



Parent Handbook

What You Need to Know

2023-24

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Philosophy & Goals

Alef Bet Montessori School provides a unique and innovative education that integrates a traditional Montessori curriculum with Hebrew and Judaic Studies. We welcome infants through children 6 years of age.

Alef Bet Montessori School is a proud member of Montessori Schools of Maryland and certified by AMI (Association Montessori Internationale) and Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington (AISGW), Washington DC's most prestigious organization of private non-for profit schools

Alef Bet Mission Statement

Our mission is to instill the love of Torah, Israel, and fellow human beings through our commitment to citizenship, ethics, morality, personal responsibility, and independence.

During this school year, we will give your children an unparalleled early childhood experience, learning skills, and refined social skills. They will be able to experience a **full discovery zone** of learning and enjoy the love of Torah, Israel, and community.

Class Ratios and Sizes

Ratios	
18 months to 2 years	1:3 (1 teacher per 3 students)
2-3 years	1:6 (1 teacher per 6 students)
4-5 years	1:10 (1 teacher per 10 students)
5+	1:15 (1 teacher per 15 students)
Class Sizes	
Toddler:	12 children
Primary including Kindergarten	27 children
Elementary	25 children

Alef Bet Non-Discrimination Policy

Alef Bet Montessori does not discriminate in student admission, retention, or expulsion or otherwise discriminate against any student on the basis of race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. Nothing herein shall require our school to adopt any rule, regulation, or policy that conflicts with our Jewish religion or moral teaching and Montessori methodology.

Alef Bet Policy, in compliance with the State of Maryland, hereby adheres to the following

guidelines for all public and publicly funded schools and school programs:

(1) Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964; and
(2) Title 26, Subtitle 7 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code, which states that public and publicly funded schools and programs may not:

- i. Discriminate against a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability;
- ii. Refuse enrollment of a prospective student, expel a current student, or withhold privileges from a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student because of an individual's race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; or
- iii. Discipline, invoke a penalty against, or take any other retaliatory action against a student or parent or guardian of a student who files a complaint alleging that the program or school discriminated against the student, regardless of the outcome of the complaint.

Contact Information

E-mail: Info@AlefBetMontessori.org

Phone: 301-556-5010

Daily Schedule

Arrival Times & Dismissal

Elementary	8:15 am – 3:00 pm
Primary Half Day	8:15 am – 12:15 pm
Primary Full Day – Kindergarten	8:15 am – 3:00 pm
Toddlers Half Day	8:15 am – 12:15 pm
Toddler Full Day	8:15 am – 2:45 pm
After Care (Mon, Wed, Thurs)	until 4:00 pm

Toddler Day Overview (18 months to 3 years old)

8:45 am	Welcoming exercise
9:00 am	Morning routine of Montessori “work”
9:30 am	Snack - students eat together around the table as a community
10:00 am	Tefilah
10:30 am	Playground and outdoor time
11:00 am	Lunch
11:30 am	Relaxation and storytime

12:15 pm	Dismissal (Half Day Students)
Most of our toddlers nap from noontime until around 2 pm. The after-nap activities include storytime, playful toys, and more.	

Primary Day Overview (ages 3 years – 6 years old)

8:30 am	Welcoming exercise
9:00 am	Morning routine of Montessori “work” and Tefillah
9:30 am	Snack time and work cycle
11:45 am	Playground and outdoor time
12:15 pm	Lunch
12:45 pm	Free play
1:00 pm	Montessori math, reading, and writing
2:45 pm	Dismissal

Elementary Day Overview (ages 6 years – 9 years old)

Please visit our website at <https://www.alefbetmontessori.org/> for more information on a day in elementary school.

Prepare Your Child for School

The week before school starts, we recommend taking the following steps to prepare your home and your family for school:

- Gradually **adjust the bedtime**. Good sleep is a major factor in our children’s development and behavior. It is better to start dinner at 6 pm and allow children time in their PJs by 7:30 pm so that they get enough sleep during the week before school starts. Please make sure your child gets enough sleep (10 -12 hours at night). Recommended bedtime is 7:30 or 8 pm
- **Eliminate morning electronics** viewing (TV, iPod, iPhone, iPad, DVD, any screen time). Our children’s brains are greatly impacted by the viewing of electronics. It often affects their behavior and their attitude. We also highly recommend limiting the afternoon viewing time for half an hour to an hour per day. Often children will be resistant to attend school or participate in morning regular activities (breakfast and dressing themselves) because of the overstimulation of electronic viewing.
- Talk to your child about school and let them know they will be attending school. However, it is important not to build up **false expectations** about school such as a “countdown.”

