



# Parent Handbook

2024-2025

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# Lansdale Montessori School

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Dear Parents,

Welcome! We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for choosing Lansdale Montessori School for your child.

This handbook has been designed to inform you of the necessary policies, regulations, and procedures of the school in accordance with the State of Pennsylvania Private School System and the management of the school.

Please read the entire handbook, acquaint yourself thoroughly with its contents and keep it for the assistance it is designed to give you.

The Lansdale Montessori School is dedicated to early childhood instruction utilizing the Montessori Method. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Michelle Santacroce  
Director

## 2. PHILOSOPHY

Doctor Maria Montessori, the Italian pediatrician who founded the philosophy, believed self-motivation to be the key to learning. Therefore, the Montessori teacher acts as a facilitator whose role is to stimulate interest in all facets of a child-centered environment. Montessori education recognizes the importance of all areas, including social, emotional, and intellectual needs.

Characteristics of our Montessori Program are:

1. An individual approach to education, which recognizes individual learning ability, interest, style and pace.
2. Promotion of self-esteem by encouraging independence and self-sufficiency.
3. Encouragement of respect for one another and the environment.
4. Creation of a structured environment within which there is a freedom of choice in learning.
5. Use of a positive, gentle and consistent approach with the child.
6. Creation of an environment rich in learning opportunities for the child's absorbent mind.

Uniquely designed Montessori materials and teacher-made materials are used to meet the child's learning needs. These materials are:

1. **Manipulative** – the child learns by doing
2. **Concrete** – the child can touch, feel, and move objects to learn their characteristics
3. **Sequenced** – learning begins with the simple and progresses to the complex

### **Preschool (2.7 years – 6 years old):**

The primary programs involve a series of sequential, manipulative and sensorial activities that are designed to ultimately bridge the gap between concrete and abstract learning.

## 3. CURRICULUM

The core of the Montessori curriculum consists of practical life, sensorial, language, mathematical, and cultural activities.

### **A. Practical Life**

Children learn independence and acquire a sense of well-being by executing "practical life" tasks. This area includes lessons in "grace and courtesy," care of the environment and care of self, as well as a variety of activities that foster the child's development to do these tasks successfully. Through repetition of Practical Life exercises the child will attain a sense of

order, concentration, coordination, and independence necessary for further learning.

**B. Sensorial**

Dr. Montessori invented certain materials, which aid in the development of the intellectual senses of the child. These are all oriented to advance the child's ability to define qualities such as color, size, sound, texture, and shape. They help to develop the child's visual, auditory, and tactile senses. Some Montessori materials such as geometric solids are concrete representations of mathematical concepts that appear in later schooling.

**C. Language**

The language materials include objects and pictures to be named, matched, labeled and classified to aid vocabulary development. Storytelling and read-alouds are used to acquaint children with the components of a story, and children are encouraged to create oral and written stories about interesting events in their lives. For recognition and familiarity of letters, textured letters are used to allow children to feel and see the alphabet. Phonics and the moveable alphabet lead children toward writing and reading.

**D. Mathematics**

Montessori math materials give children concrete experience with numbers. For numerical recognition, textured numerals are used to allow children to feel and see their shapes. A sequential array of math material is available for the children's discovery into our mathematical world. The math materials are a highlight of Dr. Montessori's achievements. The emphasis is on using manipulative materials to give the child a concrete foundation for the abstract math work he/she will do in later years.

