: book fairs, Adopt A Highway, Safeway and Giant Programs for Schools, listening to readers, etc.

Parents who have talent, careers, or hobbies that they think would be interesting to the children are encouraged to make arrangements with the teacher(s) to set up a time to share this information with the children. Parents are also encouraged to share anything they may have to aid in studies of different cultures and topics.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

All extracurricular activities (Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Music, Martial Arts) will begin at 4:00 p.m. or thirty minutes after school.

Participants are not to be in the classroom without an adult supervisor.

Groups planning outside activities, off school grounds, must have permission slips to leave school grounds.

SCHOOL DIRECTORY

Cardinal Montessori issues a school directory. Each family will have the opportunity to decline being listed in the directory before it is printed. The purpose of the directory is to facilitate friendships, car pool arrangements, play dates among the children, birthday parties, and other activities.

Please remember that the use of the directory for business or other purposes is inappropriate. The school will also set up an e-mail directory to send out broadcast messages over the internet. Please ensure that your e-mail is provided to the front office.

THINGS FROM HOME AND SCHOOL

Toys, coloring books, comics, etc. are not permitted at school. If your child has something special to share with the class (e.g., shells, rock collection, special books, flowers, etc.) please send a note to the teacher asking for an appropriate day to share the item.

Occasionally a child may bring home small items from the classroom, such as a Pink Tower cube, beads, cards, etc. Please check your child's pockets and return any such items to the classroom, explaining to the student that these things are for the class to use and keep in the classroom. These little pieces are sometimes extremely difficult and costly to replace.

Primary students may have books and reading assignments. Books should be carried in a plastic bag in order to protect them from outside conditions. The school provides the initial plastic bag; if a replacement bag is necessary, it is the responsibility of the parent/student to replace the book bag.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

Students are required to wear the school uniform every day with tennis shoes. Any clothing that interferes with or disrupts the educational environment is unacceptable.

Students not complying with this code will be asked to cover the non-complying clothing, change clothes, or leave school for the day.

The school uniform for the boys includes: a red or white collared polo shirt, navy blue pants or shorts, a "cardinal red" buttoned sweater, and tennis shoes. Tee-collared shirts may be worn only if the CMS logo is printed on the tee-shirt worn by the student. All shirts or blouses must be tucked into pants, jumpers, or skirts at all times during school hours. Female socks, stockings, etc. must be a solid school color (red, white, or blue) and not netted.

The school uniform for the girls includes: red/blue plaid jumper, a white collared blouse or a red or white collared polo shirt, navy blue pants or shorts, a "cardinal red" buttoned sweater and tennis shoes. All students may wear red sweatshirts and red collared polo shirts except on picture day. Blouses or shirts must be tucked into jumper, skirt, pants, etc. during the school day.

Female students in the elementary classes (age: 6-12 years) must wear shorts under their school jumper. All elementary students must wear tennis shoes everyday to school. Female students under five or in a primary class have an option of wearing shorts under their school jumper.

School Uniforms can be purchased at the following location:

Robcyns Uniforms
Bradlee Shopping Center
3660 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22302
(703) 379-7800

CLOTHING

Clothing should fit, be neat and clean, and conform to standards of safety, good taste, and decency. Clothing that exposes private parts, the midriff, or undergarments, or that is otherwise sexually provocative, is prohibited. Examples of prohibited clothing include, but are not limited to: sagging or low-cut pants, low-cut necklines, tube tops, halter tops, backless blouses or blouses with only ties in the back, clothing constructed of see-through materials, and head coverings unless required for religious or medical purposes. All shirts or blouses must be tucked into pants, jumpers, or skirts at all times during school hours.

All secondary clothing (sweaters, coats, boots, mittens, hats, etc.) should be clearly marked with the student's first and last name. It is very time consuming to sort and allocate outerwear when student's name has been omitted from garments. Note: The school and faculty are not responsible for missing clothing.

