



ROCHESTER
MONTESSORI
SCHOOL



FAMILY HANDBOOK

*“An education capable of saving humanity is
no small undertaking.”*

~Dr. Maria Montessori

Updated June 2025



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Welcome to Rochester Montessori School

Thank you for choosing Rochester Montessori School (RMS) for your child's education. We look forward to partnering with you in support of your child's developmental and academic experiences. Success in this endeavor requires the support of the School, Montessori principles, engagement, and open communication. This Family Handbook serves as a primary resource to learn about the School and applicable policies and procedures.

Please stay informed and engaged by reading emails, class updates, and newsletters. Throughout the year you will receive most communication from the school via email. You can also stay current by accessing information on the school information system called SchoolCues, on our Facebook and Instagram accounts, by participating in our RMS Community Connection Committee (RMCC), or by attending RMS-sponsored events and activities. You will have the opportunity to attend regularly scheduled classroom visits, bi-annual conferences, and education events. We want you to understand what your child is learning and, more importantly, how your child is learning. We also want you to know the “why” behind the learning processes. By supporting the various cultural events and participating in school fundraisers when possible you will gain a deeper understanding of our community and its goals for all.

Mission & Vision Statement

Mission: Rochester Montessori School guides the child to develop independence, critical thinking, and deep respect towards self, others, and the environment.

Vision: Cultivating life-long learners who forge a better world.

Grace, courtesy, peace, love, and respect are core Montessori values and are central to everything that occurs at RMS.

It is our goal to create an environment that fosters open communication, creates an understanding of each other's expectations, and mutual respect for the core educational values and principles at RMS. As you review this handbook, please let us know if you have questions or if there is anything that we need to know about your family that would help to ensure we are providing the best learning opportunities for your child. We know that together, our community will thrive.

Rochester Montessori School Core Values

1. We believe the Montessori Method builds a foundation for lifelong learning, confident children and academic preparedness.
2. We uphold the teachings of Maria Montessori and believe in a scientific approach to education and child development.
3. We believe the Montessori and International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme develop critical and creative thinking, global contexts, self

management and communication skills needed to participate in an interconnected, complex world.

4. We believe all children need independence and opportunity to make their own decisions in order to become confident adolescents who thrive and adults who will lead us to a better future.
5. We believe our differences are what makes us beautiful. We celebrate our authentic selves by developing deep respect towards self and others.
6. We lead with kindness and peace.
7. We minimize our impact on the Earth and be good stewards of our resources.
8. We create an educational environment that is orderly, calm and engaging; where all members celebrate a love of learning.
9. We develop the whole person in mind, body and spirit so they may be able and empowered to share their unique gifts with the world.

History and Philosophy

History of Rochester Montessori School

Rochester Montessori School was established in 1968 by a small group of parents seeking the best possible education for their children. After researching the possibilities, it was determined that the Montessori philosophy most closely aligned with the goals of this group of parents. Over the years, RMS has grown from its original class of twelve students to its present size of more than 200 children. With the investment of land in 2004 for a dedicated campus, long gone are the days of renting space. There will always be many fond memories of our early beginnings that included space at the Congregational Church, the Rochester Township Hall, Assisi Heights, Bethel Lutheran Church, and Christ United Methodist Church downtown. Today, RMS resides on a beautiful and serene 15-acre campus and it has served families in Rochester and the surrounding areas for over 55 years. The growth and success of RMS could not have happened without the support of our community. Great pride is taken in the fact that the Montessori philosophy has been embraced and continues to thrive at RMS and the greater Rochester area.

Board of Directors

Rochester Montessori School is a secular, not-for-profit organization governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is responsible for safeguarding the long-term financial health of the school, including asset management and capital development, as well as providing general oversight and strategic planning for school longevity. The Board is also responsible for hiring the Head of School, who is charged with administering the school.

Dates of Significance

- 2024 Solar panels installed
- 2023 Celebrated 55 years
- 2021 Added 9th grade to the IB Program
- 2019 8th grade attended the Montessori Model United Nations program in Rome
- 2018 Celebrated 50 years
- 2016 Middle School traveled to Costa Rica
- 2016 Enrollment reached 200 students for the first time
- 2015 Students attended the Montessori Model United Nations program in China
- 2014 RMS graduated its first class of Montessori/IB eighth grade students
- 2014 6th grade attends the Montessori Model United Nations program in New York
- 2013 Became an authorized IB World School
- 2013 Celebrated 45 years
- 2011 Became a candidate school for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program
- 2010 The elementary, music, and art classes moved into the new addition
- 2008 Celebrated 40 years
- 2005 RMS moved to a dedicated campus at 5099 7th Street NW
- 2004 Land purchased in northwest Rochester and construction began
- 2002 RMS Board of Directors voted to establish a permanent home
- 1998 Celebrated 30 years
- 1992 RMS moved to Christ United Methodist Church
- 1982 RMS moved to Assisi Heights
- 1980 Elementary program added
- 1975 Extended day program added
- 1970 Toddler program added
- 1969 RMS moved to Rochester Township Hall
- 1968 Parents founded RMS Children's House, enrolling 12 children

Montessori Philosophy

The Montessori philosophy is based on the belief that children are highly intelligent and that carried unseen within each child is the person the child will become. Dr. Maria Montessori founded the Montessori education approach in 1907 based her educational methods on scientific observation of children's learning processes. She was guided by her discovery that children teach themselves and that each child learns in their unique way according to their strengths, personality, interests, and disposition. Consequently, RMS personalizes instruction to support each student and responds to each child's interests. To develop the fullest physical, spiritual, and intellectual potential, the child must have freedom—achieved through order and self-discipline.

The Montessori approach offers a hands-on, experiential, and investigative education experience. RMS children are active learners in multi-age classrooms. Children progress as they are ready, learning at their own pace, and are free to complete a project or pursue a subject as deeply as they wish, according to personal enthusiasm. Each child's

path of learning follows a unique scope and sequence within the Montessori framework—a key difference from the traditional linear sequence of curriculum often delivered in traditional education environments.

Montessori introduces children to the joy of learning at an early age and works diligently to preserve their inherent curiosity through adolescence and beyond. The Montessori approach provides a Whole Child Education by meeting each child where they are academically, physically, socially, and emotionally.

Montessori classrooms are referred to as “prepared environments.” The prepared environment is carefully and age-appropriately designed to foster children’s engagement for long periods of time by minimizing distractions and supporting children’s ability to make purposeful choices. Focused, uninterrupted work cycles allow for challenging hands-on, minds-on academic activities that guide children to conduct inquiries and make discoveries. These activities are referred to as children’s “work” where children discover and correct their own errors through feedback from the materials being used. Through repetition of work and self-discovery, children experience internal feelings of success. And, because the work of a child is to become an adult, they are supported in becoming independent thinkers responsible for their own choices.

A Montessori, International Baccalaureate World School

Rochester Montessori School’s purpose is to provide a quality education grounded in the Montessori philosophy for children 18 months-9th grade. Our hope is that all students will grow to be self-reliant, internationally-minded thinkers who inquire, reflect, seek knowledge, make decisions, solve problems, communicate, and care about the world and those around them. Through faithfully carrying out Montessori principles and employing faculty of highly trained Guides and Assistants, RMS creates a safe and healthy learning environment to cultivate students’ natural capabilities, talents, and strengths.

For children in grades six through nine, RMS is both a Montessori School and an authorized International Baccalaureate (IB) World School. Understanding RMS requires knowledge of both the Montessori and International Baccalaureate philosophies.

The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (MYP) aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. By combining the Montessori tradition with the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program, we strive to prepare students for their future.

The MYP supports Montessori’s interdisciplinary approach to international education. The three fundamental concepts of the MYP - holistic learning, intercultural awareness, and communication - readily build upon the curriculum goals found in our early

childhood and elementary programs. In addition, the MYP's five global contexts frame and direct the interdisciplinary practices inherent in a Montessori middle school program.

Importantly, the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program adds a global dimension and context to teaching and learning at RMS. Students engage in real and pressing global challenges. They think creatively, design and implement workable solutions, participate in democracy, and act as entrepreneurs. We seek to prepare students for life beyond our campus, which includes high school, college, career, family, and citizenship.

By situating learning experiences in both local and global contexts, the MYP encourages students to seek knowledge and become engaged, thoughtful, and compassionate lifelong learners who embrace the challenge of living and learning in their local and global communities. Using diverse approaches to teaching and learning, the program fosters the academic, personal, and social growth of students. Through rigorous study and experiential learning, students will develop a comprehensive knowledge of the world, grapple with complex issues and problems, embrace civic responsibilities, and engage with people who are different from themselves.

In all our programs, the teacher is known as a "Guide" and serves as a facilitator in the growing and learning process. Instruction is individualized as much as possible rather than by group instruction. The role of the guide is to help children learn how to think deeply, for themselves, and to think about others. Our philosophy is to promote "how" by providing "self-teaching" materials. Our desire is that all children develop habits and skills that are critical for the kind of challenges adults face in our ever-changing, complex, international world. As Maria Montessori said, "How children learn influences who they become."

Communication

School Contact Information

Phone	507-288-8725
Fax	507-288-4186
General email	office@rmschool.org
Website	www.rmschool.org

Administration

Head of School	Kelley Flanders, M.Ed.
Director of Operations and Systems Development	Christian Obando, M.Ed.
Director of Additional Services and Summer Programming	Cady Batzel
Admissions and Communications	Abby Russi
Accountant	Tim Lacine
Office Assistant	Carolina Abrantes

Communication Pathways

Please utilize the following table to ensure that your questions are efficiently answered. If your question falls outside of the listed contacts, please contact office@rmschool.org or (507) 288-8725.

What	Who	How
Academics Classroom Behavior Classroom-specific Events	Your Child's Guide(s)	Email your guide directly. Each guide's contact information is shared at the beginning of the school year. Staff members check email daily when not directly supervising children.
Absences Late Arrivals Early Pickups Illness Reporting	Complete a School Cues: Gold Form	Log into your SchoolCues Account Go to Permissions Form Tab portal.schoolcues.com

Admissions Inquiries New Enrollment School Tours Alumni Website Marketing	Admissions & Communications Coordinator Abby Russi	abbyrussi@rmschool.org
Before School Care After School Care Studios Enrichments Summer Programming Facebook & Instagram Pages	Director of Additional Services & Summer Programs Cady Batzel	cadybatzel@rmschool.org
Billing (e.g., Security Deposits, Tuition, Additional Services, Programming, Tax Receipts)	Accountant Tim Lacine	timlacine@rmschool.org
Operations Buildings & Grounds Child Care Center Licensing	Director of Operations and Systems Development Christian Obando	christianobando@rmschool.org
Montessori & Internationale Baccalaureate Leadership RMS Strategic, Mission, and Vision Faculty and Staff Supervision Financial Aid, Grievance Procedure	Head of School Kelley Flanders	kellyflanders@rmschool.org
SchoolCues General Support Late Notice of Changes to Arrivals/Dismissals Medication Contagious Illness Notifications Documentation for Children's Records	Office Assistant Carolina Abrantes	carolinacabrantes@rmschool.org
Weather Closings & Delays	Families receive emails via SchoolCues Consult RMS Facebook & Instagram Accounts KTTC & KIMT News	

*When you need to speak to your child’s Guide, please make an appointment with them via email. For time-sensitive matters, please call the main office. A message will be delivered and the Guide will contact you when their schedule permits. In general, your child’s Guide is unavailable for conversations during the morning arrival or afternoon pick-up times due to obligations to the children.