First Day of School List

Please bring to school for the first day:

1. A picture of your child on the first day of school to be placed on his cubby so that he/she can recognize their own spot.
2. Indoor shoes that are easy to put on
3. Rainboots to keep in school – we are gardening and playing with water outdoors
4. An extra winter set of clothing (summer and winter) to be kept in the class. Make sure to **mark your child's name** on the clothing and keep it in a sealed bag or shoebox.
5. Toddlers should also have a diaper bag with extra diapers, wipes, and a blanket.
6. Parents who would like their child to nap at school should send a sheet, a blanket, and a pillow with their child. Sheets and covers are washed at school.
7. Winter in our area is cold and snowy. Make sure to have at home outdoor play gear: a heavy coat, mittens, hat, and boots for snow and snowsuit. Please make sure to have all these items on hand before the weather turns cold. We will play outdoors in most weather, including snow.
8. Toothbrush and toothpaste

Transition and First Days – 🎵 ☺ Mommy Comes Back

On the first week of school, we expect new children, both in the Toddler and Primary classrooms, to go through a transition period.

During the transition period, the **Toddlers** are expected to attend **one hour** during the first week. We slowly extend that hour into 2 & ½ hours in the second week and only then do we start the child on a full-day program.

The **Primary class** children attend **half day** for the first week of school (noon dismissal) as part of their Transition Period. Even returning students, who moved from Toddlers to Primary will attend half-day of the first week of school to allow a smooth and positive transition.

Why do we do the Transition Period? It is hard for a child to say goodbye. It is difficult for the child to understand that you will always come back for him/her. There is no way to explain to a young child what is 5 minutes or 2 & 1/2 hours. Children ages 18 months to 5 years old are not capable of understanding the **concept of TIME** as we do. Only in the Elementary class do they start realizing how short a minute is in comparison to an hour. There is a little switch in the brain that kicks in at the Elementary level. But before that, children cannot tell what is one minute vs. 7 minutes vs. 2 hours. They can only sense it through the schedule of the day, the rhythms of the people, and the activities around them.

What can we do to help the child? How do we transition? There are no shortcuts, no free rides. Transitions are always difficult.

- Talk to your child at home. Say that you are going to school and Mommy/Daddy will always come back.
- Assure them that you are confident – as their little sensors can tell when you are lying about it.
- Believe in your heart that they are in a good place.
- Sometimes it is the parents who cannot separate from the child. Find the child in you, and let go.

Once in school, a child will become accustomed to the order and sequence of the activities in the class. This way, he/she learns a routine. The routine helps him/her understand the following: first we sing, then we read, then we play, then we eat, then we go outside, then we sing again and then MOMMY COMES BACK! “Mommy Comes Back” is a sweet song that can be found at www.cdbaby.com.

Absences

Please let us know if your child is not coming in, is ill, or is going to be late. We will miss your child and will wait for you to let us know. E-mail the office info@alefbetmontessori.org.

Children arriving after 8:30 am for the Elementary level are considered to be late.

Children arriving after 8:45 am for the Primary level are considered to be late.

Children arriving after 9 am for the Toddler level are considered to be late.

Children who are late will have a difficult time adjusting to class. Please be on time.

Carpool Line and Traffic

See chart on the last page

Drop Off & Pick Up

Arrival: Kiss & Ride or Park Your Car

Times for Kiss & Ride Carpool: Carpool line runs from 8:15 am to 8:30 am. There will be a grace period in which staff will be outside until 8:45 am.

Kiss and Ride: We have created a carpool system, and two lanes for carpool, to expedite the process. When parents stay seated in their cars, the carpool line moves at a quicker pace. This procedure prevents cars from stacking up and blocking traffic. It is also a courtesy to other parents so they will not be unexpectedly delayed exiting the school. Therefore, we ask all parents to follow the “Kiss and Ride” procedure as follows:

- Please pull all the way up to the yellow line (if you are the first car in line) or as far as you can go behind the car in front of you.
- **Please stay in your car** and keep moving up the line until a staff member greets you.
- A staff member will come to your car, observe you taking your child’s temperature, ask you to sign your child in, and will then assist your child/children out of the car and escort them to class. You should continue to stay in your vehicle through this process and allow the staff member to assist your child/children out of the car.
- **Do not leave your car unattended** when using the “kiss & ride” carpool line.
- If you need to apply sunscreen, tie your child’s shoes, get them dressed, etc., please park your car out on Tuckerman Lane prior to pulling into the carpool line.
- While waiting in the carpool line for your child(ren) , please do not block the exit driveway.

