

Montessori Children's House

Parent Handbook



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1 Mission

Montessori Children's House's mission is to provide for each student an individualized, developmentally appropriate academic, social, and emotional experience that is founded in Montessori principles and instills a love of learning.

2 Philosophy

At MCH, we provide personalized learning in a warm and nurturing environment. Our educational philosophy is equally guided by Montessori principles, common sense, and the latest in evidence-based research.

We believe that children need: free play, fresh air and exercise, warm praise and encouragement, work they can be proud of, gentle challenges, clear rules and boundaries, consistent expectations, and above all, patience and understanding.

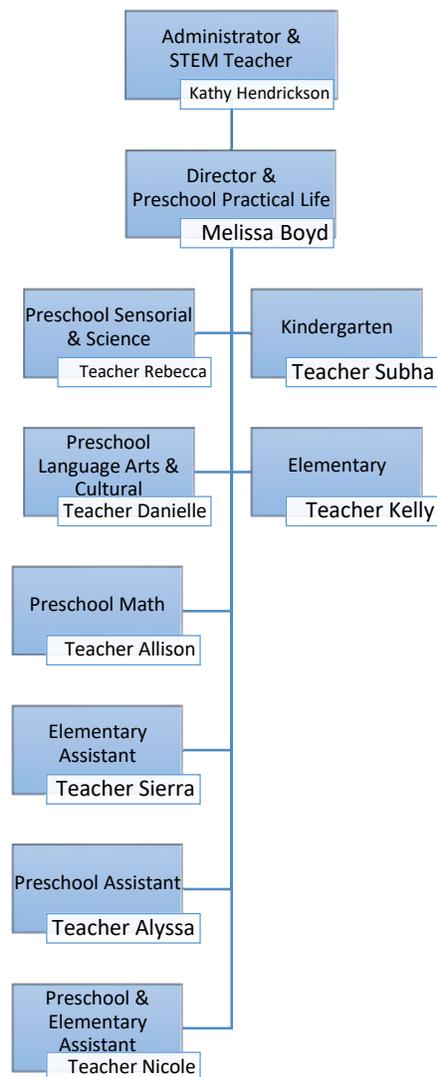
We treat MCH kids with respect, embrace their curiosity, give them age-appropriate responsibility, and foster their independence and self-reliance. Our students are proud of what they accomplish, and it shows!

Montessori education is individualized; every student is at a slightly different level socially, emotionally, and academically. A student who is quite advanced in math might be struggling with writing. A student who is very successful academically might still be working on her emotional maturity. A student who struggles with focus and concentration at some tasks may be very successful when working on topics that he is curious and passionate about. At MCH, we meet and support our students where they are. Students who are ready to work ahead are supported at their individual pace. Likewise, students who may need more time to grasp a particular concept are given the time, support, and practice that they need to succeed.

We strive to partner with our MCH parents, create a true feeling of family and community, and really listen to parent input so that we can work together to provide the very best for our students.

A final part of our philosophy is to celebrate the joy of learning. Young children are curious, joyful learners. They amaze us every day!

3 MCH Organizational Chart



4 School Year and Summer Session Calendar

The MCH school year begins on the day after Labor Day, and ends each year in mid-June. We are typically closed for one week between the end of the school year and the start of the summer session, which runs through the third week in August. MCH is closed for approximately one week at the end of August.

We are closed for the following holidays:

- Labor Day
- Veteran’s Day
- Thanksgiving & Black Friday
- Winter break (including Christmas & New Year’s)

- Martin Luther King Day
- President’s Day (parent-teacher conferences)
- Spring break (including Easter)
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day

Please refer to the current school calendar for more details.

5 School Hours & Daily Schedule

MCH operates Monday through Friday, from 7:30am – 6:00pm. Our daily schedule may vary somewhat to accommodate weather and our educational programming, but the general schedule is as follows:

5.1 Preschool

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 7:30am – 8:30am | Early Morning Care | At MCH this is included at no extra charge for all students. During this time, students do a combination of free lessons and free play. This is a wonderful opportunity for them to socialize, settle in for the day, get the wiggles out, and get ready to work. |
| 8:00am – 10:30am | AM Snack | Morning snack is available throughout this time |
| 8:30am – 8:45am | Morning Group | This is where we discuss the main topic of the month, present family projects, stories, songs, read books, etc. |
| 8:45am – 11:30am | Main Work Cycle | Following group, we have our main work cycle, during which the students work on their Montessori lessons. Students are allowed to move freely throughout the work cycle and choose work in different areas. |
| 11:30am | 2 nd Group | The work cycle ends with a short second group time, after which students are dismissed to recess. |
| 11:30am – 12:00pm | Recess | We do our best to be outside unless the weather is truly uncooperative. If we have to be indoors for recess, we do a variety of creative movement and indoor play activities. |
| 12:00pm – 12:30pm | Lunch | |
| 12:45pm – 2:45pm | Nap | |
| 2:45pm – 3:00pm | PM Snack | |
| 3:00pm – 4:00pm | After School Care | Free play, outdoors when weather permits. |
| 4:00pm – 6:00pm | After School Care | Indoor free lesson time, group activities, and homework time for older students. |

5.2 Kindergarten

| | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 7:30am – 8:00am | Early Morning Care | Arrival and free lessons |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|--|
| 8:00am – 8:30am | Recess | We do our best to be outside unless the weather is truly uncooperative. If we have to be indoors for recess, we do a variety of creative lessons and indoor play activities. |
| 8:30am – 8:50am | Snack & enrichment classes | Monday: snack time & group Tuesday: STEM class (snack after) Wednesday: Japanese class (snack after) Thursday: Spanish class (snack after) Friday: snack time & group |
| 8:50am – 11:30am | Main Work Cycle | Following group, we have our first work cycle, during which the students work on their Montessori lessons. Students are allowed to move freely throughout the work cycle and choose work in different areas. |
| 11:30am – 12:00pm | Lunch | |
| 12:00pm – 12:30pm | Afternoon recess & group | Outdoor recess (weather permitting) and group |
| 12:30pm – 2:30pm | Second Work Cycle | Students work on their Montessori lessons. Students are allowed to move freely throughout the work cycle and choose work in different areas. |
| 2:30pm – 3:00pm | Clean Up & Snack | Clean up, afternoon snack, and dismissal to aftercare |
| 3:00pm – 4:00pm | After School Care | Free play, outdoors when weather permits. |
| 4:00pm – 6:00pm | After School Care | Indoor free lesson time, group activities, and homework time for older students. |