Privacy Notification: All data collected by RMS to meet Minnesota licensing requirements or RMS internal needs is stored securely and made available to parents/guardians and RMS staff per policy.

Communication Tools

Communication is of vital importance to ensure understanding and efficient operations of our school. RMS has several avenues for communicating with parents:

SchoolCues: School Cues is a hub for student information management, communications, and your child’s records. Instructions for account setup are sent upon enrollment. The portal can be accessed at: portal.schoolcues.com. A free mobile SchoolCues parent app is available on the app store of your choice.

When completing forms and uploading documentation, including payments or enrollment tasks, access your SchoolCues account via website from a desktop computer or by using a browser on your mobile device. For security purposes, these features are not available within the mobile app.

Family Communication to RMS	RMS Communication to Families
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Permission Forms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gold Communication Form: changes to pickup/dropoff times or authorized adult ○ Tardy Form ○ Absentee Form ● Payment Dashboard ● Student Information System (SIS) Updates ● Parent-Teacher Conference Sign-up ● Easy Sign Ups (e.g., snacks, chaperones, volunteering) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Classroom and School-wide Communications, Events, Calendar ● Billing and Tuition Notifications ● Incident Reports ● Contagious Illness Reports ● Attendance History ● Enrollment Agreements ● Parent-Teacher Conference Sign-up ● School Directory

Website: Our web address is www.rmschool.org. The website provides information about Montessori, Internationale Baccalaureate, academic year calendars, newsletters, staff bios, and more.

Social Media: RMS maintains Facebook and Instagram accounts to share images and

information on classroom activities, RMCC or school events, and general information about our school.

RMS Facebook Page

www.facebook.com/rochestermontessorischool

RMS Instagram Page

www.instagram.com/rochestermontessori

Rochester Montessori Community Connections (RMCC) maintains a Facebook group for currently enrolled families. The RMCC uses this group to cultivate connection, parent support, volunteerism, and to share helpful information about RMCC organized events.

RMS Community Connections

www.facebook.com/groups/663513747110741/

Take Home Bags or Folders: Information that cannot be sent electronically from school or requires hard copies will be sent home with your child. The Toddler Community and Children's House will send information home on Thursdays. Elementary, the Middle Years Program, and all Specialist Programs (Art, Ecology, Spanish, etc.) will send information home as needed. We'll keep these hard copies to a minimum, but we suggest you regularly ask your child if anything was sent home.

Transparent Classroom: Our Elementary classes use Transparent Classroom for lesson recordkeeping and parent-teacher conference forms.

School Programs

Educational Programs

Our educational programs form a continuum from 18 months through ninth grade. Each program offers developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences designed to maximize each child's learning and thinking capabilities. In the following descriptions, the ages quoted are approximate. RMS reserves the right to alter age minimums or maximums based on individual, licensing, and community needs.

Please visit the RMS [website](#) for additional curriculum information beyond the following:

Toddlers (18 months through three years)

The Toddler Program is designed for children from 18 months to 3 years of age. Our Toddler Communities are referred to as a seed (Pinecone and Acorn). The classrooms are staffed by Montessori Guides and trained Assistants.

The Toddler program is an amazing community of young friends who learn and grow together. The learning environments provide activities that aid children in developing independence, self-mastery, and social skills. The activities promote movement,

exploration, and discovery. The activities also help children develop eye-hand coordination as they string beads, sequence cubes, arrange objects on pegs, match pictures, complete puzzles, and paint. Language activities promote early literacy as children sequence objects, match pictures, and use vocabulary enrichment exercises. World language lessons are also a part of this program.

Children enrolled in the full-day Toddler program have lunch and a rest period. As the children wake, additional activities take place.

Children's House (three years through Kindergarten)

In keeping with RMS tradition, each Children's House Community is named for a tree (Aspen, Birches, Cypress, Redwoods, & Willows). These classrooms are staffed by two or three adults—one or two Montessori Guides and one or two trained Assistants. Children explore and investigate well over 150 Montessori lessons grouped as art, geography, history, literacy, mathematics, music, practical life, science, and sensorial. World languages are also taught at the Children's House level. Children develop self-confidence, initiative, persistence, independence, concentration, orderliness, cooperation, grace and courtesy, and respect for others.

Following the morning work cycle, half-day children are dismissed. Lunch and naps are offered for full-day children. Children who nap are offered a thirty-minute rest time. After thirty minutes, children who are not sleeping may get up and enjoy various activities. Those who are developmentally ready will join the afternoon work cycle in their classroom. Children remaining in the nap rooms, upon waking, will join in age-appropriate activities that emphasize practical life, sensorial, and social skills. Sleeping children will be woken to prepare for the 3:00 pm dismissal or transition to afterschool.

The third year in Children's House (traditionally known as the Kindergarten year) is a year of mastery. During this year, the children become leaders and mentor their younger friends. They engage in both morning and afternoon work cycles. By the end of the third year, children emerge self-confident, self-aware, and ready to continue to take on challenges. The three year cycle creates the foundation for advancing academic and developing social skills, in a dynamic stimulating environment.

Elementary (first through sixth grade)

The Elementary learning environments are designed for children from first through sixth grade. Our Elementary classrooms are staffed by a Montessori Guide and a trained Assistant.

Elementary students study a broad interdisciplinary Montessori curriculum emphasizing exploratory materials designed to provide instruction in anthropology, archeology, biology, botany, chemistry, earth science, geography, geology, geometry, government, literacy, mathematics, meteorology, oceanography, sociology, and Spanish. Children become responsible for time management, self-guided learning, and effective teamwork with others.

The elementary years are divided into two groups. Lower Elementary (E1) includes students in the first through third grades. Upper Elementary (E2) includes students in the fourth through sixth grades. Children work through a set curriculum at a rate that is

determined by both ability and interest. 6th grade also marks the introduction to the International Baccalaureate Curriculum.

Middle School (seventh through ninth grade)

As we expand our program up to the adolescent students (grades 7-9) Montessori blends remarkably well with the core values of the learner profile valued by the International Baccalaureate Programme (MYP). RMS maintains its authorized International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP) designation by participating in accreditation every five years. Our Middle School Community is led by trained International Baccalaureate and Montessori guides.

Middle School at RMS provides a framework of academic challenge that encourages students to become critical, reflective, and creative thinkers. Students learn to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and their lives in the international world. Through rigorous study and experiential learning, students develop a comprehensive knowledge of the world, grapple with complex issues and problems, and embrace civic responsibilities.

The Middle School curriculum consists of eight subject groups – Language and Literature, Individuals and Society, Sciences, Mathematics, Spanish, Design, Physical and Health Education, and the Visual and Performing Arts. These subjects are integrated through six global contexts, which provide authentic settings through which students engage with issues and ideas of personal, local, and global significance. The global contexts include Identities and Relationships; Orientation in Space and Time; Personal and Cultural Expression; Scientific and Technological Innovation; Globalization and Sustainability; and Fairness and Development. Students complete service and business projects.

Additional information is found on our [website](#).

Specialized Learning

World Languages

Mandarin Chinese is taught in the Toddler Community and Children’s House, laying the foundation for future world language acquisition. Lessons are integrated into daily activities of the classroom community and focus on language exposure, speaking, and listening.

Spanish is also introduced in Children’s House at RMS and continues with formal instruction through Elementary and Middle School. Elementary and Middle School students engage in speaking, listening, cultural studies, and appropriate reading and writing activities.

Physical Education and Health

The physical education curriculum formally begins in Lower Elementary and offers age-appropriate learning experiences for each child in a variety of content areas such as basic movement skills, physical fitness, rhythm and dance, games, sports, tumbling, and nutrition and health. Our program encourages each student to do their best and guides

them to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.

Art

While children produce abundant amounts of art and crafts in the Toddler and Children's House communities, formal art instruction begins in Lower Elementary. An Art Guide offers a combination of directed art classes and open studio time. Students study artists and genres through short readings, videos, and discussions as well as explore connections between art and life. The elements of art and principles of design are emphasized and practiced in the creation of student art.

Outdoor Learning Environment

The Outdoor Learning Environment encompasses the areas of restored prairie grasses; a variety of coniferous and oak trees; vegetable, flower and pollinator gardens; a compost heap, a chicken palace, beehives, and fruit trees. Beginning in Children's House, children take part in learning about:

- The importance of soil health and methods of improving soil
- Using sustainable, regenerative agriculture practices to grow annual and perennial food crops, and edible and medicinal herbs
- Cooking and preserving harvested foods, as well as identifying and foraging for and using wild edible food and medicine sources
- Caring for chickens
- The life cycles and significance of pollinators, with opportunities for older students to work in the beehive with adult supervision, as well as harvesting honey from the comb.

The outdoor learning environment affords experiences to connect with nature and enjoy time to observe, journal, and just "be" in nature.

Program Transitions

Children's transitions between programs are determined by several factors. To ensure student success, transitions are monitored by guides of the current classroom, guides of the student's next classroom, and administration.

Factors that impact the timing of transitions include age, social and developmental needs, concentration and focusing abilities, and academic skills. Guides and administration will work closely with the parents during this process and encourage input and feedback to ensure a successful transition. All final decisions are at the discretion of the Head of School.

Classroom Ratios

All class sizes are designed to be large enough to optimize each child's learning experience but small enough to allow for appropriate guidance and supervision. Because the Montessori classroom has a three-year cycle, ratios are typically adjusted to

maintain the efficacy of this structure. Our general student-to-adult ratios are:

- Toddler - 7:1
- Children's House - 10:1
- Elementary - 13:1
- Middle School - 15:1

Additional Services

Before School and After School Care services are available on a contractual basis. Due to limited space in these programs, we accept registrations on a first-come, first-serve basis. You must reserve a consistent weekly schedule. Priority is given to full-week registration. Drop-in care is available on a limited basis when scheduled in advance with the Director of Additional Services and Summer Programs. Please view the [Additional Services Handbook](#) for more information.