Kiss and Ride Preparation for Parents and Children:

We ask parents to prepare the child at home. Have a conversation with your child and say, “when we get to school we will do the 1..2..3. Goodbye”. Practice this at home prior to arriving

at school. Please make sure that your thermometer is working prior to arriving at school and remind your child that this is part of the drop-off routine.

Carpool Together: We highly encourage parents to carpool together. We will provide you with the school Contact List so that you can create carpool groups.

Park Your Car: If you need to get out of your car to assist your child or escort them to the door, please park your car on Tuckerman Lane. Please walk your child to the door where a staff member will greet you.

Late Arrival: In the morning, doors close at 8:45 am, after that please sign your child in at the office. When your child arrives late, it means something has been missed, your child will find it hard to adjust to the classroom, and will miss morning circle time - it is also disruptive to the rest of the class. Usually, a child that is late feels distraught and misplaced. The class has already started and he/she missed the welcoming part of the morning. Being on time is important in our classroom. Please make every effort to bring your child on time.

Late Pick up: There are currently several dismissal times: 12:15 pm, 2:45 pm, and 4 pm. Please be mindful to pick up your children on time. We allow a 15 minute grace period for pick up.

Late Pick up fee: For late half-day pick up, children will be transferred to the office to wait and parents will be charged a fee of \$1 per minute after 12:30 pm. For late full-day pick up, children will be transferred to aftercare and parents will be charged \$1 per minute after 3:00 pm. For late after care pickup, parents will be charged \$1 per minute after 4:15 pm.

Communication with the School

E-mailing info@AlefBetMontessori.org is the **BEST WAY** to leave non-urgent messages for the school. This e-mail is checked at least twice a day by multiple staff members.

Executive Director, Ayelet Lichtash	301-556-5010 x3 Ellie@alefbetmontessori.org
Admissions Officer	301-556-5010 x1 admission@alefbetmontessori.org
Office Manager, Edith Gvirtzman	301-556-5010 x2 Edith@alefbetmontessori.org

How Does the School Communicate with Parents?

We use the contact information provided on the Application Form and Emergency form to contact the parents. MSDE requires that Parents keep the school updated through the year if daytime phone numbers, designated emergency numbers, or emails change so that you can be reached if necessary. In case of a health question or problem, the school should be able to contact you directly and immediately.

Emails

We communicate school information to parents primarily via email. *Note – If you have not received an email from us this summer around mid-August, welcoming you to the school that means that you are not on our email listing.* Please email info@alefbetmontessori.org to be added to the listserve.

Website

Our school has its own website, www.AlefBetMontessori.org. Please check the *Blog* section of our website on a weekly basis to see what the school and students are up to.

How Do Parents Communicate with the School?

For communications concerning your children:

The staff believes that parents' issues and concerns about the School are best addressed and resolved by prompt, direct, and open discussion. If a parent has a particular concern related to a classroom situation, it is encouraged that the parents speak directly with the child's lead teacher. If the parent does not feel the problem has been effectively resolved after speaking with the lead teacher, the parent should request a meeting with the Executive Director. They will then determine what action, if any, is necessary. The Executive Director will inform the parent and the teacher how the School proposes to deal with the issue. Issues regarding any other member of the staff or any administrator should also be raised with the Executive Director, who will follow up with a similar procedure to such issues.

Communication from/with the Executive Director

The Executive Director, Ayelet "Ellie" Lichtash, writes to, and meets with, the School's parents throughout the year to share school news and to maintain an open line of communication. Parents are invited to "Coffee with the Director" scheduled throughout the school year between 9:30 – 10:30 am. If you need to meet privately or schedule a different time, you can call or email Ayelet, to schedule an appointment that is mutually convenient.

Communication with Teachers

We ask parents to understand that the beginning and close of the school day is a busy time for teachers and therefore not recommended as an opportunity for discussing serious issues. Parents are invited to meet with the teachers for general sessions every first Wednesday of the month from 2 – 2:45 pm. To privately communicate with your child's teacher, please leave a phone message at 301-556-5010 ext.1 or send the teacher a note via email to your classroom:

toddlers@alefbetmontessori.org	(Morah Tamar)
rimon@alefbetmontessori.org	(Morah Carlye)
dvash@alefbetmontessori.org	(Morah Jenn and Morah Farhana)
zayit@alefbetmontessori.org	(Morah Kimberly)

(Meet with the Teacher). Please indicate in your phone or written message, specific times when you would be available to speak via telephone or in-person, and briefly describe the topic or issue if possible.

