

SCHOOL & PARENT PARTNERSHIP UNDERSTANDING

Montessori Country School is a community committed to aiding the full development of the child through the Montessori method. Our students thrive when their homes and school operate in harmony and alignment with each other. The child is best served when these environments share educational values and expectations.

To facilitate this process, this Understanding aims to:

- Clarify expectations between the school staff and parents
- Convey the need for a respectful, open, and trusting relationship between staff members and parents
- Encourage the strongest possible partnership based on these shared expectations guided by a unified vision

What does the school expect from parents?

Q: *What is the most basic expectation the school has of parents?*

A: Understand and trust the Montessori model of education, so that we can support one another in the care and nurturance of the child. Devote real and sincere effort to learning Montessori principles, and to bring these concepts into the home environment and your parenting. Principles include:

- Allow your child to overcome challenges without your interference or assistance. This builds self-esteem, a sense of purpose, and the determination to master life skills.
- To build independence, confidence, and skills, allow even the youngest child to engage in real life activities. Ensure that older children contribute to home life by participating in household tasks.
- Use positive discipline techniques with your child.
- Attend all regularly scheduled Parent/Guide Conferences and required or strongly encouraged parent education events.
- Familiarize yourself annually with our Family and Student Handbook, your classroom's expectations, and the role of the active and supportive parent in our community.

Q: *How can parents positively support the school community?*

A: Demonstrate respect for all adults and children in our community, the school, and the school's programs and policies.

- Model respect for your child. Speak of the school and every member of the Montessori Country School community in positive terms.
- Always work to resolve misunderstandings and conflicts respectfully and graciously. This should start with the person with whom there is conflict and, if resolution is not accomplished,

speaking with the appropriate person (i.e. a member of the administration who is directly responsible for the individual or the situation.)

- Engage in our culture of giving. Sharing your time, talent, and resources all support the school community in providing the best education possible for our students.

Q: *What are my responsibilities regarding communication between home and school?*

A: Maintain respectful, direct, and active communication with the school.

- Communicate in a timely manner about all significant events in your child's life.
- Share observations and concerns about your child or classroom experience directly with your child's teacher. This allows the teachers to be responsive to your and the child's needs in a timely manner.
- Read all school generated communications in a timely fashion. This includes the weekly Friday Notes, monthly Points of Interest newsletter, monthly blog posts from your child's teacher, and all communications from the office.
- Communicate questions and concerns promptly and directly. Bring classroom concerns directly to the child's teacher. School policy concerns should be communicated to the administrative team. If you are unsure who to contact, please contact the office for assistance.

What can parents expect from the school?

Q: *What can I expect from the school academically?*

A: *We are first, and foremost, a Montessori school with a deep commitment to best practices of Montessori education.*

- Our focus is always on the formation of the whole child. By nurturing curiosity and initiative, the child develops strong work habits, a clear sense of purpose, and the will to learn and grow.
- We recognize your child as a unique individual. Therefore, our Montessori Guides create lesson plans based on meeting each student's specific needs.
- We support students' self-construction as thinkers who persevere. We accomplish this through a deeper exploration and internalization of concepts rather than the memorization of facts.
- Students are given real choice in the name of liberty—freedom with responsibility.
- The opportunity to practice responsible independence gives rise to self-formation and the emergence of character. Through this work, the Montessori child develops a healthy respect for self, others, and the environment.
- All students are encouraged to take on works and projects that may seem out of their reach and require them to stretch. Though they may fail occasionally, they must not shy away from big and challenging work. Simply engaging in the struggle forges perseverance and patience as well as self-knowledge and self-esteem.

Q: *What can I expect in terms of communication from the school?*

A: We will always communicate as partners, working hard to provide open, timely, and respectful information and insight about your child and the school community.

- All communications will be approached from a place of partnership in the best interests of our students.
- We will work diligently to communicate the beauty, nuance, and growth that transpire each day in the life of your child. Absent a daily diet of worksheets and grades to mark progress, we must rely on parent/guide communication to transmit evidence of growth gained through direct exploration with ideas, materials, research, the natural world, and creative means.
- We will offer numerous opportunities to support your own ongoing Montessori education, including observations in your child's classroom (Primary and Elementary levels) and workshops, meetings, and lectures focused on the structure, curriculum, and activity in the Montessori environment.
- We will listen when you speak and respond with respect, always communicating in a timely, professional, and confidential manner.
- We will contact you directly in the event of special concerns about your child.
- Should you have difficulty resolving any issue, our administrative staff will facilitate efforts to reach a solution.
- We will inform you of school-wide news and events with the weekly Friday Notes, monthly Points of Interest newsletters, monthly classroom updates and photos from your child's teacher, information found in the Current Family Portal, and posts on social media (Instagram and Facebook).

Q: *What can I expect of the school environment?*

A: *We strive to ensure an environment that is physically and emotionally safe and supportive, as well as aesthetically beautiful.*

- We provide materials and activities in each classroom that directly correspond to the developmental stages and characteristics exhibited by your child. The materials are challenging and inspiring and the learning environments are well tended to and inviting.
- We maintain buildings and grounds that are physically safe, secure, and well maintained. We are actively engaged in enhancing and updating our facilities and grounds.
- Adults, students, and environments form the whole of our Montessori community and culture. All members play a vital role in your child's experience. We strive to make the learning environment supportive and safe for every child, in every way.

Q: *What can I expect from the school staff?*

A: We focus on the needs and well-being of the individual child in harmony with the life and well-being of the community. We make mission-driven decisions, focused on good stewardship and responsible management. We offer an open door to your questions or concerns.

- You can always expect the Montessori Country School staff to be professional and courteous, providing mutually respectful communication with all our constituents. We strive to be a model of the grace and courtesy that guides Montessori curriculum and culture.
- We work to balance the individual needs of the child with the needs of the classroom or school community as a whole.

We look forward to a working partnership with you to provide both an outstanding educational experience and warm, welcoming community for both you and your child.

(MCS received permission to use this Partnership Agreement from Greenspring Montessori School

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