



**dubuque montessori school**

a parent-run, not-for-profit corporation  
2605 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Dubuque, IA 52001  
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# Parent Handbook

## Mission Statement

The mission of Dubuque Montessori School is to bring together children of all social, economic and cultural backgrounds in an atmosphere that encourages children to develop to their fullest potential, using proven, child-directed Montessori methods and materials in a warm, nurturing, safe and loving environment.

Updated September 2011

## **Unlimited Access**

In accordance with the Department of Human Services Licensing Standards Section 109.5, all parents shall be afforded unlimited access to their children and to the provider caring for their children during the center's hours of operation or whenever their children are in the care of a provider, unless parental contact is prohibited by court order. The provider shall inform all parents of this policy in writing at the time the child is admitted to the center.

Dubuque Montessori School will partner with the Multi Cultural Center in Dubuque to provide services to all families who do not speak or read the English language in cases where we are unable to partner families with other families from within our school.

## **Smoke Free Environment**



Young children are especially vulnerable to the health risks from second hand smoke. Pursuant to the Iowa Smoke Free Air Act, Dubuque Montessori School provides a Smoke Free Environment. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the grounds either indoors or outdoors.

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## Visitors Access Policy

The DMS Board encourages parents and other citizens to visit DMS and believes that there are many potential benefits that can result from increased interaction with the public. At the same time, the school has a legitimate interest in avoiding disruption to the educational process and protecting the safety and welfare of the children and staff. A balance must be achieved between the potential benefits and risks associated with the presence of visitors in our building. Limitations may be placed on visitors **who are not parents** or guardians of children who attend DMS.

The director shall have the authority to determine which visits are to be permitted as well as the discretion to set any appropriate conditions on the nature and extent of such visits. In exercising the director's discretion, the director shall consider the purpose of the visit, the impact of the visitor's presence and the relationship of any visitor to the children. School personnel shall seek to assure that visitors are courteously received and that sincere efforts are made to provide them with information as may be needed to foster a cooperative relationship between home, school and community.

## Rules for Visitors to School

General Requirements for Visitors to Schools:

- A visitor is defined as any person seeking to enter the school building who is not an employee or registered child of DMS.
- All visitors shall report to the school office when arriving or leaving the school and shall wear a DMS visitors badge.
- Whenever possible, visitors should obtain authorization from the director in advance. At the discretion of the director, such prior authorization may be required.
- All school visitors must comply at all times with Board policies, administrative rules and school regulations.

Exceptions to visitor requirements:

Parents or citizens who have been invited to visit school as part of a scheduled open house, special event, scheduled performance by a class, during drop off and/or pick up procedures or other adult participants in organized and school approved activities are exempt from requirements above.

*Visitors to Classrooms or Other Instructional Areas:*

- Access to classrooms or other instructional areas of the school may be restricted upon the recommendation of the teacher in charge or as otherwise deemed necessary by the director.
- Because classrooms and other instructional areas are the most vulnerable to disruption, specific conditions may be imposed upon visitors, including but not limited to:
  - *requiring visitor be chaperoned*
  - *limiting the duration of the visit to particular times or length of time*
  - *limiting the activities of the visitor to a particular purpose(s)*
- Visitors wishing to conference with teachers or director during the course of the school day are encouraged to make arrangements in advance when ever possible.

## Visitors Access Policy, Continued

### *Supervision and Monitoring of Visitors:*

- All visitors and parents/guardians (visitors), whether or not that visitor has been cleared for involvement with the children through the formal record check process and finger printing (as outlined in the Department of Human Services rule 109.6(6) and pursuant to Iowa law) shall be supervised and monitored by the staff, teachers, or the director during the extent of the visit to DMS. Supervision is defined as having general oversight over, direction of, and regulation of the visitor's activities and interaction with the children at DMS. Monitoring is defined as watching and observing the visitor's activities and interaction with the children at DMS. Each classroom instructor or assistant shall be responsible for supervising or monitoring visitors in their classroom. All staff is responsible for supervising and monitoring visitors in their general vicinity, including the visitor activities en route to the classroom.
- Special Situations: Both parents and guardians of a student have rights to visit the child's school and have unlimited access to their child unless a court order exists restricting such contact.
- Student Teachers: Student teachers are exempt from the aforementioned provisions because they are subject to record checks and background clearance from their supervising institute.

The DMS director has the authority to exclude from the school premises any person who disrupts or who appears likely to become a disruption to the educational program. Any such individual shall be directed to leave the school premises immediately and law enforcement authorities shall be called if necessary.

## **Dubuque Montessori School**

Since 1968 Dubuque Montessori School has provided thousands of children with the learning tools needed to build a solid foundation for future growth, development and success. DMS is a parent-run, not-for-profit organization composed of parents of children attending Dubuque Montessori School. Parents elect their own representatives to the board of directors, which in conjunction with the Montessori trained administrator and teaching staff make important decisions regarding the school.

Board meetings are held monthly and are open to all. Time and date of up-coming meetings are posted in the monthly newsletter and are typically held the third Monday of the month at 6:45 p.m. and are held at the school.

## **Dubuque Montessori School Mission**

The mission of Dubuque Montessori School is to bring together children of all social, economic and cultural backgrounds in an atmosphere that encourages children to develop to their fullest potential, using proven, child-directed Montessori methods and materials in a warm, nurturing, safe and loving environment.

## **Affiliation and Licensing**

Dubuque Montessori School is a licensed preschool and childcare center through the Iowa Department of Human Services. Dubuque Montessori School is a member of the Dubuque Child Care Alliance, the Montessori Institute of America and the National Child Care Association.

