



MAY RIVER

— MONTESSORI —

est. 1987

Family Handbook

2026 – 2027

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION		3
Our Heritage.....		3
Our Vision.....		3
Mission Statement.....		3
Non-Profit Status.....		3
MONTESSORI OVERVIEW		3
Who was Maria Montessori?.....		3
What is the Montessori Method?.....		4
The Prepared Environment.....		4
Role of the Teacher.....		4
GENERAL INFORMATION		4
Probationary Period.....		4
Non-Discrimination Policy.....		5
Policy of Tolerance.....		5
Attendance Policy.....		5
Tardy Arrival.....		5
Excused Absences.....		6
Unexcused Absences.....		6
SAFETY & SECURITY POLICIES		6
Security Policies.....		6
Release of Children Policy.....		6
Child Safety & Tracking of Students.....		7
Emergency Procedures.....		7
School Text Messaging.....		7
School Closings.....		7
Emergency Drills.....		7
Animal Policy.....		8
PROGRAMS OFFERED		8
Toddler Program.....		8
Primary Program.....		8
Lunch Bunch Program.....		9
Elementary Program.....		9
After School Program.....		9
MONTESSORI CURRICULUM		9
Practical Life.....		10
Sensorial.....		10
Language.....		10
Mathematics.....		11
Importance of the 3 Year Cycle.....		11
THE SCHOOL DAY		11
Arrival Procedures.....		11
Label Everything.....		12
Making Goodbyes Easier.....		12
Dismissal Procedures.....		13
Relaying Information.....		14
Bringing Needed Items to School.....		14
Orientation.....		14
Toddlers & Primary Dress Code.....		14
Elementary Dress Code.....		15
Field Trip Dress Code Policy.....		15
Lost and Found.....		15
Healthy Snack.....		15
Not a Nut-Free Campus.....		15
Lunch Policy.....		16
Napping vs. Resting.....		16
Outdoor Free Play.....		16
Community Service.....		17
SPECIAL OCCASIONS		17
Birthdays.....		17
Winter Concert.....		17
Classroom Celebrations.....		17
Share Day.....		17
School Photos.....		18
Toddler & Primary Field Trips.....		18
Elementary Field Trips.....		18
Parent Volunteers / Chaperones.....		18
Car Seats / Boosters.....		19
STAFF & STUDENT HEALTH		19
Health Records.....		19
Sick Policy.....		19
Sick at School Policy.....		19
Medication Policy.....		20
Lice Policy.....		20
Minor Accidents / Scrapes.....		20
Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease.....		21
Emergency Medical Policies & Procedures.....		21
DISCIPLINE POLICIES		21
The Classroom Community.....		21
Ground Rules.....		22
Discipline Policy.....		23
Behavior Intervention Forms.....		23
Behavioral Outcomes.....		23
Extreme Behavior.....		24
Computer & Technology Use Policy.....		24
Biting.....		25
Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect.....		25
ACADEMIC POLICIES		25
Parent Teacher Conferences.....		25
Toddler & Primary Curriculum Assessment.....		26
Elem./Secondary Curriculum Assessment.....		26
Homework.....		26
Student Records.....		27
COMMUNICATION		
Take-Home Bags.....		27
Transparent Classroom Portal.....		27
Classroom Observations.....		28
FAMILY INVOLVEMENT		28
Getting Involved.....		28
Family Engagement Opportunities.....		28
Parent-Teacher Organization.....		28
Parent Commitment.....		28
Room Parents.....		29
Thrive Policy.....		29
Harmony Policy.....		29
FINANCIAL POLICIES		29
Accounts Receivable Policy.....		29
Tuition.....		30
Tuition Protection Fund.....		30
Financial Assistance.....		30
Re-enrollment.....		30
SCHOOL ORGANIZATION		31
Board of Trustees.....		31
Faculty & Staff.....		31
FERPA.....		31
Acknowledgement Page.....		32

INTRODUCTION

OUR HERITAGE

May River Montessori (MRM) first opened its doors in August 1987 with just 17 young students and a shared vision of creating a child-centered learning environment rooted in Montessori principles. Within only four years, the school's growing community quickly outgrew its original home.

Over the past three decades, May River Montessori has continued to flourish—expanding through three relocations and more than seven major additions and renovations. Today, it stands as a cornerstone of the Bluffton community, providing an authentic Montessori education that nurtures curiosity, independence, and a lifelong love of learning.

Founded by two dedicated mothers, May River Montessori has touched the lives of hundreds of families. Each family has, in turn, become part of the school's story—shaping its warm, collaborative culture and helping it grow into the thriving educational community it is today.

OUR VISION

Shaping future generations of world changers and peacemakers.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We inspire a love of learning, compassion, and acceptance within an authentic Montessori community.

NON-PROFIT STATUS

May River Montessori is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. This means the school operates for educational purposes rather than profit, and all tuition and contributions directly support our programs, staff, and facilities. May River Montessori does **not receive any government funding**; the school relies entirely on tuition and voluntary contributions from our community to provide the highest quality Montessori education.

Voluntary contributions to May River Montessori, where no goods or services are received in return, are tax-deductible as allowed by the IRS. These gifts help us enhance the learning environment, provide classroom materials, and continue developing our beautiful campus. We are deeply grateful for the generosity of families and friends who choose to invest in the school's mission.

The school is licensed by the South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS) and follows the health and safety guidelines established by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC).

MONTESSORI OVERVIEW

WHO WAS MARIA MONTESSORI?

Dr. Maria Montessori, born on August 31, 1870, in Chiaravalle, Italy, was the first woman to graduate from the University of Rome Medical School in 1896 and became one of the most influential educators in history.

In the early 1900s, Dr. Montessori dedicated herself to working with underprivileged children. Her medical training and scientific approach shaped her philosophy of education: she observed children carefully and approached their learning with an open mind. Through her work, she discovered that young children could engage deeply with specially designed manipulatives, developing remarkable intellectual and social abilities. Montessori believed that education is not something given by another person—children educate themselves. Therefore, the role of early childhood education is to nurture the child's natural curiosity and capacity for learning while protecting their essential nature. Her profound respect for each child's individuality became the cornerstone of the Montessori method.

The Montessori approach was introduced to the United States in 1912, with one of the earliest schools established by Alexander Graham Bell. Today, Montessori education thrives in countless schools across the U.S. and around the world.

WHAT IS THE MONTESSORI METHOD?

At the heart of the Montessori philosophy is the belief that every child carries within them the potential of the adult they are destined to become. To fully develop their physical, intellectual, and spiritual abilities, children need freedom—freedom that is cultivated through order and self-discipline. The child’s world may initially seem chaotic, filled with countless sights and sounds. Through careful exploration, the child gradually creates order from this apparent chaos, learning to discern and make sense of the impressions around them, while steadily gaining mastery over themselves and their environment.

The Montessori classroom is a thoughtfully organized, enriched environment designed to engage children’s curiosity and support meaningful learning. Children progress at their own pace, yet within a carefully structured framework, guided by skilled teachers. Specialized materials and programs are used to nurture each child’s mental, physical, social, and emotional development at every stage of growth.

THE PREPARED ENVIRONMENT

Dr. Maria Montessori developed the concept of the “prepared environment,” where materials are carefully arranged to guide each child’s learning at their own pace. She emphasized the formative importance of the first six years—the “absorbent mind”—when intelligence, values, and habits are most easily shaped. Montessori classrooms provide attractive, developmentally appropriate materials that encourage exploration of sensory, motor, and intellectual experiences.

Learning in Montessori schools is often described as “directed discovery,” where children work individually with materials that both challenge and support their understanding. The teacher prepares the environment, guides each child’s learning path, and stimulates curiosity, but it is the child who learns through self-motivation. Through this structure, children develop “inner discipline,” concentration, perseverance, and thoroughness, fostering confident, competent learners who find joy in both intellectual and social growth.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER

At May River Montessori, our teachers are specially trained in the Montessori philosophy and approach to learning. Their role is to guide your child when needed and introduce materials that spark curiosity and learning. By carefully observing each child, teachers can support their unique growth and development.

Our classrooms are thoughtfully prepared to meet the intellectual, emotional, and physical needs of children in a way that makes learning naturally engaging. Oftentimes, materials are introduced in connection with a unit of study or the current theme.

Each classroom includes children of different ages, which is an important part of the Montessori experience. Your child benefits from working with peers of various ages while receiving guidance from a dedicated teacher and a supportive teaching team.

GENERAL INFORMATION

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

May River Montessori is unfortunately not equipped to serve children with significant disabilities or severe emotional or psychological challenges that require a lower student-to-teacher ratio, intensive individual support, or specialized interventions to succeed. Students are also not able to move up to or join the Primary Program unless they are fully potty-trained.

Enrollment is offered on a probationary basis to new students. This allows us to ensure that our Montessori environment is the best fit for your child.

During the **first eight weeks of school**, we will have a special “getting to know you” period. During this time, your child will learn classroom routines, make new friends, and adjust to the expectations of our Montessori community. We’ll also use this period to observe how your child engages with the environment and their peers.

We'll be looking for:

- **Confidence and Safety:** That your child feels happy, secure, and contributes to a safe, respectful classroom atmosphere.
- **Independence:** That your child is able to complete age-appropriate tasks independently, follow directions, and participate in daily routines with minimal assistance.
- **Engagement and Cooperation:** That your child is able to learn, play, and work peacefully alongside others, showing kindness, curiosity, and willingness to help.

Your child's adjustment and progress will be reviewed during Fall Parent–Teacher Conferences. If we have any concerns about your child's transition, we will contact you to discuss strategies for support and next steps.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

May River Montessori welcomes students of all races, colors, nationalities, and ethnic origins. All students are afforded the same rights, privileges, programs, and activities offered by the school. The school does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, or ethnicity in its educational programs, admissions process, or other school-administered activities.

