OCEAN STATE
MONTESSORI
SCHOOL

FAMILY
HANDBOOK

The Ocean State Montessori School's Family Handbook is published to provide information on student life so students and families may gain as much as possible from their experience at the Ocean State Montessori School. The Handbook is informed by Montessori pedagogy, the Ocean State Montessori School's vision and mission statements, and our core community values. Students, parents/guardians, faculty, administration, and staff should all read and be familiar with the contents of the Handbook, so that each member of the community knows and understands the expectations of students and families within our community. This Handbook is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to create, nor does it create a contract or part of a contract in any way, including, but not limited to, between Ocean State Montessori School and any parent, guardian or student affiliated with or attending the school. The Ocean State Montessori School reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to alter, amend, delete or modify the policies and procedures in this Handbook at any time.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome from the Head of School

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the Ocean State Montessori School! Please take time to review this Family Handbook and familiarize yourself with its contents. We hope you will find it helpful when you have questions about our school's mission, policies or Montessori pedagogy in general.

You will notice that our handbook opens with our Vision and Mission Statements, followed by our Community Agreement. These documents hinge on a partnership between OSMS and our students' families. As such, we have included an entire section titled "Partnership Between Families and the Ocean State Montessori School," which addresses certain aspects of what families can expect of us and what we expect of our students' parents and guardians.

It is crucial that we support each other in nurturing independence, self-esteem and a lifelong love of learning in the children we serve. The intention of this handbook is to communicate as clearly as possible how to help create a successful partnership throughout your child's journey at OSMS. Whether this is your first year at the Ocean State Montessori School, or your child is poised to graduate from the sixth grade, we encourage each of you to take the time to read and reflect on the contents of this handbook.

Thank you for sharing your children with us. We look forward to a peaceful and productive year at the Ocean State Montessori School.

Sincerely,

Amy W. Andrews
Head of School

Vision Statement

Our vision is to develop each child's full potential as collaborative and self-directed learners by providing an academically excellent, interdisciplinary Montessori experience in partnership with our parents that nurtures each child's intellectual curiosity, connection with the natural world, academic accomplishment and social and emotional growth as they become engaged citizens of the world.

Mission Statement

The Ocean State Montessori School fosters independence, self-esteem and a life-long love of learning by providing an academically excellent and nurturing Montessori environment for children in preschool through sixth grade.

Community Agreement

The Ocean State Montessori School has two rules: Respect and Safety. The following agreement is a series of positive statements developed by our faculty and Head of School about how our two school rules are enacted in our day-to-day behavior at OSMS. We expect our students, their families, and our faculty and staff to follow these guidelines.

Be Respectful

We are KIND

- Be courteous and sensitive to the needs of others. Words like please, thank you and excuse me are commonly heard throughout our school

We are TIMELY

- Be observant of classroom hours, due dates and expectations. Montessori pedagogy prepares children for life skills such as time management. Help them be successful by getting them to school on time.

We are MINDFUL

- Be aware that the workday does not end at the same time for everyone. Brains are hard at work in many classrooms and offices. Keep conversations quiet when dropping off or picking up throughout the day.

Be Safe

We are CAUTIOUS

- Make safe choices. Walk inside the building. Keep hands in your own personal space. Use inside voices.

We are PRESENT

- Keep children in your sight at all times. Children may not wander the building or enter classrooms once they are dismissed.

We are ATTENTIVE

- Be aware of the rules inside the school and on the grounds of OSMS. If you aren't sure about a rule, ask someone.

History of the Ocean State Montessori School

The Ocean State Montessori School was founded in 1973 when a group of parents secured a grant to buy Montessori materials and hired a teacher and two assistants to teach thirty students in the Presbyterian Church in Barrington. In 1977 the school moved. Twenty 3 to 6-year-old children were taught each year in rooms rented from various East Providence churches. In 1983 the Ocean State Montessori School moved to quarters at the St. Francis Xavier Church where we stayed for over twenty years. At first, we rented a single room with an adjacent playground where both a morning and an afternoon Montessori class were held. In 1986 the school began to provide an extended day program for families needing childcare beyond the scheduled school day. As enrollment climbed, additional staff members were added, and more classrooms were obtained for use.

The Ocean State Montessori School opened a Lower Elementary program in 1999 and an Upper Elementary program in 2002. In November of 2002 the Ocean State Montessori School moved to our current location at 100 Grove Avenue. This facility offered a multitude of bright sunny classrooms as well as much needed space for storage, meetings, offices and expansion. The Wee Threes program was added in September 2008. In 2017, we extended our Primary 3 (kindergarten) program from a half-day to a full day.

The Ocean State Montessori School currently provides a Montessori education for children ages 3 through 12, as well as an extended day program. The Ocean State Montessori School is approved by the RI Department of Education as a non-public school and is licensed by the RI Department of Human Services as a Child Care Center for preschool and school aged children. OSMS is an associate member of the American Montessori Society and a member of the International Montessori Council, Montessori Schools of Massachusetts and the Association of Independent Schools in New England.

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN FAMILIES AND THE OCEAN STATE MONTESSORI SCHOOL[1]

What does OSMS expect from families?

Q. What is the school's most basic expectation of families?
A. Make continuing efforts both to understand and to embrace the Montessori approach and to work in partnership with the school. These efforts should begin before admission. The school seeks to admit families who understand and embrace the mission of the school. To that end, we help families learn about the Montessori approach by providing information and opportunities for parent/guardian education as part of the admission process—so that families can make an informed decision in choosing to enroll their children—and continue to provide more opportunities throughout a family's years at the school.

Once children are enrolled, the school expects parents/guardians to attend regularly scheduled conferences with teachers and parent/guardian education events, and to familiarize themselves with the philosophy, policies, and procedures contained in the Family Handbook and other school publications. Children thrive when home and schoolwork together in harmony, with both environments sharing the same educational values and expectations.

Q. What contribution can I make to a positive school community?
A. Demonstrate respect for all adults and children, the school, and the school's programs and policies (see OSMS Community Agreement). Model for your children respect—for them, their classmates, families of classmates, teachers and other school staff—in short, for everyone associated with the school. Respect begins with civility and deepens into trust. Our most fundamental behavioral guidelines for the children are, "respect yourself, respect others, and respect the environment." We expect the same from adults, families, and school staff, at all times and in all relationships within the school community. This includes speech and outward behavior. Support your child by speaking of their teachers, classmates, and school in positive terms. Respect and abide by the school's policies and procedures. Honor your commitments. Look for ways to make a positive contribution to the life of the school. Through your behavior, you contribute to your children's moral development and to the culture and climate of their school, which they experience daily.

Q. How can I create consistency between home and school?
A. Strive to parent according to Montessori principles. Learn as much as you can about Montessori principles as they apply to preparation of your child's home environment. This begins with the general principle, "never do something for your child that they can do for themself." Allow your child to engage in all the simple tasks of practical life that a child can do for themself at each stage of development. Montessori education may also entail learning a communication style different from the way in which we were parented. Children develop a love of learning and become responsible, independent, and capable when their family's values and expectations are consistent with those of the school.

Q. What are my responsibilities regarding communication between home and school?
A. Maintain active, direct and respectful, two-way communication with the school. Read communications that are sent home, including all information contained in family pocket communications, Weekly Update emails from Ms. Amy, teacher newsletters, and calendars. Inform the school in a timely fashion of pertinent changes in your child's life.

Active communication involves sharing observations and concerns about your child with the child's current teacher. In matters large and small, remember the principle of respect: even when there is disagreement, disagree respectfully. Children prosper most when the primary voices in their lives sing in harmony. Let's work together for that music to happen.

[1] Adapted from *The Post Oak School's Family Handbook*
https://www.postoakschool.org/images/postoak/PDF/Publications/Post_Oak_Family_Handbook_2017-18.pdf

What can families expect from OSMS?

Q. What can I expect of the school academically?
A. Ocean State Montessori School aspires to fulfill its mission as a Montessori school. As a Montessori school, we are different from conventional schools. Our first commitment is to the multi-dimensional development of the child. Montessori children do amass a great deal of factual knowledge in school. However, our aim is for each child to be far more than a repository of this information: we guide each child to think for themself. Cognitive development and a solid academic foundation are important, yet they represent only one dimension of our aspirations for your child. Equally significant is your child's social, emotional, spiritual, and physical development.

Children are given choices and a great deal of freedom—within limits—during the school day. The choices a child makes, and the accompanying responsibilities, influence the emerging character of your child. Choosing their own work or shaping it to a considerable degree, following that work through to completion; while working independently or in cooperation with others, the Montessori child identifies their interests and develops their individual gifts.

Ocean State Montessori School students influence each other to be self-motivated. Significant emphasis is placed upon community service. Younger children learn by serving their small community, e.g. classmates, classroom, and family. As they grow, children reach out to the larger community and experience the many rewards of helping others. The children gain awareness and appreciation of others, of the challenges faced by others, and equally importantly, of their own strengths and abilities to help others and affect the world around them. Community service is an integral and important part of their lives and stays with them well beyond their Ocean State Montessori School years.

We treat each child with dignity and respect and expect that they will treat all others with the same respect. We treat each child as an individual and strive to develop each child's unique gifts—within the context of the classroom and the school community. With freedom comes responsibility, and each child learns to balance their personal freedom with a clear sense of responsibility to themself, to others, and to the community as a whole.

Q. What can I expect in terms of communication from the school?
A. We aim to maintain open, honest, timely, and respectful communication with you about your child and about information affecting the school community. There are two regularly scheduled parent/guardian observation weeks followed by teacher conferences. The school distributes a weekly email, the school calendar, and other occasional invitations, updates and notes in the family pockets and through email. Throughout the year parents and guardians are given opportunities to volunteer in the classroom and to help with school-wide events. (Please see the Communications with Families section for more details.)

Q. What can I expect of the school environment?
A. We strive to ensure an environment that is physically and emotionally safe and supportive, as well as aesthetically beautiful. Dr. Montessori said that the classroom teacher's first responsibility is to prepare the environment. This means that the learning materials should correspond to the developmental characteristics of the child at each level, and that those materials must be attractive to the child: correct in size, aesthetically pleasing, well maintained, and complete. More broadly, the whole school environment must meet these criteria: to appeal to the child and to inspire their work. We are ever vigilant to ensure that the school building and grounds are physically safe, secure, and well maintained. Our community of children and adults comprise a social environment and culture that impacts the child's experience. We strive to make this environment emotionally supportive and safe for every child. This does not mean that there are no problems. It does mean that we will work with your child in developmentally appropriate ways to deal with problems as they arise, empowering them with social skills and aiding them in the development of emotional intelligence to prepare for a lifetime of working with others in different communities and organizations.

Q. What professional standards can I expect of the school and faculty?
A. The Ocean State Montessori School is approved by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) and the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS). The school is accredited as an associate member of

the American Montessori Society (AMS), the leading advocate and resource for quality Montessori education in the United States. OSMS is also a member of the International Montessori Council (IMC) and the Association of Independent Schools of New England (AISNE).

All lead teachers hold bachelor's or master's degrees and each lead teacher in our Montessori programs (Wee Threes, Primary, Elementary) has received or is working toward their AMS teaching credential from a Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) accredited teacher training center.

The school promotes a culture of professional growth in a number of ways. Lead teachers and guides work with the Head of School to continue their own professional growth. Each year the school sends several teachers to the annual AMS conference. Teachers who do not attend the conference attend AMS approved trainings and workshops. Each guide completes at least 20 hours of professional development each year, including workshops and seminars approved by DHS as well as personalized Montessori trainings developed by our Head of School. In addition, the school hosts workshops and conferences for professional development of faculty, staff, administration, and board.