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Dubuque Montessori School, Inc. admits children of any gender, race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to children at school. It does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarships and other school administered programs. This notice is included pursuant to the regulations of the Internal Revenue Service relating to tax-exempt entities.

## Montessori Philosophy

Dubuque Montessori School, Inc. (further referred to as DMS) was founded on the principals of Dr. Maria Montessori-- physician and educator. She advocated the theory that children develop according to natural law and that they have special periods of sensitivity to aid them in the development of life. She urged that these sensitive periods be utilized to the fullest by giving the children the opportunity to develop their capabilities within a carefully prepared environment. She warned that no amount of good teaching would help the child if given at the wrong time. Every sensitive period of development prepares them for the next and if children are properly prepared in one period, they are more able to fully develop their capabilities in later periods. This understanding of the child's development is the basis for the design of the Montessori materials, which are educational materials designed to provide the child with hands-on experiences with practical activities and cultural and academic concepts. Through generous contributions and continued fundraising efforts, Dubuque Montessori is very fortunate to have state-of-the-art Montessori materials in each of its classrooms.

Fundamental to all of Dr. Montessori's ideas is respect for the child and for their ability to learn. Montessori was unique in her view of the child as more than merely a yet-to-be grown adult. She taught us that...

*"We ought not to consider the child and the adult merely as successive phases in the individual's life. We ought rather to look upon them as two different forms of human life, going on at the same time and exerting upon one another a reciprocal influence."*

Just as the child is dependent upon the adult for protection and care, Montessori saw the adult as being dependent upon the child for hope for the future.

*"Humanity can hope for a solution to it's problems, the most urgent of which are those of peace and unity, only by turning its attention and energies to the discovery of the child and the development of the great potentiality of the human personality in the course of its construction."*

Dr. Montessori called her schools 'houses for children.' They are places designed with respect for the child. Their design is specific to the social and developmental needs of the child. The adults who build them must have a careful eye to "see through the child's eyes" and in the process of doing so appeal to the child's sense of order and beauty and to his physical capabilities. She saw education as a natural process, which develops spontaneously in the prepared environment. Dr. Montessori described her method as "an aid to life."

At Dubuque Montessori School, we are committed to the practical application of these ideas by providing an educational environment for the pre-school child. We are a community of families dedicated to the discovery of the child.

## Goals of Montessori Teaching

The teacher or directress, as she is referred, works with individual children, introduces materials and gives guidance. One of her primary tasks is careful observation of each child in order to determine his/her needs and to gain knowledge needed to prepare the environment to aid his growth. The method of teaching is indirect in that the directress neither imposes upon the child as in direct teaching nor abandons him as a non-directive permissive approach. Rather, the directress is constantly alert to the direction in which the child has indicated he wishes to go and she actively seeks ways to help him accomplish his goals.

The principal goals of Montessori learning are as follows:

- ❖ To respond to a child's intellectual interests so that he may develop to his full capacity within a scientifically prepared learning environment.
- ❖ To maintain respect for the individual child's learning ability and thus enable him from his earliest years to deal with the challenges of life and to develop a love of learning.
- ❖ To recognize that the most productive learning period in life is between birth and six years of age, and thus utilize the enormous flexibility of these learning years.
- ❖ To instill the value of self-education and to direct the child's creative energy into meaningful paths of learning.
- ❖ To encourage self-discipline, self-knowledge and independence, as well as enthusiasm for learning an organized approach to problem-solving and academic skills.

## Montessori Classroom

The child is free to move about the classroom at will, to talk to other children, to work with any equipment whose purpose he understands, or to ask the directress to introduce new material to him. He is not free to disturb other children at work or to abuse the equipment that is so important to his development.

A Montessori classroom is a prepared environment divided into the following areas:

The **Practical Life** area has two types of activities: those that teach the children to care for themselves and activities that teach the child to care for the environment. The direct aim of these activities is to teach the child order, concentration, coordination, and independence.

The **Sensorial** area contains materials, which help the child to develop discrimination and classification skills. These materials assist the natural process of the child's mind to receive impressions of the environment through the senses.

The **Mathematics** area introduces the child to quantity, then the symbols 1 - 10. The next step is teen and tens. By using beads and number cards the child learns the basis for the decimal system. It is a gradual process of working with many materials in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division that will lead to total abstraction.

The **Language** area is composed of specially designed materials, which assist the child in his natural development of writing and reading skills. They are broken down into components and distributed according to the natural powers of the child.

The **Science** area is closely related to all other areas in the classroom. Hands-on experiments will allow the children to observe and draw their own conclusions. The children will also delve into the study of animals: their habitats and their classifications, such as non-living, living, plants or animal, vertebrates and invertebrates.

The **Geography** area begins with the study of the globe with its land and water masses, continents, countries and cultures. Materials include the globe with color coded continents, maps, and clay models of land and water forms. Cultures are studied through pictures, foods, music and artifacts.

The **History** area provides a concrete presentation of the past and is accomplished through work with time lines relating to the child's own day and life as well as famous holidays or individuals, non-human and human time periods.

In addition to in-depth explorations and the various areas of the Montessori classroom, **Art, Music and Movement** are also offered daily. **Yoga, Spanish and Sign Language** are introduced a few times a week and can be practiced daily throughout the classroom.