**E. Cultural Subjects**

A Montessori environment includes a variety of hands-on materials and experiences in the following areas:

Science

Geography

Music

Movement

Art

Creative Dramatics

## **F. Aims**

- To help the development of the child as a human being
- To experience learning as a happy, joyous experience
- To promote the development of a positive attitude toward self, others, the school, and the community
- To offer a prepared environment that will satisfy the child's needs and allow him or her to fulfill his potential

## **4. MONTESSORI CONCEPTS/GLOSSARY**

The development of ORDER, CONCENTRATION, COORDINATION, and INDEPENDENCE (OCCI) is central to the Montessori philosophy. Briefly, ORDER is created externally through a well-organized environment and developed internally as the child grows and acts in the environment. CONCENTRATION is crucial for learning, and is encouraged by our classroom procedures and materials. Physical COORDINATION allows children to learn through movement and their senses, and is fostered by Montessori materials, which incorporate fine and gross motor movement and provide for a CONTROL OF ERROR, allowing children through their own observation to see and correct errors, and refine their movements along with their understanding of concepts. INDEPENDENCE is a goal of learning, stemming from each child's innate desire to understand and act upon his environment.

In the classroom, OCCI are supported by procedures known as GROUND RULES. GROUND RULES are guidelines, which teach respect for people and for the environment, assuring an orderly and accessible classroom. The GROUND RULES are emphasized at the outset of the year, and revisited throughout the year, often with lessons of GRACE AND COURTESY, formally introducing social skills and ways of behaving and problem-solving, which build and support the classroom community.

Maria Montessori characterized natural or "normal" development as marked by concentration, self-discipline, and love of meaningful activity. Montessorians often refer to NORMALIZATION as the state of development wherein a child or group of children demonstrates those characteristics.

Each material is called an "EXERCISE" or "WORK," and has both direct goals (such as a Sensorial material geared for learning visually to discriminate by size) and indirect goals (such as preparing for mathematics through grading from largest to smallest, or preparing for writing by grasping knobs using the pincer grip). These materials are also geared to help children develop concentration, eye-hand coordination and a sense of order and independence. The materials in each area of the classroom are sequenced according to complexity to assure an understandable, successful and increasingly challenging experience for children.

Materials are presented in one-on-one or small group lessons, or occasionally in larger circles. Children come to understand that they may work with any material, which has been presented to them. Many materials offer opportunities for exploration beyond the teacher's presentation.

For example, the Sensorial materials can be used in creative ways to make patterns, and find connections between various materials.

## **5. GROUND RULES FOR A MONTESSORI CLASSROOM**

Groundrules are needed in a Montessori classroom to help establish a peaceful, organized working group of children. Groundrules, well-established, well-understood and well-implemented, will create a joyful learning environment for the children. Some of our groundrules are as follows:

- A. No child or adult will hurt another in any way.
- B. Children will care for materials and return them to the place where they belong upon completion of their work.
- C. Children should not interfere with a working child. However, they may choose to work together. A child in the classroom should have the right to select an activity, work independently or with a friend until completed, and return the work to its place of origin.
- D. Children learn to respect work in progress (individual lesson or group lesson).
- E. Children learn to walk in the classroom and moderate their voices so as not to interfere with the rights of others.
- F. Children learn to carry and handle materials in an appropriate manner as demonstrated and reinforced by the teacher.

Corporal punishment is not allowed at Lansdale Montessori School. Groundrules are reinforced by adult example, discussion, and natural consequences. The school assures the protection of all individuals by the rules and regulations adopted from the State of Pennsylvania "Private School Regulations." When a problem or misunderstanding arises, there is a clear procedure for mitigating the circumstances. The method is as follows:

- a. The teacher will present and discuss the problem with the Administrator and/or Director.
- b. The parents will be called for a special conference with the teacher and/or Administrator and/or the Director.
- c. The conference will serve the purpose of exchanging ideas to help the child. If there is a serious question of whether the child can function happily at the school, while preserving a safe and productive environment for all, the school may set a limited "probationary" period of one to four weeks to try to resolve the issue.
- d. At the end of the probationary period, the parents and the Administrator and/or the Director will hold a personal or telephone conference to make the decision as to what further action should be taken to best meet the needs of the child, while preserving the safety and rights of others.