Q. What can I expect of the school administration?
A. Integrity; a focus on the needs of the individual child in harmony with the life of the community; mission-driven decisions embodying good stewardship and responsible management; and an open door to your questions or concerns. Administrative staff interface with all the various constituencies of the school: students, parents/guardians, extended family, faculty, trustees, alumni, prospective families, former families, professional visitors, government officials, other schools and educational organizations, vendors, and the general public. In your interactions with administration, you can expect professional, courteous, and business-like conduct, as well as mutually respectful communication. School administrators often face decisions requiring a balance of competing priorities. Sometimes those factors are mutually exclusive; sometimes equally well-intentioned adults see matters differently. In making decisions, the administration will focus on the interest of the individual child in balance with the needs of the school.

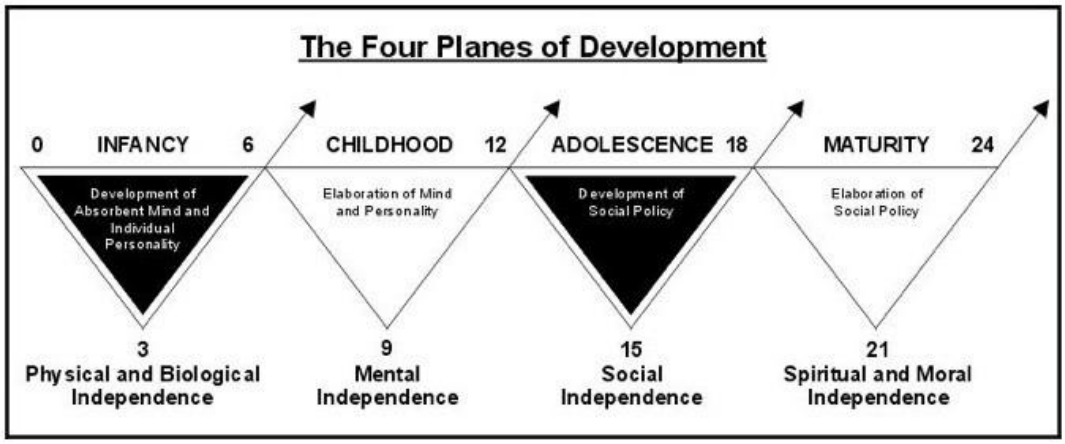
Babysitting and Outside Care Conflict of Interest

It is against OSMS policy for families to employ Ocean State Montessori School faculty and staff for in-home childcare. This policy is furnished to maintain the professional integrity of our school program. Employees of the Ocean State Montessori School may not provide babysitting or childcare for Ocean State Montessori School students at any time.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE OCEAN STATE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

OSMS is founded upon the teaching practices developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator. The Montessori philosophy of education guides all we do from curriculum and materials to our interactions with children and the language we use to communicate with them.

Dr. Montessori developed a method of teaching based on her scientific observations of young children's behavior. Her first "Children's House" was established in Rome in 1907. She found children learned best in a homelike environment filled with developmentally appropriate materials that provide experiences which contribute to the growth of self-motivated, independent learners. Dr. Montessori carried her message across the globe, including the United States in 1912. Dr. Nancy Rambusch established the American Montessori Society in 1960. Montessori education in the United States appeals to those who embrace it because of its outcomes for students. The American families who originally chose Montessori education matched their views of child rearing. They saw their children as moral beings, which over time would become the socially responsible people Montessori had envisioned. And they saw their children becoming confident, competent learners.



Planes of Development

Dr. Montessori's theory of cognitive, social and emotional development is rooted in the Four Planes of Development.

> *With regard to the child, education should correspond to them, so that instead of dividing the schools into nursery, primary, secondary and university, we should divide education in planes and each of these should correspond to the phase the developing individuality goes through.*
>
> -Dr. Maria Montessori

First Plane: Ages 0-6 "Early Childhood" (Individual Creation of the Person)[2]
This stage is characterized by the young child's "absorbent mind." Children have a desire for physical independence ("I can do it myself!") and are interested in real activities with an intelligent purpose. Sensitive periods during this plane include: movement, language, small objects, toileting, order, music, grace and courtesy, senses, writing, reading, spatial relationships, and mathematics.

Second Plane: Ages 6-12 "Childhood" (Construction of the Intelligence)
Children in the second plane of development have a thirst for knowledge, love of imagination, fascination with fairness, and a desire for intellectual independence. This is the time for "cosmic education," in which the child explores their place within the world and comes to appreciate the interconnectedness of all things. This is also the "bridge to abstraction"—the transition from concrete to abstract thinking. Children in this plane have a desire for intellectual independence. ("I can think it myself!")

Third Plane: Ages 12-18 "Adolescence" (Construction of the Social Self)
Children in the third plane of development are characterized by self-concern and self-assessment. This is a sensitive period for both critical thinking and exploring social and moral values. Adolescents in this plane have a desire for emotional independence. ("I can stand on my own.")

Fourth Plane: Ages 18-24 and Beyond "Adulthood" (Construction of Self Understanding)
The fourth plane of development is characterized by the construction of the spiritual self. Young adults are in the process of conscious discernment of right and wrong, seeking to discover their place within the world. Young adults in the plane have a desire for financial independence. ("I can get it myself.")

Within these planes of development are three-year cycles, a period of intense acquisition and a period of refinement and assimilation. This happens both over the six-year plane in a broad sense and within the three-year cycle in a more specific or refined sense.

The infant and toddler learn to crawl and walk, the young child learns to run and skip. During these planes of development are sensitive periods for acquiring certain skills. Think of the toddler who has to open or close all the cabinet doors - the sensitive period for order, the 4-year-old that colors for hours- the sensitive period for writing, the 9-year-old that plays games for hours-the sensitive period for rules, fairness, fantasy. The multiage

[2] Adapted from an article by Margaret Jarrell, Courtesy of Greenspring Montessori 2013.

classrooms, three-year curriculum and specific materials in a Montessori school are designed to meet the needs of the children as they move through these developmental planes in a three-year cycle. If a child hasn't had the opportunity to internalize a certain skill, it is important they are given the opportunity to do so.

You can't learn to read or count to 100 if you haven't mastered being able to concentrate on a task. Giving the child three years to explore the environment and materials gives them the opportunity to have the time to meet those needs. As we know, everyone learns differently and at different rates. Even as adults the more experience we have with a concept or skill the more we understand and can then impart that knowledge to others- from playing tennis to mastering a new computer program. By the end of the three-year cycle the child will have had the opportunity to move through part of a plane of development and will have assimilated the acquired skills they need to start the next developmental phase in the next classroom. For this reason, the third year in Montessori classroom is sometimes called the *leadership year*. This is when students internalize all the various skills for which they have both indirectly and directly prepared during the earlier years. It is also the time when students become self-possessed learners, confident in their abilities. It's when they emerge as leaders, eager to share their skills with their younger peers.

Key Aspects of the Montessori Method:[3]

- Deep **respect** for children as individuals
- **Multiage classes** allow teachers to develop close and long-term relationships with their students, allow them to know each other's learning style well, and encourage older students to become role models, mentors, and leaders to younger students.
- **Integrated curriculum** is carefully structured and connects subjects within programs (e.g., history and cultural arts) to maximize the opportunity for learning and builds from program to program to progress from concrete to abstract learning.
- **Independence** is nurtured and leads to children becoming purposeful, motivated, and confident in their own abilities.
- **Peace and conflict resolution** are taught daily and children learn to be a part of a warm, respectful, and supportive community.
- The child creates, in a very real sense, the adult that is to be, through their experiences, interactions, and environments. **Character development** is a central focus of the Montessori curriculum.
- **Hands-on learning** is central to the curriculum in all programs and leads to children being engaged rather than passive with their work.
- The environments are responsibly and carefully prepared with multisensory, sequential, and self-correcting materials to support **self-directed learning**.
- Teachers and children and teachers and families work together as a warm and supportive **community**.
- **Self-expression** is nurtured in all children. Children experience art, music, poetry, theater, writing, and other forms of creative arts with confidence and passion.
- **Uninterrupted Work Time** –The purpose of long, uninterrupted blocks of work time is to allow students to freely select work, eventually becoming absorbed in work that has a particular fascination for them at this point in their development. Interruptions disturb the development of the child's focus, concentration, and opportunity to deeply delve into work. During this uninterrupted work time, teachers also have the opportunity to present lessons to the children, ensuring that lessons are given and work is explored in all areas of the classroom.

Examples of Daily Classroom Schedules

Primary Classroom ***(8:15 am to 11:45 am)***

8:15 – 8:30 am	Drop-Off
8:30 – 8:45 am	Circle
8:45 – 10:45 am	Instructional time
10:45 – 11:15 am	Recess
11:15 – 11:45 am	Circle
11:45 – 12:00 pm	Dismissal/Children's Room

[3] Excerpted from *Montessori in the 21st Century*. The American Montessori Society. 2003.

Primary 3/Kindergarten ***(8:15 am to 3:15 pm)***

8:15 – 8:30 am	Drop-Off
8:30 – 8:45 am	Circle
8:45 – 10:45 am	Instructional time
10:45 – 11:15 am	Recess
11:15 – 1:45 am	Circle
12:00 – 12:30 pm	Lunch
12:30 – 1:40 pm	Instructional time
1:40 – 2:10 pm	Recess/Rest/ Reading – no nap gear required
2:10 – 3:05 pm	Specials class (Science, Phys Ed, Art, Health, Spanish)
3:15 – 3:30 pm	Dismissal

Elementary (***8:15 am to 3:15 pm)***

8:15 – 8:30 am	Drop-Off
8:30 – 12:00 pm	Instructional time
12:00 – 12:30 pm	Lunch
12:30 – 1:00 pm	Recess
1:00 – 3:15 pm	Instructional time
3:15 – 3:30 pm	Dismissal

Learner Outcomes

Consistent with the Montessori Method, the OSMS curriculum is designed to achieve the following learner outcomes:

- Independence
- Confidence and Competence
- Autonomy
- Intrinsic Motivation
- Ability to Handle External Authority
- Social Responsibility
- Academic Preparation (learning to learn)
- Spiritual Awareness
- World Citizenship

APPROACH TO DISCIPLINE

Children have more need of models than of critics. –Joseph Joubert

We believe that the people who work with young children on a regular basis must be sensitive, warm, caring, knowledgeable, and interested professionals. They must be able to identify individual qualities, to design and implement a program and an environment that will be conducive to positive growth in all areas of development. Teachers must offer authentic role models for interactions with others and display a sincere enthusiasm for active learning.

The educational philosophy of the Ocean State Montessori School is that real, effective discipline is one that comes from within a person. Developing this inner discipline is one of the objectives of the Ocean State Montessori School. It is our belief that inner discipline develops in a child through active involvement in self-chosen tasks and the development of self-control. The development of inner discipline in a child is always the goal in Montessori education. The clear organization of the physical environment; the structure, consistency, and predictability of daily school life; the indirect manner of teaching interpersonal skills through the lessons of "grace and courtesy"; the reliance on peer modeling and coaching channel positive behavior. Appreciation and empathy help to limit difficulties.

It is our belief that if the ground rules are consistently followed and positively reinforced, the necessity of external discipline will be diminished. However, when such external discipline is deemed necessary, the following will be observed without failure:

1. Suggest alternative activities.

2. Persistent misbehavior in a group setting may lead to temporary removal from the group while remaining in the classroom. Behavioral expectations are made clear and the child is asked if they are ready to return to the group.

3. Converse with the child who constantly seems to be in need of discipline; explore ways of making life more pleasant. Problem-solving skills are reinforced and alternative behavior choices are suggested.

4. Teach the child that emotions are real and valid, and how to deal with them in constructive ways with kind words rather than physical responses.

5. If the behavior persists, parents/guardians will be notified and joint action will be taken. The Head of School will be notified of persistent, inappropriate behavior and may make recommendations to the parents/guardians in regard to outside referrals or additional behavior management programs.