## Anti-bias Education at Dubuque Montessori School

As we provide very well-rounded learning experiences, it is difficult to make most holidays meaningful for the young children we serve ages 2-6. Most holidays are religious and based on concepts that are beyond the young child's understanding. Within your family you have the opportunity to involve your child in the aspects of holidays you feel are in keeping with your personal family beliefs, values and traditions. We feel it is most effective for us to expose children to information and activities that you might not have the time or resources to facilitate as a family, therefore we have developed an anti-bias approach to educating our young children.

Because children live in a diverse and complex world, they interact daily with people different from themselves. By using an anti-bias approach, children can develop and strengthen their self and group identities, while interacting respectfully with others in a multicultural environment. The goal is to help children to become sensitive to issues of bias, race, age, physical or mental ability, etc., and to develop anti-bias skills.

The following is a list of the celebrations Dubuque Montessori School will be incorporating into our curriculum throughout the year:

1. September: World Peace Day.
2. October: Focus on autumn activities.
3. November: Focus on being thankful and giving.
4. December: Multicultural celebration - a "feastival" - provide foods from different cultures, a celebration of all. Focus on winter activities.
5. January: New Year and celebrate historical people.
6. February: Celebrate love, friendship, and random acts of kindness.  
Celebrate famous people (continued).
7. March: Celebrate reading month.
8. April: Earth month: flowers, spring, and new birth.
9. May: Promote grace and courtesy; end the year with a school-wide tea party.

Dubuque Montessori School's goal is to in an **age-appropriate way**, awaken and broaden a child's horizon through an anti-bias curriculum.

## **Programs**

### **Toddler Program**

Designed for two and very young threes, this program offers socialization and formal learning experiences in a fun and happy setting for the young child. It utilizes gross motor coordination activities, singing, stories, and presentations of Montessori Materials in the area of Practical Life, Sensorial and Pre-Mathematics. A smaller adult to child ratio allows optimum interaction in preparation for the Montessori primary Program.

### **Montessori Primary Program**

This program helps the child build a foundation for a life of creative learning. It is designed for the child three to six years of age, including kindergarten. The Montessori prepared environment is filled with a sequence of activities ranging from simple to complex, leading to the development of order, self-discipline, concentration, initiative, coordination and independence. The core curriculum areas of Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Math, History, Geography and Science are enhanced by activities in Art, Music and Movement.

### **Extended-Day Program**

The Extended-Day Program is designed for children and families who need a loving and stimulating environment beyond that of the designated class time. Children who join us for extended-day will have endless opportunities to delve into art, dramatic play, large motor activities, singing, movement stories and games, only to mention a few. Extended-Day is a home away from home and is available for all enrolled children. Hours are before class 7:30-9:00 and after class until 5:30. Hot lunch is served daily and is available for a minimal charge. Space is limited so please call to schedule your child. You will be billed weekly for the use of Extended-Day.

### **Entrance Requirements**

Children two to six years of age are accepted at Dubuque Montessori School without regard to ethnic, social or religious background. Children will be enrolled as openings are available. A waiting list is established and filled with preference given to siblings of children already in attendance at Dubuque Montessori and to children of optimal enrollment age (younger than four). This policy provides for continuity of enrollment which enhances each child's experience in a Montessori environment. Montessori is designed for cycles of three years. Children who attend the full cycle receive greater rewards than those attending only one.

## **Additional Entrance Requirements**

### **Tuition and Fees**

A non-refundable registration fee must accompany all registration contracts. The tuition for Dubuque Montessori School is an academic year fee which is pro-rated in nine installments with the first installment due at the time of registration. The last month's (May) tuition is due in September along with the annual supply fee. Monthly installments are due thereafter October through April, by the 5th of the month. A \$10.00 late charge is assessed on all overdue accounts.

For children beginning Montessori mid-year, Registration Contracts require the accompaniment of all fees as well as first and last month's tuition.

In an effort to continue to employ top professionals and reduce staff turnover, our staff is contracted based on full enrollment. For this reason, Dubuque Montessori School is unable to make tuition adjustments because of weather related school cancellations, child vacations and/or illness. We are also unable to refund May's tuition if a child withdraws mid-year.

### **Forms**

Upon admission to Dubuque Montessori School the following forms must be submitted in accordance with the Department of Human Services Licensing Standards before a child may begin.

- ❖ Registration Contract
- ❖ Parental Emergency Medical Consent Form
- ❖ Child History
- ❖ Student Medical Form-Completed and signed by a physician
- ❖ Iowa Department of Public Health Certificate of Immunization
- ❖ Parent/School Agreement
- ❖ Travel & Activity & Media Release Form
- ❖ Permission to Apply Sunscreen
- ❖ Child and Adult Food Care Program Application and Enrollment Form
- ❖ Signed statement acknowledging receipt of the Dubuque Montessori Parent Handbook

## **Orientation**

In Montessori schools all over the world, it has been found that a careful orientation period produces effective and long lasting adjustment for the Montessori Child. Typically, children new to Montessori attend class two days prior to the returning children in order to facilitate their adjustment to the Montessori environment

A parent orientation program is held early in the school year. The program includes the introduction of staff, review of policies and procedures and a discussion of the rights and responsibilities of parents and staff as well as an introduction to the Montessori materials and methodology.

## **Arrival and Dismissal**

Classroom hours for the Toddlers and Young Three's are 9:00-11:00 AM. Classroom hours for the Primary Program (3-6 year-olds) are 9:00-11:30 AM or 12:45-3:15 PM. During arrival (8:55-9:05) or (12:40-12:50) children enrolled in the Primary Program may be dropped off at the front door. If you wish, you may simply pull up in line and we will greet your child at your car and escort them into school. If you prefer to walk your child in, please park in one of the designated parking stalls. Do not leave your car running and/or unattended in line. If your child is enrolled in the Toddler and Young Three's drop off is at the lower level. Follow the same procedure.