POLICY OF TOLERANCE

May River Montessori values and respects the diverse religious and cultural backgrounds of our students. We welcome the sharing of cultural traditions in a spirit of understanding and respect. Our children may offer a song of thanksgiving before snacks and meals. We acknowledge holidays and birthdays within our school community, while also honoring each family's preferences regarding participation.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance is key to your child's success. When a child misses school or arrives late frequently, it can interrupt their learning and slow their progress. Every day, your child is building important concepts and absorbing values that form the foundation for lifelong learning. By prioritizing attendance, you help your child understand the importance of being present and engaged. Please make every effort to have your child at school each day and stay for the full day, unless they are ill. Together, we are helping children develop habits that will benefit them for a lifetime.

Excused tardies

- **Requirements:**

Must have a written note, with common reasons including:

- Doctor, dentist, or other medical appointments
- Family emergency
- Court appearance or court-ordered activity

Unexcused tardies

- Oversleeping or traffic problems, without a valid excuse.

If you choose to take a trip during the school year, the school will not provide schoolwork. Parents may choose to provide activities for their child to complete while traveling. Keeping a travel journal is a wonderful way for children to continue learning and reflect on their experiences.

TARDY ARRIVAL

Although our Montessori program is individualized, it relies on consistency and continuous progress. It is very important for your child to arrive on time for the start of class. Arriving on time helps children feel safe and grounded. Predictable routines reduce anxiety and support emotional stability. Children who arrive on time start lessons with everyone else, ensuring they don't miss morning routines or foundational activities that set the tone for learning. It also communicates that school is important and valued, which strengthens a child's attitude toward learning. **Children arriving after 8:30am will be marked tardy.** Arriving late can be difficult and sometimes uncomfortable for your child, as they may miss the opening group time, where the day's schedule is discussed and lessons are introduced. It also often leads to children being upset or having a harder time separating from their parent or guardian. If your child arrives after 8:30 AM, please bring them to the front office for admittance, as classroom doors will be secured and instruction will have begun. An office staff member will then escort your child to the classroom.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

While regular attendance is the responsibility of the parents or guardian, it is also the responsibility of the parents or guardian to notify the school when the child is absent. The absentee form on Transparent Classroom should be completed as early as possible in the event of an absence.

An excused absence is defined as:

1. Sickness or injury
2. Medical treatment provided by a licensed physician
3. Observance of religious instruction or religious holiday
4. Death of a family member
5. School or personal approved trip

The student may be excused for continued or repeated illness up to **10 attendance days** in a 90-day calendar. After this period, a doctor's verification will be required. Chronic illness and family emergencies will be considered on an individual basis.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Absences from class for any reason other than those identified shall be considered unexcused. Student absences that are not verified or documented will also be considered unexcused. Vacation or personal family time that have not been pre-arranged and documented in writing will be considered unexcused. **Students who accumulate more than 10 unexcused absences per semester may be retained.**

SECURITY & SAFETY POLICIES

SECURITY POLICIES

At May River Montessori, your child's safety is our top priority. To ensure we know who is on campus at all times, the following security procedures are in place for all teachers, parents, and visitors.

The main front office entrance is the only door for parents and visitors during the day. All guests must enter and exit through this door and check in with office staff for a visitor's badge. Upon leaving, guests sign out using the same process. Both doors at the main entrance must remain closed unless in active use.

Per DSS regulation 114-503 F, parents and guardians have full access to their children at all times unless restricted by a court order.

Classrooms are equipped with multiple exits for safe evacuation in emergencies. Outdoor exits should remain open and clear from the inside and locked from the outside. Doors leading outdoors must not be left open while children are inside, unless children are actively using the outdoor space under teacher supervision.

May River Montessori also maintains video surveillance at all campus exits. Security measures are regularly reviewed and updated as needed to ensure the continued safety of our students and staff.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN POLICY

May River Montessori will only release a child to his or her parent or guardian, or to an approved person listed in the child's file per DSS regulation No. 114-503.F. Parents will add a list of approved adults in the Transparent Classroom portal that the school staff can refer to for people who may pick up the child.

At the start of the school year, you will receive a carpool sign to place on the dashboard of your car which states the name(s) of the child(ren) and their classroom(s). As you drive through the carpool line, this sign will help identify you so that staff can prepare the child(ren) to be ready when you pull up. Please keep your sign in your car, ready to be displayed at dismissal time each day.

If your child is being picked up by anyone other than you or your regular carpool, submit that information to the school in the morning via an email to the front office and the classroom teachers. Please ensure that the person picking up brings the carpool sign with them. Please do not call or give changes to us verbally in the morning carpool line. It is important that we have this information in writing for safety reasons. Be sure your child knows of any changes in dismissal or carpool arrangements.

If you plan to pick up your child early, please notify the front office and classroom teachers. When you arrive to pick up your child for an early dismissal, you must come to the main office to sign your child out. If we are aware of an early dismissal ahead of time, we will make every effort to have the child ready and waiting for you in the front office. No child may leave early without having the parent or guardian sign him or her out.

CHILD SAFETY AND TRACKING OF CHILDREN

School staff maintain visual contact and communication with students at all times. Before leaving the classroom, teachers must take roll and perform a headcount, verifying students against the check-in/check-out sheet. During any activity—whether in the classroom, during specials, on the playground, or on a field trip—teachers continuously monitor and count students. When lining up or transitioning between activities, teachers take roll again and check students against their list as per DSS regulations. All dismissals must follow the school’s dismissal policy, and the student must be marked as “dismissed” on the check-in/check-out sheet.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of an emergency during school hours, staff will follow predetermined procedures appropriate to the situation. Parents and guardians will be notified immediately through an emergency announcement sent via Transparent Classroom and our text messaging system, detailing the situation and the plan for proceeding. Teachers will also call each child’s parent or guardian to confirm communication. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, emergency contacts listed on the child’s form will be contacted.

During an emergency dismissal, students will be released only to parents, guardians, or designated emergency contacts. Staff will make every effort to maintain normalcy and protect children from any effects of the emergency.

SCHOOL TEXT MESSAGING

In the case of emergencies, unscheduled school closings, and reminders for families, May River Montessori will also use our text messaging platform to send out such messages. Make sure you have the correct phone number on file with the office to ensure that you receive these messages.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

If the school closes due to inclement weather or other hazardous conditions, an announcement will be sent out through our Transparent Classroom portal as well as via a text message. Our social media pages will also provide updates. May River Montessori typically aligns with decisions to close made by Beaufort County School District.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

May River Montessori conducts monthly fire and evacuation drills as required by DSS to help students practice leaving the building quickly and calmly in the event of a fire or other emergency requiring evacuation. Teachers review and practice the procedures with students in a way that eases any apprehension.

The school also conducts safety (lockdown) drills to prepare students to seek safety inside the building during severe weather or other hazardous situations. These drills are presented and practiced in a calm, non-threatening manner. For younger students, the drills are introduced in a playful way, similar to a hide-and-seek game, to prevent stress or anxiety.

ANIMAL POLICY

Animals are an integral part of the Montessori environment. May River Montessori welcomes animals on campus but reserves the right to exclude any animal that disrupts the learning environment or poses a risk to the health and safety of students or staff. Pets in the classroom help teach responsibility, compassion, empathy, and respect for all living things. They provide children with tangible connections to the natural world and can have stress-reducing benefits.

All classroom activities involving pets are supervised by teachers. Pets will be maintained at least seven feet from food preparation and eating areas, and their habitats will be kept clean. Children will be invited to help care for the animals daily, including feeding, providing fresh water, and maintaining clean habitats. Handwashing is required for children and adults after handling animals or animal equipment. No child will ever be forced to interact with a pet.

May River Montessori welcomes service animals on campus. Service animals are permitted wherever their handler is allowed. Emotional support animals may only be on campus with prior approval, evaluated on a case-by-case basis. SCDSS requires all service animals to have a file on record with the school, including documentation such as the animal's certification as a service animal, a doctor's prescription, and the most recent veterinary record.

PROGRAMS OFFERED

TODDLER PROGRAM (24 MONTHS – 3 YEARS)

- 5-Day Program (Monday-Friday) 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM
- 3-Day Program (Wednesday-Friday) 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM
- 2-Day Program (Monday-Tuesday) 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Our Toddler Program welcomes our youngest learners, beginning at 24 months of age, in the Cottage and Bungalow classrooms. Families may choose a 2-, 3-, or 5-day schedule. This program provides a gentle and natural introduction to school, laying a strong foundation for future Montessori education and a lifelong love of learning.

**Children may not enter or remain in the Toddler Program if they are turning 5 during the school year they are applying for. Two and 5-year-olds may not be placed in the same classroom.*

PRIMARY PROGRAM (3 YEARS – 6 YEARS)

The Primary Program serves children ages **3 to 6 years old** and is designed to support each child's growth and independence within a Montessori environment.

Program Hours:

- **Half-Day Program for 3-year olds** (Monday-Friday) 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM
- **Full-Day Program for 4 and 5 year olds** (Monday-Friday) 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM

Important Notes

- ***Children may not enter the Primary Program unless they are fully potty-trained.***
- Children who turn 4 by September 1st are not eligible for the half-day program, as the full-day program is necessary to access the complete curriculum and best supports their learning and readiness for Kindergarten.
- Kindergarten students are required to attend the full-day program to ensure they access the full curriculum.
- The full day program for 4- and 5-year-olds allows children to remain in their classroom with their teachers for lunch and an additional afternoon work period focused on individualized learning and small-group enrichment.
- 3-year-olds who need a longer day may participate in the Lunch Bunch program.
- An After School program is also available for Primary students from 2:45 p.m.–5:00 p.m. to accommodate family schedules.