Parents' Visit and Class Observation

- Parents are welcome to join a monthly meeting with the Director for discussion on child development at Coffee with the Director.
- Parents are invited to observe our class while it is in action. The first month of the year is always piled with breaks for the High Holidays. However, by the second month, the children settle into the classroom routine. Check the calendar and RSVP your slot (2 observers per class at a time). While observing the children, please be reminded that they are 'working' on tasks or chores and interruptions, such as loud voices, might distract them from their

work. Come and enjoy watching us concentrate!

- Parents will also meet with the teacher each semester for half an hour for a conference specifically to discuss the progress of their child.

Inclement Weather / Area Emergency

Our school follows the Montgomery County Public Schools for closings and late openings on the first day of snow only. After that, if there are additional snow days, parents will receive an email by 7:15 am or as soon as the action for the school has been determined. In the case of an early dismissal, the staff will also attempt to notify all parents/caregivers by phone.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent Teacher Conferences will be held twice a year in November/Early December and March. The purpose of the conference is to communicate and provide information about each student's growth in social, emotional, and academic areas, as well as other aspects of each student's development. Parents and teachers can also request additional conferences should the need arise. We provide a student record for your child.

We Want Feedback

We pride ourselves on our flexibility and responsiveness. It is tragic to us if we hear too late about something that we could have fixed what has spoiled a student's or parent's experience. Let us hear from you! (We take compliments too!) Send us an email, set a time to meet with us in person – and we will make the time to listen. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TRUST.

Health, Safety & Medication

To protect the health and wellbeing of all of our children and families, it is critical that all families abide by the health guidelines of our school, and as mandated by Maryland law. We appreciate your full cooperation and compliance. Not abiding by any of these guidelines can risk infection for other children, and can inconvenience other parents and families.

Health & Forms

In compliance with Maryland law, the school is required to have a health inventory form, emergency contact information, and immunization log for each child attending the class. In the absence of these forms, the child cannot be admitted to the class. The forms have to be in the office before the first day of school.

Sick Policy

24 Hour Rule: If your child is sick with fever (100 degrees or over), vomiting, or diarrhea, your child may not return to school until he/she is free from fever or other related symptoms for **at least 24 hours**. In the case of Conjunctivitis or "Pink Eye," we require that the child remains at home for a full 48 hours after being on medication before returning to school.

Getting Sick at School: It is the school's responsibility to determine whether a child is too sick to be permitted into class, as we must protect all the children. Children who are deemed too sick to be in school will be sent home. If parents cannot be reached, a person noted on the Emergency Forms will be asked to pick up the child. If a child must be isolated from other children due to illness, he/she will be kept in a quiet area of the classroom on a rest mat. All

contagious diseases must be reported to the Executive Director Office and will be posted for parents to see.

The following situations will, at all times, indicate that a child is too sick to be allowed in class. If your child is exhibiting any of these symptoms at home, please keep your child at home. If your child begins exhibiting any of the following symptoms at school, a parent will be called to pick up the child. These symptoms include: :

1. any fever (a 100 or over is considered fever)
1. any unidentified rash
2. drainage from the eyes or nose which is greenish in color
3. diarrhea or persistent cramping
4. vomiting
5. infected skin patches of any nature
6. dark urine/blood in urine or bowel
7. sore throat or trouble swallowing
8. severe coughing
9. difficulty breathing
10. any unusual behavior that might be associated with illness

Medications and Sunscreens

We prefer not to give any medications to our students. If your child must have medication, State law mandates a doctor's permission in writing. A Medication Permission form may be obtained from the office. You must give the prescription medication and the form to the office Business Manager for the medication to be stored in a locked box. Please send any approved medication in its original prescription container.

Please note that we will not administer non-prescription drugs of any kind (including cough drops and vitamins).

We strongly encourage you to apply sunscreen/bug repellent before your child is brought to school. It is time consuming for the staff to apply lotion to all the children.

Allergies

Keeping ALL kids safe is a community responsibility. We ask all parents to help us accommodate children with allergies, and to please check with your child's teacher before bringing in any class snacks that are not on the approved snack list. Also, after breakfast, please make sure to have your child wash his/her hands before coming to school so no leftover residue from an unknown food is transferred to the classroom.