During dismissal, parents should pick their children up no later than five minutes after dismissal time. This practice is for the child's peace of mind as well as the smooth operation of the program. For your convenience, you may pick your child up in the same manner that he/she was dropped off. Pull up in line and we will escort them to your car. Again, if you prefer to walk in be sure to park your vehicle in a designated parking stall. Do not leave your car unattended in line

We ask that you respect the authorized arrival and dismissal times. The time needed before and after class is valuable time for the teachers to prepare. If you have a conflict and need early drop off or late pick-up, please call and we can make arrangements for your child to join us for some fun in Extended-day.

Please note that your child will not be released to an unauthorized person without your written permission. Written notice of car-pool arrangements should be sent to school. Any changes in pick-up plans (even for one day) must be made known. Pin a note to your child's clothing or a phone call is acceptable in the case of an emergency.

## **Objects Brought to and from School**

Your child is encouraged to bring books, CDs, nature and cultural items or other related educational materials to school. Toys can be a real distraction and should be left at home.

If your child inadvertently brings home objects from school please send them back to school immediately. Do not confront your child, simply state that this belongs to school and should be returned. Our Montessori equipment has many pieces and is self-correcting. If one piece is missing, we remove it from the classroom. The missing piece generally means it is no longer self-correcting and it becomes confusing and frustrating for the child.

## Communications

We believe strongly that the parents and staff working together maximize the child's Montessori experience. Our teachers are available to you during drop off and pick up and our administrator is available daily between the hours of 8:30 and 3:30. If you have something of a sensitive nature that needs to be addressed, we ask that you not discuss it in the presence of the child or the presence of the other children. A conference or informal chat can be arranged by contacting the administrator or leaving a message for the instructor. We are happy to meet with parents anytime a need arises.

Another source of communication is written. Written information will be sent home weekly in your child's mailbag. Mailbags are sent home on Wednesday's (Thursday's for the two-day toddlers). The mailbag will include weekly sheets from your child's teacher, the monthly newsletter, and bills for those utilizing Extended-Day, SCRIP, and any other announcements concerning special events, conferences, etc. If you discover that you may have missed some communication, please contact the office.

## Conferences

Conferences will be held as indicated on the current school calendar. You will receive a conference invitation form, which you will send back indicating specific times that you are available. The school will then send you confirmation of the date and time for your conference. Conferences are intended to be a time of sharing. You are encouraged to bring your questions and, observations of your child's Montessori experience to the conference. We believe strongly that conferences are an opportunity to cement the home-school partnership, coordinating approaches to encourage the child. Again, we are happy to meet with parents anytime a need arises, it is not necessary to wait for conferences.

## Parent Involvement

You are encouraged to become actively involved in the many activities at DMS. Each year, several events are scheduled to help strengthen the link between home and school. We are always looking for interested parents to enhance our program. If you would like to share your profession, hobby or talents with us, we appreciate any contributions of time and talents.

## In-Service Days

A number of in-service days are scheduled each year. These dates are noted on the school calendar and reminders will be noted on the weekly sheets and monthly newsletter which are sent home in your child's mailbag. In-service days are a valuable tool used by our staff to visit other schools, attend educational workshops and prepare for conferences.

## Weather Conditions and Cancellation Policy

Listen to your radio on days of questionable weather. KDTH AM or KAT FM announces school cancellations every nine minutes in the morning. In the event that the Dubuque Community Schools have cancelled school for the day due to weather related reasons, Dubuque Montessori School will be closed. **In the event that the Dubuque Community Schools have announced late arrival or early dismissal, Dubuque Montessori School will start on schedule.** It is at the discretion of the parents to determine if they can safely get their children to Montessori. When weather becomes severe and businesses are closing early, Montessori may also close to ensure the safety of the children and our staff. If this happens you will be notified by telephone and asked to pick your child up provided you can make it here safely.

## Biting Policy

Biting is a very common behavior among children birth to three years of age. Biting is a form of communication and is almost always a response to the child's needs not being met or coping with a challenge or stressor. At Dubuque Montessori School we believe by understanding the developmental stages of the children in our care and their individual needs, we can proactively prevent many biting behaviors by the environment which we create for the children.

We understand that children biting children is one of the most common and most difficult behaviors to deal with in group child care settings. It can occur without warning, can be difficult to defend against, and provokes strong emotional responses in the biter, the victim, the families, and the caregivers involved.

For many toddlers, the biting stage is just a passing problem. Toddlers try it out as a way to get what they want from another toddler. They are in the process of learning what is socially acceptable and what is not. They discover that biting is a sure-fire way to cause the other child to drop what they are holding so the biter can pick it up. However, they experience the disapproval of the adults nearby and eventually learn other ways of gaining possession of objects or expressing difficult feelings.

For other children, biting is a persistent and chronic problem. They may bite for a variety of reasons: teething, frustration, boredom, inadequate language skills, stress or change in the environment, feeling threatened, or to feel a sense of power.

In order to alleviate some of triggers for biting, DMS has many practices in place that are known to help prevent incidences of biting in small children.

- Quality relationships: Staff develops nurturing relationships with the children and gets to know each child individually. Staff is given many opportunities for professional development to help he/she learn ways to build quality relationships with the children.
- Environmental influences on child's behaviors: Children are given opportunities to work in both small and large groups; there is a variety of work and children are taught how to share "work;" the environment in a Montessori classroom is often quiet and productive which is very soothing to children; and staff are very aware of and willing to help a child that is feeling overwhelmed.
- Targeted social-emotional supports: Children have a daily routine that they follow which consists of circle time, time to pursue own work, and snack time. Children learn early how to navigate classroom transitions in a way that helps them build confidence and alleviate stress. Staff talks about emotions/feelings through books and other work and teaches strategies such as yoga to help children learn to calm themselves.