## **6. NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Lansdale Montessori School is an open and welcoming community with students, faculty and staff from a variety of backgrounds. Our school community affirms the equality and worth of all peoples and appreciates the diversity of human culture, language, history and experience. Consistent with this philosophy:

No person is excluded from employment at LMS, or otherwise treated differently on the basis of any legally protected factor, including but not limited to: gender, race, color, sexual orientation, citizenship, national origin, religion, status as a disabled veteran, pregnancy, exercise of legally protected rights, age or any disability which LMS can reasonably accommodate without undue hardship and which does not create a direct threat to the person or another person.

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

## **7. HARRASSMENT**

LMS is committed to protecting the rights and dignity of students, parents and staff. A fair and productive environment shall be maintained, free of harassment and discrimination. Allegations of harassment will be investigated. LMS will work to eliminate offending conduct, and when appropriate impose disciplinary action, up to and including termination of any employees that may be involved, and/or withdrawal of parents involved.

## **6. ADMISSIONS**

- Children of all races, national or ethnic groups, origins, creeds, and socioeconomic status are accepted.
- Preschoolers who will be 2.7 years old as of September 1 through 6 years old will be accepted for the primary classrooms.
- Children must be toilet independent to enter the program.
- Kindergarten enrollment:
  - Lansdale Montessori School is licensed as a private academic preschool and kindergarten.
  - Children who are 5 years old prior to September 1<sup>st</sup> of a given year are eligible to be admitted as kindergarteners, subject to availability.
  - Children who are 5 years old prior to October 1<sup>st</sup> may be considered for admission as kindergarteners, subject to availability and to the assessment of LMS teachers and administrators.
  - If a child with a September birthday is admitted as a kindergartener, LMS teachers and administrators will continue to observe the child through the year. If at any time during the year the teachers and administration conclude that continuation to first grade is against the child's best interest, they will inform the parents. In such cases LMS will not provide documentation required for early first grade admission.



## 7. PAYMENT

The school offers two (2) payment plans:

- Plan 1: 1% Discount for paying the yearly tuition in full before July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Plan 2: 9 monthly payments, the first of which is due on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Subsequent payments are due on the first of the month, from October, through May.

\*\* A late charge of \$20 will be assessed if payment is more than five days late.

Tuition statements will not be issued monthly. An e-mail reminder will be sent at the end of each month to all families.

## 8. REFUNDS/WITHDRAWALS

The director reserves the right to deny, cancel, sever or suspend a child's enrollment if deemed for the best interest of the child or the school, in either case, the deposit is not refundable, but the tuition will be pro-rated according to the amount of time the child attended school. NO REFUNDS WILL BE MADE FOR DAYS MISSED DUE TO ILLNESS, SNOW, HOLIDAYS, OR IF PARENTS WITHDRAW THEIR CHILD FROM SCHOOL FOR ANY PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL REASON. WHEN WITHDRAWING YOUR CHILD FROM SCHOOL, ONE MONTH ADVANCE NOTIFICATION IN WRITING, ALONG WITH THAT MONTH'S PAYMENT IS REQUIRED.

If traveling requires the child to miss an extended period of time at school, payment of tuition is still required in order to keep the child's status active. If parents choose to withdraw their child and then re-register at the time of their return, LMS cannot guarantee a space for the child in that school year.

A processing fee will be charged, if a child's status is changed after enrollment (for example, changing from full-day to half-day status).

## 9. CLASS SESSIONS

<b>Kindergarten</b>	Monday through Friday	8:30a.m. - 3:00p.m.
<b>Primary Program – Full Day</b>	Monday through Friday	8:30a.m. - 3:00p.m.
<b>Primary Program – Half Day</b>	Monday through Friday	8:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.
<b>AM Extended Care</b>	Monday through Friday	8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.
<b>PM Extended Care</b>	Monday through Friday	3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Children should not arrive earlier than 8:30 a.m. (unless enrolled for AM Extended Care) or be picked up late at the end of a scheduled session. Teachers spend time before and after each class handling planning, recordkeeping, cleaning, and preparing the environment. It is essential that they have this time for their duties. *Children who are enrolled for before-school care will be admitted to their classrooms starting at 8:00 a.m.*

We ask parents at drop-off time to help us create and maintain a peaceful and productive atmosphere as we start our day. Please establish a drop-off routine that is predictable, short, and sweet, for your child. The teachers are focused on greeting each child and will not be able to engage in conversation. Parents and caregivers do not enter during drop-off but may visit at other times.