On a daily basis, snacks are provided both by Alef Bet Montessori and parents. Therefore you must inform us if your child has any allergies regarding food and beverages of any kind.

Staff members are not permitted to administer any type of antihistamines with or without a doctor's permission. Please write a list of any allergies on the Health form (2 copies) and submit one copy to the office (Business Manager) for us to keep on file and one copy to your child's teacher.

Head Lice

Head lice infestations are a recurring issue in schools everywhere. Head lice can be extremely inconvenient and time-consuming to treat and can cause discomfort.. Head lice occur in people of every age, social status, and income and should not be a cause for guilt, embarrassment, or anger. They do not indicate a lack of cleanliness or poor care of your child and are simply an inconvenience that must be dealt with. We follow the most current recommendations of the County Health Department in these situations.

Prevention: Head lice infestations can be prevented if children refrain from sharing hairbrushes, combs, and hats. Hairbrushes and combs at school are for personal use only.

Lice at School: If live lice or nits are observed on a child at school, we will contact parents immediately and the child must be picked up and taken home to be treated before he or she can return to school. All school families will be informed that lice have been observed, and all children may be checked for lice as the situation warrants.

After Treatment: Children returning to school after lice treatment **will be checked by staff daily**. If lice or nits are found again, the child will be sent home as before. If lice or nits are found, it is best practice to continue treatments for up to 3-4 days. It usually takes one or two weeks before all lice are gone.

Diaper Changing in Classroom

Our Diaper Changing policy follows the strict rules of the Office of Childcare (MD State Dept. of Education). Changing diapers is done by our staff and Hand Washing policy is adhered to strictly.

Behavior & Code of Conduct

Staff - Code of Conduct Among Ourselves

Alef Bet Montessori teachers and staff are a team. We exert a strong influence on children to become better educated, but even more importantly, our team also helps our children to mature by modeling adult working relationships based upon civility, honesty, and respect. It is with the latter in mind that the staff has agreed to work with these principles of conduct in mind.

- Give open and honest feedback to each other (because you care)
- Speak about the issue - not the person
- Acknowledge each other's accomplishments
- Reframe problems into opportunities
- Clearly define roles & expectations
- Work on building constructive relationships with every team member
- Always keep the mission & vision of the School in mind
- Serve as positive role models for the children

Parents - Code of Conduct with the Team and other Parents

Families with a child enrolled at Alef Bet Montessori become an integral part of our School Community. To be a successful community, the School needs and expects the cooperation of its parents, who must understand and embrace the school's mission, share its core values, and fully support its curriculum, faculty, and staff.

As in any relationship, concerns and issues may arise. The school will always take steps to build positive relationships with parents and families. We ask that parents also take steps to handle issues with courtesy and respect. If the school deems that a parent or family is acting in ways that are damaging or inappropriate, and that the relationship is beyond reconciliation, the school reserves the right to cancel a family's contract and dismiss a family from the school.

Ways to Participate, Get Involved and Contribute

Alef Bet Montessori is a non-profit charitable organization. Our joy is having our children explore the love of learning and their Jewish identities. For that reason, our tuition fees are lower than most other Montessori schools in the area. We encourage parents to consider contributions and donations to our school. Some ways you can help: Gifts of cash (during the Annual Giving Campaign), donation of supplies, and meaningful volunteerism (help with events and activities at the school, fund-raising, and public relations, and of course: **Join the Parent Committee**).

Volunteering

How can you Volunteer? Here are few options for parents to get involved:

1. Take a position on the PTO - (Parent Teacher Organization) to help with school events.
2. Start an extracurricular activity for the Primary level: Dance, Soccer, Drama or Karate
3. Volunteer on a Field Trip.
4. Help Organize the Hanukkah, Purim, or Lag B'Omer Party.

Volunteerism: When a parent agrees to perform a service for the school the entire community is counting on that person to fulfill their promise. If it becomes clear that a parent cannot, they should contact a member of the Parent Committee and arrange for a replacement right away.

Privacy: Please help us maintain the mutual trust and respect we all need to keep our community healthy by safeguarding the privacy of children, parents, and staff. Passing on confidential, damaging, or hurtful information is not acceptable. Keep staff and parent email addresses and phone numbers confidential. Use the contact information for school-related business only, unless you receive permission otherwise.

Etiquette: Alef Bet Montessori teachers, staff, and parents are all expected to strive for high standards of etiquette and behavior. Commitments should be honored, criticism should be constructive and genial, and "thank yous" should be frequent.