No matter what the cause, it is important to be aware of the potential problem before it happens. Therefore, Dubuque Montessori School, after consulting child care experts and manuals, has developed the following plan of action to be used if and when biting occurs in our school.

## **Response to Biting - Action Plan**

### **Before biting occurs:**

- Dubuque Montessori School has created an environment which meets the developmental needs of the children. An environment that elicits calm, thoughtful behavior. We monitor and supervise all children while working and/or playing. Redirection is used in situations where a potential biting incident may occur.

### **When a child is bitten:**

#### The biter:

- The biter is immediately removed with no emotion, using words such as “biting is not okay – it hurts.” We will avoid any immediate response that reinforces the biting or calls attention to the biter. Caring attention will be focused on the child who was bitten.
- The biter will not be allowed to return to work/play and will be talked to on a level which he/she can understand. “I can see that you want that truck, but I can’t let you hurt him. We don’t put our teeth on people.”
- The child will be redirected to other work/play.
- Staff will complete a DMS incident report and notify the family of the biter when the child is picked up for the day.

#### The Injured:

- Staff will separate the child who was bitten from the biter.
- Special attention will be given to comfort the child.
- Staff will administer appropriate first aid and complete an incident report to notify family of the bitten child.

Classroom staff will confer with the director to review the context of the biting incident and implement any necessary changes to environment and/or supervision.

#### When biting continues:

- Staff will chart occurrences, including attempted bites, and indicate location, time, participants, behaviors, staff present, and circumstances. Staff will meet with the director on a routine basis for advise, support and strategy planning.
- Staff will “shadow” children who indicate a tendency to bite, to: head off biting situations before they occur, teach non-biting responses to situations and reinforce appropriate behavior and adapt the program to better fit the individual child’s needs.
- In extreme cases of biting, if it is deemed in the best interest of the child, center and other children, DMS will terminate the child for the duration of the biting stage.

DMS staff will maintain complete confidentiality of all children involved when notifying parents of the biter or the bitten that an incident has occurred.

## Clothing

Play clothes are appropriate and recommended at Dubuque Montessori School. We guarantee that the children will get dirty. The children should not be fearful of ruining their clothing as this inhibits their eagerness to explore and express themselves.

A child learns self-respect through self-mastery. Help your child by choosing clothing that can be mastered with ease. Roomy coats, larger zippers and buttons, elastic pants and Velcro are just a few things to look for when choosing your child's clothing.

Always dress your child appropriately for outside weather. During cold weather is important to send your child in boots, hat and mittens and also to send along a pair of shoes or slippers for indoors. **All outer clothing should be labeled with your child's name.** With over 100 children passing through our doors and many with identical clothing items it is very easy to get things mixed up.

If your child is a toddler, please send a complete change of clothing in a zip-lock bag labeled with your child's name. The school does have extra clothing in case of an emergency; however, the children generally feel more comfortable changing into their own clothes. If your child is sent home in our clothing, please wash and return as soon as possible.

If your child has an accident at school, soiled items will be placed in a plastic bag. For sanitary reasons, the Department of Human Services Licensing Standards prohibits us from further handling soiled clothing. For this reason, we apologize that items will not be rinsed out.

## Outdoor Education Policy

The preschool experience is enriched by time spent outdoors. Our children spend time outdoors developing their gross motor skills, socializing in a manner different than that within the classroom and observing nature. Our outside experiences are an integral part of the education we provide.

Children using extended day will go out DAILY in all but the most extreme weather conditions. Although "extreme" weather varies according to what people are accustomed to, our parameter for outdoor activities is above 15 degrees F wind-chill, as determined by the National Weather Service. We will go outside, however briefly, if the weather conditions are above the wind-chill limit and it is not raining or snowing too hard to stay dry. Winter months require that the children come to school with snow pants, coats, boots, hat and mittens.

We do realize that it sometimes might be advisable to keep a child indoors after an illness; however we do not have the extra staff needed to keep a child indoors during outdoor playtime. **For this reason we ask that you give your child the time needed to recover until he/she is free to join us in the outdoors.**

## **Nutrition and the Child and Adult Care Food Program**

Snack is served in each of our classes. Snack consists of 2% milk or 100% juice and a serving of a nutritious food which may include cereal, bagels, fresh fruit, fresh vegetable, crackers, pretzels and cheese. Snack is served self-serve. Children are encouraged but never forced to eat. For children who are with us after their scheduled class time, a snack is also served mid afternoon at about 2:30pm.

If your child joins us over the lunch hour, hot lunch is provided for a fee. Lunch menus are sent home monthly and are also posted in the main lobby and in the kitchen. Our lunches and snacks meet or exceed the standards as set forth by the Child and Adult Food Care Program (CACFP). If at any time your child requires a diet different than what we serve, a written statement needs to be submitted by you or your child's physician and must include the date, specific diet change needed, medical diagnosis specified indicating the need for food variation and the time frame involved.

*Example: Charlie needs to drink only rice milk because of possible milk allergy. This needs to be in effect September 1, 2009 through May 31, 2009.*

If food sent from home does not meet the CACFP standards, we are responsible for supplementing in order to meet all nutritional requirements. The food components must meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture's requirements. All food brought into the school must be stored in a sack or lunch bag with your child's name and placed in the refrigerator.