At pick-up time, the staff is responsible for all children until parents arrive and so cannot engage in extensive conversations at pick-up time. The safety of the children is our first concern. The procedure for releasing a child is as follows:

- The application for admission provides a space to indicate who (other than the parents) may pick up your child. Those persons should be prepared to present identification upon pick-up.
- If circumstances occur that require you to send someone other than the designated individuals, please notify LMS in writing ahead of time.
- Late pick-up (5-to-15 minutes) will result in a warning, followed by a \$20 fee on the second occasion. Pick-up more than 15 minutes late results in a \$30 fee regardless of whether it is the first time or a subsequent instance.

## **10. SCHOOL CLOSING**

Lansdale Montessori School follows the North Penn School district when it comes to weather-related closings and delays (see details below). Information as to the North Penn School District can be found at [www.npenn.org](http://www.npenn.org). LMS will also use email and communication apps as an extra method of communicating weather-related information.

If the North Penn School district elects to have school virtually, Lansdale Montessori School will make its own decisions about weather-related closure and communicate via email and school communication apps (or by phone if necessary).

If North Penn has a One Hour Delay LMS will open at 9:30AM. Half-day children who attend school will still be dismissed at 11:45AM. AM extended care will be cancelled. PM Extended Care will not be affected.

If North Penn has a Two-Hour Delay LMS will open at 10:30AM. Half-day children who attend school will still be dismissed at 11:45AM. AM extended care will be cancelled. PM Extended Care will not be affected.

If North Penn cancels school for the day, LMS will also be closed.

If North Penn calls for a weather-related early dismissal, LMS will communicate with parents via email and phone calls to relay our closing time. Parents should be prepared to pick up their children immediately or to have a back-up individual who can do so. Weather conditions can quickly become dangerous.

## **11. OBSERVATIONS**

The Lansdale Montessori School's policy is that of an open school. Specific requests for observations should be made in advance with the director so that we do not have too many observations scheduled on any given day.

## **12. PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Individual conferences with the teacher are held 2 - 3 times during the year to discuss and review the student's progress and advancement. Teachers will notify you in advance of the conference dates and times available.

If you wish to talk to a teacher at any time, please call the school office or email to arrange an appointment. If a teacher needs to speak to you about your child, the teacher will contact you and arrange a conference. All conferences are held confidential.

## **13. PROGRESS REPORTS/PARENT EDUCATION WORKSHOPS**

A progress report will be sent to each family in May.

The Lansdale Montessori School holds an orientation meeting in the fall and often has other workshops or open houses during the year. It is strongly recommended that parents attend these special workshops throughout the year. Notices of times and dates will be distributed during the year.

## **14. SPECIAL PERSON'S NIGHT**

In an open house, the student selects a special person (parent, relative, or adult friend) and they return to school in the early evening and act as host to their special person. The child shares some of their favorite activities in the classroom.

## **15. PARENT PARTICIPATION**

While parent participation in the classroom activities is not a requirement, parent assistance for field trips, special celebrations, etc. is welcomed. Sharing a talent, hobby, cultural event or interest area with the children is encouraged. Please contact your child's teacher if you would be interested in reading, sharing your profession, your talents, or your culture. We love to learn about and from the diverse families in our community!

## **16. SPECIAL INFORMATION FROM HOME**

In the event that a significant change occurs in your home, please consider informing your child's teacher or administrator as soon as possible. All information will be regarded as confidential. We will accept your judgment as the kinds of changes, which may affect your child's behavior, security and general well-being. Common causes of distress include either or both parents being away from home for any reason for an extended time; a new person living in the home; illness of either parent; illness of sibling; any hospitalization; accident or death in the family; new caretaker or any new employee; moving; death of a pet.