6. The Head of School will make suggestions regarding alternative schools that may better meet the needs of the child, as necessary. Each situation may warrant a different timeframe as families work to schedule testing, evaluation and/or treatment/intervention. The Teacher and Head of School will work together to determine when it is time to ask a student to leave the Ocean State Montessori School and will meet together with parents/guardians to present this decision.

Under no circumstances shall any child be subjected to corporal punishment in any manner upon the body or to verbal abuse.

Children are encouraged to express their feelings and opinions in a non-judgmental atmosphere, and adults use active listening and empathic understanding to help interpret a situation with those involved. The teacher sets the tone for bringing the child into harmony by avoiding harsh words, bribes, and generalizations. As children feel accepted for who they are and what they feel, they develop positive self-esteem. The happier children are with themselves, the more likely they are to reach out and interact cooperatively with others.

With Wee Threes and Primary

Living peacefully with others is an overwhelming challenge for toddlers when their strongest and most impulsive language is through their bodies and not their words. Cognitively, motor messages override verbal messages at this developmental age. Even when words do come, sometimes they do not accurately or effectively express what the child is trying to say.

Toddlers expend enormous amounts of energy getting their bodies to do what they want them to do and to go where they want them to go. Frustration can precipitate tears or whining and even biting, pushing, or pinching. Though not acceptable behaviors, these responses are effective toddler ways of communicating frustration. Thankfully, most toddlers do usually develop acceptable ways of venting these feelings as they become more comfortable in the environment.

For minor, nonchalant misbehaviors, gentle redirection toward work, which will re-engage the interest of the student, is often all that is necessary.

For recurring, minor misbehaviors, a teacher may temporarily limit the child's choice of workspace and/or quietly state the impact of such behavior on class materials or on other children's feelings. We help the child use language to describe what they need or want.

When a toddler persists in aggressive behavior, the adult stays by the child's side until the child has calmed and can refocus their attention positively. During periods of unacceptable behavior, teachers continue to interact with the child, using gentle, positive support and clear, simple language. 1. Teachers may meet with parents/guardians to share concerns and discuss ways to replace the aggression with positive coping mechanisms. 2. Teachers must also inform the Head of School of concerns and decide together an appropriate course of action, if follow-up is needed.

With Primary and Elementary

For minor, nonchalant misbehaviors, gentle redirection toward work, which will re-engage the interest of the student, is still often all that is necessary.

For recurring, minor misbehaviors, a teacher may temporarily limit the child's choice of workspace and/or quietly discuss the impact of such behavior on class materials or on other children's feelings.

For more serious misbehaviors, staff members will immediately intervene to protect the child from the hurtful consequences of their own actions, to ensure the safety of others, and to prevent serious damage to the environment. The child may be temporarily removed from the group activity to reflect with a teacher on what happened and on what they can do to remedy the situation. A phone call or conference must be convened with the parents/guardians to inform and decide together an appropriate course of action, if follow-up is needed. Teachers must also inform the Head of School of concerns and decide together an appropriate course of action, if follow-up is needed.

The Ocean State Montessori School's Biting-Incident Policy

Biting often results from frustrated, inadequate communication and/or lack of impulse control—two developmental tasks that toddlers, and even some older children are intensely engaged in. Toddlers are in the process of mastering language and often lack the words to fully express their needs, feelings, and thoughts. In the absence of words, toddlers employ their bodies; they push, grab, scratch, and sometimes bite. A bite by an older child is more unusual, but usually still stems from the inability of a child to be successful in using words to resolve a conflict.

Because impulse control is still being developed in young children, there can be a lag between what a young child wants immediately and learning to be calm and wait for something. Often giving words to children who have bitten once or teaching them to take turns will help with the behavior and typically there will not be another bite. It is not unusual however, for a toddler to bite once or twice.

When a child bites another child at the Ocean State Montessori School, our policy is that both sets of parents/guardians are called and informed of the incident without using the other child's name. The parents/guardians of the child who has bitten are given some advice by the classroom teaching team that speaks to the developmental tasks discussed above.

Right after the biting incident, the child who has bitten is told that biting hurts, and that biting is not allowed. The child is asked to use their words to resolve conflict and express feelings, not their teeth. The child is then encouraged to participate in repairing the bite. This means attending to the hurt child by giving the hurt child an ice pack after the wound is washed.

The hurt child is usually calmed by one of the other teachers who administers first aid and attends to the child until they feel okay. The hurt child is also told that the teachers will be very careful so that the child will not get hurt again. The biting child is then "shadowed" in the classroom by a teacher, given a lot of guidance and language and is watched for other biting attempts or impulsive behavior. After both children are calm and feel more comfortable an incident report is written by the teachers. The forms are then handled according to the procedures in place for Accident and Incident paperwork.

If the biting behavior continues, and this means after two bites, a meeting is then set up between the Head of School and the parents/guardians of the child who is biting. **Every subsequent bite after the second bite occurs, the parents/guardians are called by the administration to pick up their child.** The Head of School is also immediately informed of the biting incident and places a call to the parents/guardians. The Head of School schedules another meeting with the parents/guardians and sometimes must suggest that the parents/guardians consider having their child evaluated for oral/motor sensory therapy and/or play therapy.

If the above procedures are not successful, the Head of School will discuss other alternatives with the parents/guardians, including the option of the child taking a break from school.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Policies for Maintaining a Safe, Secure, Positive and Respectful Atmosphere

At OSMS we believe that preventing bullying and/or harassment is critical for creating and maintaining a safe, secure, positive and respectful atmosphere, which supports academic achievement, increases school

engagement, respects the rights of all individuals and groups, and purposefully builds community. The Peace Education component of our curriculum takes a preventative approach to bullying by teaching self-respect and respect for peers, teachers, and the environment. For more information, including the process for reporting, investigating and taking appropriate disciplinary action, please see OSMS' Bullying Response Policy and OSMS's Policy Against Discrimination and Harassment, in our School Policies section below.

Building Security

All visitors to OSMS must check in at the Main Office.

The Ocean State Montessori School is a secured building with all doors remaining locked at all times. During the school day, children are not to leave their classroom or the building without the permission of their teacher. However, freedom of movement within the classroom is a part of the Montessori approach to education. Some classrooms allow children to work in the hallways of the school as well. Children are often given permission to walk to other parts of the building during the day. Each classroom develops a monitoring system that lets the teacher know the comings and goings of each child.

Ocean State Montessori Emergency Plan

In some situations we evacuate our building and go to our Safe Haven and in other situations we 'lock down' or 'shelter in place' inside our building. Details are below.

Emergency Phone Numbers

If an emergency requires calling for an ambulance, Police, and/or Fire Department, the following procedures should be followed:

- Police/Fire/Ambulance: 911
- Poison Control Center: 1-800-222-1222
- RI Energy Gas-Related Emergency: 1-800-640-1595
- RI Energy Electric - downed power line: 1-855-743-1101

Nearest Hospital: Hasbro Children's Hospital / Rhode Island Hospital, 593 Eddy St, Providence, RI 02903

Local Safe Haven: Weaver Public Library, 41 Grove Avenue, East Providence, RI 02914

Training and Drills

In accordance with State law, emergency drills are conducted multiple times throughout the year. Building evacuation drills to our Safe Haven are conducted at least annually. All students and staff are required to participate in these mandated drills. The school administration will maintain a record of these drills. Staff/faculty will receive training on the Ocean State Montessori School's Emergency Plan implementation, including their respective assigned emergency response functions and use of supplies in the disaster kits.

Dismissal During Emergencies

On Walk to Safe Haven: Once we are en route to our Safe Haven, no child will be released until we have reached our destination. A parent/guardian's responsibility, should they arrive during our safe movement to our site, is to assist in whatever may be needed. We will release children only when we have received advisement from East Providence or State of Rhode Island Emergency Services.

Sheltering in Place: Should we need to 'shelter in place' or 'lock down,' no parents/guardians will be allowed in or out of the building until we receive advisement from the East Providence or State of Rhode Island Emergency Services.

Parent/Guardian Notification: If possible, parents/guardians will be notified by e-mail and/or text message, and we will leave a message on the answering machine in the school office. Teachers will use their classroom lists to make calls by cellular phone should there not be enough time to notify parents/guardians by e-mail or change the message on the answering machine. If cellular phones are inoperable, the children will remain with their teachers at the Safe Haven until an approved adult arrives to retrieve them.
NOTE: Whether we are in our Safe Haven or in our building, we will ONLY release children to those whose names are on the approved pick-up lists provided by the parents/guardians.

Student Safety and Health Policies

All faculty and staff at OSMS receive training in first aid, CPR, and the use of EpiPens. If an accident or injury occurs, faculty respond immediately and follow emergency procedures. Each classroom is equipped with a first-aid kit that is inspected regularly.

Accident and Incident Report Forms

All accidents involving students are reported to the Administration as soon as possible following the event. After the injury is handled, the adult who administered first aid to the injured child fills out an *Accident Report Form*, which includes how and where the injury occurred, how it was treated and what follow-up is recommended. The injured child's parent/guardian will be required to review and sign the form on the day of the accident. The signed form is retained by OSMS and the parent/guardian may request a copy.

When an Ocean State Montessori School student has an incident at school, the staff member handling the situation must report what happened to the Administration as soon as possible following the event. The staff member completes an *Incident Report Form* as soon after the incident as possible, including a description of the incident, others involved, action taken and suggested follow-up. The involved child(ren)'s parent/guardian will be required to review and sign the form on the day of the incident. The signed form is retained by OSMS and the parent/guardian may request a copy. In order to preserve student privacy, if other children are involved in the incident, only the original copy (for the Head of School) will include the names of the other children.

Suspected Child Neglect or Abuse

Any observation of unexplained bruises, cuts, burns, etc., or any suspected child neglect or abuse should be reported to the Administration immediately. Our faculty and staff are trained to identify signs of child neglect and abuse and are required to report any suspicions of child neglect and/or abuse to the designated authorities.

Medications

If your child requires medication, please confer with your doctor and, if possible, obtain medication that can be administered at home. If it is absolutely necessary that your child have medication administered during school hours, please request a *Medication Dispending Form* from the Administration. All medications must be delivered to the main office and the administrative staff will see that the appropriate faculty or staff member is enlisted to dispense the medication. **Do not send medication to school in your child's lunch box, backpack, etc.**

It is the policy of OSMS to administer prescription medications only and only with written consent from the parent/guardian. School staff will not administer non-prescription medication, including aspirin, vitamins, herbal remedies or other over-the-counter pain relievers, etc. Medication must be in the original pharmacy-issued container with the child's name, medication and dosage instructions clearly labeled. The only exception to the prescription medication policy is for Benadryl for students with allergies who may need Benadryl in case of an allergic reaction, either before or in conjunction with Epi-Pen administration.

Staff administering the medication will document each time the medication is administered on the *Medication Dispensing Form*.

Life-Threatening Allergic Reaction and Epi-Pen Administration

In the case of a severe allergic reaction, we follow the steps outlined above under "Serious Injury." All staff and faculty who work with your child have been trained to recognize allergy symptoms and how to administer the EpiPen.

Children with prescriptions for Epi-Pens must have a *Medication Dispensing Form* on record with the school. An Epi-Pen (and Benadryl as needed) must be provided to the school along with this form and will be kept in the child's classroom. Children who attend the extended day program should bring in a second Epi-Pen to be kept in the extended day classroom.

If a child experiences a severe allergic reaction, our faculty and staff have been trained to administer an Epi-Pen even if we do not have a *Medication Dispensing Form* on file.

No Nut Policy

The Ocean State Montessori School is a nut-free school. Nuts of any type (tree nuts and peanuts) are not allowed as a snack, part of a child's lunch, or during OSMS events .