Furthermore, any jewelry that can be easily removed or is distracting to other students or staff must not be worn at school.

Students not complying with this code will be asked to cover the non-complying clothing, change clothes, or leave school for the day.

All students, boys and girls, are required to wear "tennis shoes" to school. Sandals, patent-leather or heeled shoes, mukluks, slippers, etc. are not to be worn to school.

Shoes with higher heels than normal and open footwear such as sandals, do not give the student enough protection in the classroom or the playground.

When considering coats, boots, etc., please provide clothes that the student can get into and out of easily without assistance. We are trying to teach the student independence in these areas.

During the winter months, students may only have one jacket or coat at school. Historically, parents have kept several reserve coats at the school. These reserved coats take additional hallway space and hooks and are not necessary.

EXTRA CLOTHING AND LINEN

Parents should to send extra clothing for their child(ren) (underwear, socks, shirt, pants, etc.). Younger students may need two sets of clothes and more than three pair of undergarments. Be sure that these items are clearly marked with the student's name.

Students who do not have extra underwear will be given newly purchased underwear to wear and the parents will be charged a fee for the new underwear.

Underwear issued to a child should not be returned to the school for use with other children. The school has extra used and donated clothing for students that do not have extra clothing to wear to replace soiled garments.

Be sure to exchange winter clothes for summer clothes as the weather changes. Bed linen must be taken home every Friday and cleaned. Students who do not have clean linen on Monday will be issued clean linen and the parents will be charged a daily linen fee.

Soiled bed linen must be taken home that night, cleaned, and returned the next day with the student.

FATHER'S, MOTHER'S, AND GRANDPARENT'S DAY

Each year we have Father's, Mother's, and Senior Citizen Day (Grandparent's day) at CMS. The purpose of these special events is to build a good family memory for the child. Typically, there is no planned school agenda for our special visitors except to enjoy the time with your child or grandchild and "go with the flow" of the classroom.

Most fathers, mothers and grandparents spend a part of the school day with their child or grandchild. Other visitors come for lunch and recess with their little host or hostess.

EMERGENCY CARE AND ACCIDENTS

In the event of an accident or sudden onset of illness, the school will not hesitate to seek proper care for a student. The student's emergency instructions on file at the school are consulted immediately and the parents are called. The school generally expects, at most, a two hour time frame depending on the time of day, weather conditions, and traffic, but, more than three to five hours after a call is unacceptable.

If necessary, the student will be transported to the designated medical facility. The parental consent statement will accompany the child so that treatment can be given immediately in the absence of the parent. It is imperative that you keep the emergency contact information up-to-date with names and addresses of two (2) persons, other than the parents/guardians, to be contacted in case of an emergency, as required by law.

In case of a minor accident, your child will be treated at school and an accident report completed. School accident reports must be signed by parents and kept on file in the student's school record.

EMERGENCIES AND BUILDING EVACUATION

In case of an emergency or building evacuation, students will remain either on school property or adjacent church parking lot.

In inclement weather or if a complete area evacuation occurs, students may be moved to the fire station down the street until parents are reached and students can be picked up.

An emergency school roster will be on hand and phone calls to parents will be made in alphabetical order or by age of the students after evacuation site has been determined and students are safe.

In the event that there is a terrorist strike in the surrounding metro Washington area (a terrorist strike may include, but not necessarily include the following: the use of radioactive "dirty" bombs, chemical and biological weapons, etc...), the school's staff will move all students into the school's main hallway.

The school will shut down all heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, and close and secure all doors and windows. The purpose of the ventilation shut down is to hopefully create a moderate barrier that will limit chemical agents from flowing into the building.

During the winter months, if the heat and ventilation system is off, the building can get chilled quickly and warmth may be a factor. The combination of coats stored in the hallway and numerous little bodies will hopefully counter the frigid environment that we may encounter. Make sure your child comes with adequate cold weather clothing during the school year or at least during heightened security periods.