LUNCH BUNCH PROGRAM (24 MONTHS – 3 YEARS)

- Half-Day Extended Day Program (Monday-Friday) 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM

This program serves our children ages 24 months to 3 years old (those still 3 after September 1st) who stay for a longer day until the 2:45 PM dismissal. Children transition to the Cottage and Bungalow for lunch and an extended rest period. This is followed by a period of indoor activity and/or outdoor play.

ELEMENTARY PROGRAM (6 YEARS – 12 YEARS)

- Lower Elementary – Grades 1-3 (Monday-Friday) 8:30 AM – 2:45 PM
- Upper Elementary – Grade 4-6 (Monday-Friday) 8:30 AM – 2:45 PM

Our Lower Elementary program serves our children in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades, ages 6-9, while the Upper Elementary program serves children in 4th, 5th, and 6th grades, ages 9-12.

The Elementary program is uniquely designed to build on the Montessori Foundation established in the primary program. While continuing a commitment to whole child development. The curriculum provides a continuum of both philosophy and materials, from toddlerhood to adolescence. The elementary program incorporates extended work periods, in depth studies, supplementary instruction for special school projects, and a wide array of field trips and collaborative projects. The elementary after school program is offered for elementary children from 2:45 PM to 5:00 PM to better serve the needs of our families.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Program Hours:

Afterschool begins when your child's school day ends and continues until **5:00 PM**. You are always welcome to pick up your child earlier if needed.

- **Primary students** will be on the **Primary playground** at the back of the school.
- **Elementary students** will be on the **Green Space** or in the **Grove**.
- **At 4:45pm**, all remaining children will wait on the Portico for pick-up.

Please ensure all children are picked up **promptly by 5:00 PM**. Pick-ups after 5:00PM are subject to a \$25 late fee per occurrence. After 5:15PM, an additional \$1 per minute fee will be charged. The fee must be paid in full before the child may return to the Afterschool program.

Snack:

Please pack an adequate snack specifically for afterschool, clearly labeled in your child's lunchbox.

Activities & Play:

Our goal is to maximize outdoor time, giving children unstructured, enriching free play. During extreme heat or inclement weather, children will move indoors. In these cases, students will gather in the Willow Room for pick-up. We will do our best to notify you of any room changes via text or a sign posted on the usual pick-up door.

Elementary Students:

Elementary students have a dedicated homework or reading period from dismissal until 3:45 PM to support their learning before afterschool activities begin. They usually spend the rest of their time helping Farmer B, playing on the Green Space, or doing activities in the Willow Room.

MONTESORI CURRICULUM

In the Montessori primary classroom, the curriculum is introduced through four main areas of study: **Practical Life, Sensorial, Math, and Language**. These foundational areas help children develop concentration, coordination, independence, and critical thinking skills that naturally prepare them for more advanced study at the elementary level and beyond.

Children are encouraged to explore each area freely, guided by their own curiosity and developmental readiness. The Montessori environment also includes cultural studies, music, art, drama, physical education, and gardening, all thoughtfully integrated into the school day to support a well-rounded education.

The curriculum is further enriched through units of study, field trips, guest speakers, and special class activities, which bring learning to life and connect classroom experiences to the world around the child.

PRACTICAL LIFE

Practical life exercises are activities drawn from everyday life that create a meaningful link between home and school. In the Montessori classroom, children develop independence through care of self—learning skills like buttoning, zipping, snapping, and tying shoes—and care of the environment, including tasks such as washing tables, scrubbing, and tending plants. These activities also refine small motor skills and hand-eye coordination through tasks like spooning, threading, pouring, and using tweezers. Strengthening the muscles of the hand in this way provides an indirect preparation for writing.

Practical life work goes beyond physical skills—it fosters important attitudes and habits, including focus, concentration, self-discipline, attention to detail, task completion, pride in work, and organizational skills. Lessons in grace and courtesy—such as saying please and thank you, waiting one’s turn, and not interrupting—are woven into these activities, helping children develop social awareness and respect for others.

In the elementary classroom, practical life activities build on the foundation developed in the primary years, with a focus on advanced life skills, responsibility, and leadership. Through programs such as gardening, students have the opportunity to develop entrepreneurial and business skills, learning how to plan, organize, and manage real projects while contributing to their community.

SENSORIAL

Sensorial materials help children explore and understand the world through their senses while also laying the groundwork for future math concepts. Each material isolates a specific quality—such as texture, size, shape, color, smell, length, height, width, distance, direction, roughness, smoothness, or sound—allowing the child to focus fully on that attribute.

A strong foundation in sensorial experiences nurtures keen powers of observation and perception, helping children become very aware of their surroundings. These refinements not only enhance discernment but also deepen the child’s enjoyment and appreciation of the world.

As children progress into the elementary years, the sensorial foundation evolves into more advanced studies through the cultural curriculum, including geography, global studies, history, botany, zoology, and physical science, providing rich opportunities for discovery and deeper understanding.

LANGUAGE

Montessori language materials help children classify and understand their world while gradually broadening vocabulary through pictures and real objects. Vocabulary is encouraged and developed naturally as children interact with the environment.

Reading and writing are introduced together. Children begin by learning the sounds of letters, then use sandpaper letters to trace the shapes with their fingers, learning proper formation. Finally, they are guided to blend sounds into words, developing both reading and writing skills simultaneously.

In the elementary years, language study expands to include reading across a variety of genres, literary analysis, root and word study, grammar, writing (including narrative, argumentative, and expository forms), and public speaking, giving children the tools to communicate effectively and with confidence.

MATHEMATICS

The Montessori math curriculum is designed to help children develop a deep, concrete understanding of mathematical concepts before moving to abstract problem-solving. Using carefully designed hands-on materials, children explore math through repetition, observation, and discovery.

In the primary classroom, children begin with concrete materials—such as number rods, beads, and sandpaper numerals—to understand quantity, order, and symbol recognition. Gradually, they move toward abstract thinking, applying these concepts to addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

This approach helps children gain confidence and joy in learning math. They don't just memorize facts—they develop a real understanding of numbers, strengthen problem-solving skills, and build a solid foundation for more advanced mathematics. In the elementary years, students advance their mathematical learning through linear counting, the decimal system, geometry, algebra, and discrete mathematics, preparing them for continued success in higher-level math and real-world applications.

IMPORTANCE OF THE 3 YEAR CYCLE

Each Montessori classroom is designed as a three-year mixed-age community, allowing children to remain in the same environment for three consecutive years. This provides consistency, stability, and a strong sense of belonging.

During the first year, children are introduced to the classroom materials and routines, developing independence and foundational skills. In the second year, they build confidence and mastery as they expand on what they've learned. By the third year, children step into leadership roles—mentoring younger classmates, modeling responsibility, and solidifying their own understanding through teaching and example.

Completing the full three-year cycle is essential to experiencing the full benefit of the Montessori approach. If a child leaves before completing the cycle, it is like creating the batter but not baking the cake—the third year is when everything comes together, and the child fully integrates the knowledge, confidence, and independence they have been building toward.

The continuity of this three-year journey allows children to move at their own pace, revisit concepts as needed, and grow within a trusted relationship with their teacher, resulting in a confident, capable, and self-motivated learner.

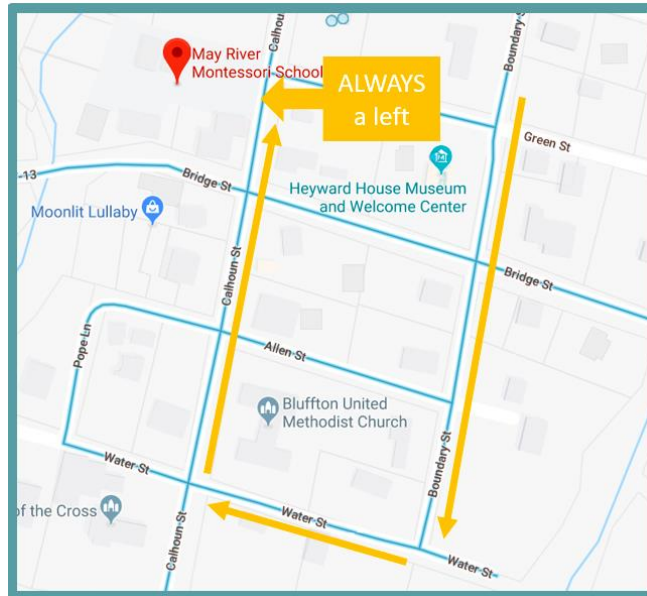
THE SCHOOL DAY

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

The school day begins at 8:30 AM for all students. Staff members are available to welcome and greet the children by assisting them out of their cars between 8:00 AM and 8:30 AM.

It is important to follow the designated carpool route. The Bluffton Police Department and Town of Bluffton have required the school to follow this specific route for the safety of its citizens and to reduce traffic load during these busy times.

1. Take Boundary St. to Waters St.
2. Make a right on Waters St.
3. Make a right turn on Calhoun St.
4. Make a left turn into the school's circular driveway.
5. Please do not make a right-hand turn into the May River Montessori driveway during carpool. It is dangerous for our children and disrupts the order in which children are retrieved from their cars.



If you arrive to school prior to 8:00 AM, please wait in the car with your child until 8:00 AM. There are no staff members outside to receive and be responsible for your child's safety. Please do not enter our driveway before 7:50 AM as this delays or prevents staff arrival.

To ensure a smooth transition from the car to the classroom, please drive your child around U-shaped driveway, stopping at the first available drop off point designated by a numbered post where a staff member will be standing and waiting. As the staff member greets and helps your child out of the car, please be sure to have your car in park and to be off your phone in order to facilitate your child's safe exit from the vehicle.

Please wait your turn in the carpool line. **Passing is not permitted since students could be exiting the car on both sides.** This is a hazard to the safety of our children and staff.