We will not serve an item if:

- we cannot verify the ingredients,
- the ingredients contain nuts or nut by-products (almond extract, peanut oil, etc.),
- the ingredient label states that the product
    - was made in a facility that also processes nuts
    - was made on equipment that manufactures food with nuts
    - may contain nuts or nut oils

When you send in a snack for the classroom you must send it in its original packaging or list all ingredients used. If you use a mix, please send the ingredient list from the package as well as what else was added (eggs, milk, type of oil, etc.). If we find a product containing nuts, the snack will not be served and we will send an "Oops, you sent in something with nuts" note.

Other Allergies and Dietary Restrictions

We have a number of children with other food allergies or dietary restrictions, including soy and eggs. Each classroom will monitor group snacks for other food allergies in their class. Teachers may ask parents/guardians of children with allergies or dietary restrictions to provide a "back-up snack" for their children so they will always have something appropriate to serve.

Illness

Any child who has one or more of the following symptoms should stay home from school. Students who develop these symptoms during the school day will be sent home from school. Students with the following symptoms will be required to remain home for at least 24 hours.

- Vomiting during the school day;
- Severe diarrhea (is bloody, causing bathroom accidents or causing two or more diarrheal incidents);
- Oozing skin sores that are undiagnosed and cannot be covered;
- Respiratory symptoms that are worsening or impeding ability to engage in schoolwork; or
- Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.

When a child becomes ill at school or OSMS suspects that the child may be suffering from a communicable disease, the following measures will be taken:

- The ill child will be brought to the office to keep them from exposing well children at OSMS until they can be taken home.
- The ill child's parents/guardians will be called to pick up the child.
- If the parents/guardians cannot be reached, OSMS will call the emergency contacts listed on the child's account.

Returning to school depends on the nature of the illness. For the symptoms above, individuals may return to school when:

- They are fever free for at least 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication.
- Fever with a new rash has been evaluated by a healthcare provider and fever has resolved.
- Uncovered skin sores are crusting, and the child is under treatment from a provider.
- Vomiting resolved overnight and the child can hold down food/liquid in the morning.
- Diarrhea has improved and the child is no longer having accidents and/or bowel movements were normal for 24 hours (bloody stool should be evaluated by a provider).
- Respiratory virus symptoms are getting better overall for at least 24 hours. Additional actions to reduce spread are encouraged.

After communicable disease exposure, OSMS staff will use sanitizing procedures and encourage staff and students to take extra precautions with hand washing, food handling, dish washing, etc.

Hearing and Vision Screening
Once a year, an outside service, East Providence Child Outreach, performs screenings at Ocean State Montessori School for children who live in Rhode Island and are aged 3, 4 or 5 on the date that testing is scheduled. Hearing screenings for Wee Threes through Lower Elementary are performed by RI School for Deaf. There are no fees for these services. Parents/guardians who choose to participate will be required to fill out a questionnaire prior to testing. If any concerns emerge from the testing, you will be notified directly by the testing service providers.

Smoking
The Ocean State Montessori School is a smoke-free environment; smoking is not permitted anywhere on school grounds or during offsite OSMS family events.

ATTENDANCE, ARRIVAL, AND DISMISSAL

Attendance: Why it Matters[4]

Consistent attendance and punctuality are important. The students who benefit most from the prepared environment are those who attend regularly and arrive punctually. There are several reasons for this:

- Student's experiences in the classroom are cumulative; consistent attendance bolsters learning.
- Parents/guardians' and students' shared commitment to regular and timely attendance at school affirms the importance of school and learning.
- Intermittent attendance, or periods of long absence, can affect students' adaptation to school and learning.

Teachers will counsel parents/guardians should absences become a hindrance to a child's progress and a course of action will be discussed.

Scheduling Appointments and Vacations
Please make every effort to ensure students attend regularly. Schedule family vacations and trips to coincide with school breaks and holidays. Students are expected to be in attendance on the day before and after a break or holiday. Schedule appointments with doctor, dentist, orthodontist, or other professionals outside of school hours.

Absences/Absenteeism
Parents/guardians are urged to stress the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. These characteristics should be fostered by both the family and the school. Remember our Community Agreement: We are timely.

If your child is going to be absent, arrive late, leave early or is not taking a bus, please email **attendance@oceanstatemontessori.org** *and* **your lead teacher(s)** with the reason for the absence, tardiness, or early departure. Direct emails to lead teachers are the most efficient means to communicate messages, but please remember they may not respond immediately while they are in the classroom with students.

Arrival and Dismissal
Please do not leave your child unattended in the hallway during morning drop-off, dismissal, or after extended day pick-up. It is important for the teacher to acknowledge your child's arrival and dismissal so that all children are accounted for at all times.

Students are required to be at OSMS from the beginning of their first commitment of the day until the completion of their last commitment. Students are expected to attend all class engagements, field experiences, school trips, class meetings, activities, and any other required school function.

If you need to pick up your child from school before the close of the regularly scheduled school day, please inform your child's teacher ahead of time. When you arrive to pick up your child, come to the front door to sign them out. A staff member will retrieve your child from their classroom and bring them to you.

[4] Adapted from *The Post Oak School's Family Handbook*
https://www.postoakschool.org/images/postoak/PDF/Publications/Post_Oak_Family_Handbook_2017-18.pdf

Late Arrivals/Tardiness

Please make every effort to get your child to school on time. Late arrivals are disruptive to those who have arrived on time, as well as to teachers who are trying to give uninterrupted lessons or conduct a morning circle. Children who arrive late miss their personal greeting by their teacher and miss the opportunity to say good morning to their friends before settling into their morning work. Children with excessive tardiness may put themselves at risk for not being invited back the following year.

We recognize that traffic jams and other obstacles may make families late on occasion. Please note that tardy arrivals will be recorded on our daily attendance records. This information is recorded on progress reports and becomes a part of the child's permanent record.

Drop-Off and Dismissal

All OSMS classrooms open at 8:15 am. Families should have their child to school no later than 8:30 am. All students are expected to enter their classrooms on their own. Goodbyes, hugs and kisses should take place before the child exits the car or outside the front door. Students are responsible for placing their own belongings on their hooks inside their classroom or in their lockers. If you arrive before 8:15 am, please wait in your vehicle for a staff member to open the Drive Thru door. Please do not park in the staff lot on John St. If you arrive after the Drive Thru Drop Off window has ended and the gate is locked, please park and walk your child to the front door. A staff member will escort them to their classroom.

Drop-Off Options

Drive Thru: Drive Thru Drop-Off is a service offered by OSMS to facilitate timely arrival to school. Families may drive through the gate near the blue dumpster via our John Street staff parking lot. Gates open at 8:15 am and close at 8:30 am. Teachers will be at designated exterior door #17 to help children safely exit vehicles and to direct them to their classrooms. Please make sure your child is unbuckled and ready to exit the car at drop off. This will allow the car line to move more quickly. Families should form a single line entering the staff parking lot, giving OSMS employees enough space to enter or exit the lot as needed. Remember the Drive Thru lane is one-way only. Please be mindful of traffic laws and aware of your vehicle position in the Drive Thru lane. Be careful not to block neighboring driveways and be aware that faculty and staff need access to the parking lot.
Front Door: All families have the option to drop off students at the front door #1. For front door drop off, please park along the street and walk your child to the front door. You will say goodbye to your child outside the front door and a staff member will escort them to their classroom.

Dismissal

All families will park and enter the school via door #2. Students are dismissed from their interior classroom doors and all individuals entering the building must be prepared to show photo ID at the front door and/or classroom door. Returning families should also bring a photo ID to show new staff members who may be dismissing students from classrooms. As always, your child's safety is our top priority. If you are running late to pick up your child, please call the main office so that we can notify your child and their teacher(s).

Wee Threes, Primary 1 & Primary 2: 11:45 am - 12:00 pm
Families will park and enter the school via door #2. A staff member will open the door at 11:45 am. If you arrive early, please wait in the front courtyard until the door is opened. Students will be dismissed to an authorized person from their interior classroom door.

Primary 3, Elementary and Extended Day 3:30 Group: 3:15 - 3:30 pm
Families will park and enter the school via door #2. A staff member will open the door at 3:15 pm. If you arrive early, please wait in the front courtyard until the door is opened. Students will be dismissed to an authorized person from their interior classroom door.

Extended Day 5:30 Group:
Families will park in the staff parking lot on John St after 3:45 pm and ring the doorbell/camera at the blue double doors #5. A staff member will escort the student to the door for dismissal. The school closes at 5:30 pm and we ask that you please arrive promptly at or before 5:30 pm.

Professional Development Days: 11:45 am
ALL students will be dismissed at 11:45am on Early Dismissal Professional Development Days. Please see the current School Calendar for specific dates.

Pick-Up List Authorization

Children are to be released only to individuals listed on their Authorized Pick-Up Forms, which each family submits in the OSMS Blackbaud Enrollment Management portal. Children will be released to their parent/guardian or to an authorized adult listed on the pick-up list or emergency contact list.

Parents/guardians may make changes to their child's authorized pick-up list at any time throughout the school year by contacting Administration and requesting to have the update form assigned in the portal. Once electronically signed and submitted by parents/guardians, the form will be received by the Administration and will be distributed to the child's teachers.

In case of emergency, a phone call made directly to the Administration by a parent/guardian, when a written notice from the parent/guardian is not possible, may authorize a change in that day's pick-up.

In the event that a change is to be made for pick-up (i.e. a child is going home with a friend) and the parent/guardian must enlist an individual who is not on the Authorized Pick-Up List, the school will release the child only under the following condition:

- a handwritten note or an email, signed by the parent/guardian, is sent to the lead teacher(s) and attendance@oceanstatemontessori.org directly from the parent or guardian

If a person other than the parent/guardian comes to pick up a child, the staff member in charge of releasing the child must ask to see a driver's license or photo ID. They will match the name on the ID to the printed version of the Authorized Pick-Up List. If no notice has been received by the school that this person is here to pick up the child, a member of the Administration must then be notified. It will be necessary for the Administration to contact and reach a parent/guardian to verbally confirm this release.

Approved Pick-Up Policy

- A child will be released to the parents/guardians listed on the account except in cases where a parent/guardian provides court documentation stating otherwise
- A child will be released to individuals listed on the Authorized Pick-Up List only under the following conditions:
    - the individual is recognized by the classroom teacher and is at least 16 ½ years of age, or
    - the individual provides proof of identity (valid photo ID) as an authorized pick-up person listed on the Authorized Pick-Up List. Parents/guardians may also be requested to provide proof of identity if not recognized by staff
- A child will be released to individuals not listed on the Authorized Pick-Up List only if:
    - a handwritten note or email, signed by the parent/guardian, is sent to the lead teacher(s) and attendance@oceanstatemontessori.org
    - in case of emergency, a phone call authorizing a one-time pick-up is made directly to the Administration by a parent/guardian
- The child will <u>not</u> be released to any individual who arrives to pick up if:
    - the individual does not appear on the Authorized Pick-Up List
    - the individual is not recognized by the staff and cannot provide proof of identity even though their name is on the Authorized Pick-Up List, or
    - prior arrangements have not been made according to criteria above.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Tuition

Each family is obligated to pay tuition in accordance with their Enrollment Agreement. As detailed below, Blackbaud Tuition Management provides the tuition management services for OSMS. OSMS's Tuition and Need Based Tuition Assistance Policy is included in the School Policies section below.

Blackbaud

Blackbaud Tuition Management provides tuition management services for the Ocean State Montessori School. OSMS uses this service to collect all tuition and fees as well as extended day and enrichment class fees and other miscellaneous items (e.g., Pizza Fridays, late pick-up fees, etc.).