Summer Enrichment

Rochester Montessori School offers summer programs for actively enrolled children. When space allows, extended family and alumni will be invited to enroll in the summer program at RMS. Summer options are available for ages 18 months to 6th grade, with various half-day and full-day options. Toddler and Children's House students must attend Rochester Montessori School during the preceding school year before they are eligible to sign up for the summer program.

Admissions Policies and Procedures

Application Process

Prospective families are expected to complete a school tour and observe at least one classroom if possible. Applications are accepted year-round and join a wait pool for the next enrollment cycle. Applications are considered complete when the application fee is paid in full. School transcripts are required for applicants aged Kindergarten and older.

Older children may be invited for a classroom visit as part of the application process. Wait pools exist when program levels reach maximum capacity. When openings occur, placements from the wait pool are offered based on the application date, desired starting date, and student makeup of the requested program, among other considerations. Current families and employees' children in the wait pool are given priority enrollment.

Enrollment Policies

- Enrollment Agreements will be offered to new applicants starting in early spring and continue until classrooms are full.

- A signed Enrollment Agreement is required before a child may attend school.
- All new enrollments are subject to a 60-day probationary period during which time any issues that cannot be resolved may warrant a cancellation of the placement without an obligation on the part of RMS.
- In the case that action is taken in regards to a probationary period, tuition and fees will be refunded as described below under withdrawals and refunds.
- After the 60-day probationary period, enrollment is continuous, meaning you are enrolled with RMS year after year, with no further action needed until you tell us otherwise.
- Although parents may request a specific classroom via email to the Head of School, classroom requests are not guaranteed.
- Once a child is placed in a class, they continue in that class until moving to the next program level (e.g. E1 to E2). In rare cases, the school may move a child to a different room or make a mid-year move to the next LEVEL to better provide for the child's needs. This decision is made through a collaborative process involving the Head of School, parents, and teaching staff.
- Throughout the school year, half day children may have the opportunity to move to full day enrollment based on nap/classroom space and staffing.
- Generally, full day enrollments will not be changed to half day (Toddlers & Children's House). However, there are exceptions when guides recommend this change based upon the observed needs of the child. This determination is made by the Head of School after discussion with parents and guides regarding the child's needs.
- When a child is unable to attend school for an extended period of time, the child's space will be reserved and attendance can continue if all tuition responsibilities are met during the time away from school.

Equal Education Policy

This policy ensures equal educational opportunity for all Rochester Montessori School students. It applies to all areas of education, including admissions, academics, coursework, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, or other rights or privileges of enrollment. Rochester Montessori School adheres to state and federal non-discrimination laws. This means we do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, marital status, parental status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or receipt of public assistance.

Responsibility It is the responsibility of every employee and other personnel of Rochester Montessori School to comply with this policy. The Head of School may promulgate regulations and procedures, as needed, to execute this policy. Rochester Montessori School urges reporting all incidents of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, regardless of the offender’s identity or position in the school. Any student who believes he or she has experienced conduct contrary to this policy or has concerns about such matters should file a complaint as soon as possible.

Reports under this policy shall be directed to the Head of School. All reports will be documented in writing and investigated impartially as appropriate. When the Head of School is unavailable, or concerns involve the Head of School, a report should be made to the President of the Board of Directors.

Billing Policies and Procedures

Tuition Payment Procedures

All tuition and fees are collected via online payment, cash, or check. If an online payment form is chosen, the vendor (e.g., SchoolCues, Amilia, PayPal) charges applicable processing fees.

What	When	Amount
Application Fee	At the time of application	\$100 per child/application
Enrollment Security Deposit	Upon acceptance of the Enrollment Agreement	\$500 per child/enrollment agreement
First Tuition Installment	June 2nd OR upon acceptance of the Enrollment Agreement (if after June 2nd)	1/10th of the total tuition
Second - Tenth Tuition Installments	2nd of each month, August - April	1/10th of the total tuition for each of the remaining nine installments

A continuous enrollment agreement and a truth-in-lending act (TILA) agreement are sent upon admission to RMS.

A security deposit of \$500 per child is paid at the time of acceptance into RMS. All security deposits will be placed in a low-risk account. Parents will not be paid any interest when the security deposit is returned. The security deposits are non-transferable.

Tuition

- Tuition is paid in 10 installments. The first installment is made at the beginning of June or at the time of enrollment if enrollment occurs in June or later. The subsequent nine installments are made monthly from August - April.
- Tuition is due on the 2nd of each month or the next business day if the 2nd falls on a weekend or holiday.
- Tuition does not cover the cost of summer programs, additional services (BSC/ASC), studios, specialty offerings, or any other miscellaneous fees (e.g., MMUN, field trips).
- Tuition statements can be found in the Payments module of SchoolCues.
- Tuition can be paid in the following ways:
 1. Online: Payments can be made manually or by auto withdrawal at portal.schoolcues.com. They are accepted via credit/debit card or ACH. Processing fees will apply for online payments. Credit card transactions will incur a mandatory transaction fee of 3% + 30¢. ACH transactions will incur a mandatory transaction fee of 0.8% capped at \$5.00, with a minimum transaction fee of 50¢. Using ACH auto withdrawal first requires verifying your bank account annually, followed by setting up automatic withdrawal through SchoolCues. Returning families using ACH auto-withdrawal will need to reset their payment information each year after July 1 and before the August payment is due.
 2. In-Person: Tuition can be paid in cash or by check at the RMS office.
- Tuition payments are required even when a student is absent due to illness, family vacations, etc.
- A tuition discount is applied as a credit to the final tuition installment of the year for families with multiple children currently enrolled in the school—a \$500 discount for the second child, a \$1,000 discount for a third or fourth child, etc.

Midyear Enrollment Changes

When midyear changes occur (example: Moving from Half Day to Full Day, or moving up to a new leveled program), tuition is prorated.

- RMS will determine any adjustments to the payment schedule and communicate them via email.
- Tuition changes and adjustments will be made to all remaining tuition payments or may be paid in full at the time of the agreement.

Annual Continuous Enrollment Notification

- Enrollment at RMS is continuous, meaning your child is automatically enrolled for the following school year unless RMS is notified of changes during the Continuous Enrollment Change Notification Period.
- Continuous Enrollment Change Notification Period: You will receive a notification

each year notifying you of your continuous enrollment and withdrawal deadline.

- Security deposits are rolled over for students returning for the next school year.
- Each year, the following documents need to be updated using SchoolCues:
 - By April 30th, updated TILA notifications will be available to families and must be completed.
 - By August 1st, all child files and health records, as requested by the RMS administration, including immunizations, well-child checks, and updated allergy information and medication.

Withdrawal and Refund Policy

- If you intend to withdraw at the end of the current school year, you must communicate your intention to withdraw to the Head of School by completing the withdrawal form during the Continuous Enrollment Notification period of the current school year. Security deposits are returned within 60 days from the last day of school.
- If the notification of withdrawal is received after the established Continuous Enrollment Notification deadline but before **June 30th**, your security deposit will be forfeited.
- If the statement of withdrawal is received after **June 30th** but before **July 31st**, the first tuition installment and the security deposit will be forfeited.
- If the statement of withdrawal is received on **August 1st** or later, RMS will retain all tuition installments paid in accordance with the installment schedule, including the tuition installment for the withdrawal month. Any fees paid and the security deposit will be forfeited.
- If, for any reason, RMS formally asks a student to withdraw, the tuition refund will be prorated to the day of departure, and the Security Deposit will be returned within 60 days of withdrawal.

Non-Sufficient Funds/Non-Payment Collection Procedures

- All tuition installments are due the 2nd of the month or the next business day after the 2nd, on which they are charged.
- Any payments received after the 17th of the month they are charged will be subject to a \$50.00 late fee.
- A fee of \$50.00 (fifty dollars) will be assessed for non-sufficient funds (NSF).
- The accountant will communicate outstanding balances, expecting payment by the 20th of each month.
- Failure to remedy an NSF situation or pay tuition payments due after the 20th may lead to suspension or termination of services.
- Failure to remedy an NSF situation or pay tuition payments within 45 days of the

due date may result in suspension or termination of services.

- Failure to bring an account current within 90 days will result in submission to a collection agency.
- In the event that RMS must take legal action to collect delinquent accounts, RMS will also pursue collection costs.

Tuition Assistance

- Rochester Montessori School offers tuition assistance to families on a needs basis.
- Application forms are available on the RMS website and are due by April 15th for the upcoming school year. Families new to RMS interested in applying for financial aid should complete the forms when they are accepted for enrollment.
- Applicants must complete an application form annually and send it directly to Tuition Aid Data Services (TADS). TADS will determine the level of need. RMS awards tuition assistance based on this report.
- Information provided in the application process is kept strictly confidential.
- Applications for tuition assistance submitted after April 15th will be processed, and needs will be met if the school has funds remaining in the financial aid budget.

Child/Student Records

RMS has adopted a policy regarding the rights of parents and students regarding school records. This policy complies with federal and state laws guaranteeing the right to examine and challenge the contents of student records. The Minnesota Legislature has said all school records are private, meaning RMS cannot release any information without parent/guardian authorization.

Annual Information for Children's Files

Your child's information must be updated annually. The due date for updated information and all required forms is **August 1st**. Children will not be allowed to attend school until these forms have been completed and turned into school. All school forms are completed and submitted via SchoolCues under the Student Information System (SIS). More information on SchoolCues and submission of forms will be provided annually and upon enrollment.

Registering with your Public School District

All students must register with their local public school district before the beginning of each school year. This registration may also provide transportation benefits for families living in Rochester.

Arrival at School

Before School Care

Early morning drop-off begins at 7:30 am. Children may not be left alone before arrival time. Families must walk their children inside to the front office to be checked in to Before-School Care.

Morning Drop-off

The daily arrival time and the carline runs from 8:15 am to 8:40 am arrival and dismissal procedures are designed to facilitate greater independence and freedom for your child. Safety is of the utmost importance at Rochester Montessori School.

Toddlers

Toddlers do not participate in the school car line. We ask all toddler parents to walk with their children to the building, where a designated staff member will be waiting by the front benches to greet and receive them. The separation point is outside of the front doors. Please allow your child to walk into the building and manage their belongings. These are essential parts of the Montessori experience that build self-esteem and independence. Guides will share any deviation from this arrival plan with their families each school year.