If you arrive late, there will be no staff outside to greet and help you. Please park your car and walk your child to the front door of the main building. You will need to sign in at the front office. Your child will then be escorted to class. **You may not enter the building or classroom as this makes separating more challenging for the child.**

TIP: Having your child transition from the car to the classroom "independently" is part of helping him or her learn what to expect. You are helping your child feel safe, loved, and gain confidence that he or she can do it. You are sending a message to your child when you let him or her walk into the school that the school is a good place to be and that he or she can be successful. Your confidence goes a long way in the transition from you and the car to the classroom.

Label Everything

Please make sure all of your child's belongings are clearly labeled with their name. This includes their lunch box, water bottle, backpack, share items, outerwear, gloves, hats, and any items brought for after school clubs. Labeling everything helps ensure that your child's belongings can be easily identified and returned if misplaced. It also helps our teachers and staff keep the classroom and common areas organized, reducing the chance of lost items.

Making Goodbyes Easier: Helping with Separation Anxiety

It's very normal for young children to experience some hesitation or tears when separating from their parents—especially at the beginning of the school year or after long breaks. These moments are part of learning trust and independence. With consistency and reassurance, most children adjust quickly and begin to look forward to their school day.

Here are some helpful strategies to make goodbyes easier:

- **Be on time.** Arriving promptly helps your child start the day calmly and confidently. When a child arrives late, the class may already be engaged in activities, which can make separation more difficult.
- **Be confident and calm.** Children take their cues from you. A positive, reassuring tone helps your child feel secure and lets them know school is a safe and happy place.
- **Create a simple routine.** A quick, predictable goodbye (for example, a hug, “Have a great day!” and a wave at the door) helps your child know what to expect.
- **Avoid lingering.** While it’s tempting to stay until your child settles, long goodbyes often make it harder for both of you. A loving but brief farewell is best.
- **Trust the teachers.** Our staff are experienced in helping children through transitions. Most children settle within minutes once the day begins.
- **Acknowledge feelings.** It’s okay to say, “I know it’s hard to say goodbye. I’ll see you after school.” This validates their emotions while reinforcing that you’ll return.
- **Be consistent.** Separation becomes easier when drop-offs happen calmly and in the same way each day.
- **Celebrate successes.** Talk with your child about the fun things they did at school to build positive associations.

With time, routine, and reassurance, goodbyes become easier—and your child gains confidence, independence, and joy in coming to school.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Please make sure to note your child’s **dismissal time** and plan to arrive promptly. Families should **follow the same route used for morning arrival** when entering the school driveway.

Each family will receive a **carpool sign** displaying your family name and the name(s) of your child(ren). Please keep this sign in your car and display it clearly each afternoon. This helps staff identify you quickly so we can have your child(ren) ready when you arrive. Follow the same **U-shaped traffic flow** used during morning arrival.

Staff members will escort children to their vehicles and assist with securing safety belts. However, **parents, guardians, or drivers are ultimately responsible** for ensuring that all children are properly buckled according to state law. If needed, please pull forward and park to double-check seat belts.

For everyone’s safety, please:

- **Stay alert** and drive slowly through the carpool lane.
- **Avoid cell phone use** while in the carpool line.
- **Do not pass** other cars that are loading—this is extremely dangerous.

When picking up, please **remain in your vehicle**. If walking up to collect your child, please walk along the fence and wait on the bridge area for a staff member to bring you your child/ren. If someone else—such as a babysitter or grandparent—will be picking up, please make sure they understand and follow these procedures. Also make sure they have the carpool tag with them and that they are listed as an approved adult for pick-up.

Children are expected to be picked up promptly at their scheduled dismissal time. If a child is not picked up on time, they will be taken to our **After School Program** for supervision. A **\$25 late pick-up fee** will be assessed to the family. Consistent late pick-ups may result in a meeting with administration to discuss scheduling or other arrangements.

Please note that we can release students **only to approved persons**. If your child will be going home with someone other than a usual carpool driver, please send an email to the office and classroom teachers. Also, make sure the approved person brings the carpool tag with them. In the event of an **emergency transportation change**, you may call the school office, and staff will communicate the change to the classroom.

RELAYING INFORMATION

If you need to relay information to the teacher, please send an e-mail or call the front office. After class time has ended for the day, the teachers will return calls and respond to emails. We kindly ask that you refrain from texting teachers' personal mobile devices. While we appreciate the instant accessibility of our mobile devices and recognize the need for regular and open communication, it is essential that our teachers are fully present and engaged with our students during class hours.

BRINGING NEEDED ITEMS TO SCHOOL

If you need to bring something to your child during the school day, please drop it off at the front office and a staff member will take it to the classroom so that there is minimal interruption.

ORIENTATION

At the beginning of each school year, May River Montessori holds an orientation period to help our Toddler and Primary students ease into their new classroom environments. Separation can be stressful for young children, so this gradual transition is designed to help them adjust in small, manageable steps. This approach allows children to feel secure and confident as they become familiar with their teachers, classmates, and daily routines—setting a positive tone for the year ahead.

We recognize that this schedule may be inconvenient for working families and truly appreciate your patience and understanding. This thoughtful introduction is an important investment in your child's long-term success and emotional well-being.

Orientation typically lasts only the first week of school for most students and varies depending on the child's age and program:

- **Toddler students** attend for one hour each day during orientation week.
- **Primary students** who are new to the classroom attend for two hours in the morning, while returning students come in the afternoon.

During this time, teachers and children get to know one another and begin building a sense of trust and community. Children are introduced to the classroom environment, learn how to choose and care for materials, and practice returning work to the shelves. They also explore the playground and outdoor areas while learning the safety guidelines that support independent, joyful play. Orientation week lays the foundation for a successful school year—helping each child feel at home, confident, and ready to begin their Montessori journey.

TODDLERS & PRIMARY DRESS CODE

Simple, comfortable play clothes are best for our Toddler and Primary students. Children at this age move a lot — they work on the floor, play outdoors, and explore through hands-on activities. Please dress your child in clothes that allow for free movement and independence, especially in the bathroom. Overalls can be tricky for little ones, so we ask that you avoid sending them in those. Keep in mind that learning can get a little messy — paint, clay, and outdoor play are all part of the fun!

Shoes:

Tennis shoes or other closed-toe shoes are required. These provide the best support and protection for active play both indoors and outdoors. Please avoid fancy shoes, boots, sandals, flip-flops, or Crocs, as they can make running and climbing unsafe.

Accessories:

Hats and caps should not be worn inside the building. Jewelry and other accessories should be kept to a minimum, as they can be distracting or easily lost. If an accessory becomes a distraction, teachers may set it aside to be returned at the end of the day.

Finally, please label all clothing and personal items — this helps ensure that lost items make their way back home!

SPARE CLOTHES

Toddler students should have a change of clothes and underwear in their Montessori school bags each day of school. Primary students should keep one change of clothes in a zip lock bag at school, including socks and underwear, labeled with his or her name for unavoidable situations that require a change of clothes. Please send these spare clothes into the classroom to be kept in the closet at the beginning of the year. Please exchange these clothes appropriately with the season.

ELEMENTARY DRESS CODE

At May River Montessori, we encourage children to dress comfortably and appropriately for active, hands-on learning. Clothing should support freedom of movement, self-care independence, and participation in both indoor and outdoor activities.

General Guidelines:

- We encourage students to wear **May River Montessori spirit shirts, polo shirts, or sweatshirts** to show school pride and help create a sense of community.
- Clothing should be **neat, clean, and weather-appropriate**.
- Students should wear clothes that allow them to move freely, sit comfortably on the floor, and participate in physical activity.
- **Simple play clothes** are best—avoid anything that restricts movement or can be easily damaged during outdoor or art activities.
- Students should be able to **manage their clothing independently** (for example, when using the restroom).
- **Closed-toe shoes** are required for safety on the playground and during outdoor activities. Sneakers or other sturdy shoes are recommended.
- **Hats** may be worn outside for sun protection but should be removed indoors.

Not Permitted:

- Flip-flops, slides, or shoes without a back strap
- Clothing with offensive language, graphics, or references to violence or inappropriate topics
- Costumes or dress-up accessories (except on designated special days)
- Excessive jewelry or accessories that may cause distraction or safety concerns

Seasonal Notes:

- Please dress your child appropriately for the weather; we go outdoors daily whenever conditions allow.
- Label all outerwear with your child's name.

FIELD TRIPS DRESS CODE POLICY

For field trips, we request that students wear a May River Montessori shirt or polo. This assists with an easy way to distinguish the group from other students when in public venues.

LOST & FOUND

All clothing should be labeled. This includes outerwear. There are many similar hats, coats, sweaters, and sweatshirts. If your child has lost a clothing item, please check his or her classroom first by sending an e-mail to the teachers. If the item cannot be located by the teachers, then please check with the front office.

HEALTHY SNACK

Please provide a small individual snack for your child each day. Remember that this is only a snack, not the size of breakfast or lunch. Please make sure your child eats a good breakfast at home before coming to school. We find that healthy snacks that are enjoyable and nutritious are a wonderful and important asset to your child's day.

NOT A NUT-FREE CAMPUS

May River Montessori is not a nut-free campus. If your child has food allergies or sensitivities, including foods other than nuts, please inform both your child's teachers and the office staff. This allows us to accommodate your child and ensure their safety during the school day.

Families in the classroom with a child who has allergies or sensitivities will be notified of any special food requirements. The school and teachers will not identify the child or family with the allergy.

LUNCH POLICY

Families are encouraged to send **nutritious, well-balanced lunches** to help children stay healthy, focused, and ready to learn. Lunch time is an opportunity for children to **develop positive eating habits and independence**.

- **Choose foods your child will actually eat**, focusing on wholesome, healthy options such as:
 - Sandwiches
 - Fresh or dried fruit
 - Raw vegetables
 - Cheese
- **Foods not allowed:**
 - Candy
 - Soft drinks
 - Cakes or cupcakes
 - Fast food items
- **Portion Size**
 - Toddler and primary children may not eat a whole sandwich or large piece of fruit. Cutting sandwiches in quarters and pre-cutting fruit in small containers works best.