The bathroom entrances are in the hallway, so lavatory sanitation may not be a problem unless public water is terminated. The school will have a limited supply of bottled water and snack on hand. If the phones are active and operational, we will communicate to all parents via the internet and hold the main telephone line only for emergencies. Please be judicious with calls during an emergency.

Picking up children during a chemical/biological attack, may contaminate the whole school. To limit this interaction, the school will lock the front door and ask parents to come to the first classroom door (Ms. Coryell's first classroom).

There will be a two-way radio on the steps for parents to communicate with staff inside the building (if the telephone lines are down). We will release the student in the room and ask them to go out the side door. That room will be the designated isolation room. We request that you not come in the building, but let the student go through the room and out the door.

Lastly, while the school is limited in ways that it is able to defend against these aggressive acts, it may be reassuring to parents that the school will remain open until the last parent has picked up their child. Regrettably, the school may not always be able to guarantee state standards of student-teacher ratio, in extreme events, but we will remain open.

It is very important that the school emergency information (cell and work numbers, emergency pickup personnel, and any other data) be updated and accurate.

Also, it is advisable that each parent store or write the school's telephone number in your cell phone or wallet!

HEALTH CERTIFICATES

NOTE: ALL KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO HAVE A MEASLES BOOSTER BEFORE ENTERING SCHOOL.

In accordance with the Private School and Child Care Ordinance of Prince William County, each child must have (1) a physician's certificate of physical examination done no more than 12 months prior to enrollment, (2) a current record of immunization before the child can be admitted to school.

Certificates of physical examination must be in the student's record by the beginning of the school year; immunization records must be in the school office on or before the first day of school or your child will not be allowed to attend until the records are received.

If you object to a certificate of physical examination on religious grounds, you may submit a signed statement indicating your beliefs certifying that your child is in good health and free from contagious disease to the best of your knowledge.

MEDICATION DISBURSEMENT

NOTE: THE STATE OF VIRGINIA DEFINES MEDICATION TO INCLUDE ALL PRESCRIBED AND NON-PRESCRIBED MEDICINES TAKEN ORALLY OR APPLIED TO THE SKIN REQUIRES A MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION FORM (COUGH MEDICINES, HERB, VITAMINS, THROAT LOZENGES, CHAPSTICK, SUNSCREENS).

Prescribed medicines shall be kept in a central location within the schools, where they will remain clean, dry, and available to designated personnel. All medication shall be kept in a secure area preventing access by students and non-designated employees.

Office personnel, designated by the school's director, will administer medications to students. All medications shall be administered in the school office area. Parents shall develop a plan with the student or office administrator to ensure that the student goes to the office at the prescribed time. Medication can be given only within one half hour before or after the prescribed time. Medicine will not be administered before 9:00 a.m. or after 3:00 p.m.

Parents and guardians must transport medications to and from the school. If tablets are to be divided, the parent or guardian is responsible for dividing the tablets.

Medication must be in the original manufacture's container and box. Container and box must be carefully labeled with the student's full name and directions for administering. New authorization must be filed each week the child is on medication (seven day rule for medication). No out-dated medication will be administered. Over the counter medicine should be age appropriate. When needed, prescribed medication will be stored in a refrigerator in a clearly defined area away from food.

For students who are prone to have epileptic seizures and/or asthma attacks or other health conditions at school, teachers shall be made aware of appropriate procedures for handling these conditions and for calling 911.

When an emergency arises, school staff will implement appropriate emergency procedures. Any staff member shall contact Emergency Medical Services (911).

CMS staff members are trained to administer emergency procedures needed in life-threatening situations. Parents who wish to have medicine left at the school for extended periods (more than seven school days), must have the Long-Term Medical form completed and signed by the student's physician prior to leaving the medicine at the school. The state of Virginia prohibits the school from holding prescribed medicine for students or personnel without the written authorization from a physician.

PICKING UP ILL STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL

If a child is persistently vomiting, has acute and severe ear pain, is violently coughing, or has extreme nausea, he or she needs to be picked up as soon as possible.