Children's House, Elementary, and Middle School

Most families use our morning arrival car line procedure outlined in the parking lot section of the handbook, making the car the separation point. Children have the benefit of entering the building independently. If families elect to walk their children into the building, the front doors will be the separation point. The children walk down the hall and into the classrooms independently.

Late Arrival

It is important for your child to arrive at school on time for the start of the school day, but we understand that late arrivals happen.

- As soon as you know that your child will be arriving late to school, please complete a Tardy Communication, which is located under the Permissions Form tab on SchoolCues.
- Please park and escort your child into the school. Do not drop your child off outside to walk into school alone.
- Sign in at the office upon your arrival so that we can account for your child's tardy attendance.

Dismissal from School

Toddlers

Please park on the West side of the parking lot (adjacent to the Peace Pole Garden). Pickup occurs outside of your child's classroom. If you arrive early, please gather in the lobby seating area and refrain from assembling in front of the classroom doors. This can be a distraction to the children.

Children's House, Elementary, and Middle School

Pick-up functions similarly to the drop-off procedures. Please pull into the parking lot and form a line on the East side of the lot leading to the front door. Staff will bring children out to the front of the building at their assigned dismissal time, at which time you may pick them up when it is your turn in the car line. **Please do not block the crosswalk.**

Children's House parents should display their assigned car identification number. If you need a new number card, please contact the office. Elementary and Middle School parents do not use these numbers.

After School Care

After School Care starts at 3:00 pm and goes until 5:30 pm, families must check in at the office before picking up their child. The admin staff will direct you to the appropriate location to pick up your child each day.

Authorized Pick Up

We will only release children to authorized adults. If we do not recognize the person picking up your child, we will contact you immediately to verify that person's authorized status.

If an adult arrives for pick up and is deemed unfit to pick up a child (i.e., is suspected to be under the influence, acting oddly, violent, etc.), RMS will contact the proper authorities to ensure the child's safety.

Early Departure

If your student is leaving early for the day, you must communicate this with the office and your child's Guide via a Gold Communication form, which is located under the Permissions Form tab on SchoolCues. Please park and sign your child out at the front desk.

Parking Lot Safety

Accidents are more likely to happen when drivers are distracted. Please **do not use cell phones** and **drive slowly (5 mph)** in our parking lot to keep our community safe.

- Our limited parking spaces should be used by toddler families or guests coming in for events or meetings. Otherwise, all adults are asked to use the carline.

- The overflow zone at the bottom of the drive is a temporary waiting area.
- NO PARKING is permitted in front of the building, in front of any yellow curb, or along the driveway. These are all access points for emergency vehicles.
- Please do not use the disabled spaces without the appropriate disabled placard or plate.
- A space is designated for new/expecting mothers.
- NEVER leave a child in your car unattended.

Supervision

Staff will be outside the building at the beginning of the carline for drop-off. Please obey the traffic flow and safety procedures outlined below.

Traffic Flow

- If you arrive before 8:15 am, please form a line on the East side of the lot.
- Once staff members arrive outside, the first car in line will be directed to pull forward.
- **Please do not stop in the crosswalk** or you will be asked to move forward before unloading can occur.
- Once stopped, a staff member will open the door and greet you and your child.
- Children should get out of the car by themselves, if possible.
- If a child is having a difficult morning or refuses to get out of the car, you may be asked to park and walk with your child into the foyer.
- Please do not park in the unloading zone in the front of the school as this area must be kept open in case of emergencies.

Modeling Parking Lot Safety

- While waiting for your turn in the carline, we ask that you and your child remain inside the vehicle for safety. We ask you to demonstrate safety by not allowing your children to **hang outside of sun roofs and windows**.
- We ask that children refrain from climbing on the light poles or on top of vehicles.

Entering the Building

- Please use sidewalks and crosswalks to enter the building.
- When parking at the center island, you must use the crosswalk and wait for traffic to clear. If cars are present, make eye contact with drivers and practice good traffic crossing habits - stop, look, listen, look again.

Community Guidelines

Our Prepared Environment

The Rochester Montessori School expects all members of our school, including children, parents, faculty and staff, to treat each other with grace, courtesy, and respect. As a Montessori school, we emphasize education over punitive action and respect over disrespect. In keeping with our Montessori philosophy and curriculum, our tradition is to prepare children for life. We teach children skills to handle conflicts and difficult social situations, minimize and respond to bullying, and know when to independently solve problems and when to get help. Our goal is to help each child develop their full potential in a safe and nurturing learning environment that is free from all forms of harassment including bullying.

Relationship to the Montessori Method

As a Montessori school, we hold as a part of our mission the belief that each child develops to their full potential in a safe and nurturing environment.

As a Montessori community we promote the following Universal Expectations:

Be Responsible & Respectful to Yourself, Others, & the Environment

RMS works to ensure that each child has a safe and secure learning environment. Internal motivation and self-discipline are the goals of RMS's character development. Our goal is for children to grow into ethical, independent thinkers who are willing to stand for what is right and to take action when necessary. We provide children with skills, knowledge, and strategies to respect and acknowledge differences and to give support to others when needed.

We do this through our shared Core Character Education:

Grace & Courtesy, Peace Education, and Mindfulness

All levels at RMS experience grace and courtesy lessons in their learning environments. As children transition into the Elementary program, they begin a deeper exploration of Montessori values of freedom and responsibility, which tie personal freedom to the willingness to take responsibility for one's words and actions. They also begin the Cosmic Education curriculum, which introduces the child to the world beyond their own neighborhood and their own ideas. They continue their work in Peace Education by learning conflict resolution and furthering their social skills. In the Middle School program, students may become peer mediators.

Montessori views rewards and punishments as ineffective tools for discipline and academic success and therefore should be used sparingly. Instead, we work to identify the child's needs in a positive manner. Understanding a child's behavior allows us to work with the child to creatively develop alternative ways to support their fundamental needs. We respond to challenges with natural and logical consequences, fostering the child's self-reliance.

School Culture

Montessori Guides are not an authority over children but work together as co-creators of the school environment. As a result of multi-age classrooms, students may have the same Guide for multiple years. This enables the development of rapport and trust. These supportive connections can serve as the basis for strong behavioral health and provide students with the comfort to confide in adults.

Community Learning Environment

Montessori schools support both independence and collaboration. Students meet as a whole class to reflect on what they are learning, both academically and socially. The learning community then makes decisions as a group that support the needs of all.

Our programs promote inquiry through independent and collaborative exploration. The classroom materials and instruction are varied to provide students at all levels with engaging work. Through a combination of self-directed and guide-directed learning, students work through high-level, non-competitive tasks that absorb their attention and build their confidence.

Academic and Behavioral Student Intervention

Additional Support Overview

In keeping with the Montessori philosophy to work with each student in support of their social, emotional and academic growth, RMS has guidelines to support students who may benefit from additional services beyond their learning environment. To best meet the needs of the individual child, these services may be for a host of purposes - social, emotional, academic, or behavioral growth. These additional services are utilized to support the Montessori method to meet each child's fullest potential.

Levels of Support Service

Standard Montessori in a Montessori Learning Environment: The Montessori method found in every learning environment at RMS, delivered by trained Montessori Guides, will successfully meet the needs of the majority of our students. The Montessori progression of materials and concepts is grounded in the Montessori philosophy to meet the needs of the whole child. Our standard learning environments provide a prepared environment, small group and one on one lessons, regular observations of students,

hands-on Montessori materials, frequent movement, grace and courtesy, student choice, and low student to Guide ratios.

Support and Intervention

This support service is utilized by our students when a specific area of concern in the child's development has been identified by either the Guide or parent. This level of support encourages growth in a targeted area and a variety of interventions can be drawn upon to implement in the learning environment. Interventions that could be provided are more frequent small group instruction, increased one on one lessons and follow-up activities, scheduled frequent observations of the specific concern, or change in the student's schedule. Guides and parents will discuss any concerns and Guides will then complete an Initial Concern Form for the Resource Specialist. The Resource Specialist and Guide then meet to discuss possible interventions and monthly tracking begins.

Additional Support and Intervention

If the targeted interventions implemented listed above do not meet the student's needs, additional support can be provided. The Student Intervention Team (SIT), composed of our Resource Specialist, a Guide from each of our classroom levels, the child's classroom Guide, and the Head of School, is engaged and further supports the planning strategy for the child. This can include a specific individualized educational plan and scheduled intensive observations by members of the SIT. The SIT serves as a support and as experienced educators to provide additional insight and perspective on ways to support student success. The student will have continued support within the RMS setting with recommended modifications and interventions by the SIT. Communication with parents will occur prior to any implementation of support, interventions, or further steps in meeting the student's needs. If additional instructional support is needed, parents will be made aware of our referral process and determine if evaluation is appropriate through our outside resources.

Outside Resources

RMS works with Rochester Public Schools for the purposes of an evaluation when all other forms of intervention and support do not give the student the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential. Referrals for evaluation are carefully considered in collaboration with the Head of School, Resource Specialist, Guides, and parents. Parents receive ongoing support through the process of referral, evaluation, and beyond by RMS as well as clarification about the process of referral before beginning. The evaluation is conducted by Birth to Three or the Rochester Public Schools in collaboration with RMS. The results of the evaluation will determine whether a student qualifies for additional services provided by Rochester Public Schools. Once the evaluation is complete, parents, RMS, and Rochester Public Schools will meet to discuss the findings and determine

appropriate next steps. Guides will be provided with suggested accommodations to use within the learning environment to best support student success and student progress will be tracked.

Student Code of Conduct

RMS believes that it is important to establish an understanding of unacceptable behaviors to ensure a safe and respectful environment. The following behaviors may be subject to disciplinary action:

- Repeated acts of dishonesty
- Any criminal activity or violation of the law
- Cheating and plagiarism
- Damage to or misuse of property, including the misuse of technology or use of technology in a way that causes property damage
- Failing to follow the instructions of an RMS staff member
- Inappropriate physical contact with another person, as well as physical aggression and fighting
- Possession, distribution, or use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco or paraphernalia
- Possession of weapons, explosives, incendiary devices, or any type of combustible substances
- Substantially interrupting the learning environment
- Sexual misconduct and sexual assault
- Theft
- Threats of violence
- Using language that is inappropriate in a school setting or possessing materials containing language that is not appropriate in a school setting. Inappropriate language includes abusive, profane, obscene, or threatening language. Inappropriate language also includes language that constitutes cyberbullying, bullying, discrimination, harassment, or hazing. Teasing and name-calling may also be considered inappropriate language.