Upon enrolling at OSMS each family is required to set up a Blackbaud Tuition Management account. Parents/guardians are responsible for keeping their own account up to date and for managing their own login and password information.

Depending upon the family's selection, Blackbaud will email a monthly invoice. All tuition and fees are due on the first or the fifteenth of the month, according to the selected payment plan. (See your Enrollment Agreement for specifics regarding payment plans.) Tuition and fees must be paid directly to Blackbaud. OSMS does not accept any in-school payments.

If a parent/guardian has a question about their bill, they can contact Blackbaud Tuition Management at 888-868-8828. Please have your family ID readily available for the quickest service. Accounts can also be accessed online 24 hours per day at: https://parent.blackbaud.school/Login.aspx

Tuition Management FAQ: https://parent.blackbaud.school/Enhanced/faq.aspx

Blackbaud Enrollment Management is a secure registration platform that provides OSMS families with a streamlined way to complete enrollment agreements and school paperwork, such as the Authorized Pick-Up Lists, Extended Day Program enrollment, field trip permission forms, etc.

Blackbaud systems help OSMS to be more administratively efficient and environmentally responsible. All school lists, directories, etc. are generated from information located on these systems. **If the information in the system is not accurate, OSMS will not have the correct information on file for that child. Please make every effort to ensure that you have filled out your family's forms fully and accurately**.

Additionally, any time there is a change to your child's personal information or that of a parent/guardian (including but not limited to an address change, new phone number, change in medical condition, etc.), please notify the Administration.

Food Guidelines

Food is not just the essential "fuel" for our bodies to function and develop; it also serves a social function. At OSMS we strive to promote the social aspect of food by providing opportunities for students to practice grace and courtesy:

- setting the table using tablecloths or place mats, china, glassware and silverware, napkins, centerpieces, etc.;
- setting aside a special place for a few children to eat snack when they wish;
- teaching table manners:
- saying "please" and "thank you";
- waiting to eat until everyone is served;
- chewing with the mouth closed;
- not speaking with food in the mouth;
- using silverware and napkins properly;
- waiting for others to finish;
- cleaning up and making the table ready for the next person.

General Lunch Guidelines

During the school year our students learn about the environment and recycling. OSMS encourages the use of reusable containers and the avoidance of excessive packaging.
Children should help prepare their own lunches at home until they are able to do it themselves. Involving them in shopping, reading labels, and planning meals is important in their ownership of what they eat. The more children know about what is good for them and why, as well as what is not good for them and why not, the more they will be able and willing to make positive choices on their own.

If your child forgot their lunch, please call the school. If you can bring in the lunch box, please deliver it to the main office. To promote individual responsibility and to maintain the integrity of the classroom lunch routine, please do not bring your child's lunch directly to the classroom or extended day programs.

Primary 3 and Elementary Lunch

All Primary 3 and Elementary students eat lunch in their Montessori classrooms. Preparing for lunch is a practical life responsibility for the students.

During Primary 3 and elementary lunches, a staff member is present to assist students as needed. Primary 3 students are encouraged to be independent and to open their own containers and choose the order in which they eat their food.

Children's Room Lunch

Wee Threes and Primary 1 and 2 students who participate in the extended day program eat lunch in their Children's Room. Although our extended day staff is available to assist our younger children during lunchtime, we encourage independence by allowing children to open their own containers and choose the order in which they eat their food.

Suggestions for helping your young child develop lunchtime independence:

- Have your child practice using a lunch box over the summer and on weekends
- Select a lunch box and containers that your child can easily open and close independently
- Pack several small food choices for your child to choose from
- Please avoid sending in juice boxes

Healthy Snack Suggestions

Please note the below list is not comprehensive. Feel free to email your child's teacher if you have questions about the appropriateness of your snack idea.

Dairy: cheese (slice cheese into squares or cubes, or send cheese sticks), yogurt (e.g., Yo-Kid 6 packs, Greek style kid-sized yogurts, etc.—no squeezers or Gogurts), pudding.

Fruit: clementines (or other "Cutie" type citrus that is easy for children to peel themselves) bananas, assorted fresh fruit cut into bite-size pieces, berries, applesauce, raisins, dried fruit leather, banana bread, etc.

Vegetables: baby carrot sticks, celery sticks, sliced cucumbers, broccoli, etc. Children are often more inclined to eat vegetables if they have a dip, such as ranch dressing, hummus, etc. Zucchini bread, carrot or corn muffins, hummus with crackers or pita bread.

Grains: pretzels, goldfish, crackers, breads, mini bagels with containers of cream cheese (whipped cream cheese is easier for the children to spread), mini muffins etc. (Please read labels carefully for allergy information – contains nuts/processed in a nut facility.)

Please: No yogurt squeezers, whole grapes, whole cherry/grape tomatoes (they are a choking hazard). No candy or chocolate.

Birthdays at School

OSMS keeps a record of each child's birthday and celebrates each in a special manner called *Celebration of Life*. During this celebration, a special globe is brought into the classroom and the child being celebrated is invited to walk around the "sun" one time for each year they have been on earth. This is a way for our students to reflect on their own life story and their place in the cosmos. In the Wee Threes and Primary programs, we also invite families to send in one picture from each year of the child's life, beginning with birth.

Secondarily, if wished, we also celebrate by serving a "treat." We encourage creative thinking and making healthy choices when deciding on a birthday snack; adults have the association of cake with birthdays, but children find many things satisfying and special. Ideas include strawberries or mini-muffins, watermelon or yogurt, frozen juice pops, fruit kebobs, fun shaped pancakes, or healthful cookies. The possibilities are endless!

This is not a birthday party at school; each level has its own guidelines for birthday celebrations that should come home to you from the classroom. When in doubt, email the teacher.

Non-School Party Invitations

Parties outside of school are a great way for OSMS families to meet and celebrate with each other. If you are giving a birthday party for your child and plan to invite classmates, it is better to invite only a few privately or to invite them all. When many are invited, but not all, feelings get hurt. Please mail or email invitations; do not send them to school for distribution. Also, talk to your child about limiting their birthday conversations to home and not at school. Your cooperation with this will save other students from having their feelings hurt.

Holidays and Cultural Celebrations

The Ocean State Montessori School is a nonsectarian school. We are proud of the fact that people of different cultures and religions place their children within our school. This requires our sensitivity to deep religious feelings. Religious holidays are presented as cultural celebrations that enrich all of our lives.

The Montessori philosophy reflects universal acceptance of all people and appreciation of differences. Cultural diversity is well represented and highly valued at OSMS. Holidays are explored culturally and historically as special times for sharing traditions. We emphasize the celebratory nature of holidays, encouraging community participation, understanding, and appreciation. Traditional symbolism is used as a tool for exploration, not as an expression of religious devotion or mere decoration. Child-initiated activities, discussions, and questions are supported, and parents/guardians are encouraged to inform their child's teacher of what and how they celebrate holidays.

Keeping in mind these ideals, the guidelines our teachers adhere to for holiday celebrations are as follows:

- Present religious events and celebrations from a historical and cultural perspective.
- If several celebrations occur near each other in time or season it is appropriate to deal with all.
- The themes should be cultural and historical and not religious.
- Do not include any type of prayer or any words that can be interpreted as a prayer during the celebration.
- Our professional library collection has many books relating to the presentation and study of Multicultural Activities. Use these references.

Clothing

Please send your child to school in clothing that allows for independence, freedom of movement, and participation in outdoor play. Suggestions include bottoms with elastic waistbands, shoes and boots that are easily put on by the child. Allowing children to dress themselves, tie their shoes, or zip their own jackets helps promote independence and self-confidence.

Weather permitting, we seek to go outside on the playground every day. Students also help in the garden, attend outdoor field trips, participate in art class, physical education, etc. Some of these have the potential to be messy. Clothing should therefore be weather-appropriate and easily washable. Please make sure your child has a warm winter coat, snow pants, a hat, mittens and snow boots. These can be left at school to avoid the hassle of bringing snow gear to school every day.

Well-fitting shoes should be worn at all times so children can run and play freely and safely on the playground. Please avoid "party" shoes that have smooth, slippery soles. Clogs, Crocs and other slide-on type shoes are not acceptable, nor are platforms. These types of shoes have proven to be dangerous while playing on the playground, climbing structure and in the Multipurpose Room for indoor recess.

In keeping with the Montessori philosophy of peace, we ask that families refrain from dressing their children in clothing that depicts superheroes or other aggressive characters. We have observed that such clothing can lead to excessively rough playground games, teaching violence as a way to solve problems, and the exclusion of certain children from activities. Examples of unacceptable characters include Spiderman, Batman, and Incredible Hulk. Clothing depicting animals, such as dinosaurs, is acceptable. Please stay away from any cartoon characters, so children are not distracted at school. Clothing representing sporting events or sporting heroes is allowed.

All families should send a complete set of extra clothes (pants, long and short sleeved shirt, underwear and socks) to be kept at school. Occasionally children have toileting accidents, spill something on their clothes or

get cold/warm during the day. If your child attends the extended day program, a second set of clothes should be kept there as well.

All clothing and outdoor gear should be clearly labeled with the child's name.

Electronics[5]

Personal electronic devices of all kinds are increasingly becoming part of our lives. Children are no exception. Schools around the world are dealing with the impact of the presence of such devices on school campuses.

As a scientist, Dr. Montessori was interested in technology: she placed value, as do we, on students' use of technology to support learning and to be used as a tool to enhance the learning experience. Our mission of providing a superior Montessori education can be jeopardized when students are distracted by using technology in ways that are unproductive or directionless.

Personal electronic devices can be a significant disruption to the work of students and teachers at OSMS. For this reason, students may only use school-issued electronics while on campus. This guideline extends to having such items in early morning drop-off, extended day programs, and on school-related trips, except where expressly permitted for the purposes of school-related activities or personal security such as on trips or other outings in the community.

If a child brings a mobile phone, smart watch, personal game station or other electronic device to school they will be required to leave it with their teacher upon arrival at school. The device must remain turned off throughout the day and will be returned to the child upon dismissal from their Montessori program or extended day.

As with any school policy, we strive to preserve the peacefulness and productiveness of the classroom environment. We greatly appreciate your support.

Extended Day Programs

The Ocean State Montessori School offers extended day options for families who need care in the early mornings or afternoons. Extended day programs can be used on a full- or part-time basis. Preference is given to students who contract for full-time use.

Children's Room

The Children's Room is our extended day program for Wee Threes and Primary students. The Children's Room is available daily after Montessori classroom dismissal. Our staff escort the children from their Montessori classroom to the Children's Room. Children's Room dismissal times are 3:30 pm or 5:30 pm.

During the extended day program, children enjoy eating lunch together (refer to Children's Room lunch above for details). After lunch the children rest and nap. Although not all children fall asleep, each child is required to rest. After rest, children participate in a wide variety of activities including arts and crafts, games, toys, story-time, singing, creative movement, and cooking. A snack is served to children in the midafternoon. Special events throughout the year add additional excitement and fun. Although the materials and activities are different, the Children's Room supports the philosophy and curriculum of the morning Montessori program.

Prime Time

Prime Time is our extended day program for Elementary students. After dismissal, the children's teachers walk them to the Prime-Time room. Each afternoon a snack is served at the start of Prime Time. After snack, children have ample opportunity to play and socialize with their friends. Activities include games (board, card, etc.), arts and crafts, music, stories, puzzles, reading, drama, and creative movement. Children of this age are increasingly social and value their time spent in the company of friends. Although the materials and activities are different, the activities in Prime Time support the philosophy and culture of the morning Montessori program.