5.3 Elementary

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|---|
| 7:30am – 8:00am | Early Morning Care | At MCH this is included at no extra charge for all students. Elementary students spend this time doing free lessons individually or in small groups. |
| 8:00am - 8:30am | Morning Recess | Outdoor recess, weather permitting. This is a wonderful opportunity for them to socialize, settle in for the day, get the wiggles out, and get ready to work. |
| 8:30am – 8:50am | Morning Group | Good morning, calendar, weather, moon chart and read aloud |
| 8:50am – 11:00am | First Work Cycle | Math, reading, and individual work. |
| 11:00am – 11:30am | Enrichment classes | Monday: Music, T. Kelly Tuesday: STEM, T. Kathy Wednesday: Japanese, T. Alyssa Thursday: Spanish, T. Danielle Friday: Art, T. Kelly |

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| 11:30am – 12:00pm | Lunch | Students who participate in extracurricular activities attend during this time. |
| 12:00pm – 12:30pm | Recess | Outdoors when weather permits. |
| 12:30pm – 2:30pm | Second Work Cycle | Science, social studies, small group work, individual writing assignments. |
| 3:00pm – 4:00pm | After School Care | Free play, outdoors when weather permits. |
| 4:00pm – 6:00pm | After School Care | Indoor free lesson time, group activities, and homework time for older students. |

6 Curriculum

6.1 Preschool

The MCH Preschool curriculum follows a traditional Montessori early childhood program approach, with learning organized into six content areas for the morning work cycle (8:30am – 11:30am):

Language Arts: The Montessori Language Arts curriculum is a systematic, phonics-based, multisensory approach to teaching writing and reading.

Mathematics: We offer a systematic, comprehensive math curriculum that uses a variety of concrete manipulatives. Each student works on material at his/her level.

Science: In preschool, our students begin learning about the natural world and its plants, animals, and systems. Preschool students are captivated by science experiments and demonstrations, and so we do them frequently during group time.

Geography & Cultural Arts: Preschoolers work with specifically designed globes, maps, and puzzles as they begin to explore oceans, continents, countries and major geographic features. They are introduced to cultural studies of many major countries. We offer Spanish language class once per week, as well as Japanese and origami lessons. Our students explore music, and have daily opportunities to sing, listen to music, create crafts, and make art.

Sensorial: Sensorial work is at the heart of a Montessori program. By working with a variety of carefully designed materials in a specific order, students develop and hone their senses, concentration, and attention span. They build the perception, visual discrimination, and motor skills that they will need to begin the very challenging work of learning to write and read.

Practical Life: These activities are some of the first that our preschoolers work on. They learn to take care of their classroom and materials. They are quite proud of their abilities and increasing independence. Students have the opportunity to cook, garden, make crafts, and continue to learn and practice a variety of other useful life skills. In addition, Practical Life activities give students a lot of practice on their fine motor skills, which are essential to development.

In addition, our curriculum offers ample time for **free play, movement, outdoor recess** (weather permitting) and **student socialization**. See our general schedule in section 4 for more detail.

6.2 Kindergarten

The MCH Kindergarten is a full-day Kindergarten that combines Montessori education with a more traditional room environment. We intentionally keep class sizes small, with typically **14 or fewer students**, so that each student can benefit from individual attention.

Each student receives work customized to his or her needs and level. We also meet and exceed the Virginia Standards of Learning.

Our Kindergarten curriculum is quite comprehensive; for a detailed account of all topics covered, please refer to our current Kindergarten Curriculum document. The following summary is provided as an overview:

Language Arts: The Montessori Language Arts curriculum is a systematic, phonics-based, multisensory approach to teaching writing and reading.

Mathematics: We offer a systematic, comprehensive math curriculum that uses a variety of concrete manipulatives. Each student works on material at his/her level. Some instruction may be given in small groups, if there are several students working at the same level, and individualized instruction is also used.

Science: Most of our Kindergarten science curriculum focuses on biology and earth science. We learn extensively about the plants, animals, and ecosystems that make up our natural world, as well as things like weather, the water cycle, etc. Kindergarteners are often fascinated with science, and it is a wonderful opportunity to expand their learning and understanding.

Geography & Cultural Arts: Students explore oceans, continents, countries and major geographic features. They will participate in units on major historical figures, and are introduced to cultural studies of many major countries. They continue to practice Spanish, Japanese, origami, and have a wide variety of music and art activities throughout the year.

Sensorial: MCH students continue to develop and engage their senses in Kindergarten. Students build on their pre-K sensorial work through more formal learning and practice in visual arts and music. Other Sensorial activities are integrated into our cultural and science activities.

Practical Life: Students continue to build on their pre-K work, by taking care of their classroom and materials. They are quite proud of their abilities and increasing independence. Students have the opportunity to cook, garden, make crafts, and continue to learn and practice a variety of other useful life skills. In addition, our Kindergarteners are always working on their fine motor skills, which are essential to development.

Kindergarteners at MCH continue to enjoy daily time for free play, guided movement, and outdoor recess.

6.3 Elementary

Our elementary curriculum follows the Virginia Standards of Learning, so all standards are met and our students are well-prepared when they eventually leave MCH. However, our elementary class follows the MCH and Montessori practice of providing students with a **personalized learning** experience. Each student receives work at his or her level. We offer both acceleration and differentiation for gifted

learners (see section 6.4 for more information about gifted education at MCH). This is made possible by our small class size, of typically 14 or fewer students.