Separation Report

Our first priority is to protect all children from physical harm. If redirection does not work, guides may remove a child from an activity for a period of time. This separation will occur within the classroom unless the child's behavior warrants removal from the classroom. When separation occurs the guide will complete an Incident Report using SchoolCues. When necessary, guides will communicate with parents by phone before the end of the day regarding the reason for the separation.

Bullying Prevention and Response Plan

In this plan, we address our Montessori philosophy as it relates to nurturing and promoting compassionate behavior.

The scope of this plan covers any activity initiated within the classroom, on the school grounds, through the use of personal and RMS devices, networks, and accounts, or during school trips that has a demonstrated adverse impact on a targeted child.

All members of the RMS community are expected to participate in this plan.

- The Head of School is responsible for the implementation and administration of the plan, and questions and concerns related to this plan may be referred to the Head of School.
- Parents are asked to follow through with issues communicated by Guides.
- All children, parents, faculty, and staff are to refrain from participating in spreading rumors, accusations, and negatively commenting about children, parents, faculty, and staff.

Definitions

A person is bullied when they are exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more persons.

Bullying can take on many forms such as verbal, non-verbal, written, electronic, or physical behavior. Bullying can include derogatory comments and name-calling; social exclusion or isolation; physical harm; lies and false rumors; theft; threat or being forced or coerced to do something against one's individual will.

Cyberbullying occurs through the use of digital technology while in school. It includes but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and internet postings. Unwarranted contact may take place in, or occur on, social networks, chat rooms, blogs, or cell phone texts.

Reporting

We are intent on creating a school culture that encourages the community to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behavior. We are a community committed to addressing these incidents and empowering students to be part of the solution. The school has an open reporting system where any concerned person may report an incident of bullying or cyberbullying. Designated school personnel will respond to the reporting party. Insofar as is legally allowed by Minnesota state law, confidentiality will be maintained with respect to the parties involved in the report, however, the party reporting the incident will be notified that it has been investigated and results may be shared as appropriate. Reporters and targets shall not be subject to any retaliatory action because they have initiated a complaint.

Process

Incidents of bullying will be dealt with in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the ages of the children involved.

The following process is non-chronological and will be the school's response to reported

incidents of bullying behavior:

1. Reported Incident

- a. The student(s) involved will be addressed by the Guide to whom the incident was reported. If the incident is reported to other school personnel, they will report the incident to the student's Guide.
- b. The Guide will speak privately with the student(s) to determine the severity and intent of the situation. Factors used to determine this will include age, maturity level, special needs, degree of harm, surrounding circumstances, nature of behavior(s), past incidences, the pattern of behavior, the relationship between the parties, and the context in which the alleged incident occurred.
- c. If the findings reveal a lack of intent to bully, the student will be directed to complete mediation with the other student(s) involved. The Guide will work with the children over the course of one or more meetings until the incident is sufficiently resolved. The parents of all parties and the Head of School will be informed when the intervention is complete.

2. Finding of Intent

- a. The student(s) involved will be brought to the Head of School, and the school personnel involved will review the situation. The Head of School may ask for further information, seek appropriate resources, as needed, as well as speak with the Guide(s), Resource Specialist, or other students.
- b. The parents of the student(s) involved will be called and a meeting will be arranged to discuss the situation and the consequences as relevant to the severity of the incident.
- c. If it is found to be warranted and age-appropriate, the student(s) involved may be sent home at the time of the incident and will not reintegrate into the school until a meeting with parents occurs.
- d. At the time of the parent meeting the following steps (as is appropriate) may be taken.
 - i. The student(s) will explain what happened.
 - ii. The parents will be given time to respond.
- f. The parents of the targeted student(s) will be called and a meeting will be arranged to discuss the situation and steps taken for support including additional resources, and prevention.
- g. Follow-up will include, but is not limited to the following:
 - i. The Head of School will state the consequences. These may include a warning, written apologies to another child, close supervision of the child, remediation, suspension, or, in extreme situations, expulsion from school.
 - ii. If it is age-appropriate, a peer mediation session facilitated by the Head of School, Guide, and/or Resource Specialist will occur prior to returning to the classroom.
 - iii. The involved student(s) will check in regularly with their Guide, Resource Specialist, and/or Head of School. Depending upon the circumstances, there may be a follow-up session with the whole class or classes to discuss and reinforce school values.
- h. Documentation and meeting note copies will be maintained and secured in the office.

Health and Medical

Health Care Summaries

Rochester Montessori School is required by Minnesota State Law to have a physician signed Health Care Summary form completed for all enrolled children.

All Health Care Summary and immunization forms must be on file in the office by the **FIRST day of school** or the child will be unable to attend school until the immunizations are up to date or an appointment is scheduled for the purpose of accomplishing this.

When to Stay Home

Students should stay home when:

- Severe cold, cough, or sore throat.
- New skin rash, especially if draining – unless medical opinion states the rash is not contagious.
- Temperature of 100 degrees or more with or without symptoms of an illness.
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or abdominal pain.
- Any other sign of acute illness.
- Until results of laboratory tests (i.e., throat culture, nasal swab) are known.

When to Return to School

Students may return to school when:

- Well enough to participate in normal school activities.
- Free of all symptoms for 24 hours.
- Temperature remains normal for a 24-hour period without the use of fever reducing medications.
- On an antibiotic for at least 24 hours.
- Your health care provider states your child can return to school.

Reporting Absences

Regular attendance at school is expected. Prolonged absences can affect learning. **All absences must be reported.** If your child will be absent from school, please complete an absentee form in SchoolCues before 8:30 am and let us know the reason for their absence. Attendance is taken in each classroom at the end of the official arrival time (9:00 AM) and all absences are reported in the SchoolCues Attendance section. If your child is not present at school at this time, and you have not notified us, we will call you at home or at work. Prolonged absences OR absences that are not consistently reported to the office may require additional follow-up.

School Nurse

While RMS does not employ a nurse, a public health nurse visits RMS regularly and provides a full range of health-related services including hearing and vision tests and training for the staff. Olmsted County Public Health provides RMS with the services of a variety of specialists for testing and referrals.

Injuries and Accidents at School

RMS keeps emergency contact information for every child on file in the school office. Please notify the office of any change to your primary contact information by completing the change request under the Student Information section on SchoolCues at portal.schoolcues.com using a web browser (changing information is not available via the SchoolCues app).

If a student has an accident at school, we will assess the situation and take action, which include:

1. Administering first aid before a child returns to activities.
2. Documenting injuries/accidents in SchoolCues; Contact parents when appropriate.
3. For serious injuries/accidents, calling 911 and notifying parents.

In all cases, an accident report will be provided to you, which specifies the details of the accident.

Sick at School

If a student becomes ill at school and/or cannot participate in regular activities, we will do our best to keep them comfortable until they can be picked up.

RMS is not licensed to operate a sick care program. A child with any of the following conditions or behaviors is considered ill and must be sent home from school. If the child becomes ill while at school, the child will be isolated from other children and a parent will be called immediately. A child who is ill will be supervised at all times.

The following is a list of conditions that exclude a child from school:

1. A reportable illness or condition as specified that the Commissioner of Health determines to be contagious and a physician determines has not had sufficient treatment to reduce the health risk to others;
2. Chickenpox until the child is no longer infectious or until the lesions are crusted over;
3. Vomiting;
4. Diarrhea;
5. Contagious conjunctivitis or pus draining from the eye;
6. A bacterial infection, such as streptococcal pharyngitis or impetigo and has not completed 24 hours of antimicrobial therapy;

7. Unexplained lethargy;
8. Lice, ringworm, or scabies that is untreated and contagious to others;
9. A 100 degree Fahrenheit or higher temperature before fever reducing medication is given;
10. An undiagnosed rash or a rash attributable to a contagious illness or condition;
11. Significant respiratory distress;
12. Inability to participate in activities with reasonable comfort;
13. If they require more care than the program staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other students in care.

Administering Medication at School

Non-Emergency Prescription Medication

For the safety of students, it is recommended that medication be given at home whenever possible. For example, medication prescribed three times a day can be given before school, after school and at bedtime. If medication must be given during school hours, the following requirements apply:

1. School personnel can only give medication with a written order from a health care provider that is licensed to prescribe, and the written consent of a parent/guardian. A copy of the Authorization to Administer Medication form is available in the office.
2. Medication must be brought to school in a container labeled by the pharmacy. The following information must be on the label:
 - a. Child's full name
 - b. Name and dosage of medication
 - c. Time and directions for administration
 - d. Licensed prescriber's name
 - e. Current date
 - f. Description of the medication (size, color, markings)
3. Medications should be brought to school by a parent/guardian or a responsible adult. Office staff will count the medication and check it into the office.
4. To avoid passing medication back-and-forth daily, ask the pharmacist to put the medication in two containers, one for school and one for home.
5. Mixed dosages in a single container will not be accepted for use at school (for example, 5mg and 10mg tablets in the same bottle).
6. All medication administered at school will be kept in a locked cabinet.
7. A new Authorization to Administer Medication form is required:
 - a. When the dosage and/or time of administration is changed
 - b. At the beginning of each school year
8. Parents/guardians must notify the school in writing when the medication is discontinued.

9. Over-the-counter medications must be in the original container with dosing recommendations visible. Secondary students may self-administer non-prescription pain medication that does NOT contain ephedrine if the parent submits written authorization annually and the medication is brought to school in a properly labeled bottle. Parents must complete and sign an Authorization to Administer Medication before over the counter medication may be administered at school. The privilege to self-medicate can be revoked at any time if unsafe use of medication is observed.
10. It is the joint responsibility of the parent/guardian, student, and school personnel to see that the medication is given at the right time.
11. At the end of the school year, any medication remaining must be picked up. Medications that remain unclaimed or cannot be returned to a parent/guardian will be destroyed.

Rules regarding school administration of drugs and medicine are found in MN Statutes 121A.22, 121A.221, 121A.222, 121A.2205.

Sunscreen

RMS staff may only apply sunscreen to children with written permission, Please apply sunscreen to your child in the morning before arriving at school. For children staying for afterschool, sunscreen along with written permission should be sent to school labeled for it to be reapplied in the afternoon. Elementary and Middle School students may bring sunscreen to school for their own, personal use only.

Allergies

RMS does not prohibit families from sending items to school that are common allergens (peanuts, milk, eggs, gluten, etc.). Our guides will make you aware of any allergies present in your child's classroom and take steps to mitigate the risk from exposure to food allergies.

It is of the utmost importance that you provide the school with all information regarding any allergy your child may have. This information helps us plan accordingly in respect to classroom pets, snacks, etc. Upon initial enrollment, please be sure to fully disclose any allergies on the health form documents. If an allergy develops AFTER enrollment, please notify us immediately. We need to know how to care for your child. RMS staff is trained in the use of EpiPens. If a student does have an EpiPen, it is required that you provide the school an EpiPen together with the Medical Authorization form to be kept in the school office.