[5] Adapted from *The Post Oak School's Family Handbook*
https://www.postoakschool.org/images/postoak/PDF/Publications/Post_Oak_Family_Handbook_2017-18.pdf

School Closings

In the event OSMS must close due to inclement weather or emergency, the school will primarily notify you through an automated text message. A trial/test message will be sent in late September and announced through email. Notification will be sent through Rhode Island Broadcasters Association (RIBA) which is published to local TV and radio stations. When feasible, school closings and/or delayed openings or early dismissals will also be communicated via email and social media channels.

COMMUNICATIONS

Contact Information

General

Physical Address.....100 Grove Avenue, East Providence, RI 02914
Mailing Address..... PO Box 14667, East Providence, RI 02914
School Phone Number.....401-434-6913
School Website.....www.OceanStateMontessori.org
Head of School.....Amy Andrews Amy@oceanstatemontessori.org

Board of Directors Executive Committee Emails

President……President@oceanstatemontessori.org
President Elect……..Preselect@oceanstatemontessori.org
Secretary……Secretary@oceanstatemontessori.org
Treasurer……Treasurer@oceanstatemontessori.org

Teacher E-mails

Each Lead Teacher has a school e-mail address listed in the Student and Family Directory. Parents/guardians are encouraged to send e-mails concerning classroom questions. Lead Teachers make every effort to respond to emails within one business day.

Telephone Calls to Parents/Guardians

Teachers will call parents/guardians whenever they have a concern about a child. Parents/guardians will call the school office to request a call back from a teacher. Teachers will make every effort to return the telephone call within the same day.

Parent/Guardian Grievances

The procedure for consideration and adjustment of grievances of any parent/guardian shall be as follows. The parent/guardian will consult with the child's teacher first. Failing to reach settlement in conference with the teacher, the parent/guardian will consult with the Head of School. The Head of School will help mediate a meeting between the parent/guardian and Teacher. Involvement of the OSMS Board of Directors regarding parent/guardian grievances shall follow the procedures outlined in the Board policy found in the Board Adopted School Policies section.

Observations in the Classroom

Parents/guardians who wish to virtually observe a Montessori classroom at work may do so. Appointments can be arranged with the Lead Teacher. We ask that parents/guardians do not observe the classrooms before mid-October. This will give students and teachers an opportunity to acclimate to the classroom schedule and routines.

Teacher Conferences

Teachers hold two conferences per year in October and May. Parents/guardians are also free to schedule additional meetings with teachers if they want to discuss their child or the classroom.

Methods of Home/School Communication

As discussed in the Partnership between Families and OSMS section above, OSMS aims to maintain open, honest, timely and respectful communication with our parent/guardian community. In an effort to be transparent, proactive and to keep families informed we offer several means of home/school communication.

Weekly Updates

Each week the Head of School sends a weekly update via email to all enrolled families. The weekly update contains information about current and upcoming school events, school news, reminders and other pertinent information.

OSMS Website

The OSMS website "For Families" page is a resource where families can access the school calendar and important links.

Social Media

OSMS's social media accounts are updated regularly with photos from our classrooms, information about Montessori education, announcements about our school, and photos from OSMS events. Families and friends of OSMS can follow our school on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

VOLUNTEERING AT OSMS

We are fortunate to have a community of families that are invested in the positive development of our children at OSMS. Family volunteerism helps to build and maintain a vibrant and active community as well as to create a warm, cooperative atmosphere. Family volunteerism also sets a positive role model for our students and helps build relationships between families. You can fulfill your volunteer requirement at OSMS (minimum of ten volunteer hours per family per year) in a variety of ways – contributing in the classroom, assisting with one-time events, or serving on an ad hoc Task Force, Committee, or on the Board of Directors. Ad hoc volunteer opportunities will be listed in the Head of School's weekly email throughout the year. If you are interested in serving on any of the committees or the Board of Directors, please get in touch with the contacts listed above.

Committee and Board Volunteer Opportunities

Community Events Committee

The Community Events Committee organizes several community events over the course of the school year, including the annual Trunk or Treat, Spring Festival, and staff appreciation event. For more information or to volunteer for the Community Events Committee, please contact the Head of School.

General Volunteering Opportunities

Special Events

Throughout the year OSMS hosts a variety of special events. Many of these events provide families with an opportunity to assist OSMS by volunteering with set-up, clean up and throughout the event itself. Information about these one-off volunteer opportunities is typically shared in the Head of School's Weekly Update.

Classroom Substitute

When possible and appropriate OSMS will ask parents/guardians to substitute in the classrooms. All substitutes must pass a state background check and participate in a training workshop with the Head of School before being placed in the classroom. If you have flexibility during the week and are interested in being called as a substitute, please contact the Head of School.

On-Call Assistance

From time-to-time OSMS may need help with specific tasks, ranging from IT assistance to garden planting and everything in-between. If you have a skill that would be helpful to OSMS we encourage you to let us know about it. When a situation or circumstance arises in which we need help with something related to your skill, we will contact you. This is a great way to be involved in the community and fulfil your ten volunteer hours.

Classroom Volunteers

There are many opportunities for families to volunteer for their child's classroom. Each Montessori Lead Teacher will post classroom volunteer opportunities outside of their classroom or announce volunteer needs via email. Our teachers welcome your participation in the classroom. Please email your child's teacher for specifics on the classroom volunteering suggestions below or with ways that you would like to share yourself.

Examples of classroom volunteering are:

- Laundry – Bring home dirty classroom laundry on Friday (towels, washcloths, etc.) and return it cleaned on Monday morning.
- Library – Select appropriate books for the classroom (consult with the lead teacher for suggestions and topic) and check them out of your local library.
- Food Preparation – Bring food on Monday for children to practice Practical Life skills (consult with lead teacher for suggestions).
- Flowers – Bring a bouquet of flowers on Monday for the children to arrange.
- Playdough – Bring a homemade batch of playdough for the classroom (recipe provided by lead teacher).
- Push Pin / Tracing – Bring a template and paper home and trace the template onto the paper for classroom push pin works.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

The Ocean State Montessori School is incorporated as a non-profit corporation and managed by a Board of Directors. The board is governed by the school's articles of incorporation and by the school's by-laws. Parents/guardians of children at OSMS are Members of the Corporation as noted in the Ocean State Montessori School, Inc.'s Bylaws (amended September 23, 2016) and summarized below.

Ocean State Montessori School, Inc. Membership

Each parent or guardian that signed the Enrollment Agreement for a child currently enrolled at OSMS shall be a Member of the Corporation. Members responsibilities include:

- electing Directors
- approving or rejecting amendments to the bylaws
- approving or rejecting amendments to or restatements of the Articles of Incorporation
- attending the Annual Meeting
- attending Special Meetings as necessary

Board of Directors

The Ocean State Montessori Board of Directors is a combination of a working and advisory board. Our Directors are actively involved in managing the overall affairs of OSMS and have the full power and authority to act on behalf of OSMS except as specifically stated in the Articles of Incorporation and the bylaws. The Members of the Board of Directors serve as custodians of the integrity of the school, holding in trust the school's future as well as its present. As such, the board shall comply with the bylaws and conduct the business of the Board of Directors in good faith and with honesty, due diligence, reasonable competence, and respect for others.

Their primary duties involve:

- Maintaining accountability for OSMS property and funds
- Hiring/evaluating the Head of School
- Reviewing and approving the annual operating budget
- Setting institutional policies consistent with our mission
- Engaging in ongoing strategic planning
- Actively supporting fundraising efforts, including but not limited to, contributing to the OSMS Fund, soliciting donations for and attending fundraisers
- Assessing OSMS's effectiveness in manifesting our mission
- Respecting the confidentiality of our families and students

The OSMS Board of Directors is comprised of no fewer than five (5) and no more than fifteen (15) Directors. Every effort is made to have a parent or guardian from each level of the students: Wee Threes, Primary, Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary. Only one Member from each family may serve as a Director at a time. Faculty and staff of OSMS, with the exception of the Head of School, are not eligible to serve as Directors.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the OSMS Board of Directors is comprised of the President of the Board of Directors, the President-Elect of the Board of Directors, the Secretary of the Board of Directors and the Treasurer of the Officers of the Board of Directors.

A complete listing of current Directors and their positions can be found on the school website and/or in the Student and Family Directory published each October.

Head of School

The board selects and annually evaluates the Head of School, and delegates responsibility for implementation of policies to the head. The Head of School guides the board in formulating the school's mission and in developing its strategic plan. The head prepares and carries out the operating plan and the annual budget, as approved by the board. They also have the duty to report to the board on school matters, and is accountable to the board for effective, business-like management of the school.

The Head of School serves as the professional educational leader of the institution. They have complete responsibility for faculty, staff, and student selection, evaluation, and dismissal. The Head of School articulates the mission of the school to its constituencies and is responsible for the professional quality and behavior of the faculty.

BOARD ADOPTED SCHOOL POLICIES AND ENROLLMENT AGREEMENTS

Below, set forth in their entirety, are the Ocean State Montessori School's Policy Against Discrimination and Harassment, Tuition and Need Based Tuition Assistance Policy and Bullying Response Policy, each of which has been adopted by OSMS's Board of Directors. These three policies inform the day-to-day operations at OSMS and as such have been included here for review by our students' families.

Board-adopted policies not included in the *Family Handbook* include:

- Board of Directors Conflict of Interest Policy
- Board Designated Operating Reserve Policy
- Executive Compensation Policy
- Record Retention Policy
- Whistleblowing – Prohibition Against Retaliation Policy
- Policy Regarding Exceptional Circumstances for Entry into the Wee Threes Program

Policy Against Discrimination and Harassment

Adopted December 17, 2015

At the Ocean State Montessori School, we affirm the dignity and work of every person and strive to create and maintain a respectful working and learning environment. OSMS prohibits discrimination, including discriminatory harassment, on the basis of race, creed, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, citizenship, status as a disabled veteran, or past or present honorable military services, or any other status protected by law with respect to access to, the provision of, or employment in, OSMS's educational services, programs and activities.

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is treating a person differently or interfering with or preventing a person from enjoying the advantages or privileges afforded to others because of their race, creed, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, citizenship, status as a disabled veteran, or past or present honorable military services, or any other status protected by law.

What is discriminatory harassment?
Discriminatory harassment is unwelcome conduct based on a person's race, creed, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, citizenship, status as a disabled veteran, or past or present honorable military services, or any other status protected by law, that is sufficiently severe and pervasive so as to unreasonably interfere with that person's ability to work, learn or otherwise participate in OSMS's programs and activities. It can include unwelcome verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct directed at one or more members of a protected group, such as objectionable epithets, demeaning depictions or treatment, and threatened or actual physical abuse or harm.

Discriminatory harassment includes sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to or rejection of the conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of or the basis for employment or other service with OSMS;
- the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a person's work performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or offensive working environment; or
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by a person is used as the basis for decisions affecting such person's relationship to OSMS.

Examples of Conduct Which May Constitute Sexual Harassment
Direct or implied requests by a supervisor for sexual favors in exchange for actual or promised job benefits such as favorable reviews, salary increases, promotions, increased benefits or continued employment constitutes sexual harassment. Other sexually oriented conduct, whether it is intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a work place environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating or humiliating to male or female employees may also constitute sexual harassment. While it is not possible to list all circumstances that might constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct, which, if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending upon the totality of the circumstances, including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness: • Sexual advances —whether they involve physical touching or not;
• Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life;
• Comment on an individual's body, comment about an individual's sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;
• Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or cartoons;
• Leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, or suggestive or insulting comments;
• Inquiries into one's sexual experiences; and
• Discussion of one's sexual activities.