Guidelines and Recommendations:

- Send **food your child will eat** and encourage wholesome, sugar-free options. Help children discover that healthy foods can taste great and support their bodies.
- **Do not send candy, sugary desserts, or soft drinks.** Filtered water is provided for all students. If sending an additional beverage, please choose a healthy option.
- Use **reusable containers** whenever possible, and lunch boxes with built-in cool packs are recommended, as the school cannot refrigerate lunches.
- All **uneaten food** that can be contained will be sent home. This helps families monitor preferences and portion sizes.
- Please pack a **cloth napkin** to lay lunch on and a paper napkin for wiping hands and faces.
- **Sugary snacks** like cookies or fruit-flavored treats are discouraged; children will be encouraged to eat their main lunch foods first.
- **Lunches cannot be refrigerated or heated**, so pack ready-to-eat items and include a cold pack if necessary.
- **Include necessary utensils** (fork, spoon, etc.)
- **Filtered water** is provided for all students; families may send an additional healthy drink if desired.
- **Label all lunch containers and items** with your child's name.

NAPPING VS. RESTING

All children in the Primary Program have a short rest period of about 20 minutes after lunch. This quiet time allows children to lie down, rest, listen to music, reflect, and re-energize for the afternoon. While children do not typically sleep during this period, those who do fall asleep may continue resting until the class begins the afternoon schedule.

Children in the **Lunch Bunch program** have a longer nap period after lunch. Covers and blankets are washed by the school at the end of each week to ensure a clean and comfortable nap environment. We ask that students in the lunch bunch program not be picked up between 12:30-1:30pm, to not disturb all the sleeping children.

OUTDOOR FREE PLAY

Outdoor play is an essential part of the Montessori philosophy, supporting children's physical, social, and cognitive development. At May River Montessori, our Toddler and Primary students have multiple opportunities for outdoor play each day, with recess scheduled in both the morning and afternoon.

Our Elementary students also begin their day with outdoor free play. Upon arrival, elementary children go directly to the elementary playground until 8:45 AM before moving into their classrooms to start their day. We have found that beginning the day with outdoor activity helps students develop stronger concentration, increased focus, and a greater enthusiasm for their work

throughout the day. Outdoor time encourages independence, cooperation, and the freedom to explore, all of which are core Montessori values.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

At May River Montessori, we nurture compassion and a spirit of giving. Our Elementary students engage in activities that benefit the community, from food drives to holiday visits at assisted living facilities. Each class may also pursue additional service projects, helping students experience the joy of making a positive impact.

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

BIRTHDAYS

At May River Montessori, birthdays are celebrated as **Celebrations of Life**, honoring your child's growth and accomplishments. A special snack may be sent for the class, but please avoid sugary treats like cupcakes, donuts, or cookies. Healthier options include fruit, yogurt parfaits, or mini muffins. You are welcome to bring small plates or napkins for serving. Birthday party invitations may only be given out at school if there is an invitation for EVERY child in the class. Please give the invitations to your child's teacher to distribute. If families wish, students may give a gift to the classroom in honor of their birthday—such as a book or an item from our Amazon Wish List—as a way to model gratitude and generosity.

Classroom celebrations look a little different at all levels based on what is developmentally appropriate:

In the **Toddler classrooms**, birthdays are celebrated simply and joyfully with classmates. Teachers coordinate a special time close to each child's birthday that includes a treat provided by the family and singing "Happy Birthday." Parents do not attend these celebrations, allowing the children to maintain consistency in their daily routine while avoiding separation anxiety.

In the **Primary classrooms**, families are invited to join the celebration. Parents or guardians may bring a small poster with photographs showing their child's growth over the years to share with the class. This activity helps children reflect on their personal journey while celebrating in a meaningful, Montessori way. Children will also walk around the sun.

In the **Elementary classrooms**, birthdays are acknowledged within the classroom community, but celebrations typically take place outside of school.

If your family prefers that your child not participate in birthday or classroom celebrations for personal or religious reasons, please let us know so we can honor your wishes respectfully.

WINTER CONCERT

Each December, we host a Winter Concert celebrating the season through music and recognition of a variety of holidays and cultural traditions from around the world. This joyful event highlights our community's diversity and spirit of inclusion.

If you prefer that your child **not participate** in the concert, please notify your classroom teachers in advance.

CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS

Throughout the school year, we acknowledge and learn about various holidays and special occasions that reflect the diversity of our community and the world around us. Throughout the school year, the classrooms may have planned holiday activities. If your family prefers your child to not participate in celebrations for personal or religious reasons, please let us know.

SHARE DAY

Primary children enjoy bringing items to school to share and talk about. The children are encouraged to bring items of interest to share with the whole class. It is especially nice when a child can share something that correlates with the classroom's unit of study. It may be a book, photos, objects, or it may be an interesting oral story or adventure. All items should be clearly labeled with your child's name.

Please help us by observing the school rule of not bringing any toys to school. It helps your child and us if you diligently assist us by keeping toys in the car or at home.

Good examples of share items are:

- Materials from nature: Leaves, rocks, birds, nests, eggs, acorns, shells, etc.
- Photograph of a pet. Live pets are only allowed if arrangements are made with the teacher in advance.
- Photograph of a special event or trip.
- Items pertaining to the current unit of study in the classroom.
- Something that the child has made: sculptures, buildings with Legos, arts and craft project, etc.

SCHOOL PHOTOS

School photos, both individual and class photos, are taken in the fall of each school year. Students may wear an outfit of their choice for their photo day. May River Montessori clothing is not required. After the photo shoot, you will receive an e-mail from the vendor that the school uses for photos should you wish to purchase them. These photos will also be used in the school yearbook.

TODDLER & PRIMARY FIELD TRIPS

Children in the toddler and primary program will generally not be participating in field trips that require driving. Kindergarten students may participate in an afternoon field trip nearby. Most field trips will be within walking distance of the school. Classes will notify parents in advance of these walking field trips. Each student is required to have a completed field trip permission slip on file with the office at the beginning of each school year.

ELEMENTARY FIELD TRIPS

The elementary classes will take field trips and participate in community service events throughout the year. They are planned to visit local points of interest and coordinate with subjects being studied by the class. Sometimes they are planned to take advantage of special community events. Parents are encouraged to chaperone the elementary field trips. Field trips generally cost \$25 per student.

Parents should be advised in advance of any field trip that would mean their child would leave the school campus. A permissions slip will be sent through Transparent Classroom and needs to be completed electronically at least 48 hours before any field trip.

Upper elementary students can experience overnight field trips. Overnight trips are funded through the Oak Room Pizza Fundraiser, which are run by the students.

PARENT VOLUNTEER DRIVERS/CHAPERONES

Parents who volunteer to drive or chaperone for field trips must provide a copy of their driver's license and vehicle insurance card, along with completing a background and DMV driving record check through our online portal. There is also a volunteer agreement that must be signed by all volunteers after they have completed the background and driving check. Volunteers can send us a copy of their insurance and drivers license or stop by the office for us to make copies of it for you.

Chaperones and drivers may be asked to cover their own field trip costs, depending on the event. For safety reasons, younger siblings may not attend field trips.

Please review and support the following safety expectations. Safety is our top priority, and all regular school rules remain in effect during field trips.

- Seat belts must be worn at all times by everyone in the car.
- Drivers may not be on their phones while operating a vehicle.
- Students must remain seated until the vehicle comes to a complete stop.
- Students may not shout, horseplay, or switch seats while the vehicle is moving.
- Hands and objects must remain inside the vehicle at all times.
- Eating or drinking is only allowed with the driver's or teacher's permission.

CAR SEATS/BOOSTERS

In accordance with South Carolina law, every elementary child must have an appropriate car seat or booster seat to participate in a field trip. Please ensure your child's seat is clearly labeled with their name and dropped off at school on the morning of the trip.

Under 8 years OR under 57 inches	Booster Seat	Must use a booster seat until both age 8 and height of 57 inches are met.
Age 8 or 57 inches or taller	No car seat required	The child can use an adult seat belt, but it is safest to keep them in the back seat until age 13.

STUDENT & STAFF HEALTH

The safety and well-being of our students and staff are of the utmost importance at May River Montessori. All medical policies and procedures at the school are in accordance with South Carolina state law.

HEALTH RECORDS

South Carolina immunization forms are required by law to be up to date for all children attending school before the start of the school year. All immunization forms will be checked to make sure our students are in compliance with the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). Religious exemption forms are accepted at May River Montessori. Please note that the religious exemption form must be processed at a DHEC facility. It is important to follow the specific guidelines and procedures outlined by DHEC to ensure that the exemption is valid and accepted by May River Montessori. Families are responsible for submitting updated vaccination documentation as required by state regulations. The school may request updated immunization records at any time during the school year to ensure compliance with health and safety requirements.

SICK POLICY

At May River Montessori, we work diligently to keep classrooms, materials, tables, bathrooms, and other areas clean to minimize the spread of illness. However, when children are together, sickness can still occur. Please note that May River Montessori does not have a nurse on staff.

Attendance Guidelines for Illness:

- Students or staff with **contagious illnesses** (e.g., strep throat, conjunctivitis, chickenpox, flu) or **fever** must remain home.
- Individuals must be **fever-free for 24 hours without medication** and should remain at home for the following school day before returning.
- For common colds, students or staff should stay home if a **fever, sore throat, eye infection, or severe nasal discharge** is present.
- Individuals with **vomiting, diarrhea, or an undiagnosed skin rash** should remain home.
- Anyone who develops symptoms while at school will be **sent home immediately**.
- A **physician's release** is required to return after a communicable disease.

Communication:

- Parents or guardians should notify the office and teachers via an email if a student will be absent due to illness.
- If a student or staff member is diagnosed with a communicable disease (e.g., influenza), this information may be shared with the families of classmates and staff to help prevent further spread.