Contagious Illnesses

We are required to keep records of communicable illnesses for the State. You must contact the school office within 24 hours if your child contracts a communicable disease (examples include, but are not limited to: Covid-19, influenza, chicken pox, strep throat, scabies, impetigo, ringworm, lice, conjunctivitis). We will notify you by email whenever we confirm that your child could have been exposed to any communicable disease at school. The Health and Human Services listing of Communicable Diseases is available in

the RMS office.

Head Lice and Nits

Due to the tenacious nature of head lice/nits, RMS urges parents to follow these procedures closely. When head lice are discovered at school, the parent/guardian of the child will be notified immediately and pick-up will need to be arranged. The child may not remain in school until the end of the school day and can only return to school after the first application of treatment has been completed. For more information please contact the Olmsted County Health Department, 507-328-7500, or your physician for more information.

Vaccinations

Current immunization records are required for each child enrolled. Exclusions from participation in school may include: during an outbreak of vaccine-preventable diseases, if a student does not have required vaccinations, or a valid exemption.

Exemptions

Parents must submit a physician's written explanation if vaccinations are delayed or exempted following medical advice or a religious exemption. In this case, parents must complete and notarize Part D of the Child Care Immunization Record form.

Safety and School Security

General Safety Measures

RMS controls access to the school. The main entryway exterior door into the vestibule is open from 7:30 am-5:30 pm, all other doors are locked. When you arrive at school please ring the doorbell located inside the vestibule on the east wall and a staff member will let you in. It is important that staff members open the doors for individuals waiting in the vestibules.

The RMS parking lot, area surrounding the building, and classrooms are equipped with video surveillance. This surveillance is closed circuit, and is only accessible to the Head of School and the Director of Operations and Systems Development. Video footage is reviewed as needed and is temporarily stored before being permanently deleted.

Signing In and Out

Guests to the school must sign in and out at the office.

Authorized Pick Up Person(s)

Parents must complete the Authorized Pick-Up Persons section in the Student

Information System in SchoolCues. At least two people other than parents must be authorized for pick-up. We will only release your child to individuals authorized for pick-up. You may add or delete people from your Authorized Pick-Up list at any time by submitting a change in SchoolCues.

In the event an unauthorized person comes to pick your child up we will call parents for authorization before your child can be released.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted monthly throughout the year. All faculty and staff have pre-arranged responsibilities during a drill or a real fire. In the event of a real fire, activation of the school's fire alarm will automatically summon the local fire department. Upon evacuation, all classrooms will gather at their designated locations and parents will be notified.

Tornado Drills

Tornado drills are conducted during April - November. The school has built-in tornado shelters where staff and students shelter in place during drills or a real weather emergency. During a severe weather watch or warning, an administrator continually monitors the school's weather alarm and local news stations for updates.

Intruder Drills

Practicing drills is a key element to ensure the school is as prepared as possible for potentially unsafe and threatening situations. In the event of an unknown or potentially threatening individual or situation on our property, the school has protocols to address multiple scenarios. The administration will periodically schedule intruder drills to make sure the process runs as smoothly as possible.

School Closure

Rochester Montessori School typically follows Rochester Public Schools for closure purposes. However, there are occasions when RMS *does not follow* the Rochester Public Schools in delaying or canceling school due to bad weather.

RMS Closure/Early Dismissal Policy

- When the Rochester Public Schools (RPS) close due to snow or ice, **RMS** will also close.
 - If RPS has a distance learning day for any other reason than inclement weather, RMS will remain open.
- When RPS schools are delayed due to snow or ice, **RMS** will open for school at 10:30 am unless otherwise specified. Early Arrival and Morning 1/2 day programs will be canceled.
- When RPS closes due to cold temperatures, **RMS** will independently decide if it is safe to keep school open. We will use our best judgment based on the safety of the school community in consideration of travel to school and operating procedures including carline. Families will be directly notified by RMS on this decision.

- Parents will be notified of early dismissal due to inclement weather.
- RMS may be required to close if there is a prolonged utility failure.

Communication of Closure, Delay or Early Dismissal

We will announce school delays or closures due to weather or unforeseen circumstances via SchoolCues email, on Facebook and Instagram, and on the “School Closing” information on the [KTTC](#) Television Station.

In case of an early dismissal due to weather or unforeseen circumstances such as utility failure, the school will contact parents to pick up your child.

Driving for Field Trips

RMS uses school buses when possible for transporting children. A fee may be collected to cover this cost. For going outs and small group trips, parent drivers with private vehicles will be used. Parents will be asked to give permission to ride in another family’s car prior to the trip. Parent drivers will be required to provide proof of insurance for the vehicle they are driving, a copy of their driver's license. All children must use car seats as required by law, otherwise, seatbelts must be worn by everyone in the vehicle at all times.

Background Checks

Rochester Montessori School complies with the Department of Human Services (DHS) background study policies and conducts background checks on all employees. For more information on DHS background requirements please refer to DHS rule 245C.

Background checks are conducted using a third party vendor for volunteers who have contact with our students for classroom related activities (e.g., guest workshop teachers and field trip chaperones).

Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect

Mandated Reporting: RMS has adopted this policy from the Department of Human Services for licensed programs.

Who Should Report Child Abuse and Neglect

- Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.
- If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

Where to Report

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 911.
- Reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in a licensed child foster care or family child care facility should be made to county child protection services

- Reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in all other facilities licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services should be made to the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake line at (651) 431-6600.
- Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to Olmsted County social services agency at 507-328-6130 (day) or 507-535-5625 (after hours). Reporting can also be made to the Rochester Police Department at 507-328-6800 or the Olmsted County Sheriff's Office at 507-326-6800.
- If your report does not involve possible abuse or neglect, but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern the facility, you should call the Department of Human Services Licensing Division at (651) 431-6500.

What to Report

- Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556).
- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.
- An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

Failure to Report

A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Human Services and by the Minnesota Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations.

Photo Release Permission

All families are asked to sign a release waiver in SchoolCues regarding the use of their child's image in any capacity. Photos are primarily used on our website and social media outlets. Photos of children without permissions will not be used. Please know that when photos are used on social media releases we do not use student's name and personal information. Any press releases using student names will be approved by parents before release. Photos used solely for curriculum purposes, curriculum communication, and the yearbook do not require permission.

Outdoor Environment

RMS is fortunate to have an outdoor environment that includes gardening, chickens,

playground equipment, maintained prairie trails, and large open spaces. Students are taught proper ways to access our outdoor environment depending on their age. Children are always supervised outside. Parents must supervise their children when attending RMS events. Most of the outdoor environment is appropriate for all ages except as follows:

Playground structures: the large playground structure is approved for children ages 5 and above, per manufacturer guidelines. The dome structures, small structure, climbers and in-ground slides may be used by ages 3 and up. Please abide by these expectations when visiting our grounds.

Prairie Trail: the trails may be used by students in Lower Elementary or older under supervision of an RMS staff member.

Emergencies and Accidents

At Rochester Montessori School, all staff are annually trained in the Emergency/Accident Policies, the Risk Reduction Plan, the Allergy Response Plan, and the Emergency Plan during orientation, and when changes are made. Copies of policies are available on site and readily accessible to staff. Rochester Montessori School is committed to monitoring the implementation and adherence to these policies and procedures.

First Aid/CPR/OSHA

All staff are required to have pediatric first aid training and infant and child CPR and treatment of obstructed airways every two years by a qualified trainer, which must be completed within 90 days of employment.

If first aid procedures are required they will be administered by the first trained staff on the scene. All first aid administered will be documented in SchoolCues via Incident Reports.

All staff are Minnesota Occupational Safety Health Administration (MNOSHA) trained regarding Bloodborne Pathogens and Employee Right to Know at orientation and at least once each calendar year. This will include universal precautions to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and the handling of disposal of bodily fluids. Documentation of training will be kept on file.

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.41, subdivision 2, Rochester Montessori School ensures proper procedures for the safe handling and disposal of bodily fluids from incidents such as nose bleeds, bites, cuts and abrasions.

A first aid kit is kept in each classroom.

Attendance Policy

Attendance

Regular attendance is important and helps set the stage for your child's attitude toward school, consistency of expectations, and to reinforce concepts and skills your child is learning. Much of our instruction is hands-on and involves student-guide interaction. Consequently, it is difficult for students to catch up after missing significant time from school.

We understand that absences are occasionally necessary. Please notify the school via SchoolCues no later than 8:30 am if your child will not attend that day. Elementary and Middle Years Program students who are absent or anticipate being absent for two or more days may arrange to get assignments from their guide ahead of time.

Excused Absences

We encourage you to schedule appointments and travel during non-school hours and on scheduled breaks. Some examples of valid conditions for excused absences are:

- Illness or injury that makes the student physically unable to attend school
- If your child has a contagious disease or infection
- Medical or dental appointments
- Funeral or loss of a loved one
- Court or administrative proceedings
- Religious observance
- Educational opportunity

Excessive Absences

If absences become habitual, we will request a meeting with you to discuss this situation. Habitual absence affects your child's educational and social opportunities.

Tardiness

A child is considered tardy after 8:40 am, the end of the car line. Habitual tardiness affects the whole classroom. By missing the beginning of the school day, which includes important time for social connection, it can be difficult to form friendships as well as make up missed academic lessons.

Early Dismissal and Return

For early dismissals, please complete a Gold Communication Form in SchoolCues. Children must be picked up inside the building and signed out at the reception desk. The same procedure is followed if they return to school.

School Community

New Student Orientation

Orientation typically takes place in the middle of August. All new students or students moving into a new program and their families are expected to attend whether entering Toddler, Children's House, Elementary, or Middle School. Orientation is a special time when your child will become accustomed to the classroom and develop a sense of belonging and comfort before the school year actually begins.

Dress Code

Clothing and Shoe Requirements - All Students

- All clothing and shoes should have the student's name clearly marked with permanent black ink, preferably in a place that won't get worn.
- Students are outside during all seasons. Your child should be dressed appropriately for the weather and be prepared for changing weather conditions.
- Students must keep an extra pair of shoes at school to leave in the classroom. Tennis shoes are recommended as they are required for participation in physical education.

Children's House and Toddler Additional Clothing and Shoe Requirements

- Children's House and Toddler children must have an extra set of seasonally appropriate clothing stored in a large plastic zip-lock bag at school. This includes a shirt, pants, socks and underclothing. Remember to label each item with your child's name.
- Help younger children become independent dressers by choosing clothing and shoes that allow for self-care in toileting and dressing – elastic, velcro, and loose fitting items are preferred over snaps, laces and tight clothes.