Our Elementary students continue to work with Montessori materials, and similar concrete learning tools. They have some opportunity to choose their work during free lesson periods, and may choose from a variety of interesting and enriching activities (for example, playing chess with a classmate).

Elementary students have daily recess and outdoor time (weather permitting).

6.4 Gifted Education & Learning Differences

At MCH, we have had the privilege of learning with many profoundly gifted, exceptional, and twice exceptional students. Our personalized learning, small class sizes, multi-age groups, and completely individualized learning pace make MCH ideal for gifted learners, and any student with learning differences. Children all have individual strengths and weaknesses across all areas: academic, social/emotional, and behavioral. Our program is designed to work with these strengths and weaknesses, rather than try to group children into a level and expectations based on their grade alone.

We do **not** use high-stakes testing or restrictive cut-offs to try to separate gifted students from bright overachievers. Bright, hardworking students should be celebrated! All students who are working above grade level are supported and given the opportunity to work on material that is appropriate for their individual development. Likewise, although we strongly encourage parents of students with learning differences to work with their pediatricians to obtain full diagnostic evaluations so that we can best serve our students, we work to support our students' needs regardless of whether they have a formal diagnosis of a learning difference or not.

In addition to accelerating the curriculum for students working ahead of their grade level, we also offer differentiation to students who demonstrate a need to explore part of the curriculum in greater depth or at a very high level of challenge.

For more information or to discuss your child's specific learning needs, please contact the Director.

7 Extracurricular Activities (*Temporarily Suspended due to COVID)

We have currently suspended our extracurricular activities due to COVID, but please see the following information in case we are able to resume: In addition to our Montessori programming, we offer several other optional extracurricular activities. These activities take place during free-lesson periods, so that students who participate do not miss any class work. Programming is offered through independent contractors, and what we offer may vary throughout the year depending on their scheduling. However, we usually offer:

- Yoga
- Dance
- Soccer

All of our extracurricular activity programs must provide a state background check, Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) background check, signed sworn affirmation, a Tuberculosis test record, and an insurance policy. All payments are made to the individual company, and students are signed in and out of the extracurricular program session.

8 Homework Policy

Preschool students have a simple, fun, and creative Family Project once per month. Most of these projects are optional. A few (such as decorating a bag to hold the student's Valentines) are used in our holiday programming.

Kindergarten and Elementary students are assigned occasional projects to be completed at home, and also receive a small amount of regular homework. The homework covers material that the students are already comfortable with, and is intended to help them practice good routines, build responsibility, and develop organizational skills. If your student appears to be struggling or if the homework takes more than a few minutes to complete, please inform the teacher.

Kindergarten students typically receive brief, individualized homework Monday – Thursday. Homework should take approximately 5 – 10 minutes to complete.

Elementary students usually receive an individualized packet of homework each week, which is due on Friday. The teacher designs the homework set so that it should take the student approximately 10 minutes per day (40 minutes per week) or less.

Our teachers may adjust their homework expectations according to what best serves the students' needs. However, the homework will follow the general MCH principles of being: individualized, familiar content, and not too time-consuming, stressful, or burdensome.

9 Student Evaluation, Report Cards & Parent Conferences

9.1 Preschool

Preschool student progress is tracked through the teachers' direct observation of the student's work. Parents will receive a report card three times per year, written conference notes, and informal updates throughout the year. Student work comes home daily. Parent conferences may be scheduled by appointment.

9.2 Kindergarten

Kindergarteners' progress is tracked through the teacher's direct observation. MCH also administers a brief reading assessment at the end of the school year, to give our parents concrete information about their child's reading progress. Parents will receive a report card three times per year, and will also receive informal updates throughout the year. Student work comes home daily. Parent conferences are scheduled in February of each year. If necessary, parents or the teacher may request a conference at any time.

9.3 Elementary

MCH does **not** administer SOL tests or similar, except by parent request if the test is needed for placement into another school. High stakes testing is not in keeping with MCH principles, as we do not believe that it is in the students' best interests. In order to evaluate and track student progress, we may use tools such as:

- Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA): a short formal assessment of the student's reading level, which is conducted by the teacher. Our teachers are specifically trained and experienced in administering DRAs.

- Computerized adaptive assessments (examples may include: Readworks, Scholastic Reading Inventory, Zearn)
- Weekly spelling test
- Regular graded assignments
- Unit tests

All tests, assessments, and evaluations used by MCH teachers will follow these general principles:

- Tests are administered in a low-stress manner, treated as a routine part of learning and checking progress
- Tests are only administered if they will provide useful information to the teacher, student, and parents
- Extensive review, test preparation, and “teaching for the test” are not permitted

MCH Elementary students will receive a report card three times per year. Parent conferences are scheduled in February of each year. If necessary, parents or the teacher may request a conference at any time.

10 Parent Involvement

MCH is fortunate to have a wonderful community of involved parents who help support our school. We have a Parent Committee who support our teachers and programming. We are grateful for the many parents (and grandparents!) who volunteer in the classroom and we welcome you to visit the school. In normal years, we encourage parent participation in some of the ways described below. Unfortunately, due to COVID, we have to temporarily limit parent participation.

- Read a book to our students during group time
- Chaperone children on field trips
- Eat lunch with your student
- Volunteer at our parties and special events
- Share with the class about your job, special talents, or interests

To arrange a visit, simply contact the Director by phone or email to set a time.

11 Policy on Non-Discrimination

Montessori Children’s House does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national and ethnic origin, or any other protected class when enrolling students, hiring staff, and administering its school policies.

12 Admissions and Registration

MCH admits students ages 2 ½ years through 5 in our preschool class. There are a limited number of spaces available for 2 ½ year olds, in order to maintain an appropriate teacher ratio for these younger students. **In order to be admitted, all MCH students must be potty trained (able to use the toilet independently).**

In order to be admitted into our Kindergarten class, children must be 5 years old by September 30th. In exceptional cases, if both the MCH Director and the student’s parents agree (in writing) that the

student's social, emotional, and academic needs are best met by being included in the Kindergarten class, a 4 year old may be admitted. MCH admits elementary age students in grades 1 – 5.