Communication: Parents best support a school climate of trust and respect by communicating concerns openly and constructively to the teacher or staff member closest to the problem. The use of mass emails to contact fellow parents about sensitive issues involving Alef Bet policy, teachers, staff, or students is inappropriate and counterproductive.

Conflicts between parents or parents and staff should be addressed in a calm and private manner, preferably in person or with a respectful note. Phone calls and emails should not be used to express anger, frustration, or criticism. Meetings are to be held by appointment at a mutually convenient time.

Students - Positive Interaction and Positive Discipline

It is our responsibility as adults to help foster healthy and happy interactions. Developing social attitudes begin in the home. Classroom rules are centered on respect for others and our

environment. The children are asked to respect another child's privacy. A disruption usually happens by accident and the children first tell each other what he or she did to disturb the work. This is usually sufficient. If the behavior continues, the child is encouraged to enlist a teacher's help and together they talk to the child involved. If the problem should persist, or a child needs help with confronting another child, we will assist in a dialogue exchange of listening and mirroring with the children involved.

In the Montessori system, we do not use "time out" or punishments. We use techniques from methods such as Positive Discipline, Montessori Peace Education, and Parent Effectiveness Training. We help the children learn to listen, respond, and work out an agreement. In addition, we encourage even the shy child to speak up and respond to how he/she is feeling.

Responsive relationships and positive discipline techniques create supportive environments where children can grow and thrive. Some examples of positive discipline techniques that we use include:

- providing choices; (offering a variety of activity and material choices)
- using redirection; (positive discipline technique where the adult changes the child's direction or focus from a negative behavior/experience to a positive one)
- having clear rules and expectations
- using reflection
- using problem-solving and developing clear rules and expectations with input from older toddlers and preschoolers. Input from the children encourages children to feel ownership of their classroom environment, in how it is run with respect to materials, teachers, and friends.

Chronic misbehavior results in unhappy children and a disruptive learning environment. When a child becomes disruptive, parents will be notified. If the behavior continues, parents will be asked to seek professional guidance. Our responsibility to your child includes the obligation to limit this disruption from the learning experience. If a child cannot modify his/her behavior, the parents will be asked to remove their child from our school. Parents are responsible to reimburse or replace any school property deliberately damaged or broken by their child. We try to involve the child as much as possible in the replacement and repairs of any broken materials or property. In the rare case, parents are responsible for reimbursing or replacing any school property deliberately damaged or broken by their child.

Please remember that we, as teachers and parents, need to be in continual communication concerning the social interactions of each child.

Discipline and Self Discipline

Please do not raise your voice. If a child raises her voice, tell her in a controlled manner: "Can you use your low voice" or "Can you use your inside voice" – and show it by example. Repeat the child's sentence to the child in a calm voice.

In the Montessori system, **we do not use "time out" or punishments**. Instead, the teacher will take the child aside, explain what was wrong, and explain what is expected and how she should act in the future. The teacher can practice proper behavior with the child at a later time when all is calm.

Primary children are not reflective; they cannot sit and think about what they did, and whether it was wrong. Elementary children can. That is the reason we do not use it.

If a higher level of discipline is required, the teacher might ask the child to accompany her for a

period of time during the day.

What do we do – we resort to Conflict Resolution Steps.

In a **conflict situation** it is recommended to do the following Conflict Resolution Steps:

1. Approach the situation in a calm and neutral manner
2. Lower yourself to the child's height, acknowledge the child's feelings (you are sad, mad, worried, hurt...) and state them correctly
3. Let children know you need to hold any disputed object
4. Allow the child time to calm down
5. Remove a child from the situation, if necessary, to stop the conflict (or emergency) and start from number 1.
6. Gather information by asking "What Happened?" or "What is the problem?" Avoid saying, "Why did you do that?"
7. Let every child tell her story
8. Repeat back the child's story to each other
9. Restate the problem: "The problem is ..."
10. Listen to hear if the child corrects it
11. Ask the child for ideas and solutions
12. Invite children to solve the dispute themselves
13. Set the limits again by telling them, "We do not push, pull hair, say go away." Say, "we use words".
14. Model the correct way to ask or say something: "Can you please move up?" or "Hello, can we play?"

Student Life

Dress Code

In a school environment, children play both outdoors and indoors, and get very busy. Please send your child with clothes and shoes that are easy to wash and take off. Expensive shoes can be ruined! Fancy slippers can get lost. Please keep them at home.

Blue and white clothing is required as the standard dress for the school's graduation party and for Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel's Independence Day).