Restrictions on Clothing and Shoes - All Students

- Children should refrain from wearing clothing and shoes that are distracting in the learning environment. Some examples of this may include clothing with lights and/or sounds. We will help children wearing these items to change into spare clothing. If you have questions please contact your child's guide.
- Shoes may NOT have flashing lights.
- Shoes may NOT have wheels in them.
- All shoes and boots must have non-marking soles. Students that have shoes that mark the floor will not be able to participate in some activities and the shoes will be sent home.

Winter Boot Procedures

All children must remove their boots before entering the classroom. We ask that

Elementary and Middle School students remove their boots in the lobby and either put on their shoes at the lobby benches or walk to class in their stocking feet. Children DO NOT need to remove winter gear items (coats, jackets) as it is difficult to carry everything to class. **Parents**, if for some reason you must walk down the hallway, **please respect the children by removing your boots prior to walking down the hallways.**

Toileting Independently

In a Montessori environment, the term "potty training" is referred to as "toilet learning" or "toileting independently." In our Toddler program, the goal is to empower children to increase their desire for independence and to place more emphasis on the child's engagement in the process. Children are never forced or shamed into using the toilet. In order to transition or be admitted into Children's House, children must be able to toilet independently. Children's House classrooms are not equipped in the same way Toddlers classrooms are for diaper changing and RMS must adhere to strict licensing requirements for soiled and wet clothing. Of course, we understand that children will have accidents from time to time. In these instances, the guides will help children to change their clothes and encourage independence as much as possible.

A child is considered to be able to toilet independently if the child is able to:

- Communicate the need to use the bathroom
- Recognize the need to use the bathroom and will stop what they are doing to use the bathroom
- Push down and pull up their pants without assistance
- Wipe after using the toilet, with minimal assistance
- Get on and off the toilet by themselves
- Wash and dry their hands by themselves
- Wait to use the bathroom if in use by another child or a bathroom isn't readily accessible
- Wake upon napping should they need to use the bathroom

Please note that in Children's House, training pants and pull-ups are not permitted.

Lunch

At RMS lunch is eaten together in the classrooms. It is a time for the children to slow down, relax, have quiet conversation, practice basic social skills, and learn good nutritional habits. To reinforce this learning process, we ask that you:

- Prepare a nutritious lunch, including all the basic food groups. RMS provides milk (1% for children over the age of two, whole milk for children under two) for students. If your child uses milk different from traditional cow's milk, please provide an alternate milk for your child.
- Involve your child in helping to prepare lunch
- Use reusable containers that your child can open
- Use a sturdy lunch box and label it with your child's name
- We ask that you do not send the following items:

- Sugary drinks such as soda and other sweetened beverages
- Candy or foods high in sugar
- Lunch boxes with pop culture figures depicted on them
- If your child forgets their lunch, we will contact the parent or guardian to bring lunch. RMS will provide a back-up lunch if one cannot be dropped off at school in time for the child to eat.

Snacks

- Please send a morning snack with your child daily.
- If your child is registered for After School Care, you will also need to provide an afternoon snack.
- Snacks should follow the same guidelines as lunch and consist of foods such as cheese, crackers, breadsticks, fruits, and vegetables. If your snack only contains one food group, RMS will supply milk so two food groups are offered.

Sharing and Personal Belongings

In our Children's House classes children regularly bring items for sharing, such as objects from nature, meaningful items from home, or other special events in their lives. Children may NOT bring toys, trinkets, candy and gum, cartoon or figure toys, electronic games, pocket knives, mock weapons etc. to school as these cause disruptions and distract from the prepared environment. If such items find their way to school, they will be held for the child until they can be sent home.

Lost and Found

Lost and Found is located in the front lobby. Prior to the end of the school year any unclaimed clothing that is not retrieved or labeled will be donated. RMS will notify parents prior to this donation so you have adequate time to check for lost items.

School Belongings

If a child intentionally damages school materials, we may ask for reimbursement for the cost of the material. If your child brings home a piece of material from the classroom, please return it. Missing pieces render some of the classroom materials unusable. RMS does not loan or rent any of the Montessori material for home use.

Field Trips

The SchoolCues Permissions Form provides consent for short walking field trips within a mile or two of the school. For all other field trips, guides will send out specific permission forms for approval and signature. The form will contain information about the trip, time of departure and return, and means of transportation. Permissions slips

will be sent out at least two weeks in advance. Emergency contact and medical forms will be taken on all field trips. It is important that parents ensure that these forms are always up to date.

Going Outs

Dr. Montessori's ideal for the Elementary experience was a purposefully limited environment where key lessons provide jumping-off points for additional exploration outside the classroom. Going outs are designed to foster independence and resourcefulness, and to give students important real-life experiences. As students pursue greater depth in their work, they find the need to enter the "real world" to gather additional information. Perhaps they visit a museum, interview a specialist, or investigate a rock outcropping firsthand. Trips are typically planned by a small group of students engaged in a specific type of work or research. Through the guide's assistance, but ultimately on their own, students must plan their own trip, arrange transportation, and make necessary appointments. These Practical Life experiences place the responsibility on the students and allow them to develop vital communication and organizational skills. Going outs are typically for Elementary and Middle school students.

Conferences and Progress Reports

During conferences you will receive information about your child's work, progress, and growth. It is vital that you arrange to meet with your child's Guide. Two formal conferences are held during the year - one in October and in March or April (please refer to the calendar for your child's conference dates). Arranging your conference times and dates takes place electronically, and you will receive an email regarding how to do this.

Evaluation and Assessment

Toddler, Children's House, and Elementary children are not "tested" or graded in the traditional sense. The Guides instruct them in the use of the materials and then carefully observe their development. Our Guides are trained to observe and record each child's progress. Observation records play an important role in communicating progress and are the basis of evaluation.

Children in Lower Elementary experience taking tests as they learn, for example, math facts and spelling words. Testing becomes more formal in the spring of third grade and in our Upper Elementary and Middle School classes. We administer a standardized test called NWEA's MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) annually in the fall and spring to students in fourth through ninth grades. NWEA's MAP is a nationally normed "smart" test used by many public and private schools. The purpose of this testing is:

- As a practical life exercise to help students understand how to take tests since they will take many once they leave RMS;
- For the Guides to obtain further information about each student's progress and use this to support their learning;
- Provide parents information on their students' progress relative to national norms.

Progress reports will be provided during two formal conferences. These conferences are designed to help you understand where your child is in relation to his or her development, not in relation to other students. Middle school students receive three report cards during the school year with letter grades.

Becoming skilled in time management is a part of our Elementary and Middle School curriculum. In the Elementary programs, the Guide plays a greater role in determining each child's lessons and work because there is a very specific curriculum. In Lower Elementary, the children record their lessons and work plans in their work journals. These plans are both a to-do list and a record of their work and are key documents in understanding what your child is learning. Upper Elementary children also receive work, which is logged into a personal planner. As such, each child tracks what is assigned, when it is due, and what has been completed. Guides log lessons in Transparent Classroom which is also used for parent communication and can greatly aid parents in understanding what their child is doing day by day. Middle School students will receive study guides in several of the subjects. A study guide is a mini-syllabus that explains lessons and assignments.

IB MYP Project Rubrics

Students in our MYP program (grades six through eight) complete projects in each of their MYP subjects. These projects are evaluated using MYP criteria and rubrics. The rubrics are displayed in the Upper Elementary and Middle School classrooms. Please consult the Middle School Handbook for more information on MYP Project Rubrics.

Classroom Observations

Parents are encouraged to schedule classroom observations throughout the school year to further understand their child's learning activities and progress. During observation, you may wish to note how your child uses the materials, relates to the staff and other children, and becomes responsible for the care of the classroom environment. Formal observations are scheduled from 9:15 am to 10:15 am in the mornings, between mid-October and mid-May. Observations of Art, Physical Education, and Spanish classes are scheduled on an as-needed basis. Please contact the office to schedule an observation.

Animals in the Classroom

Animals are an important part of the Montessori classroom. Children learn responsibility while caring for animals and develop a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of life.

If your child has pet allergies, please notify the office (in addition to indicating this on the Health Summary Form) so appropriate accommodations can be made. If an allergy develops during the school year, we will ask for medical documentation before removal of any animal from the environment.

Students wishing to bring a family pet to share with the classroom should make prior

arrangements with their Guide.

Child Care Program Plan

Rochester Montessori School is a licensed child care center through the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Licensed Child Care Centers must follow Rule 3 and develop a [Child Care Program Plan](#). Licensed programs at RMS include Toddlers, Children's House, before and after school and summer programming. Questions regarding these policies and rules should be directed to the Director of Operations and Systems Development. The following outlines how RMS meets state requirements.

Requirement A: Rochester Montessori School provides supervision for children at all times.

Requirement B: 18 months through Children's House and through age 12 for Additional Services.

Requirement C: RMS is open from 7:30 am - 5:30 weekdays.

Requirement D: Rochester Montessori School is a non-sectarian, non-profit organization dedicated to providing an authentic Montessori education to the children of Rochester and SE Minnesota.

Requirement E: It is the responsibility of the Head of School to develop and evaluate this plan in writing on an annual basis.

Requirement F: RMS promotes physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development of children by focusing on the growth of the whole child. Our goal is that each child reaches their full-potential by the time they graduate from RMS.

Requirement G: Rochester Montessori School emphasizes sensitivity to the cultural background of its students. We make it a point to study and appreciate all cultures, and we encourage children and families to share their cultural heritage in school. Our environment provides flexibility in terms of cultural diversity and appreciation.

Requirement H: Progress reports are prepared by guides and discussed with parents at conference time. The completed forms are kept in the child's file at the school.

Requirement 9503.0050: Naps and Rest: It is the policy of Rochester Montessori School to provide opportunities for naps for children below the age of three years, ten months. Provision for naps includes:

Confined Limitation: A child who has completed a nap or rested quietly for 30 minutes will not be required to remain on a cot.

Placement of Equipment: Naps and rest will be provided in a quiet area that is physically separate from children who are engaged in activity that would disrupt a napping or resting child. Cots are placed so there are clear aisles and unimpeded access for both adults and children on at least one side of each piece of napping and resting equipment. Cots with children on them are placed directly on the floor and are never stacked.

Bedding: For our nappers, parents provide cot-sized sheets and a blanket. Bedding may be sent home for washing every other Friday or when it becomes soiled.

School Traditions & Special Events

Birthdays

Children participate in a Sun Ceremony which is a celebration of the child's life story. You are invited to attend and share photos and memories of your child for each year of life.