Dubuque Montessori School participates in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's federally subsidized food program. It is administered through the Iowa Office of Education's Child and Adult Care Food Program. As participants in this program DMS receives reimbursement for qualifying snacks and lunches served to the children. We are required to keep on file family income verification forms for each family. If your income is over the limits set by the Department it need not be listed however, the form should be signed and returned. Your cooperation in releasing this information is vital to the success of this program. If your income falls within the guidelines you qualify for either reduced .40 or free hot lunch. Please be assured all information is kept confidential. Income verification forms are updated annually in the fall.

***In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write:***

***USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights,  
Room 326-W Whitten Building  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250-9410***

***You may also call (202) 720-5964.***

## Birthdays

We enjoy celebrating each child's birthday with a simple ceremony in the child's classroom. Children with summer birthdays are invited to celebrate their "half birthday" during the school year with their class.

If you wish to bring a snack to celebrate your child's big day, please let your child's teacher know. Healthy individual treats such as cheese and crackers, salami or fresh fruit or vegetables are appropriate choices. Cakes and cupcakes are not acceptable for the preschool setting and the Department of Human Services Licensing Standards regarding health and nutrition. Because all families do not share the same view of what is appropriate and what is not for their young child, take home treat bags may not be distributed. In lieu of providing take-home treat bags for the children, you may choose to donate a book or gift of materials to your child's classroom.

If you are planning a party for your child, please be very sensitive to the fact that children are very sensitive and aware at this stage in their development. Therefore, party invitations must not be sent either through school mail bags or made in person at school. It isn't always feasible to invite an entire class of children to a party, but inevitably the entire class generally knows of the event if invitations or gifts are sent through school. The child who is left out doesn't understand and is left with very hurt feelings.

## Field Trips

Occasionally, short field trips are scheduled for the 3-to 6-year-old classes to enhance the unit of study. A signed permission slip must be on file before any child will be taken on a field trip. DMS will send permission slips well in advance and no child will be allowed to attend without written permission. A separate permission slip is needed for each field trip. No child is obligated to participate; however, non-participating students must stay home the day of the event.

Most field trips incur an additional but reasonable fee, but no child will be excluded for financial reasons. If cost is an issue, please contact the administrator.

In order to more easily comply with DHS standards, when transportation is needed Dubuque Montessori will hire a bus service that will be noted on the permission slip.

## Sun Screen Policy

Skin cancer is now considered epidemic throughout the nation by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For these reasons, Dubuque Montessori School has established a Sun Protection Policy. The policy is as follows:

1. Whenever possible, outdoor activities will be scheduled before 10 a.m. and/or after 4:00 p.m. March through October.
2. For all outdoor activities occurring on sunny days, especially between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. children will be encouraged to:
  - A. Apply a SPF 15 or greater broad-spectrum, water resistant sunscreen to exposed skin thirty minutes before going outdoors.
  - B. Play in shaded areas.
  - C. Wear a four inch or wider brimmed hat which will create a shadow that covers the head, face, nose, ears and neck.
  - D. Wear sunglasses that protect 100% of UVA & UVB.
  - E. Use lip balm that has a SPF of at least 15.
3. Dubuque Montessori School will provide sunscreen of at least 15SPF and apply to children's exposed skin areas prior to outdoor play. Parents must sign the Permission Slip to Apply Sunscreen and present to Dubuque Montessori School.
4. Parents who wish their children to wear sunglasses and lip balm will provide Dubuque Montessori School with a Zip Lock bag containing the child's items. The bag and each item should be labeled with the child's name.
5. While on duty, personnel are encouraged to practice sun safety principles to serve as positive role models for the children.

## **Emergency Evacuation**

During tornado or severe weather warnings, children and teachers will gather in the lower level. When evacuation of the building is necessary due to power/heat/cooling failure, structural, water or health hazards, all children and teachers will go to the fenced in play area. When evacuations are of a prolonged length, all children and staff will proceed across the street to Irving School.

## **Disaster Preparedness**

If we must take shelter quickly we will follow our tornado drill procedures. In the event we need to evacuate our building, we have identified Irving Elementary School as our temporary emergency shelter. Dubuque Montessori School has a Disaster Preparedness Plan in place for prolonged evacuations and is available for review in the office.

## **Pandemic Policy**

Upon notification of a public health warning, the DMS Board of Directors will review the situation and take appropriate action following the DMS Pandemic Plan. We will contact parents utilizing a phone tree approach executed by the Director and DMS Board of Directors, as well as by utilizing e-mail and the DMS web site.

## **Attendance Policy**

When it is necessary for your child to be absent from school for any reason, please call the school. If your child contracts a communicable disease (chicken pox, strep throat, etc.) let us know immediately. Exposure notices will then be sent home to all of our families. Many epidemics have been prevented because of prompt reporting by parents.

If you will be taking a vacation or have any other scheduled absences, please contact the school in advance. Remember that tuition is not subject to adjustment due to illness, travel or school closings due to weather.

## **Health Policies**

For your child to derive the greatest benefit from classroom experience, adequate rest is a must. If your child is up late at night for special reasons it may be to his/her advantage to stay home and catch up on his/her rest.

Parents are asked to use discretion when sending their child to school. Children should not be brought to school if during the previous 24 hours they have exhibited any of the following symptoms: (Even if they seem normal or well)

- ❖ Temperature of 100 degrees or more
- ❖ Vomiting or diarrhea
- ❖ Unusual or unexplained rash
- ❖ Unusual or severe coughing

Should your child become ill while at Dubuque Montessori School, we will isolate him/her in a quiet area. We will then contact the parents and if unsuccessful, we will contact those that you have listed on your emergency consent form. Children who are ill should be picked up as soon as possible.