Registration for the school year begins each May. Current students, returning students, former MCH students, and siblings of current MCH families are given first priority in registration before enrollment is open to new families. **A non-refundable deposit of \$100 is required to secure your child's spot.** In addition, the following enrollment forms must be completed and returned to the Director to complete your child's enrollment:

- Parent Handbook Agreement
- Annual Registration Form
- Emergency Medical Authorization
- Advertising Permission Form
- Field Trip Permission Form
- Virginia School Entrance Health Form (New Students and Kindergarteners only)
- New Student Enrollment Form (New Students only)
- Verification of Identity by Original Birth Certificate or Passport (New Students only)

MCH must have records of your child's immunizations before he or she may begin attending MCH. All new students must return their completed physical (Virginia School Entrance Health Form) within 30 days of their start date. All children entering Kindergarten must have immunizations updated and a new physical is required. If your child does not receive immunizations, please inform us as we have an exemption form that must be completed before the child can begin school.

13 Contact Information

MCH needs to be able to contact you with regular information about your child, as well as in emergency situations. Please let us know as soon as possible if you change your:

- Email address
- Cell phone number
- Home phone number
- Home address
- Work address
- Work phone number
- Physician or dentist
- Emergency contact (authorized people or their contact numbers)

14 Clothing Guidelines

Children are encouraged to wear comfortable play clothes, as we spend a lot of time moving and playing outside. **Preschoolers should wear elastic waistband pants.** Snaps, belts, and jumpsuits can be a struggle for children using the bathroom and may cause them to have an accident. **Please print your child's name on all removable clothing,** such as coats and jackets, mittens/gloves, scarves, and hats. Unmarked clothing and items left at school will be placed into the lost-and-found box in the lobby. At the end of the school year, unclaimed items in the lost-and-found will be donated.

We ask that children do not wear jewelry to school, as it can catch, snag, break, and otherwise cause a distraction in class.

Shoes should be easy for the student to put on and take off himself (shoes with laces and ties are not recommended) and have a **rubber sole and closed toes** (tennis shoes, Crocs, etc.). Please do not send your child to school with tall boots, high heels, or other shoes that are difficult to run in. When playing outside or participating in creative movement, these shoes may cause your child to trip or be uncomfortable.

At the beginning of the school year, we will ask parents to send in **one complete outfit in a labeled ziplock bag** to keep at school. Please include socks, underwear, pants, and shirt. Students will change into these clothes if they have an accident, spill a drink, etc.

All MCH students will receive a **lime green field trip shirt** when they join MCH. Students should wear this shirt on every field trip day. If the weather is chilly, please wear the field trip shirt over top of another warmer shirt. These shirts help our teachers and chaperones spot our children easily.

15 Absences

Please notify the school if your child will be absent. You can notify the Director by email, or call the school at (757) 495-1776.

16 Health Policies

MCH does not have a nurse present or on call at our facility. Staff at MCH have had CPR, First Aid, and Daily Health Observation training. MCH staff who are allowed to administer medication have had Emergency Medication Administration Training (eMAT).

16.1 Exclusion and Communicable Diseases

Please notify the Director if your child has seen the doctor for an illness or been exposed to any contagious disease. This information will be treated as strictly confidential (except to the extent that we are required to report to the Virginia Department of Health or Virginia Department of Social Services), and we will post a notice that there has been a reported case so that all parents may be on the lookout for symptoms.

For the health and safety of all students, MCH must follow all Virginia policies and procedures about excluding sick children. **Children sent home from school may not return the following day unless accompanied by a physician or nurse practitioner's note stating that they are not contagious and are well enough to attend school.**

MCH staff conduct a daily health observation check for all children, as required by the Commonwealth of Virginia. If MCH staff note any of the following signs or symptoms, you will be notified to come pick up your child. **Keep your child home from school if he or she has any of the following:**

- A fever (temperature of 100.4°F or higher) within the past 24 hours (the child may return to school after being 24 hours fever free **without the use of Motrin, Tylenol, or any other fever-reducing medication**)
- Vomiting within the past 24 hours
- Diarrhea within the past 24 hours

- Heavy, discolored nasal discharge
- An undiagnosed rash, sore throat, or stomach ache
- Difficulty breathing/labored breathing
- Is taking an antibiotic medication and has been on it for fewer than 24 hours
- Head lice or nits (MCH has a strict no nits policy)

In addition, **please keep your child home if he or she has symptoms of any of the following, which require a doctor's note prior to returning to school:**

- 2019 Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Chickenpox
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Fifth Disease
- German measles (Rubella)
- Measles (Rubeola, Red Measles)
- Hepatitis A
- Impetigo
- Infectious Mononucleosis
- Meningitis
- Mumps
- Pinworms
- Ringworm
- Scabies
- Tuberculosis
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

16.2 Illnesses Occurring at MCH

If your child becomes ill at school or develops symptoms of an illness, MCH staff will isolate the child from the other students and promptly contact the parent(s) or guardians according to the contact information provided.

MCH policy is that students who become ill or symptomatic at school should be picked up by parent(s), guardian(s), or another adult on the student's Authorized Pick Up list within 1 hour of notification.

If we cannot reach you and the staff believe that your child needs to be seen by a doctor, we will call the physician's office that is listed on your enrollment form for advice and contact your emergency contacts.

In the case of an illness that requires immediate medical attention, MCH staff will call 911 first, and then the family and/or emergency contacts.

Children sent home from school may not return to school the following day unless accompanied with a physician or nurse practitioner's note stating that they are not contagious and are well enough to attend school.

16.3 Injuries Occurring at MCH

Bumps, scrapes and any other minor injuries, accidents, or incidents will be treated by MCH staff as required (for example, by applying a bandaid or ice pack) and documented on an Accident/Incident Report Form. Parents will be notified and receive a copy of the Accident/Incident Form at student pick up.