Please make sure that your child has a change of clothes at school that is appropriate for the weather/climate. If your child needs any clothing, we will communicate with a note in their bag. Please check their bags each night for any notes.

Potty Training Policy

Usually, parents start training their children at 2 or 2 & ½ years old to use the potty. This is an important stage in a **Toddler's independence** activities. In our Toddler classroom, the teacher may initiate a training program for a child that is ready even earlier. This is not a requirement for the Toddler Program. However, Potty Training is a requirement for enrollment at the Primary Class, ages 3 to 6. At the beginning of the year, the child is expected to begin potty training, although it is not required that the child master it. The child can wear pull-ups and change into underwear at school. As long as the child has begun with the training, the school staff can help in the training. It is also important that they be able to care of themselves after using the toilet. Even though children are toilet trained, they still may have occasional accidents. A child who is

not fully potty trained cannot register for the extended day in the Primary level (3 to 6).

Bringing Materials/Toys from Home

We have found that items brought from home can get lost or broken and it can cause bad feelings among the children. Please do not allow your child to bring toys to school. If your child wishes to bring in an educational book, game, or other items, please discuss this with your child's teacher.

Extra-curricular Class Activities

Our enrichment program includes arts and crafts projects on relevant subjects of the school curriculum: Little Hands Baking, Yoga, and Music. This curriculum is subject to changes and alterations. Field trips are scheduled throughout the year. Please check the calendar and make sure to sign the authorization form and return it to the office by the designated time.

No Screen Policy

There are no screens allowed in our school. TV, laptops, tablets, phones or other screens will not be used with the children during school hours.

In the mornings, we ask that your child not have screen time at home or in the car prior to arriving at school.

Field Trips

On planned field trips, the transportation may either be provided by the school, parents or use of the metro. In either situation, every child is required to have written permission from the parents. The number of staff will be the same as the staff ratio at school. Children are required to remain seated at all times while the vehicle is in motion secured in seat belts. The staff will have access to a first aid kit at all times.

School buses provided by the school for a Primary class field trip can hold car seats for children 25 lbs and up. Parents of children who do not meet the requirement will be traveling with volunteers.

Food at Alef Bet

Lunch, Snacks, and Nutrition

Alef Bet Montessori provides daily lunch and snacks at cost to the parents at \$95 per month. We strive to educate our children at an early age to learn good nutritional habits. The school provides healthy snacks for the children consisting of water, crackers, cheese, hummus, eggs, yogurt, seeds, fresh and dry fruits, and vegetables. Lunch is either dairy or pareve.

Toddler's Snack

Our school follows the directions of the Office of Childcare and Maryland State Department of Education regarding the recommendation of hazardous and choking food items (such as hotdogs, fresh carrots, etc.).

Kashrut

Kashrut standards are maintained throughout the school which makes it possible for every

family at the school to feel comfortable. For that purpose, items such as challah for Shabbat or birthday cupcakes must be bought in a kosher store such as Sunflower Bakery, Moti's Market, Simply Kosher, Shalom Kosher Market, The Kosher Pastry Oven, Shaul's Kosher Market, and Goldberg's Bagels (for challah). Packaged items must have a reliable kosher sign (see snack list for acceptable kosher signs).

Please follow these rules when holding a birthday party at home, so that you can include all children.

Birthday Parties

Classroom Celebration

We would love to celebrate your child's birthday with you. We mark the birthday with songs, pictures of the birthday child, and a birthday treat provided by the family. We ask that parents purchase the treat from a kosher store: Moti's Market, Shalom's, Kosher Pastry Oven, Sunflower Bakery.

In the classroom, children have the opportunity to celebrate their birthday by participating in a "Birthday Walk." This involves a circle time experience where your child walks around the sun, marking the globe cycle, equivalent to their number of years. Parents are encouraged to bring photos of their child from each year and to write a short note about each year of their child's life. We will read it with the class.

If your child is soon to have a birthday, please coordinate with your child's teacher a few days prior to the date. We encourage parents to join us in this ceremony and to share photographs and stories of your child, to recognize how they have grown and changed during their life thus far.

Note about Sunflower Bakery: When possible, please support Sunflower Bakery as a non-profit organization/bakery that is the only program in Maryland that trains young adults with learning differences for job success in pastry arts, baking, and related food industries. Sunflower is focused on connecting students and graduates with employment opportunities.

If you are interested in supporting this cause, we urge you to visit the Sunflower Bakery Catalog: <https://www.sunflowerbakery.org/products/birthday/> Sunflower Bakery can be reached at 301-321-3280).