## Child/Staff Ratios

Following are the child/staff ratios at DMS:

Toddler Classroom (2 & young three's)	1 caregiver for 6 children	18 children maximum
Preschool Classroom (3-5 year olds)	1 caregiver for 10 children	20 children maximum
Extended Day (2-5 year olds)	1 caregiver for 6 children when ever a 2 year old is present. When a 2 year old is not present, the ratio is 1 caregiver for 8 children.	

## Medication Policy

Dubuque Montessori School will not administer medication, including non-prescription drugs, ointments and diaper rash creams to any child without a parent's written consent. Parent authorization must be on file for each medication.

### Prescription Medication

Prescription medication must meet the following conditions:

- ❖ Medication has been prescribed by a physician and is in it original container. Label contains child's name, name of physician, name of the drugstore where filled, prescription number, name of mediation and instructions for usage and duration.
- ❖ Parents must complete and sign the Medication Release Form for each medication.

If a physician prescribes an antibiotic for anything other than ear infection we ask that you keep the child home for 24 hours before returning to school.

### Over-the-Counter Mediation

We are not permitted to administer eye or ear medication or any over-the-counter product except sunscreen, lip balm, body and hand lotion, diaper cream and Vaseline.

- ❖ All of the above requires a completed Medication Release Form filled out. All products must be in original containers and labeled with child's name.

We are unable to allow you to come into the school and administer prescription/non prescription medication to your child that isn't documented on our Medication Release form in the event that a child might have an adverse reaction.

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CHART

Disease	Incubation	Main symptoms	Minimum exclusion from school
Chicken pox	16-17 days	Mild symptom and fever. Pocks and "blistery" scabs, most on covered parts of body.	7 days from onset of pocks
Conjunctivitis (pink eye)		Red, itchy eyes, pain or discomfort, matter or discharge	Until physician permits return.
Diphtheria	2-5 days	Sore throat, grayish membrane in throat.	After 2 negative cultures from nose and throat 24 hours apart.
Erythema Infectiosum (5th disease)	4-14 days	Usual age 5-14 years, brief low grade fever. Erythemia (slapped look on cheeks) on cheeks, rash on extremities lasting a few days to five weeks, rash seems to reappear.	
Gastro intestinal virus or GI upset		Nausea vomiting, diarrhea	1-2 days.
German Measles	14-21 days	Usually mild. Enlarged glands In neck and behind ears. Brief red rash.	5 days from onset of rash. Keep away from pregnant women.
Impetigo	4-10 days	Inflamed sores, with pus.	Until physician permits return.
Infectious Hepatitis	Variable- 15-50 days (average 25)	Headache, abdominal pain, nausea vomiting, usually fever. Skin and eyes may turn yellow.	14 days from onset of clinical disease, and at least 7 days from onset of jaundice.
Influenza or 'flu'		Abrupt onset of fever, chills, headache, muscle soreness, nasal discharge, sore throat and cough are common.	2-7 days
Measles	10 days to fever. 13-16 days to rash.	Begins like a cold, fewer, blotchy rod rash.	7 days from onset of rash
Meningococcal meningitis	2-10 days (commonly 3-4)	Sore throat, grayish material in throat.	After 2 negative cultures from nose and throat 24 hours apart
Mumps	12-26 (commonly 18)	Fever, Swelling and tenderness of glands at angle of jaw.	9 days or until swelling disappears.
Pediculoses (lice)	7 days for eggs to hatch	Lice and nits (eggs) in hair.	1 day after adequate treatment to kill lice and nits.
Poliomyelitis	7-12 days	Fever, vomiting, headache, stiff neck, muscle soreness.	7 days from onset
Ringworm of scalp	10-14 days	Scaly patch, usually ring shaped on scalp	Until physician permits return.
Scabies	3 days to 3 weeks	Tiny burrows In skin caused by mites.	Until physician permits return
Scarlet fever, Strep Throat, Scarlatina	1 to 3 days	Sudden onset, vomiting, core throat, favor, later fine rash (not on face), usually only with first infection.	7 days from onset if untreated or 24 hours after antibiotics
whooping cough	7 to 10 days	Head cold. Slight fever, cough, characteristic whoop after about 2 weeks.	21 days from beginning of whoop.

## **Discipline Guidelines**

All children enrolled at Dubuque Montessori School are given the opportunity to discover and create in a safe environment. The staff will implement the discipline policies outlined in this handbook, which utilizes the environment and a variety of techniques, which encourages the development of the child's inner ability for self-discipline.

The children are prepared to participate in the social life of the classroom through presentations in the Montessori Curriculum area of Grace and Courtesy. The environment is carefully prepared to meet the physical and emotional needs of the children and to cultivate a desire to discover, explore and learn. It is our belief that in a setting where most of the child's needs are met most of the time he/she will feel secure and thus act accordingly.

School ground rules are that we respect each other, the environment and ourselves. Children causing physical harm to themselves, others or the environment will be stopped. Disciplinary measures used by the staff are carried out in a respectful way, which helps the child develop self control and assume responsibility for his/her actions.

If a child has difficulty adjusting to the Montessori program a meeting will be held between the directress and other school professionals concerned. We will discuss the situation and find alternative ways to help the child benefit from his/her Montessori experience.

After six weeks if a child is not successfully able to participate and meet the behavioral expectations, another meeting will be held to determine if the child's needs are best served by remaining at Dubuque Montessori School.