Retaliation
There shall be no retaliation against any individual for action taken in good faith to seek advice concerning a matter involving discrimination or discriminatory harassment, to file a discrimination or discriminatory harassment complaint, or to cooperate in the investigation or adjudication of a discrimination or discriminatory harassment complaint, regardless of the outcome of such good faith inquiry or complaint. Retaliation is any action taken by an employee or agent of OSMS, to intimidate, threaten, or coerce a person, or to adversely affect a person's personal safety, employment or academic status, for the purpose of interfering with the filing, investigation or results of a complaint. When evidence of retaliatory behavior exists, the retaliator will be subject to appropriate and immediate disciplinary action, up to an including termination.

How can I report discrimination or harassment?
If you have any questions or concerns about discrimination, discriminatory harassment or retaliation, or if you wish to submit a complaint of discrimination, discriminatory harassment or retaliation, please contact Amy Andrews, Head of School, 100 Grove Ave, East Providence, RI 02914, (401) 434-6913. In the event the discrimination, discriminatory harassment or retaliation involves the Head of School, please contact the OSMS Board President.

Upon receipt of a complaint of discrimination, discriminatory harassment or retaliation, OSMS will undertake a fair and thorough investigation, with due regard for the rights of all parties. Every reasonable effort will be made to protect the confidentiality of the parties during the investigation. Our investigation will include a private interview with the person filing the complaint and any witnesses. We will also interview the person alleged to have committed the discrimination, discriminatory harassment or retaliation. After our investigation, we will, to the extent appropriate, inform the person filing the complaint and the person alleged to have committed the discrimination, discriminatory harassment or retaliation of the results of the investigation and any person who is found to have unlawfully discriminated, harassed or retaliated against another will be subject to

discipline, which may include, but are not limited to, counseling, training, suspension, or termination of employment.

If after investigating any complaint of discrimination, discriminatory harassment or retaliation, it is discovered that the complaint was not made in good faith, that it was knowingly false or filed with malicious intent, the complainant may be subject to disciplinary action.

Information Dissemination
The Head of School shall ensure that this policy is included in whole or by reference, in the Family Handbook and Employee Handbook, and that copies of the policy are distributed to all faculty, administration, staff and members of the Board of Directors for review and signature.

State and Federal Agencies
In addition to the above, you may file a formal complaint with the government agencies listed below:

Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights
180 Westminster Street, 3rd Floor
Providence, RI 02903
Tel: 401-222-2661
TTY: 401-222-2664
Fax: 401-222-2616

United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
John F. Kennedy Building
475 Government Center
Boston, MA 02203
Tel: 1-800-669-4000
TTY: 1-800-669-6820
Fax: 617-565-3196

Policy regarding the Ocean State Montessori School Board of Directors' involvement in grievances and complaints.

Adopted June 2024

The OSMS Board of Directors ("Board") may be contacted by an OSMS employee or parent/ guardian with a complaint or grievance ("grievance"). As the Board's role does not include involvement in personnel or purely operational issues, which are the responsibility of the Head of School (HOS), a grievance must meet certain criteria to allow Board involvement. This policy will address the circumstances under which the Board may become involved and how this involvement will proceed.

1. Anyone who petitions the board ("the petitioner") regarding a grievance must first follow the processes as outlined in the employee manual or as communicated by the Head of School.
2. If the grievance cannot be resolved through the usual means AND the grievance does not involve a purely operational issue OR the grievance involves a situation that may be illegal, unethical, unsafe AND/OR places the school at risk of liability, the involved party may petition the Board for assistance resolving the issue.
3. Written communication should be made directly to the Board President whenever possible. If communicated to another Board member or the HOS, it should be immediately forwarded to the Board President. The written communication should include:
    A. A clear description of the grievance situation
    B. Actions the petitioner has taken to attempt to address or resolve the situation, if any
    C. What the petitioner would like to happen as a result of Board involvement
4. The President will inform the Executive Committee that a grievance was received.
5. The President will confirm receipt of the grievance to the petitioner and will gather further information about the issue from the petitioner as well as from the HOS.
6. The President will determine whether it is appropriate for the Board to become involved. This may include consultation with other Board members or professionals employed by the school, such as the school attorney. This may also include encouraging the petitioner and the HOS to attempt to resolve the issue without Board involvement.
7. If the President determines that the grievance involves a purely operational issue that is the responsibility of the HOS AND the issue does not involve potentially illegal, unethical, or unsafe actions AND does not place the school at risk of liability, the President will inform the petitioner and HOS that the Board will not become involved.
8. If the President determines that the grievance does involve a shared Board/operational responsibility, does involve potentially illegal, unethical, or unsafe actions, and/or does involve potential liability for the school, the President will inform the petitioner and HOS that the Board will consider the grievance.
9. The President will inform the Board of the grievance and their determination. If the initial determination is that the Board will not become involved, this is considered the Final Determination.
10. If the President determined that it is appropriate for the Board to consider the grievance, the Board will decide next steps, including whether further investigation is needed and a course of action for addressing the grievance. The Board may consider consultation with a Human Resource or other professional with expertise in this area.
11. The reporter and HOS will be informed of the Board's Final Determination.
12. Information about all grievance petitions that are received, whether the Board becomes involved or not, will be recorded on an "OSMS Board of Directors Grievance Investigation Report Form" (see attached). These records will be saved in the President-elect online files for 7 years from the date of Final Determination.

OSMS Board of Directors Grievance Investigation Report Form

Today's date: _____

Board member completing this form: _____

Role on OSMS Board: _____

_____

Date grievance received:

Petitioner(s) and role:

Head of School:

Date of Final determination:

_____

Initial Determination

Summary of grievance petition, including names of involved parties and actions taken (and by whom) to resolve issue without board involvement:

Additional information gathered from petitioner and HOS:

Yes, the Board will consider the grievance _____

No, the Board will not become involved _____

Date petitioner and HOS were informed of initial determination: _____

Final Determination

Actions taken by the Board to gather information and determine a course of action. May include: nature of any further investigation, consultation with professionals and their recommendations.

Summary of additional information gathered about grievance situation, if any:

Board action taken:

Date petitioner and HOS were informed of Final Determination: _____

Tuition and Need Based Tuition Assistance Policy

Adopted June 16, 2016, Amended February 11, 2021)

Tuition is the largest component of Ocean State Montessori School's ("OSMS") operating budget and is needed to pay for everything from the facility to utilities, staff and faculty salaries and benefits to insurance and classroom works. Without receipt of tuition to pay for the foregoing, it would be challenging to provide a thriving place for our children. While recognizing the important role tuition plays in the success of OSMS, OSMS also maintains a Need Based Tuition Assistance Program to encourage economic diversity in its student body. Need Based Tuition Assistance is available within the scope of limited funds to students accepted for admission to OSMS whose families require financial assistance in order to afford an independent school education.

As the OSMS Board of Directors ("Board") is responsible for ensuring OSMS's fiscal stability, the Board is exclusively vested with the ability to establish, to revise, and to determine this policy with input from the administration. In establishing or revising the policy and reviewing matters in arrears and collections, the Board may consult with retained counsel and/or accountants to ensure alignment of best practices and may take into account particular extenuating circumstances.

Enrollment Agreement and Deposit

The three-year cycle is an essential element in Montessori education. It is rooted in the planes of development observed by Dr. Maria Montessori during which students acquire certain cognitive, social and emotional skills. The multi-age classrooms, three-year curriculum and specific materials in each classroom are designed to meet the needs of the students as they move through these developmental planes in a three-year cycle. As the students proceed through the three-year cycle, they experience a period of intense acquisition, refinement and assimilation of developmentally appropriate cognitive, social and emotional skills. Dr. Montessori observed that ages 6, 9 and 12 tended to be years of social and emotional growth and embraced this by making these years the leadership years (the third year in the cycle). The leadership of the older children has remarkable impact on the health of the three-year community they help lead, and it allows the oldest children in each cycle to stand tall with confidence during an uncertain time while assimilating the academic work of the first two years in preparation for the next developmental phase by sharing their knowledge and expertise with the younger students in the group. They become role models for the younger students, who long to reach their level of academic accomplishment and community responsibility. Our enrollment practices reflect the importance of the three-year cycle.

Enrollment Agreement - Enrollment Agreements are sent to the parents/guardians of enrolled students for the following academic year in January or February of the current academic year and must be returned no later than the date indicated to secure student's enrollment for the following academic year. Enrollment Agreements for new students are sent with acceptance letters and must be returned no later than the date indicated to secure student's enrollment for the following academic year. 2

Enrollment Deposits – The Enrollment Deposit for a new student is $750.00 and is due with the executed Enrollment Agreement. Enrollment Deposits apply to each applicable three-year cycle (primary, lower elementary, upper elementary) and are only refundable upon the student's completion of the third year of a cycle (P3, LE3 and UE3). Enrollment Deposits for students starting in the Wee Threes are refundable upon the student's completion of the P3 year. Enrollment deposits for students enrolled in P3 or LE3 who are enrolling for the next three-year cycle (lower elementary or upper elementary) will be rolled over.

If the student leaves OSMS at any time other than at the conclusion of a three-year cycle (P3, LE3, UE3), the Enrollment Deposit will not be refunded.

Refundable Enrollment Deposits will be applied to any past due balance before any remaining portion of the Enrollment Deposit is refunded. Refunds will be made by June 30.

Payment of Tuition Pursuant to the Enrollment Agreement

Parents/guardians of children enrolling in OSMS must sign an Enrollment Agreement prior to the child being formally admitted to the school. All tuition is paid through Smart Tuition and families are responsible for paying the annual service fee unless otherwise provided for under the Enrollment Agreement.

Sibling Discount

Effective for the 2026–2027 academic year, tuition is charged at the full rate for the first enrolled child. Families with multiple children concurrently enrolled at OSMS receive the following discounts on annual tuition: 15% for the second child, 20% for the third child, and 25% for the fourth child and any additional children.

Release of Obligations Under or Modification of the Enrollment

Agreement Due to the fact that OSMS's budget is directly derived from tuition paid by our families, and we rely on the payment of tuition to pay our teachers, staff, and maintain our facilities, release or modification of obligations under the Enrollment Agreement are rare. Nevertheless, OSMS recognizes that our families may experience extenuating circumstances, such as the death of the student, warranting a release of obligations under, or a modification of the terms of, the Enrollment Agreement.

Any modification, deletion or omission of any term(s) in the Enrollment Agreement, or any release of a parent or guardian from their obligations under the Enrollment Agreement, requires approval by a majority of the Directors on the Board. Requests for modifications to or release from obligations under the Enrollment Agreement must be made no later than 90 days following the student's last day at OSMS. The Board may require the submission of supporting documentation related to the request, which shall be kept confidential. In the event the Board approves the release of obligations under, or a modification of the terms of, the Enrollment Agreement, the Board shall ensure that the release or modification can either: 1) be applied universally; or 2) articulate, with specificity, the basis for allowing modification of or release from the Enrollment Agreement. 3

Awards of Need Based Tuition Assistance

Need Based Tuition Assistance is awarded without regard to race, creed, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, citizenship, status as a disabled veteran, or past or present honorable military services, or any other status protected by law.

Need Based Tuition Assistance awards are made on an annual basis. Families must re-apply for every year in which assistance is desired. A family with more than one child submits only one application.

Applications for Need Based Tuition Assistance are due in February and processed through Smart Aid. Applying families are responsible for paying all applicable Smart Aid fees. Families must complete the application and supply all requested information and supporting documentation by the designated deadline to be considered for Need Based Tuition Assistance. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Need Based Tuition Assistance awards are made primarily on the basis of financial need. Secondary criteria that may be considered include:
• The student's regular attendance;
• The likelihood of the student's long-term enrollment;
• The participation of the student's parents in school activities;
• The family's payment history; and
• The student's maintenance of an academic level consistent with school standards and individual abilities.

Priority for funding is given to:
• Families currently enrolled in the school and already receiving Need Based Tuition Assistance;
• Families currently enrolled in the school and requesting assistance for the first time; and
• Children applying for levels of the school in which a better enrollment balance is desirable.