While the school understands that parents are busy and leaving work can be an extreme hardship, it is important to understand that the school is not equipped to treat sick children for extended periods of time.

If your place of employment will not allow you to leave and attend to your sick child's needs, please update your school records to have the school call a relative or "backup person" to pick up your child.

The school generally expects, at most, a two hour time frame depending on the time of day, weather conditions, and traffic, but, more than three to five hours after a call is unacceptable. Moreover, the school should only make one call to the parent to pick up a sick child. Please do not ask the school staff to have your child lie down and keep you periodically updated on your child's vital signs and conditions via e-mail or cell phone.

CHRONICALLY ILL STUDENTS

Children, who are chronically sick and cannot participate in outdoor or indoor activities, are usually too sick to attend school.

Each year we have parents who expect their child to stay inside the building during the winter months and not play outside. Students who need to stay indoors for more than one day must have a doctor's note.

Remember that outdoor activity is important both physically and mentally and that children who stay inside for more than two days in a row because they are too sick to go outside, probably are too sick to attend school.

ILLNESS

NOTE: ANY SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF PURPOSEFUL OR NON-PURPOSEFUL CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT SHALL BE REPORTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH 63.1-258.3 OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA, REQUIRING "...ANY PERSON PROVIDING FULL OR PART-TIME CHILD CARE FOR PAY ON A REGULARLY PLANNED BASIS IS TO REPORT SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT."

For the protection of all students and staff, your child should be kept at home if he/she shows any of the following symptoms:

- An elevated temperature (over 100 F)
- Headache
- Upset stomach
- Swollen glands
- Flushed face due to fever
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Severe coughing
- Tearing, irritation, or redness of the lining of the eyelid
- Swelling and discharge of pus from the eye.
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Unusual behavior (crankiness, listlessness, crying more than usual, obvious general discomfort)
- Nasal discharge that is yellowish or greenish in color

We cannot accept sick children at the school. If your child arrives at the school with obvious sign or symptoms of a communicable disease, the child will not be allowed to attend that day. It is recommended that students remain out of school at least 24 hours after a fever has gone or an antibiotic is given by a physician.

A child having been diagnosed with a contagious disease should be kept at home and the condition reported to school. All parents will be alerted that a child in the school has contracted a contagious disease. Strep throat, pin worms, viral infections, measles, mumps, chicken pox, pinkeye, scabies, lice and scarlet fever are among those categorized as "highly contagious."

If a child becomes ill during the school day, he/she will be isolated and the parent will be contacted and requested to take the child home within two hours. If a child is sick, he/she may not stay at school. Parents must pick up the student as soon as possible or at least two hours after being called by CMS.

Furthermore, students who are picked up at school because they are sick may not return to school for the rest of the school day. If they are picked up for sickness, they must go home.

Students who arrive at school in a lethargic state and need to sleep before school or during the morning session should not be left at the school for morning naps.

The school is not adept or licensed to be an extended medical provider for parents who have decided to pick up sick students only at their convenience or at the end of their work day.

CMS is required by the state of Virginia to report any purposeful or non-purposeful child abuse.

LUNCHES

Students should bring healthy and nutritional lunches to school each day. Sandwiches, sliced cheese, cut vegetables and fruits are always a favorite for many students. Candy, cookies, cakes, chocolate puddings, and chocolate drinks are strongly discouraged for lunch.

All caffeinated drinks for students are not permitted at school. The state of Virginia encourages schools to comply with the nutritional requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food Program of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

SNACKS

Parents take turns providing simple snacks for their child's class during the school year. A snack basket will be sent home with the child who is responsible for snack the following day.

A sign-up sheet (calendar) is posted on the classroom door at the beginning of each month or a snack list will be provided by the teacher. Parents should provide snack approximately once a month for each child they have in the classroom.