Academic Support:

- Families are responsible for contacting teachers to arrange for missed work. Teachers will actively communicate with parents and provide materials for children with **extended absences due to illness**, provided a doctor's note is submitted.

SICK AT SCHOOL POLICY

If a child gets sick at school, his or her teacher or one of the office staff will call the parents regarding a need for them to come pick the child up. The following is a partial list of observable symptoms of contagious illnesses which will prompt a call from the school:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Coughing
- Difficulty Breathing
- Pink Eye
- Rashes or Spots
- Sore Throat

- Infected Skin Patches
- Severe Nasal Excretions
- Unusual Crying
- Extreme Fatigue

MEDICATION POLICY

In South Carolina, the Department of Social Services (DSS) has established specific regulations regarding the administration of medication in childcare settings. These guidelines are designed to ensure the safety and well-being of the children.

DSS Medication Administration Regulations

Under South Carolina Code Section 63-13-185, the administration of medication to a child in a childcare facility is subject to the following requirements:

- **Parental Authorization:** A signed and dated parental consent form must be submitted to the childcare facility prior to the administration of any medication. This authorization is valid for no longer than one year.
- **Medication Labeling and Dosage:** The medication must be administered as stated on the label directions or as amended in writing by the child's health care provider.
- **Expiration Date:** Only medications that are not expired may be administered.
- **Medication Storage:** All medications must be kept in their original labeled containers and stored in a locked location, out of reach of children. At May River Montessori, all medications are stored in the front office except for inhalers and epipens which remain with the classroom teachers.
- **Medication Log:** A log must be maintained for each medication administered, including the child's name, medication name, dosage, date, time, and the name of the person administering the medication.

For your child's safety:

- **Never send medication in your child's backpack.**
- All medication must be **given directly to a staff member** at the school to prevent accidental ingestion.
- Prescription and non-prescription medication will only be administered to children after permission has been given by a parent or guardian in writing. A dosage schedule of any prescription and or non-prescription medication is to be supplied to the teacher and signed and dated by the parent or guardian. Medication prescribed by a doctor must be in the original bottle, with the dosage and child's name clearly listed on the bottle. Medicine will not be administered without the above steps.

LICE POLICY

If head lice are found on a child, parents or guardians are asked to **notify the school immediately**. Children with lice should **remain at home and receive treatment**. They may return 24 hours after treatment has been completed. They should also remain at home for the following school day before returning to school.

If a child is found to have head lice at school:

- The child will be **sent home for treatment and may not return for 24 hours**.
- **All live lice and nits must be removed** before the child can return.
- The classroom and materials will be cleaned, and all other children in the room will be checked for head lice to prevent further spread.
-

MINOR ACCIDENTS/SCRAPES

If a child is injured at school, whether on the playground or inside the classroom:

- The teacher will **complete an incident report** detailing the accident, any first aid administered, and other relevant information.
- The incident report will be **shared with parents or guardians**.
- For **substantial injuries**, parents or guardians will be **notified immediately**.
- For **minor scrapes or bumps**, the area will be cleaned and a **Band-Aid applied**. Parents or guardians with questions about minor injuries are encouraged to **contact the child's teacher**.

HAND, FOOT, AND MOUTH (HFV) DISEASE

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease is a common viral illness that usually affects young children. It can cause fever, mouth sores, and a rash on the hands and feet. HFMD is contagious and spreads easily through direct contact, saliva, or contaminated surfaces.

Symptoms to watch for:

- Fever
- Blisters or sores in the mouth
- Rash or red spots on hands, feet, or diaper area
- Irritability or decreased appetite

When to keep your child home:

- Your child has a fever, mouth sores, and/or a rash consistent with HFMD.
- Your child is not feeling well enough to participate in regular activities.
- Your child is drooling excessively

Returning to school:

Children may return when:

- Fever has been gone for at least 24 hours without medication
- Mouth sores have healed enough for the child to eat and drink normally
- Any blisters on the body are healing and have dried up with no oozing or liquid inside
- Child is not drooling excessively

Prevention at school:

- Frequent handwashing for children and staff
- Cleaning and disinfecting toys, tables, and high-touch surfaces regularly
- Encouraging children to cover their coughs and sneezes

Notification:

Parents will be notified if a case of HFMD is identified in the classroom so they can monitor their child for symptoms.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

At the start of each school year, parents are required to sign a form authorizing May River Montessori to act on behalf of their child in the event of a medical emergency, including transportation by emergency vehicle if necessary.

In the event of an emergency:

- Parents or guardians will be **contacted immediately**.
- If parents or guardians cannot be reached, the school will contact **authorized emergency contacts** designated by the family.
- If emergency care is required, the school will **call 911 first**, then notify parents, guardians, or emergency contacts.
- Every effort will be made for the child to be **accompanied by a parent or guardian** if ambulance transportation is needed.
- If a parent or guardian is not immediately available, a **staff member will remain with the child** until the parent or guardian arrives.

All full-time teachers and staff are required to have CPR along with infant and child first aid training. May River Montessori carries liability insurance in compliance with South Carolina Statute 63-13-210-(A)(B).

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

THE CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

At May River Montessori, the Montessori philosophy fosters a **natural sense of community** and respect for everyone. In the classroom, children are given **freedom of choice** within a well-defined set of ground rules. These rules are carefully established to provide:

- Fair and clear expectations for the classroom community

- Consistent guidelines and consequences for actions
- A safe, comfortable, peaceful, and respectful environment

Teachers, assistants, and children work together cooperatively to create an environment where each child can **grow and learn at their own pace**.

What you'll notice in a Montessori classroom:

- Children work purposefully with **Montessori materials** at their own pace.
- The environment is **beautiful, child-sized, and developmentally appropriate**, designed to encourage success and independence.
- The classroom is **peaceful**, and interactions between children, teachers, and materials are **respectful and supportive**.

Discipline and Self-Regulation:

- Discipline in Montessori is about **teaching, not punishment**. It is based on **love and guidance, not anger**.
- The goal is not external control, but to help children develop **inner control or self-discipline**.
- As Maria Montessori wrote in *The Montessori Method*: "We call an individual disciplined when he is master of himself, and can therefore regulate his own conduct when it shall be necessary to follow some rule of life..."

Through this approach, children learn **self-discipline, focus, respect, and cooperation**, creating a joyful and productive learning community.

GROUND RULES

At May River Montessori, classroom ground rules provide the foundation for positive social interactions and help reinforce the values we want our children to develop, including respect and responsibility.

How children learn the rules:

- Ground rules are introduced from the first day of orientation using positive, clear communication and demonstration.
- Children are taught what to do versus what not to do in various situations.
- Minor disruptions, such as interfering with another child's work, are often redirected with a simple reminder.
- Daily experiences of respect—both giving and receiving—help children internalize these values as a way of life.
- Consistency, respect, positive reinforcement, and normalization through work create a peaceful, respectful, and joyful classroom environment.
- A developmentally appropriate, multi-sensory environment allows children to direct their energies productively, supporting self-discipline, responsibility, delayed gratification, integrity, positive self-esteem, and a strong foundation for academic learning.

Examples of Classroom Ground Rules:

- Use your **walking feet** indoors to move carefully and respectfully.
- Use your **quiet voice** indoors so others can concentrate.
- Only **one person may talk at a time**.
- Only **two people may have snack at a time**. Wait your turn if needed.
- **Put your work away** when finished so it is ready for the next person.
- You may **work with another child only if invited**; otherwise, choose your own work. Wait your turn if someone else is using the material you want.
- If a teacher is busy, **wait until they are available** before speaking.
- **Go directly to the person** with whom you wish to speak.
- **Wash your hands** after using the bathroom or blowing your nose.

These rules, paired with the Montessori environment, help children learn to manage themselves, respect others, and engage in purposeful, joyful learning.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

At May River Montessori, the safety and rights of all students and staff are a top priority. **Staff members never use or threaten physical punishment, verbal abuse, or emotional intimidation.**

Procedure for Responding to Disruptive Behavior:

1. **Positive Redirection** – If inappropriate behavior occurs, staff will first attempt to redirect the child in a positive way.
2. **Excusing from the Group** – If redirection is unsuccessful, the child may be asked to step out of the group or activity temporarily. The teacher will follow up shortly afterward to:
 - Discuss the behavior
 - Explain why it was inappropriate
 - Help the child formulate a positive solution
 - Elementary students may be asked to complete a written self-reflection to support understanding and learning.
3. **Multiple Children Involved** – If more than one child is involved in a disruptive incident, all children involved may be excused from the activity.
4. **Severe Disruption** – For extremely disruptive behavior, parents or guardians may be contacted and asked to pick up their child early. Teachers will provide a detailed account of the incident, including circumstances, time, place, witnesses, and actions taken.
5. **Persistent Behavior Issues** – If disruptive behavior continues, a parent/guardian conference will be scheduled to develop a behavioral strategy tailored to the child.
6. **Endangering Safety** – If a child's behavior endangers themselves or others, immediate action will be taken to de-escalate the situation, remove the child from the environment, and ensure everyone's safety.
7. **Program Withdrawal** – In rare cases where behavior cannot be redirected into constructive channels or poses a continued risk to the child or others, parents or guardians may be required to withdraw their child from the program.

This approach ensures children learn **self-discipline, responsibility, and positive problem-solving skills** in a safe, supportive, and respectful environment.

BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION FORMS

If a child's behavior is disruptive enough to require **early dismissal**, the following procedure is followed:

- The **teacher will contact parents or guardians** immediately to discuss the situation.
- After determining a resolution, the teacher will **complete an incident report** detailing:
 - The circumstances of the behavior
 - Input from all children involved
 - Observations from additional staff consulted
 - Any additional comments
 - The planned actions or interventions
- The incident report will be **sent automatically to parents or guardians** and will remain part of the child's school record.
- If it is a recurring behavior, a meeting with an administrator will be scheduled.