In the case of a more significant injury, MCH will contact the parent(s) or guardians(s) according to the contact information that you provide. MCH staff will explain what happened and what first aid attention was administered. You may be asked to pick up your child. If we cannot reach you and the staff believe that your child needs to be seen by a doctor, we will call the physician's office that is listed on your enrollment form for advice and contact your emergency contacts.

In the case of a major injury, MCH staff will call 911 first, and then the family and/or emergency contacts.

16.4 Medication Administration

The only medications that MCH administers are epinephrine auto injections (EpiPen), albuterol inhalers, and insulin supplied by an insulin pump. If your child requires one of these medications, you will need to obtain a Medication Authorization Form and have it signed by your child's physician. The form must include the dose of medicine, when it is to be given, and any symptoms that may accompany the use of the medication. These medications must be in the original container and properly labeled. If your child requires insulin, you will need to provide a completed Diabetes Care Plan and personally train the designated MCH staff member on the plan as well as the insulin pump, blood glucose monitor, glucagon administration, and all other aspects of the student's care.

MCH does not have a nurse present or on call at our facility. Staff at MCH have had CPR, First Aid, and Daily Health Observation training. MCH staff who are allowed to administer medication have had Emergency Medication Administration Training (eMAT). If any students with diabetes are present, a staff member with care plan and MAT Diabetes training will be present. If any medications are administered by MCH due to the student's medical emergency, we will notify parent(s) and/or guardians according to the contact information you provide, as soon as possible after calling 911.

If you have given your child any medication prior to coming to school, please notify the Director. This is for your child's safety.

Please do not send any medication to school with your child. Please note that **cough drops, chapstick, lotions, and lip gloss may be considered medication** by Virginia Department of Social Services. It is a violation of licensing standards for children to have access to these items or anything marked, "Keep out of reach of children." If in doubt, keep it home or ask the Director! Thank you for helping us keep our students safe.

16.5 Sunscreen

Please apply sunscreen prior to attending school. MCH staff will reapply sunscreen only in the afternoon (prior to afternoon outside recess), and only if the parent has filled out the Sunscreen Consent Form, with the information required by Virginia Department of Social Services.

16.6 Insect Repellant

Insect repellant should not be needed. MCH is regularly treated by a professional mosquito and pest service company. MCH staff will not apply topical insect repellant.

17 Arrival and Dismissal

17.1 Parking Lot

Parents and guardians are solely responsible for the safety of MCH students and siblings or other children during drop off and pick up. An **adult over the age of 18** must personally escort the MCH student through the parking lot during drop off and pick up times.

As we are requesting that you drop off and pick up at the door during COVID, please feel free to pull up in front of the door for arrival and dismissal. Per Virginia State law, you do have the right to drop off and pick up inside the building (lobby), so please let the teacher at the door know if you will be dropping off inside. The teacher will perform a COVID screening, and a mask is required unless you are unable to wear one due to medical reasons or sincerely held religious beliefs.

17.2 Arrival

Please do your best to arrive before 8:30am, so that your child can attend group and to help us minimize interruptions as we begin our morning work cycle. We ask that parents say a brief goodbye in at the door or in the lobby.

Parents must wait to leave until your child has greeted the teacher and the COVID screening is completed. Please do not leave your child unattended at the door.

17.3 Difficulty Separating from Parents

Starting at a new school can be stressful for children and parents too! We understand that drop off can be difficult, and here are some tips from our experience of what helps children the most:

- Keep your goodbyes short. (A longer goodbye can increase the child's stress and resistance to joining the class.)
- Remember that it won't last forever! Once they join the class, our students almost always settle in happily within a few short minutes.
- Talk with your child about his or her favorite friends, lessons, and activities at school.
- Talk to your child's teacher about bringing in a favorite book to read first thing in the morning.
- Consider a slightly earlier drop off time if you can. The lobby is generally quieter, and we are often outside playing. Your child will want to join in!

17.4 Dismissal

The front entry door will be locked during pick up times. Please ring the bell and the teacher will bring your child to you, or let her know that you would like to be admitted to the lobby and wait for your child.

17.5 Child Pick Up Authorization

MCH students will only be released to adults over the age of 18 who are listed as authorized for pick up on the student's registration form. If we do not recognize the person picking up your child, we will request to see photo identification to verify identity and authorization for pick up.

If your child has a play date scheduled, or will be picked up by an adult who is not listed on the student registration form, you must provide a signed and dated note to the Director that provides temporary authorization for the person to pick up your child. Phone authorizations are not accepted.

If there is a court order concerning custody of your child, MCH must have a copy for our files. MCH cannot withhold a child from a biological parent or legal guardian, or prevent them from attending school functions, unless we receive a copy of a court order that clearly states that this person is not authorized to be with the child.

17.6 Late Pick-Up

If you will be late picking up your child, please call the school at (757) 495-1776 to notify us. Your child may be upset if other parents are arriving and you have not arrived yet. Your little one will feel much better knowing that you are on the way. If you are more than 15 minutes late, we will attempt to contact you. If you are more than 30 minutes late, we will attempt to contact your designated emergency contacts.

Please keep in mind that parents arriving late may cause our staff to need to change their work schedule in order to supervise your child longer than planned. This is especially true for 6:00pm pick-up.

We reserve the right to bill for repeated late pick-ups at a rate of \$1 per minute over your scheduled pick up time.

18 Food

18.1 Food Allergies

For the safety of your child, please notify us in writing as soon as you become aware of any food allergy or diet restrictions. Virginia law requires us to have an allergy plan to help keep your child safe. A copy of the snack menu is posted in the lobby; if any of the snacks are unsafe for your child, you may be asked to provide an alternative snack. Please discuss any concerns with the Director.

18.2 Snacks

During the school year, MCH provides snacks to preschoolers and kindergarteners daily during the morning and afternoon sessions. Students always have access to water, and juice is offered no more than once per day during snack. As part of Practical Life, the children are given lessons on how to properly prepare and eat their snacks.

18.3 Lunch

Students who stay for lunch must pack their lunches. All lunch boxes or bag lunches must have the child's name plainly marked on the outside. We ask that you please do not pack candy or soda.