## **Discipline Techniques used at Dubuque Montessori School**

- ❖ Montessori presentations in Grace and Courtesy are used as an introduction to self-discipline.
- ❖ Redirection when appropriate provides the child with alternative choices of activities to avoid conflict.
- ❖ A breather is used for calming down a child whose behavior has become escalated. This is used before a situation becomes disruptive or dangerous. A breather is also used as a reminder to the child of more appropriate behavior.
- ❖ Our staff uses removal of the child from the situation when it is apparent that the child's ability for self-discipline is lacking. Removal is used automatically in cases of harmful actions towards others. Removing the child from the situation gives the child an opportunity to calm down and requires communication with the instructor, which promotes the use of verbal and problem-solving skills, recognition of and empathy for the needs of others.

In cases where further discipline techniques were required, the staff will document by means of an Incident Report and parents will be notified. Be assured that under no circumstance does the staff of Dubuque Montessori School use forms of verbal or physical abuse. RESPECT of the child is always preserved.

## **Child Withdrawal Policy**

Withdrawal of a child from Dubuque Montessori School after registration requires written notification by July 1 to receive a refund of the first month's tuition. Withdrawal of a child after July 1<sup>st</sup> and after the commencement of the program requires a thirty-day in advance written notification to be released from further tuition obligations. The registration fee, supply and snack fees and May's tuition are non-refundable.

## **Involuntary Withdrawal**

A child may be asked to leave Dubuque Montessori School based on the following:

- ❖ Child injurious to self and/or others
- ❖ Inability to adjust
- ❖ Program not meeting the specific needs of the child
- ❖ Non-payment of tuition and fees
- ❖ Habitual tardiness which is disruptive to the class

If you encounter a family emergency and are unable to pay tuition, please see the administrator immediately. All information will be kept confidential. Occasionally funds are available through anonymous contributions for families who are going through a tough time.

## **Grievance Procedure**

The administrator of Dubuque Montessori School addresses all formal grievances and requests. When a parent has a grievance or request related to the services provided by the school and/or its personnel, they are to follow the procedure outlined below.

When an action or event has occurred, the parent must first verbally and/or in writing discuss the concern with the staff involved, trying to resolve the situation.

If the parent and/or staff member are not satisfied with the results and wish to pursue the matter further, they may contact the administrator. A formal written, signed and dated grievance must be submitted to the administrator, outlining the situation. The administrator may wish to hold a fact-finding meeting with the parent and staff member involved, either together or separately, before taking appropriate action. If any of the involved individuals are not satisfied with the above outcome, a copy of the grievance may be submitted to the President of the Board of Directors who will meet with the Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee will make their recommendation to the full board during an executive session. The president will then notify, in writing, those involved, of the board's decision. All decisions made by the Board of Directors will be final.

Any and all grievances must be handled following these procedures. No board member is authorized to act on his/her own accord. It is the right and the responsibility of the administrator to have the first opportunity to address questionable issues. Be assured that all matters brought to the attention of the Administrator and/or the Board of Directors will remain confidential.

## Montessori Parent Guidelines

Dr. Maria Montessori found that children need:

- ❖ **Respect and self-discipline.** You can foster these by encouraging your child to hang his/her own coat, get dressed, etc. A cardinal rule is "never do for the child what he/she can do for himself "
- ❖ **Order.** Help your child establish order by giving him/her places to put things away in the home. Shelves are more appropriate than toy boxes.
- ❖ **Self-control.** Aid your child in gaining self-control by allowing her to make choices and experience the result of her choice.
- ❖ **Consistency.** Be sure you are giving your child consistent messages. The same behavior should elicit the same responses every time. Never lie to your child or allow her to make a choice which you are not prepared to accept.
- ❖ **Real, not pretend items.** Allow your child to work with real materials at home.

You can help us protect these guidelines while your child is at Dubuque Montessori School by:

- ❖ Bringing your child to school on time.
- ❖ Allowing your child to make simple choices.
- ❖ Dropping your child off at the front door and allowing him/her to enter independently.
- ❖ Refraining from constant correction of accidents or mistakes. Your child's level of interest is far more important than cognitive gains at this stage. Conceptual understanding built through work with the hands will lead to cognitive gains. We promise!
- ❖ Conveying any sensitive issues to the teacher in a private time and place away from the child. We will make every effort to respect you and your child by doing the same.
- ❖ Allowing your child to bring books, natural wonders and unit-related items to school to share with their friends. Please do not allow your child to bring toys.
- ❖ Refraining from asking, "Were you good at school today?" Children find this question very difficult to answer.
- ❖ Remembering that Montessori is a process-oriented method of education involving manipulation of materials. Your child will not bring "work" home daily. If you are interested in more information about what your child is learning, come in and observe or speak to your child's teachers.

## Suggested Reading

You may wish to understand the Montessori Method more fully by reading any one of the many books either written by or about Dr. Maria Montessori. These books can be found in area libraries and bookstores.

A Parent's Guide to the Montessori Classroom  
Montessori and Your Child  
Montessori: A Modern Approach  
Education for a New World  
Education and Peace  
The Secret of Childhood  
The Absorbent Mind  
The Discovery of the Child  
A Parent's Introduction the Montessori Preschool

Aline D. Wolf  
Terry Malloy  
Paula Polk Lillard  
Maria Montessori  
Maria Montessori  
Maria Montessori  
Maria Montessori  
Maria Montessori  
Maria Montessori

Dubuque Montessori School also has reference materials available to our families to borrow. Simply stop in the office.



**dubuque montessori school**

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