The Teacher/Administrator will keep you informed of any significant changes in the school environment, which may affect your child as well.

If there is a change in contact information such as address, phone number, email, etc., please notify the school office immediately.

## 17. SNACKS

Snacks are available each day during school sessions. They include a nutritious snack and water. Fruits, vegetables, and dairy products can be incorporated not only as a snack, but as part of the food preparation work in the Practical Life area of the classroom. Please notify your child's teacher if he/she is allergic to any food or has food restrictions.

In the Montessori classroom, your child may choose a time to go to the snack table. Snack time is designed as an independent classroom exercise combining concentration, coordination, order, and socialization.

## 18. BIRTHDAY PARTIES

We enjoy recognizing your child's birthday with a very simple celebration and candle-lighting ceremony. If you wish to do so, you may send in a special snack. Please do not send in decorations **or a large cake, which must be cut.** The time constraints of a school day do not allow for them. Also, as is customary in many schools, the Lansdale Montessori School invites you to donate a book in honor of your child's birthday. Please contact your child's teacher with any specific questions about their birthday. Families of children with summer or weekend birthdays will be contacted by the child's teacher to schedule a day to celebrate.

## 19. TOYS/OBJECTS

Toys and other personal items should remain at home. Please assure your child that his or her toys are for home use and that at school he has special "work" to do.

Please return all small objects you find in pockets or backpacks, even if they do not look important. Many classroom materials have multiple, color-coded pieces with precise measurements, so a small bead or knob might be a key item for a classroom. Do not accuse your child of stealing. Many of the children think of the school as "my school" and sometimes feel they may take parts of materials home.

Your child's teacher will let you know if "Show and Tell" times will be held as well as the dates and appropriate items to share with classmates. Books are always welcome.

Transitional objects may be brought to school by nappers and will be confined to the child's cubby or backpack other than at rest time.

## 20. CLOTHING

School clothing should be comfortable, appropriate for the weather and easy for children to manage themselves. Every item should be labeled. Outdoor clothing must be labeled and boots should be easily manageable. Your child's teacher will inform you if part of their classroom routine is the use of special indoor shoes or slippers. **COVID: LMS staff and students will follow recommendations from the CDC and local health authorities regarding masking.**

Each child should always have an extra set of seasonally-appropriate clothing, including socks and undergarments, at school. This may be kept in their backpack or in the classroom. Soiled or wet clothing will be sent home in a plastic bag, and items sent home should be replaced promptly.

The children will be taken outdoors to play as long as the weather temperature is above freezing. It is imperative that your child wears the appropriate clothing for outdoor weather. (If your child does not want to wear a jacket please put one in his or her backpack for an emergency!)

On gym day sneakers are required! Your child's teacher will inform you of the gym schedule. In general, closed-toed shoes are most comfortable for children on our playground.

## **21. FIRE DRILLS**

To ensure safety for the students when evacuating the building in case of the fire or other emergencies, fire drills are held once every month. It is essential that the evacuations of the building be orderly and efficient. It takes practice for children to learn to respond appropriately to the bell, leave their work and walk quietly, but quickly, to the place assigned for each class. The staff works closely with the children during practice sessions so they are comfortable with the safety procedures.

## **22. INTERMEDIATE UNIT**

Preschool-aged children are entitled to services provided by their home-county's intermediate unit (IU), which provide cognitive, adaptive, social/emotional, communication, and gross motor evaluation for children, upon parental request. If IU determines a need, they provide services such as specialized instruction, occupational therapy, physical therapy, hearing support, speech and language support, and vision support. Most of our children reside in Montgomery County, and would have access to services through the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit (<http://mciu.org/>). The IU provides services only for preschool-age children. Special services for kindergarten-age children are provided through the child's home school district.