Lunch boxes will be kept on the wooden shelves in the Practical Life room. Please include an ice pack in the lunch box if required. If a child forgets his or her lunch box at school, all perishable foods and open food items will be thrown out at the end of the day.

19 Birthday Parties

MCH staff are happy to work with you to arrange a day for your child to celebrate. We ask that you do not bring in food items for the students, but some families choose to bring in stickers/pencils, etc., or donate a book to the class.

In preschool, we celebrate birthdays with a “Birthday Walk” during group time. The students sing a special song and the birthday child is allowed to pick a prize from our treasure box. Parents are encouraged to attend, and bring a few photos of the special birthday boy or girl!

If you would like to distribute birthday party invitations, please let the Director know, and we are happy to help you.

Kindergarten and Elementary classes may celebrate birthdays differently depending on their schedule, so please contact their teacher directly for information.

20 Field Trips (*Temporarily Suspended due to COVID)

All part-time MCH students are welcome and encouraged to attend field trips even if it is not on their designated day of attendance. However, if it is not your child’s normal day of attendance, you will be asked to pick up your child upon our return to MCH. Please check with the Director if you would like to bring a sibling or another family member; due to group size limitations, we cannot always accommodate all requests.

All MCH staff participate in field trips. If you do not wish for your child to participate in the field trips, please notify the Director and keep your child at home or arrange for other child care. No staff will be present at the MCH building during field trips, and no students are allowed on the MCH premises during these times.

Field trip transportation is contracted through a school transportation service. Our students love to ride the bus! Parents are welcome to attend field trips, and we often have some spaces available if you would like to ride along on the bus. Because space is limited, we ask that you notify us ahead of time if you would like to ride with us. Parents may also drive separately and meet us at the location. **However, for student safety, if you will be taking your child to or from the field trip, you must notify a staff member and sign your child out from the attendance sheet.** We double-check student attendance upon departure from the school, arrival and departure from the field trip, and arrival back at MCH, so we must have this information from parents in advance.

We also take Kindergarten and Elementary students on a walking field trip to purchase a Slurpee at the nearby 7-11, and practice their money-counting skills. In addition, we take the students on occasional nature walks on the city property adjacent to school.

Students attending field trips must wear their **lime green MCH field trip shirt.**

21 Transportation (*Temporarily Suspended due to COVID)

As described above in Section 20, MCH provides field trip transportation through a school transportation service. MCH does not provide any other transportation. Parents/guardians are responsible for providing all other transportation to and from MCH.

22 Tuition & Fees

Tuition for the school year may be paid in full in September, or may be paid in 9.5 monthly payments during the school year (September – mid June). If tuition for the school year is paid in full in September, a **5% discount will apply**. If a student has pre-paid tuition for the entire school year (September – mid June), no refunds will be given if the student withdraws prior to the last scheduled day of school.

Tuition is due by the 5th of every month. A late fee of \$25 will be assessed for payments after the 5th.

Tuition is not pro-rated for student illnesses, holidays, MCH closings due to weather, early pick-ups, family vacations, or other student absences. In the event of an unplanned MCH closure lasting more than two weeks (10 school days), tuition will be pro-rated for preschool students. Elementary and Kindergarten classes will continue via distance learning for any closure 5 consecutive days or longer, and distance learning tuition will be \$275/month for Kindergarten and \$325/month for Elementary. Kindergarten and Elementary students must continue to attend via distance learning, or will be considered to have withdrawn from MCH. Students who withdraw will be marked absent and may be unable to complete their grade. Supply fees for all classes will not be refunded or pro-rated for unplanned closures, as supplies are typically purchased in advance.

Families who wish to change their afternoon pick-up time must inform the Director in writing with at least two weeks notice. MCH does its best to accommodate schedule change requests, but changes are subject to space availability and are not guaranteed.

Families who join MCH after September will pay a pro-rated amount of tuition based on their student's date of enrollment.

Families who enroll their students in MCH for the school year are committing to paying tuition and supply fees for the entire school year (September – mid June). This is due to MCH having a limited number of spaces for students. Families who withdraw from MCH prior to the end of the school year must withdraw in accordance with our Withdrawal Policy in section 27 below. The following conditions will apply:

- If your family is relocating during the school year, please inform MCH as soon as possible.
- Tuition and supply fees for the school year will be pro-rated if the family has provided written notice 30 days in advance as outlined in the MCH Withdrawal Policy, and the withdrawal occurs **prior to March 15** of the school year.
- If a family withdraws an MCH student on or after March 15 of a school year, tuition and supply fees will be due for the remainder of the school year (through mid June).
- Summer session tuition and supply fees will be pro-rated if the family has provided written notice 30 days in advance as outlined in the MCH Withdrawal Policy.

Summer tuition is paid by the 5th of each month. Families may choose to enroll for the entire 2.5 month session, or may contact the Director to see if spots are available for partial summer enrollment. If the Director agrees in advance to enroll a student for part of the summer session, then summer tuition and supply fee will be pro-rated. The Director's decision to enroll a student for a partial summer session will be based on space availability, and priority will be given to current students, returning students, and siblings of current or former MCH students.

22.1 Payment Type

Please make all checks payable to MCH. Checks may be left in the box in the lobby. MCH accepts Visa and MasterCard credit cards and debit cards; however, **please note that there is a 3% payment processing fee added to your total if you choose to pay by credit or debit card.**

22.2 Returned Checks & Non-Payment

A \$25 fee will be charged for returned checks. Should MCH receive two returned checks for insufficient funds, MCH retains the right to refuse any further payment by check.

If you are unable to make tuition payments and your account is in arrears, MCH reserves the right to immediately withdraw your child. Your child will not be allowed to return to school until your account is paid in full.

A delinquent account will be turned over to collections and additional fees will apply.

22.3 Payments to Contractors for Extracurriculars (*Temporarily Suspended due to COVID)

If your child participates in any of the extracurricular activities offered at MCH, payments should be made directly to the company conducting the activity. There are folders in the lobby for each activity where you may leave a check, and most of the providers offer online payment options.