The Tuition Assistance Committee shall consist of the Head of School and two members of the Administrative Team appointed by the Head of School. The Tuition Assistance Committee reviews all completed applications, including supporting documentation and the report from Smart Aid. All information submitted to the committee is strictly confidential. Need Based Tuition Assistance determinations shall be made in February and Need Based Tuition Assistance recipients will be notified in writing. In order to accept an offer of Need Based Tuition Assistance, recipients must notify OSMS that they accept the Need Based Tuition Assistance and return all enrollment documents to OSMS no later than the date stated in the Need Based Tuition Assistance offer letter or by the deadline for the return of Enrollment Agreements, whichever is later. The Head of School may modify the Annual Tuition amount in the Enrollment Agreement to reflect the amount of Need Based Tuition Assistance accepted, without prior approval by the Board.

If the family of a currently enrolled student experiences an unexpected change in financial circumstances during the school year, the family may submit in writing, a request for Emergency Need Based Tuition Assistance to the Tuition Assistance Committee. The Tuition Assistance 4 Committee may require the submission of supporting documentation. Following review of the request by the Tuition Assistance Committee, and provided Need Based Tuition Assistance funds are available, the Tuition Assistance Committee may award Need Based Tuition Assistance to defray the cost of tuition for the family for the remainder of that academic year.

Protocols for Collection of Past Due Balances

Below are the established protocols for administration and hired vendors to follow in attempting to collect outstanding tuition owed to OSMS.

1. Smart Tuition applies a late fee for each month a past due balance is carried.

2. If a past due balance remains on an account for more than 60 days, the payor is required to meet with an OSMS representative to enter into a written Past Due Balance Payment Plan for the outstanding balance. At most, without Board approval, an OSMS representative can enter into a Past Due Balance Payment Plan with the payor extending the time for payment of the past due balance for three months, or to the end of the school year, whichever is first, provided the account remains otherwise current.
3. Payors with balances more than 90 days past due, who have failed to enter into a written Past Due Balance Payment Plan shall be contacted by the Head of School via letter sent certified mail detailing the past due balance owed, demanding payment within 14 days of the date of the letter and indicating that failure to respond may result in dismissal of the student from OSMS and collection or legal proceedings.

4. The Head of School shall contact payors who fail to comply with a Past Due Balance Payment Plan by letter sent certified mail detailing the past due balance owed, demanding payment within 14 days of the date of the letter and indicating that failure to respond may result in dismissal of the student from OSMS and collection or legal proceedings.

5. In the event the account is not made current within 14 days of the letter sent pursuant to paragraph 3 or 4 above, the account shall be referred to the Board for deliberation at the next scheduled Board meeting. The Board may decide to attempt further communications with the parent/guardian or pursue any other action available under the Enrollment Agreement or the law, including but not limited to, dismissal of the student from OSMS, referral of the account to a collections agency or law firm for legal action, and, if the Board determines there is little or no chance of collecting the debt, writing off the debt. The Board shall clearly articulate the basis for its opinion to guard against arbitrary decisions and ensure consistent application of factors.

Collection Agency and Legal Referrals

If the parent/guardian with the outstanding debt is unwilling to enter into a Past Due Payment Plan with OSMS or has failed to comply with an agreed upon Past Due Payment Plan, and presuming there is valid legal basis, OSMS may refer the matter to a collection agency or to an attorney for legal action. The President or Head of School may enter into such a contract on behalf of OSMS with a collection agency or law firm. In no event shall OSMS be required to expend further monetary resources to collect the outstanding balance owed.

OSMS Tuition Remission Policy

Adopted February 13, 2020

OSMS provides Tuition Remission Benefits for OSMS employees who have been employed by OSMS for a minimum of a full calendar year and are working 30 hours or more per week pursuant to the following:

Tuition Remission Benefit

Effective beginning in the 2020-2021 academic year, OSMS employees working 30 hours or more per week with qualified dependent child(ren) who: 1) meet the dependent criteria established by the Internal Revenue Code; 2) meet OSMS' standard admissions requirements; 3) are applying for a program in which there is space; and 4) are accepted into an OSMS program, shall receive 75% remission for Tuition and Extended Day Charges.

OSMS may require official documentation to verify dependent status.

The Tuition Remission Benefit will be effective for newly hired OSMS employees on the first day of the month following the one-year anniversary of the start of their employment.

OSMS employees receiving tuition remission for students enrolled at OSMS in the 2019-2020 academic year shall continue to receive the tuition remission percentage in effect for the 2019-2020 academic year until the student completes their current 3-year program cycle.

Tuition

Tuition means the amount of tuition set by OSMS for the applicable academic year, including the applicable enrollment deposit.

Extended Day Charges

Extended Day Charges mean any charges incurred for use of the extended day program in the morning or the afternoon.

Coverage

The Tuition Remission Benefit applies to Tuition and Extended Day Charges only. It does not apply to fees, camps or extra-curricular activities.

Application Fee

The fee for an application for admission to an OSMS program is waived for employees.

Policies & Standards

All children of employees receiving the Tuition Remission Benefit are subject to the same academic standards and policies as all other students.

Pro-Rating of Benefits Upon Change of Employment Status

In the event of change in employment status while continuing employment with OSMS, any required adjustments in the Tuition Remission Benefit will take effect during the following semester. If an employee leaves OSMS during the academic year for which the Tuition Remission Benefit is being utilized, the benefit will be pro-rated, and the employee is responsible for payment of the resulting uncovered pro-rated tuition balance.

Disability or Death

If an employee should become disabled and unable to work, or should die during a semester in which the Tuition Remission Benefit is being utilized, the following provisions apply: If an employee with **less than** 5 years of service is utilizing the Tuition Remission Benefit the dependent child(ren) will be allowed to finish the academic year at the same Tuition Remission Benefit level for the year

in which the disability or death occurs. One additional year at 50% tuition remission will be allowed, subject to any limitations described herein.

If an employee with **more than** 5 years of service is utilizing the Tuition Remission Benefit, the dependent child(ren) will continue to be eligible to receive the Tuition Remission Benefit at the same benefit level as applied at the time of disability or death for the remainder of the 3-year program cycle, or one additional academic year, whichever is longer, subject to any limitations described herein.

Bullying Response Policy

Adopted December 17, 2015

Guiding Principle

At the Ocean State Montessori School ("OSMS"), we believe that preventing bullying and/or harassment is critical for creating and maintaining a safe, secure, positive and respectful atmosphere, which supports academic achievement, increases school engagement, respects the rights of all individuals and groups, and purposefully builds community. The Peace Education component of our curriculum takes a preventative approach to bullying by teaching self-respect and respect for peers, teachers, and the environment.

Reporting & Investigation

Any student, parent/guardian, volunteer, school faculty, administration or staff member who believes an incident of bullying has occurred should speak to the child's teacher or the Head of School promptly. Anyone can request a confidential meeting with a teacher or the Head of School to discuss a perceived incident of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. In the event the perceived incident of bullying, harassment, or intimidation involves the Head of School, please contact the OSMS Board President.

A student, parent/guardian, volunteer, school faculty, administration or staff member may complete the attached incident form, also available in the main office. This will allow the Head of School to fully investigate any accusations of bullying. Parents/Guardians will be notified within 24 hours if their child is identified on an incident report.

There shall be no retaliation against any individual for action taken in good faith to seek advice concerning a matter involving an incident of bullying, to complete an incident form, or to cooperate in the investigation of an incident of bullying, regardless of the outcome of such good faith inquiry or complaint.

After a full investigation, the Head of School will follow-up, as necessary, with all parties involved. Written documentation will be provided to parents/guardians of any involved parties summarizing the Head of School's conclusions in relation to the investigation and allegations.

If after investigating any report of bullying, it is discovered that the report was not made in good faith, that it was knowingly false, or filed with malicious intent, the complainant may be subject to disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Action

The Head of School, in collaboration with the teachers of the involved student(s) shall determine the response to confirmed acts of bullying. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Loss of school privileges
- Reflective writing
- Parent/guardian notification and meetings
- Requiring the student to make a positive contribution to the school (playground clean-up, extra chores, complete a project, or help out in another classroom)
- Restitution for damaged or destroyed items
- Encouraging the student to seek mental health counseling
- Suspension from school
- Dismissal from school

Maintaining A Respectful Atmosphere
Bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation against any person associated with a report of bullying or the investigation thereof is prohibited at OSMS. School faculty, administration and staff shall take all reasonable measures to prevent bullying at school. This may include professional development and prevention activities, parental workshops, and student assemblies. School faculty, administration and staff, at all times, will model respectful behavior to each other, to students and to school visitors. Abusive or humiliating language or demeanor will not be accepted. Additionally, students and their families are expected to exhibit respectful behavior to all members of the learning community in school and at school sponsored events.

Definitions
BULLYING, as defined by the state of Rhode Island, means the use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof directed at a student that:

a. Causes physical or emotional harm to the student or damage to the student's property;
b. Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to themself or of damage to their property;
c. Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or abusive educational environment for the student;
d. Infringes on the rights of the student to participate in school activities; or
e. Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

The expression, physical act or gesture may include, but is not limited to, an incident or incidents that may be reasonably perceived as being motivated by characteristics such as: Race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or mental, physical, or sensory disability, intellectual ability or by any other distinguishing characteristic. Bullying most often occurs as repeated behavior and often is not a single incident between the bullying/cyber-bullying offender(s) and the bullying victim(s).

CYBER-BULLYING, as defined by the state of Rhode Island, means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, texting or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Forms of cyber-bullying may include but are not limited to:

a. The creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
b. The knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages; or
c. The distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of materials on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the creation, impersonation, or distribution results in any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (a) to (e) of the definition of bullying.

Policy Oversight and Responsibility
The Head of School shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight of this policy. The Head of School shall provide the Board of Directors with a summary report of incidents, responses, and any other bullying-related issues at least twice annually.

Other Redress
This Policy does not prevent individuals from seeking any other legal remedies available to them nor does it create of alter any tort liability.

Information Dissemination
The Head of School shall ensure that this policy is included in whole or by reference, in the Family Handbook and in the Staff Handbook and distributed annually, and available on the OSMS website.

The RI Safe School Act Statewide Bullying Policy can be found at:
www.ride.ri.gov/Commisioner/documents/RI_Statewide_Bullying_Policy.pdf

OSMS Bullying Investigation Report Form

Your Name: _____ Grade (if applicable):_____ Date:_____

Please answer the following questions about this reporting incident:

List the name of the individuals involved in the alleged bullying incident. If names are not known, provide any other identifiable information:

Describe the incident:

When and where did it happen?

Were there any witnesses? [ ] yes [ ] no If yes, who?

Other information, including previous incidents or threats:

I certify that all statements made in the complaint are true and complete. Any intentional false statement of fact will subject me to appropriate discipline. I authorize school officials to disclose the information I provide only as necessary in pursuing the investigation.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

School official receiving complaint: _____ Date: _____

School official conducting follow-up: _____ Date: _____

This document shall remain confidential.

FURTHER READING

The following is a list of publications that help parents/guardians learn more about the Montessori Method:

E. Mortimer Standing, *The Montessori Method: A Revolution in Education*
Rita Kramer, *Maria Montessori: A Biography*
Angeline Lillard, *The Science Behind the Genius*
Paula Polk and L. L. Jessen, *Montessori from the Start*
Nancy McCormick Rambusch, *Learning How to Learn: An American Approach to Montessori's Writings*
Dr. Maria Montessori, *The Montessori Method*
Dr. Maria Montessori, *Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook*
Dr. Maria Montessori, *The Advanced Montessori Method, I & II*
Dr. Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*
Dr. Maria Montessori, *To Educate the Human Potential*
Dr. Maria Montessori, *The Secret of Childhood*