This process ensures clear communication, accountability, and supports the development of positive behavior in a consistent and structured manner.

BEHAVIORAL OUTCOMES

At May River Montessori, every instance of disruptive behavior is an opportunity to teach:

- Appropriate behavior
- Core values
- Social responsibility

Our approach is **loving, respectful, and firm**, always considering the impact of the behavior on the entire classroom environment. In some cases, a temporary additional support person ("shadow") may be used to help a child break a cycle of disruptive behavior.

We recognize and honor the dignity and worth of every child. By treating children with fairness and respect, we foster a classroom where children learn to respond to others in kind, developing self-discipline, empathy, and responsibility.

EXTREME BEHAVIOR

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

We expect all students to make healthy choices and avoid any contact with drugs or alcohol. This includes the use, possession, or sale of any controlled substance or alcoholic beverage. The possession or sale of these substances during the school day or at any school-sponsored event, trip, or activity may result in immediate expulsion.

INAPPROPRIATE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Digital interactions must reflect the same kindness, courtesy, and respect expected in person. Any harmful, hurtful, or inappropriate behavior while using technology may lead to disciplinary action.

LANGUAGE

Respectful communication is an important part of our school culture. Profanity or crude language is not permitted in the classroom, on campus, or at any school function. We ask that parents and visitors also model appropriate language when on school grounds.

BULLYING

Every child deserves to feel safe and valued. Any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is not tolerated—whether it occurs in our school buildings, on school grounds, or during school-related activities. All reports of bullying will be promptly investigated, and appropriate action will be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone involved.

VIOLENCE

Our school is a safe place for peaceful learning. Acts or threats of violence, unsafe behavior, or verbal abuse toward others are strictly prohibited. Bringing a weapon—or using any object as a weapon—is illegal and may result in immediate expulsion.

SMOKING & VAPING

May River Montessori is a smoke- and vape-free environment. Smoking or vaping is not permitted anywhere on campus.

DISRESPECT FOR THE PROPERTY OF OTHERS

We expect everyone to treat the school environment and the belongings of others with care. Theft, vandalism, or damage to property—whether intentional or accidental—must be repaired or repaid and may result in disciplinary action, including possible expulsion.

COMPUTER AND TECHNOLOGY USE POLICY

At May River Montessori, technology is viewed as a tool for learning, creativity, and responsible exploration. Our goal is to help students develop digital literacy and good judgment while maintaining balance with hands-on, experiential learning.

Purpose

Technology use in the upper elementary classroom supports research, writing, creativity, and collaboration. It complements—not replaces—the Montessori materials and curriculum.

Guidelines for Safe and Responsible Use of Technology

Students are expected to:

- **Use technology for learning purposes only.** All devices and internet use must be connected to classroom lessons or approved projects.
- **Respect others' privacy.** Students may not access, share, or modify anyone else's files or accounts.
- **Protect personal information.** Students should never share full names, addresses, phone numbers, or other identifying details online.
- **Use respectful communication.** Digital interactions must reflect the same kindness, courtesy, and respect expected in person.

- **Handle equipment with care.** Devices are shared classroom tools and should be treated responsibly and returned in good condition.

Internet Safety

The school maintains secure filters and monitors internet use to ensure student safety. Staff provide ongoing guidance to help students recognize safe and appropriate online behavior.

Personal Devices

Personal electronic devices (including cell phones, smart watches, tablets, and gaming systems) are not permitted for student use during the school day unless approved by a teacher for a specific educational purpose.

Consequences

Any misuse of technology—including accessing inappropriate material, violating privacy, or damaging equipment—may result in loss of privileges and other disciplinary action in line with school policy.

Partnership with Families

We encourage families to model and discuss responsible technology habits at home. Working together, we can help children build lifelong skills for safe, balanced, and thoughtful digital citizenship.

BITING

Biting is not allowed; however, we understand that it may occasionally occur among younger children who are still learning verbal communication and social skills. We address each incident carefully and thoughtfully.

Procedure for a Biting Incident:

- Teachers and staff assess the situation and provide appropriate first aid.
- Parents or guardians of both children—the child who bit and the child who was bitten—are notified.
- The teacher completes an incident report documenting the event.

Preventing Repeat Incidents:

- Children who have bitten are **closely monitored** to prevent recurrence.
- In most cases, careful supervision and guidance are sufficient to stop the behavior.
- If biting persists, the school may ask parents to **keep the child at home temporarily** until the behavior improves.
- In some cases, the school may require that a **temporary “shadow”** be hired to supervise the child until the biting stops. The school will assist parents in finding a shadow and must approve the selection.

Guiding Principles:

- Each biting incident is handled **on a case-by-case basis** depending on the circumstances.
- The goal is always to **teach appropriate social behavior** while maintaining the safety and well-being of all children.
- **Biting is not permitted**, and steps are taken as necessary to resolve the behavior and support the child’s social development.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

All staff members at May River Montessori are mandated reporters. They are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. If a staff member has a concern, suspicion, or if a child says anything that could indicate abuse, it must be reported immediately to the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) for investigation. Staff are not responsible for investigating or verifying the concern, and they should not discuss it with anyone else. Their role is solely to report the concern to DSS, as mandated by law. DSS will do the investigation. All information is strictly confidential.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent Teacher Conferences are held twice a year to share your child's progress and development. We encourage both parents or guardians to attend and kindly ask that you arrive on time. Teachers invest significant time preparing for these meetings to provide meaningful insights about each child. These conferences are a wonderful opportunity to strengthen communication between home and school, so please feel free to ask questions or discuss anything related to your child's growth and learning. There is no school for students on Parent Teacher Conference days.

TODDLER & PRIMARY CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT

The **Toddler (ages 2–3) and Primary (ages 3–6) Montessori curriculum** is designed to support each child's natural development through hands-on learning and exploration. It focuses on nurturing independence, curiosity, and a love of learning.

The curriculum is organized into several key areas:

1. **Practical Life** – Activities that develop everyday skills, coordination, concentration, and independence, such as pouring, dressing, and cleaning.
2. **Sensorial** – Materials that refine the senses and help children understand concepts like size, shape, color, texture, and sound.
3. **Language** – Exercises to build vocabulary, communication skills, reading readiness, and early writing.
4. **Mathematics** – Hands-on materials that introduce counting, sequencing, number concepts, and early arithmetic.
5. **Cultural Studies** – Exploration of geography, science, nature, and the arts to broaden understanding of the world.
6. **Social and Emotional Development** – Activities that encourage empathy, cooperation, problem-solving, and self-regulation.

Each child progresses **at their own pace**, moving from simple to more complex concepts as they are ready. Teachers carefully observe and guide each child, documenting progress and ensuring that learning builds naturally over time.

ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT

The **Montessori Elementary program (ages 6–12)** builds on the foundation of the Primary curriculum, guiding students toward greater independence, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. The curriculum is carefully structured but flexible, allowing each child to progress at their own pace.

Key areas of study include:

1. **Language Arts** – Reading, writing, grammar, spelling, and literature, emphasizing comprehension, self-expression, and communication skills.
2. **Mathematics** – Hands-on materials and problem-solving activities to develop number sense, arithmetic, fractions, geometry, and early algebraic concepts.
3. **Cultural Studies** – History, geography, science, and the arts, helping students understand the natural and human-made world.
4. **Practical Life and Grace & Courtesy** – Continuing to develop independence, responsibility, social skills, and cooperative behavior.
5. **Creative Arts** – Opportunities for music, visual arts, drama, and other creative expression.

Students' progress is individually tracked rather than measured against traditional grades. Teachers maintain detailed records of lessons presented and skills mastered and provide comprehensive progress reports to parents during conferences. Advancement is based on academic growth, social maturity, independence, and work habits, ensuring each child is ready for the next stage of learning.

HOMEWORK

Homework at May River Montessori is designed to give students the chance to practice and reinforce reading skills and to develop a love of independent reading. Early homework habits help children take responsibility for their own learning and build self-esteem.

Students are expected to complete assignments on their own, giving full attention to the work. This encourages time management and independence. Because students already engage in a full day of academic learning with Montessori materials, we keep homework to a minimum, focusing on meaningful, purposeful practice rather than busywork.

STUDENT RECORDS

Student records at May River Montessori are confidential. The school keeps all records secure in the main office and digitally through Transparent Classroom. Parents and guardians may access their child's records at any time.

To transfer records to another school, the new school must submit a **"Transfer of School Records"** form signed by the parent or guardian. No records will be released to anyone outside the school without a formal written request from a parent, unless required by a court subpoena.

Please note:

- Transfer requests cannot be processed if a student has an outstanding account balance over 30 days past due. Requests will be completed once the balance is cleared.
- Requests received during school closures will be processed when the school reopens.

COMMUNICATION

TAKE-HOME BAGS

Toddler Program:

- Children carry bags **back and forth to school** daily.

Primary Program:

- Children have **take-home bags** sent home each Friday and returned on Monday.
- All completed work is sent home in these bags.

Supporting Your Child at Home:

- Please **review your child's work positively and specifically**. Examples of supportive comments:
 - "I like the way you finished your work."
 - "I can tell you did your best."
 - "I like how carefully you colored in one direction."
 - For writing, have your child **read it to you** and **point out the best letters**.
- Focus on effort and accomplishment, not perfection or comparison with others. Each child learns at their own pace.
- It's normal if your child does not bring home physical work, especially in the three-year-old year. Much of their learning occurs through hands-on interaction with Montessori materials, even if there is nothing tangible to show.

Responsibility and Care:

- Please **help your child return the empty take-home bag each week** so it's ready for the next week's work.
- Managing take-home bags helps children develop responsibility and pride in their learning.
- Please also wash them as needed; they will get dirty from being dragged across the ground.

TRANSPARENT CLASSROOM PORTAL

All official communication from May River Montessori is conducted through **Transparent Classroom**.