22.4 Tuition Rates & Supply Fees

MCH offers free early morning care (7:30am – 8:30am) for all enrolled students.

In addition to monthly tuition, there are supply fees which cover the cost of student materials, snacks, parties, and transportation for field trips. Supply fees are due in October and February for the school year. Summer session supply fee is due in June for those students who participate.

2021 – 2022 Tuition and Supply Fees are as follows:

| Preschool 2 Days Per Week | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Hours | Tuition (monthly) | Supply Fees (Oct & Feb) |
| 7:30am – 12:45pm (after lunch) | \$274 | \$140 |
| 7:30am – 3:00pm | \$308 | \$160 |
| 7:30am – 4:00pm | \$316 | \$160 |
| 7:30am – 5:00pm | \$327 | \$160 |
| 7:30am – 6:00pm | \$344 | \$160 |

| Preschool 3 Days Per Week | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Hours | Tuition (monthly) | Supply Fees (Oct & Feb) |
| 7:30am – 12pm | \$339 | \$160 |
| 7:30am – 12:45pm (after lunch) | \$366 | \$160 |
| 7:30am – 3:00pm | \$411 | \$180 |
| 7:30am – 4:00pm | \$422 | \$180 |
| 7:30am – 5:00pm | \$436 | \$180 |
| 7:30am – 6:00pm | \$460 | \$180 |

| Preschool 5 Days Per Week | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Hours | Tuition (monthly) | Supply Fees (Oct & Feb) |
| 7:30am – 12pm | \$393 | \$180 |
| 7:30am – 12:45pm (after lunch) | \$422 | \$180 |
| 7:30am – 3:00pm | \$674 | \$240 |
| 7:30am – 4:00pm | \$702 | \$240 |
| 7:30am – 5:00pm | \$738 | \$240 |
| 7:30am – 6:00pm | \$758 | \$240 |

| Kindergarten | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Hours | Tuition (monthly) | Supply Fees (Oct & Feb) |
| 7:30am – 12:45pm (after lunch) | \$478 | \$240 |
| 7:30am – 3:00pm | \$674 | \$240 |
| 7:30am – 4:00pm | \$702 | \$240 |
| 7:30am – 5:00pm | \$738 | \$240 |
| 7:30am – 6:00pm | \$758 | \$240 |

| Elementary | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Hours | Tuition (monthly) | Supply Fees (Oct & Feb) |
| 7:30am – 3:00pm | \$747 | \$240 |
| 7:30am – 4:00pm | \$759 | \$240 |
| 7:30am – 5:00pm | \$772 | \$240 |
| 7:30am – 6:00pm | \$794 | \$240 |

| Summer Session | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | 3 Days Per Week | 5 Days Per Week | |
| Hours | Tuition (monthly) | Tuition (monthly) | Supply Fee (June) |
| 7:30am – 12pm | \$339 | \$393 | \$200 |
| 7:30am – 12:45pm (after lunch) | \$366 | \$422 | \$200 |
| 7:30am – 3:00pm | \$411 | \$674 | \$200 |
| 7:30am – 4:00pm | \$422 | \$702 | \$200 |
| 7:30am – 5:00pm | \$436 | \$738 | \$200 |
| 7:30am – 6:00pm | \$460 | \$758 | \$200 |

23 Staff Supervision

While your child is in the classroom, a staff member will be in their work area. If a teacher needs to be out of the area for a few minutes, that staff member will notify another teacher to watch over the area. MCH maintains teacher ratios of 1:8 for children 2.5 and younger and 1:10 for preschool students age 3 – 5. Our Kindergarten and Elementary classes are typically a 1:14 or better ratio; the teacher ratio for these classes never exceed 1:18.

24 Mandatory Reporting, Abuse & Neglect

MCH is committed to student safety. We are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

25 MCH Discipline Policy

At MCH we believe that positive discipline develops your child's knowledge of appropriately dealing with a difficult situation while keeping his or her self-esteem intact. We use constructive techniques in disciplining students, such as positive reinforcement, redirection, and logical consequences. MCH does not allow the use of physical punishment or berating a child.

During your child's orientation, they are taught the ground rules of the classrooms. Teachers clearly and consistently enforce these boundaries and expectations for student behavior. Students learn to:

- Walk in the classroom
- Talk using an "inside voice"
- Work only on the lessons that they have been introduced to by a teacher
- Treat everyone kindly and use gentle hands

During recess, children play freely while following the playground rules:

- Walk on the concrete patio
- No pushing, hitting or kicking, etc.
- Watch out for others
- Have a great time!

When a child forgets a rule, our teachers calmly remind the student of the rule and ask the student to choose a different appropriate action. Most misbehavior is short-lived, and MCH teachers follow through with the critical step of praising children when they are behaving well. If for some reason a student becomes aggressive (shoving, hitting, or hurting others) the student will stay with a teacher until he or she is ready to work or play among the rest of the children calmly.

26 Partnering with Parents

26.1 Support from Parents

MCH is committed to providing the best possible experience for their children. We ask that you help us set your children up for success by:

- Trying to get enough sleep (National Sleep Foundation recommends 10-13 hours for preschoolers, 9-11 hours for school age children)
- Getting lots of exercise
- Attending our free early morning care (7:30am – 8:30am) to give the children a chance to get their energy out, socialize, and mentally prepare for the day ahead
- Letting us know of any unsettling events in your child's life
- Telling us right away if you have any concerns

These basic steps help us prevent a lot of behavioral problems from ever occurring.

26.2 Informing MCH of Home Changes

If unusual or unsettling changes occur in your family life, please inform the school. **All information will be regarded as confidential.**

Some common causes for student distress may include:

- A parent is away from home for a trip or deployment
- Illness of family member
- A family has a new baby
- The death of a loved one or pet
- Parents separate or divorce
- Family is preparing to move

These circumstances can be very upsetting for children, and sometimes cause them to act quite differently at school. When we know about stressful situations, we can be better prepared to help your child through this difficult time.