## **23. TELEPHONE CALLS**

Our school is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, during the school year.

An answering machine is in use for evening calls and during the summer months. Messages will be checked and we will return your calls as soon as possible.

## 24. ABSENCE/ACCIDENTS AT SCHOOL

Parents must notify the school office the night before (leave a message) or early in the day if your child is going to be absent for illness or arriving late.

If your child is diagnosed as having a communicable disease such as COVID-19, measles, chicken pox, mumps, lice or scarlet fever, please call the school as soon as possible, so that we may inform parents of children who may have been exposed, in order for them to take appropriate measures. Confidentiality will be maintained.

We ask that families follow their doctor's recommendation and communicate with us regarding the child's readiness to return to school.

In case of an accident at school, you will be called immediately after first-aid has been given. If you cannot be reached, the emergency numbers you indicated on your child's application will be called.

Tardiness – Arrival time is 8:30-8:45am.

This is a great time to teach a child the importance of arriving to school on time. Late arrival is disruptive to the children in the classroom and disruptive to your child. *Habitual tardiness is reason for departure.*

## 25. ILLNESSES

There is no deduction in fees if your child is absent for illnesses. We are planning and preparing for your child to be with us every day. If, at any time, the staff feels that your child is too sick to remain at school, you will be called. We expect you or someone you designate to pick up the child immediately. It is best to establish a back-up person or persons upon whom you can depend in this instance. Please keep your child at home until any illness either clears up or is beyond the contagious stage. Please review the guidelines below for some possible childhood illnesses. For any other illnesses, please refer to your family doctor to ensure a safe return to school for your child and others.

**ELEVATED TEMPERATURE (100.4 or above):** Child must have normal temperature for at least 24 hours without medication before returning to school.

**VOMITING:** Keep your child home 24 hours after he or she is symptom free without medication.

**DIARRHEA:** Keep child home 24 hours after bowels are normal without medication.

**HEAD LICE:** Child may return to school after proper treatment has rendered the condition no longer contagious. Parents must continue checking the child to verify that the condition is under control.

**STREP THROAT:** Child may return to school after antibiotic treatment has rendered the condition no longer contagious, not less than 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun.

**CONJUNCTIVITIS:** Child may return to school after treatment has rendered the child no longer contagious.

**IMPETIGO:** Child may return to school after treatment has rendered the condition no longer contagious. Doctor may allow the child to return to school if area is properly treated and covered.

**MEASLES, PERTUSSIS, AND OTHER COMMUNICABLE DISEASES TYPICALLY PREVENTED BY VACCINATION:** Child can return with a doctor's note indicating that the child is no longer contagious.

**COVID:** LMS follows the CDC and local health department recommendations regarding COVID. We encourage staff, children, and family members to stay up-to-date on COVID vaccinations in order to proactively prevent illness and transmission in our community. Individuals should test when COVID-like symptoms appear. They should follow FDA recommendations regarding repeated testing to confirm results. What follows are the most current recommendations at the time of updating this policy:

Children and staff who test positive should stay home until for at least 24 hours they are fever free without medication AND their symptoms are improving. Upon their return they should wear a mask for five days as an added precaution.

**PLEASE REPORT THE OUTBREAK OF ANY COMMUNICABLE DISEASE TO THE DIRECTOR IMMEDIATELY AND OBTAIN A DOCTOR'S NOTE BEFORE RETURNING TO SCHOOL.**

## 26. MEDICATION

- Medication must be handed directly to the staff and kept out of the reach of children.
- Medication may be administered by school personnel only in the following cases:
  - When the medication is in a prescription bottle and is correctly labeled by a pharmacist.
  - When non-prescription medication (e.g. Benadryl) is indicated in a child's allergy plan or their doctor has instructed them to take it.

*Please note:*

- Prescription labels must include the student's name, name of the medication, dosage, directions, physician's name and a current date.
- A Medication Form from the school office must be completed requesting that the medication be administered.

*Revised: June 2024*