- Please contact your classroom Guide at least one week in advance to arrange the celebration. If your child(ren)'s birthday falls in the summer, the Sun Ceremony should be planned for your child's half-birthday.
- It is common for the child to give a gift to the classroom - such as a book or a needed educational material. Please contact your child's Guide for suggestions.

Holidays

Rochester Montessori School recognizes holidays as historical and cultural events, and each may be studied in some capacity. As such, we must be sensitive to and respectful of the diversity in our school.

Ribbon Ceremony

Ribbon ceremony takes place at the end of each school year to commemorate students' accomplishments. Students completing their Children's House cycle will receive a Golden Bead. Medallions are presented to students at the completion of their first elementary year. The medallion is threaded on a set of colored ribbons, corresponding to the number of years enrolled at RMS. The colors correspond to the colored bead chains used in Montessori math. This is a very special ceremony that represents the transition to the next academic year and graduation for our 8th/9th grade graduates. The event features speeches from our graduates and music from our elementary and middle school students.

The medallion and ribbon(s) are sent home with the child but must be returned at the end of each year in preparation for the ceremony. A small fee may be charged to replace lost medallions.

Academic Events

Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN)

Peace education is a cornerstone of Dr. Maria Montessori's educational philosophy. The preparation for the MMUN trip in the spring allows our 6th grade & 8th grade students to delve into understanding the world and the people around them. 6th graders participate in MMUN by traveling to New York while the 8th grade MMUN conference is in Rome. Our alums share that this was a life-changing experience where they gained confidence and global awareness.

Writers' Cafe

The Writers' Cafe provides elementary students an opportunity to showcase their skills in researching, writing and presenting in a fun, relaxed setting. Thematic evenings may include historical figures, scientific discovery, or various genre explorations.

Parent Education Opportunities

Parents who choose RMS for their children's education have an interest in creating lifelong learners. We not only strive to quench the student's thirst for inquiry, but the parents as well. Throughout the year, parent education days and nights are available to help parents learn more about and understand how and why the Montessori philosophy is implemented. These parent education opportunities are presented through classroom visits and invitations to experience Montessori teachings through hands-on student guided lessons.

Parent Involvement

Rochester Montessori Community Connection

The Rochester Montessori Community Connection's (RMCC) role/purpose is to promote greater participation in the school community to enrich each family's experience. All parents, staff and students are welcome to participate. In order to fulfill its mission, the RMCC organizes, sponsors, and hosts activities that provide opportunities for parents to participate in the life of the school and benefit the school socially, culturally, and financially including appreciation of our staff.

RMCC-coordinated activities include, but are not limited to:

- **Ice Cream Social** – kickoff for the beginning of the school year
- **Harvest Festival** – fall games, crafts, and fun educational activities
- **Soup Night** – children and families make soup from scratch to share with the community
- **Book Fair** – we love books!
- **International, Cultural and Heritage Festival** – celebrate and learn about different cultures through dress, crafts, entertainment, and food!
- **Staff Appreciation** – coordinating meals and thank yous for RMS staff

Volunteering Opportunities

Rochester Montessori School welcomes and appreciates parent participation. You are able to connect with other parents and staff, strengthening our school community. Volunteers will be subject to a background study prior to their volunteering.

Here are opportunities to volunteer:

- Attend parent meetings
- Attend RMCC meetings and events (event setup and cleanup)

- Attend Montessori parent education
- Observe in any one of the classrooms
- Help weed the gardens or water plants
- Clear snow drifts off the sidewalks during the winter
- Help out in one of the school programs (school play)
- Help with general maintenance or cleaning
- Share your area of expertise with a classroom
- Consider joining a Board Committee:
 - Finance Committee
 - Strategic Planning Committee
 - Buildings & Grounds Committee
 - Committee on Trustees
 - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Committee
 - Development Committee

Additional Resources

Recommended Reading List for Parents

Lillard, Paula P. (1966). *Montessori Today and Montessori: A Modern Approach*. NY: Random House.

These books describe Montessori theory and contemporary American Montessori schools.

Lillard, Angeline Stoll. (2005). *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius*. NY: Oxford University Press.

Lillard describes the basic ideas of Montessori education and how these are validated by today's scientific findings.

Montessori, Maria (1972). *The Secret of Childhood*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Montessori discusses the hidden learning potential of the young child and how to develop learning activities and experiences to maximize the child's unique capabilities.

Montessori, Maria. (1948). *To Educate the Human Potential*. Madras, India: Kalakshetra Publications.

Montessori describes the needs of the Elementary-aged child and how he or she learns history, science, math, and language.

Montessori, Maria. (1956). *The Child in the Family*. Chicago: Henry Regnery.

A series of short essays about the child, the family, the school, and the Montessori philosophy.

Montessori, Maria. (1948). *From Childhood to Adolescence*. Oxford, England: Clio Press, Ltd.

Montessori describes how children learn during their elementary, adolescent years, and university years. She describes the curriculum and the optimal

learning environments for each age.

Seldin, Tim and Epstein, Paul. (2006). *The Montessori Way*. Sarasota, Florida: The Montessori Foundation Press.

The authors present an illustrated guide to Montessori philosophy, history, and the curriculum for infants through high school.

A Brief History of Montessori Education

Rochester Montessori School's educational programs are based on the pioneering work of Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952). Maria Montessori was an individual ahead of her time. She was born in 1870 in Chiaravalle, Italy, to an educated but not affluent middle class family. She grew up in a country considered most conservative in its attitudes toward women. Despite the considerable opposition of her father and guides, Dr. Montessori pursued a scientific education and was one of the first women in Italy to become a physician.

As a practicing physician associated with the University of Rome, Montessori was a scientist, not a guide. It is ironic that she became famous for her contributions in a field that she had rejected as the traditional refuge for women at a time when few professions were open to them other than homemaking, teaching, or the convent. The Montessori method evolved almost by accident from a small experiment that Dr. Montessori carried out on the side. Her genius stems not from her teaching ability, but from her recognition of the importance of what she stumbled upon.

In 1900 Montessori was appointed director of the new orthophrenic school attached to the University of Rome. The children there were probably developmentally delayed or autistic. She initiated a wave of reform in a system that formerly had served merely to confine mentally handicapped youngsters in empty rooms. Recognizing her patient's need for stimulation, purposeful activity, and self-esteem, Montessori insisted that the staff speak to each child with the highest respect. She set up a program to teach her young charges how to care for themselves and their environment.

Montessori refined the idea of a scientific approach to education, based on observation and experimentation. She pursued her work with the careful training and objectivity of a biologist studying the natural behavior of an animal in the forest. She studied children with special learning needs, listening and carefully noting everything they did and said. Slowly she began to understand them and what methods worked best. Her success was given widespread notice when, two years after she began, many of Montessori's students were able to pass the standard sixth grade tests of the Italian public schools. Acclaimed for this "miracle," Montessori responded by suggesting that her results proved only that public schools should be able to get dramatically better results with normal children.

After several years of study and work at the University of Rome, Montessori accepted an invitation in 1907 to coordinate a day-care center for working-class children who were too young to attend public school. This first Casa dei Bambini "or Children's House" was located in San Lorenzo, an extremely poor district of Rome. The conditions Montessori faced were appalling. Her first class consisted of fifty children from two through five years of age, taught by one untrained caregiver.

Montessori, not knowing whether her ideas would work under such conditions, began by teaching the older children how to help out with the everyday tasks that needed to be done. She also introduced the manipulative perceptual puzzles that she had used with children with developmental delays. The results surprised her, for unlike her earlier experiences with coaxing children with special learning needs to use the learning materials, the children of San Lorenzo were drawn to the work she introduced. Children who had wandered aimlessly the week before began to settle down to long periods of constructive activity. They were fascinated with the puzzles and perceptual training devices. But, to Montessori's amazement, children three and four years-old took the greatest delight in learning practical everyday living skills that reinforced their independence and self-respect. Each day they begged her to show them more, even applauding with delight when Montessori taught them the correct use of a handkerchief. Soon the older children were taking care of the school, assisting their guide with the preparation and serving of meals and the maintenance of a spotless environment, and even learning to write and read. Their behavior as a group changed dramatically from street urchins running wild to models of grace and courtesy. It was little wonder that the press found such a human interest story appealing and promptly broadcast it to the world.

Montessori called her discoveries the "secrets of childhood." As she opened more schools, she discovered further that these "secrets" were found in children everywhere. As summarized by her student and colleague E. M. Standing, young children prefer

- Work without compulsion;
- Spontaneous repetition;
- Work rather than play;
- Concentration and self-discipline.

Montessori also discovered that two other qualities were necessary for this response from young children: a prepared, transformed guide and an environment specifically prepared for the learning capabilities found in its children. Montessori believed that the educator's job is to serve the child, determining what each one needs to make the greatest progress.

Montessori evolved her method through trial and error, making educated guesses about the underlying meaning of the children's actions. She was quick to pick up on their cues, and constantly experimented with her methods. The first "Children's House" received overnight attention, and thousands of visitors came away amazed and enthusiastic. World-wide interest surged as Montessori duplicated her first school in other settings throughout Europe, and then in the United States, with the same results. She made three American tours between 1912 and 1918 with the support of a Washington Montessori Society whose members included Alexander Graham Bell and Woodrow Wilson's daughter. Montessori gave lectures at the White House, Carnegie Hall, and numerous universities. She conducted guide education programs and developed a classroom at an international world's fair.

Dr. Montessori was a brilliant student of child development, and the approach that has evolved out of her research has stood the test for over 100 years in Montessori schools around the world. During her lifetime, Dr. Montessori was acknowledged as one of the world's leading educators.

Dr. Montessori summarized her life's achievement in this way:

Ours was a house for children, rather than a real school. We had prepared a place for children where a diffused culture could be assimilated, without any need for direct instruction...Yet these children learned to read and write before they were five, and no one had given them any lessons. At that time it seemed miraculous that children of four and a half should be able to write, and that they should have learned without the feeling of having been taught....

And so we discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process, which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is not acquired by listening to words, but in virtue of experiences in which the child acts on his environment. The teacher's task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child.ⁱⁱ

Today there is a growing consensus among psychologists and developmental educators that many of her ideas were decades ahead of her time. Only recently, as our understanding of child development has grown, have we rediscovered how clear and sensible her insight was. As the movement gains support and begins to spread into the American public school sector, one can readily say that the Montessori Way is a remarkably modern approach.

ⁱFrom Tim Seldin and Paul Epstein. *The Montessori way.*, ⁱⁱMaria Montessori. *The Absorbent Mind*, p. 7.