26.3 Addressing Behavioral Challenges

If our students struggle with specific behaviors, MCH teachers and parents partner together to help find effective solutions. We are committed to making an individualized plan to help your child succeed. As we work together, you can expect the following from us, and we request the same:

- Make time to meet in person and discuss the student's challenges and needs
- Keep communication respectful, even if we disagree
- Be open to trying alternative solutions
- Seek professional expertise to help us learn more about the child's needs

26.4 Conditions for Disenrollment

In exceptional circumstances, if MCH determines that it is necessary for the safety, well-being, or best interests of a student or his or her classmates, parents may be asked to find an alternative school for their child. Each of the following may be conditions for disenrollment of a student at MCH:

- The child is consistently unable to use the restroom independently.
- The repeated behavior of the child jeopardizes the physical safety of the child, his or her classmates, or the adults in the classroom.
- Possible interventions and supports aimed at providing a physically safe environment for the child, his or her classmates, or the adults in the classroom have been exhausted.
- Continued enrollment fails to meet the mental health and/or social-emotional needs of the child.
- A parent or guardian of an MCH student is verbally aggressive, abusive, or threatening toward MCH staff, students, or parents, or otherwise creates inappropriate or unsafe conditions.
- Nonpayment of tuition, supply or any other fee to MCH.

27 Withdrawal from MCH

If you choose to withdraw your student from MCH, you must notify the Director in writing at least 30 days prior to withdrawal. If you do not provide 30 days advance notice in writing, you will be responsible

for the following month's tuition and any unpaid tuition, supply fees, or other fees prior to the notice. As described in Section 21, if your student is registered for the school year and you withdraw after March 15, you will be responsible for tuition and supply fees for the remainder of the school year (through mid June). A delinquent account will be turned over to collections and additional fees will apply.

28 Emergency Plans, Fire and Weather Safety

MCH's security system is equipped with a fire emergency system. During monthly fire drills, the children are trained to evacuate the building using the nearest door. They are taught to move quickly, but not to run. Children are escorted to the designated evacuation location (parking lot across the cul-de-sac). In the event of an actual fire or other emergency, parents will be notified as quickly as possible to pick up their child(ren).

In the case of a tornado warning, all children and staff follow our shelter-in-place plan, which we practice with students at least twice yearly.

In the unlikely event that an emergency requires MCH to evacuate the building and the Director or designee determine that it is not safe to remain in the designated evacuation location (parking lot across the cul-de-sac), we will escort the children to the Larkspur Middle School to seek shelter. Larkspur Middle School can be accessed by a short path behind the city pond that is located next to MCH. Parents will be notified to pick up their children as soon as possible after the student safety is assured.

Parents can assist us by making sure that MCH has all of your current contact information. If we are unable to reach you, we will contact the emergency contact people that you have designated on your Registration Form. At least two MCH staff will remain with the students at all times until the parent/guardian or authorized pick up person arrives.

29 Short-term Closures Due to Inclement Weather or Other Emergencies

MCH does **not** always follow Virginia Beach City Public Schools' (VBCPS) decisions on inclement weather. VBCPS may close due to conditions in a part of the city that do not affect safety in our area.

If inclement weather is expected, WVEC channel 13 will air MCH's decision. We also notify MCH families via email, and post on our Facebook page. If we must close early due to inclement weather, parents will be notified as quickly as possible to pick up their child(ren). Parents can assist us by making sure that MCH has all of your current contact information. If we are unable to reach you, we will contact the emergency contact people that you have designated on your Registration Form. At least two MCH staff will remain with the students at all times until the parent/guardian or authorized pick up person arrives.

If MCH expects to be closed for one week (5 school days or more), Kindergarten and Elementary families should check with the Director regarding the plan to make up missed school days. In order to comply with Virginia's compulsory education laws, days missed for closure may need to be made up via distance learning, cancellation of planned breaks, or extension of the school year.

30 Extended Closures Due to Weather, Public Health or Other Emergencies

In the event of an extended unplanned closure due to a public health, weather or other emergency, MCH will notify families via email and post on our Facebook page. If we must close early while school is in session, we will follow the emergency notification procedures described in section 28.

In the event of an unplanned MCH closure one week (5 consecutive school days) or longer, Elementary and Kindergarten classes will continue via distance learning. Distance learning may include: individually-prepared lesson packets to be completed at home, asynchronous learning with pre-recorded videos and exercises, and/or live, synchronous teaching via videoconference. To satisfy Virginia's compulsory education laws, Kindergarten and Elementary students must continue to attend via distance learning, or will be marked absent and may be unable to complete their grade.

Preschool students will receive learning support and materials in order to support their continuity of learning.

Tuition and supply fees will be due as described in section 22.

31 Questions

If you have any questions about the Parent Handbook or would like to discuss anything about MCH policies, please contact the Director. MCH would be happy to arrange a time to answer your questions or concerns.



Montessori Children's House

Parent Agreement

Student Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Montessori Children's House policies were discussed with me. I have received a copy of and reviewed the entire Montessori Children's House Parent Handbook. I understand that the policies within the Parent Handbook are part of my contractual agreement with Montessori Children's House, and I agree to follow these policies. I understand that I will be notified of any changes to these policies.

I agree to have my child picked up as soon as possible if notified by MCH that he or she becomes ill.

I authorize MCH to obtain immediate medical care if any emergency occurs when the parent or guardian cannot be located immediately.

I agree to inform MCH within 24 hours or the next business day after my child or any member of his or her immediate household has developed a reportable communicable disease, as defined by the State Board of Health, except for life threatening diseases which must be reported immediately.

I understand that my child could experience illness or injury while attending MCH. In consideration of the advantages of attending Montessori Children's House, I agree to release and hold harmless Montessori Children's House, its agents, officers, directors, employees and all volunteer chaperones, from any and all claims, including negligence, arising from or relating to my child's participation in all school activities and summer programming. This release and agreement to hold harmless do not apply for intentional misconduct or gross negligence.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date