A list of suggested snacks is kept in the basket. Food that is wholesome, sugar free, and non-processed is appropriate. No drinks are required, since the students will be having water during the snack break. Snacks that expose our children to interesting and appealing foods originating from a foreign country are also recommended. Snack Suggestions: vegetables and fruits (cut to child's finger size), dips, crackers and cheese, raisins, sandwiches, different baked breads, bananas, carrots, yogurt, applesauce, nutritious cookies and muffins. Note: the state of Virginia does not allow schools to serve food that is "homemade" or that is not commercially packaged.

Parents of full day students may be asked to provide snack more than once a month (once for morning snack and once for afternoon snack).

Please do not send food containing elevated salt, coloring, chemicals, sugars or preservatives, or food easily choked on, such as stringy celery or thick carrots.

NO BIRTHDAY PARTIES

The school does not sanction in-classroom birthday parties for students or special birthday snacks. Please do not ask your teacher or the staff to make special allowances for your child to celebrate his or her birthday at school by providing a snack, pizza, and/or other party items.

BIRTHDAYS ETC.

If you are planning an outside school birthday party for your child and would like to use the "Communication Folders" to send invitations, please be careful of other students and parents feelings when sending birthday invitations. In the past, we have found that these situations can be upsetting to those students and parents who are not invited.

Likewise, if students are attending a party after school, **please do not send gifts to school with the students. The school will not be responsible for storing birthday gifts or lost or broken gifts.**

NON-LUNCH FOOD

Chewing gum and candy pops (with sticks) are not allowed at the school. All parents who pick up their children after school are strongly encouraged to remind their child not to eat their leftover lunch prior to getting into their vehicle and going home.

Lunches are consumed at lunch time only and are not allowed to be eaten after school and/or in the hallway, bathroom, classrooms, parking lot, and/or playground.

DISCIPLINE

It is our policy to help the student acquire self-discipline. We believe, if students are constructively occupied doing interesting and challenging activities, they will generally not have discipline problems in class. We feel that if students understand the rules and know the expected behavior, they will choose to behave.

Therefore, expected behavior is geared to the student's age with limits or rules developmentally appropriate and understandable to the student to whom they apply. The methods of discipline used in class include distraction, choices, brief verbal command, or time-out within the classroom and time-out at the front desk or in another classroom.

At Cardinal Montessori, we are concerned about the safety of the student as well as teaching acceptable behavior and manners. Initially, we establish and enforce the guidelines. We work with the student so that they will be capable of self-discipline.

Students are taught to respond to oral request by the staff. If a student is having problems responding to oral request, the student is asked to sit out of the activity in progress. A designated place for “time-out” will be made available to the student for the opportunity to regain control.

Discipline shall be constructive in nature and will not involve any physical punishment, disciplinary action administered to the body, verbal abuse, internment in confined spaces, or withholding of any food or nap time.

Students who stay in “time-out” for longer than ten to fifteen minutes daily or have numerous visits to the office or Mr. G’s class may have discipline issues. If a behavior situation arises that warrants a conference with the parents/guardians, the teacher or director will call to make an appointment as soon as possible. If the situation is not addressed in a timely manner, and it is determined by Cardinal Montessori School that it is in the best interest of the student and the school to terminate a student’s enrollment, a thirty (30) day written notice stating the reason for termination will be sent to the parents and a copy will be retained in the student’s records.

SNOW POLICY

Cardinal Montessori School generally follows the Federal Government closing policy. When the Federal Government is closed due to weather related events and conditions, the Cardinal Montessori School will follow their directions. Cardinal Montessori School operates independently of the Prince William Public County School system. The school will place a “School Closing” message on the telephone recording system if the school is closed for any reason.

Although the school may remain open during adverse weather, it is the parent’s responsibility to decide whether or not to drive your child to school when the weather and driving conditions deteriorate or become dangerous.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Cardinal Montessori School # 703-491-3810

Cardinal Montessori Fax # 703-499-9994

Erick Gallegos home # 704-794-9840

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