Important Notes for Families:

- Both parents/guardians should create an account to receive school communications.
- Permissions slips, progress reports, and other student-related updates are tracked through the portal.
- Weekly newsletters and important announcements are sent via Transparent Classroom.
- Upon enrollment, you will receive an invitation to sign up for your account.

Using Transparent Classroom ensures that families receive timely, accurate, and organized information about their child's education and school events. You can also choose to download the app for easier and quicker access.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

May River Montessori encourages parents and guardians to observe their child in the classroom. Observations provide a close, minimally invasive look into the Montessori environment and offer insight into your child's learning, social interactions, and engagement with the materials.

Guidelines for Observations:

- Schedule in advance by contacting the main office.
- Do not inform your child that you will be observing; allow for a normal drop-off and morning routine.
- Record any questions during your observation to share with your child's teachers. Teachers may visit during your observation to provide guidance on Montessori practices.
- **Save specific questions about your child's growth or development** for a scheduled parent-teacher conference.
- Try to observe **varied classroom settings**, including large group meetings, small group lessons, individual work periods, and free play or recess.

Timing Considerations:

- During the **first few weeks of school**, children are learning new routines. Observations are best scheduled **after the initial adjustment period, typically in the Fall**.

Observing your child in the Montessori classroom provides a **valuable perspective on their development** and the carefully prepared environment that supports their growth.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

GETTING INVOLVED

May River Montessori thrives because of the support and volunteer efforts of our families. The dedication of past and current parents has shaped the school into the warm, nurturing community it is today.

Family Engagement Opportunities

Throughout the year, the school hosts many events designed to help families become acquainted with classmates and their families. Participation in these events fosters a strong, supportive school community and allows families to actively contribute to the life of the school. We value and celebrate the sense of community, cooperation, and mutual support that makes May River Montessori a special place for children and families alike.

PARENT - TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The May River Montessori PTO plays an essential role in the life and success of our school. Its primary purpose is fundraising — efforts that help keep tuition more affordable while maintaining the high standards our families expect. Funds raised beyond our goals support additional materials, programs, and experiences that enrich the curriculum. Each year the PTO partners with the Board of Trustees and Director to determine how these funds are allocated.

We warmly encourage all parents to be active participants in the PTO — by attending meetings, volunteering for projects, and joining school events. Your involvement, support, and goodwill are vital to the continued growth and success of our school. Plus, it's a wonderful way to connect with other families and become part of our school community.

PARENT COMMITMENT

1. Make sure your child gets plenty of sleep each night. Children thrive when well rested.

2. Students are required to have regular school attendance. Consistency not only gives continuity to learning, but keeps the momentum of motivation for work, teaches responsibility, and lets the students know school is important. Make every effort to schedule any appointments outside of school hours.
3. Make sure your child arrives on time for school.
4. **It is essential for the safety and well-being of your child that the school has up-to-date contact information.** Families are asked to keep all personal and contact details current, including physical addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses, and to notify the school immediately of any changes in family circumstances or contact information. Maintaining accurate information ensures that the school can reach parents or guardians quickly in the event of an emergency and helps support smooth, effective communication regarding your child's education.
5. Have a positive, supportive attitude. If learning is important to you, it will be important to your child.
6. Spend time reading with your child as often as possible.
7. Encourage your child. Be positive. Go over his/her work and be specific about what you like about his work.
8. Read notes including emails and Transparent Classroom notifications that are sent from school.
9. Please communicate any questions, concerns, or anything that you feel is significant to your child's teacher. Good communication is vital so that we can work together for the good of your child.

ROOM PARENTS

Each classroom ideally has two room parents, though this may not always be possible. These volunteers help coordinate classroom needs and stay in close contact with the teaching staff. Throughout the school year, the appointed room parent(s) will communicate with families about classroom events and any specific needs. We greatly appreciate parents who choose to give their time in this way—it truly makes a difference in our school community.

THRIVE POLICY

Volunteering and being actively involved in your child's school experience strengthens both the classroom community and your child's learning. When parents contribute their time, talents, or support, it enhances the resources available to students, helps teachers meet classroom needs, and models a sense of responsibility and community for children. Your involvement—whether through helping with events, assisting in the classroom, or participating in school committees—makes a meaningful difference and helps create a vibrant, connected school environment where every child can thrive.

Volunteer Tuition Credit Program

Families who complete **12 volunteer hours** between August 1, 2026 and April 30, 2027 will receive a **\$600 tuition credit**, applied to the May 2027 tuition payment.

Program Details:

- Hours must be logged through our volunteer management system.
- The credit applies per family, not per child.
- Partial completion does not qualify for credit.

HARMONY POLICY

The May River Montessori community is built on a foundation of love, respect, and mutual support—for each member, the school, and the broader community. Our school takes pride in fostering a harmonious environment where children can thrive. Families and staff work together to support each child's growth both in the classroom and at home.

We hold our staff to high standards of professional ethics and ask that families actively support the school's mission and vision. Any questions or concerns regarding school policies, activities, or practices are expected to be addressed respectfully and with a focus on finding solutions.

In the rare event that a community member behaves in a way that intentionally causes discord or demonstrates malice, thereby violating our core values of love and respect, the individual may be asked to discontinue participation in the school community to ensure the well-being and harmony of all.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE POLICIES

As a nonprofit school, timely tuition payments from families are essential to our operations. Please follow your agreed payment plan closely. If you need to adjust your plan, contact the front office promptly—we understand life events happen and want to work with you. Communication is key!

- Payment Due Dates:
 - Monthly tuition: 15th of each month, July through May
 - Semester Tuition: July 15 and December 15
 - Annual tuition: July 15
 - Afterschool payments also begin on July 15
 - For children enrolling **after September 16**, tuition will be prorated based on the week of enrollment.
 -
- Late Fees and Penalties:
 - Payments are due on the 15th of each month
 - A \$65 late fee will be applied to payments received 15 days after the due date
 - Accounts more than 30 days past due may result in suspension of student attendance
 - Accounts more than 60 days past due may result in dismissal
- Sibling Discount:
 - 25% tuition discount applies for the third child and each additional child enrolled, applied to the lowest tuition(s) per family. This applies to the youngest children first.

Afterschool

- Pick-ups after 5:00PM are subject to a \$25 late fee per occurrence. After 5:15PM, an additional \$1 per minute fee will be charged.
- The fee must be paid in full before the child may return to the Afterschool program.

TUITION

May River Montessori is a nonprofit organization that relies entirely on tuition as its primary source of income. We greatly appreciate the sacrifices families make to provide their children with a Montessori education. The skills and love of learning your child develops here will benefit them for a lifetime.

Student accounts must be kept current. The school may withhold services from students whose accounts are past due unless written arrangements for deferred payment have been made. Your cooperation is essential and greatly appreciated.

TUITION PROTECTION FUND

The financial contract signed by each family covers the full annual tuition for the entire academic year. Tuition is non-refundable, and unpaid obligations cannot be canceled if a child withdraws at any time during the school year.

The May River Montessori Tuition Protection Fund ensures that the school receives tuition if a child withdraws. The Fund is self-funded, and all claims are subject to the terms of the Tuition Protection Agreement. To submit a claim after withdrawal, a parent or guardian must provide a written letter of explanation and follow the procedure outlined in the agreement.

Participation in the Tuition Protection Fund is required for all student accounts not paid in full by **August 1** each year.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

If funds are available, May River Montessori may offer financial assistance to families experiencing financial need. Our scholarship program is limited and depends on donations received each year; therefore, awards are granted on a year-by-year basis.

Applications for financial aid open **September 1** and close **March 1**. Award decisions are released **in early April**. Scholarships are determined by a committee appointed by the Board of Directors.

RE-ENROLLMENT

Re-enrollment for current students takes place **November 1–30**. Enrollment for new families begins **December 1**.

While every effort is made to maintain classroom continuity, returning students are **not guaranteed placement with the same teacher**. Children who are not moving up to the next program level will typically remain in their current classroom; however, teacher assignments are finalized in the spring once staffing decisions are confirmed, as all faculty work under one-year contracts. If a staff member chooses not to return, a qualified replacement will be found for the following school year.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Trustees of May River Montessori are entrusted with the school's past, present, and future. Each trustee plays an active role in the life of the school. Staggered terms ensure continuity and stability within the board's membership. A list of our current board members can be found on our website.

FACULTY & STAFF

The cornerstone of May River Montessori is our dedicated and experienced staff. Our faculty members are highly trained professionals, providing stability that allows children and families to build strong, trusting relationships. For the safety of our school community, all staff undergo background checks, fingerprinting, and health screenings. Occasionally, provisional employment may occur to meet regulatory requirements when unexpected vacancies arise, in compliance with South Carolina DSS regulations (SC Statute 63-13-45(a)). A list of our current staff is available on the website.

FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act)

May River Montessori follows the United States Department of Education's Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. For any further questions regarding this policy, please reach out to the office. It reads as follows:

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- *Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.*
- *Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.*
- *Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):*
 - *School officials with legitimate educational interest;*
 - *Other schools to which a student is transferring;*
 - *Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;*
 - *Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;*
 - *Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;*
 - *Accrediting organizations;*
 - *To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;*
 - *Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and*
 - *State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.*

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school



MAY RIVER MONTESSORI

FAMILY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The **2026–2027 May River Montessori Family Handbook** includes important information about the school's operations, policies, and expectations—covering areas such as attendance, dress code, discipline, assessment, and more.

By signing below, I confirm that I have access to the **2026–2027 May River Montessori Family Handbook**, which is posted and available on the school's website. I acknowledge that I have read and understand its contents and agree to follow the policies, procedures, rules, and practices outlined therein. I also recognize my responsibilities, as a parent/guardian, to support these standards as part of the May River Montessori community.

I understand that the May River Montessori Family Handbook is a living document and may be revised as needed. Any updates or changes will be communicated to families at the time they occur.

Child(ren): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____