What to Bring

We ask that you please bring the following items the day before or the morning of your child's celebration:

- Sealed Kosher birthday treat (small cupcakes)
- Photos of your child from each year (from birth to now)
- If you would like to bring a present for the class, such as a building toy, it would be greatly appreciated by the kids and the class (See birthday list or consult the teacher for more info).

Birthday Parties/Invitations Outside of School

Our school includes everyone in the party regardless of their level of Kosher observance or religious observance. Out of consideration to all children, birthday parties and other gatherings outside of school, to which members of the class are invited, should **not** be held on Saturdays. Please provide kosher food and drinks at parties or gatherings to which members of your child's class are invited. Even if there is only one child who keeps kosher, providing kosher

food such as pizza, drinks, candy, and cake for everyone ensures that ***no child is made to feel "different" or excluded***. Party invitations may be distributed at school only if the entire class is invited to ensure that all children feel comfortable and respected.

Emergency & Security Policy

Main Door Policy

The front entrance door is locked at all times with the exception of morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times. All visitors must be buzzed in by the main office. Upon entering or leaving the school, parents need to make sure the door is closed behind them.

Playground Area Policy

The Playground is a gated area. During the morning outdoor playtime, there will be staff members outside with the children. If one or more children need to be escorted inside, such as to go to the bathroom, the other staff members will remain on the playground and one will go with the children and return with them to assure their whereabouts. Furthermore, one of the three staff members will be stationed at the playground to secure the gate at all times. Each day the number of children present will be posted on the Emergency Door bulletin board. Before entering the building after playtime, the children are required to line up with their buddy partner.

Visitor Policy

Unknown visitors to our school should understand that they will be asked to “sign in,” stating their name, address, the reason for visit, and show proof of ID with photo and or driver’s license.

We are happy to give parents or prospective parents a tour of our school as long as it is pre-arranged with the office. Other visitors may only visit with advanced permission from the director.

Emergency Preparedness

Our school is taking part in the national effort to be ready for emergencies. FEMA has recently published a full guideline called "Are You Ready?", an in-depth guide to citizen preparedness. This is an informative guide for times of natural emergencies such as floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, and more, including Technological Hazards and Terrorism. Being prepared can reduce fear and anxiety. It is highly recommended that all families print out a copy of Emergency Contact Numbers that can be found under this section of the Parents Page and keep it next to your phone. More info can be found on the Department of Homeland Security's website www.ready.gov or by calling 1-800-be-ready for printed information.

Emergency Contact Numbers

Agency/Service	Telephone Numbers
Ambulance	911
Emergency Operations – County Cert:	240-777-2300
Evacuation Site – Luxmanor School	301-230-5914

Health Department	240-777-3986
Hospital – Suburban Hospital	240-826-6000
Hospital – Shady Grove Hospital	301-253-6300
Local Office of Child Care	240-314-1400
Poison Control Center	1-800-222-1222
Utilities – Water	1-800-828-6431
Utilities – Electric (PEPCO)	202-833-7500
Utilities – Gas (Washington Gas)	1-888-941-4328
Local Emergency Alert System (EAS) Radio Stn.	WTOP 103.5 FM, WGOP 540 AM, WYKS 93.9, WSMO 98.3

Emergencies

All full-time staff members are trained in child CPR/First Aid. When your child has an emergency or is ill, a staff member will notify you immediately to discuss a plan of action. Please be sure all of your student forms are updated and current, including all phone contacts.

Evacuation Policy

In case of an emergency event that requires evacuation of the School, staff members will take the first aid bags, Emergency Forms, and Attendance Sheets and evacuate the children to the parking lot.

Leaving the School

Please be advised that no child will be released to someone other than their parents without written authorization. Parents can submit a release form that includes the names of their child's caregiver and others you have authorized to pick up your child at Alef Bet Montessori on a regular basis. Please keep the form updated. If someone other than those authorized on the form will be taking your child home, please alert the staff with a written note that includes the name of the person that will be picking up your child from school along with contact information for that person.

Reporting of Child Abuse

Any staff member of the school who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subject to abuse or neglect, or has observed the child being subject to circumstances or conditions which could result in abuse or neglect, is mandated and required to immediately report such observations to the county department of human services or local law enforcement.

Parents suspecting any type of abuse can make reports through the same agency or local law enforcement. The reporting agency is Child Protective Services 240-777-4417

Carpool Line Chart

