



The
**McGuffey
Montessori**
School

School Handbook

2019/20

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Introduction

Our Goals

We have a deep concern for the “whole” child and feel that each area of his/her development is of equal importance—the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth. We strive to help the individual child develop fully through his/her work, according to the teaching of Dr. Maria Montessori, the founder of the Montessori Method. The following are areas of development you can expect to see in your child:

- Independence
- A joy of learning
- Love of order
- Learning through discovery
- Concentration
- Attachment to reality
- Self-discipline
- Ability to choose
- Enjoyment of quiet
- Self-confidence
- Self-awareness

Philosophy

The core idea in the Montessori philosophy of education is that all children carry within themselves the person they will become. In order to develop physical, intellectual, and spiritual potential to the fullest, the child must have freedom: a freedom to be achieved through order and self-discipline. The world of the child is full of sights and sounds that at first appear chaotic. From this chaos, children must gradually create order, learn to distinguish among the impressions that assail their senses, and slowly but surely gain mastery of themselves and their environment.

Dr. Montessori developed what she called the “prepared environment,” which already possesses a certain order and allows children to learn at their own speed, according to their own capacities and in a non-competitive atmosphere.

The years between 2 1/2 and 6 are the years in which children learn the rules of human behavior most easily. These years can be constructively devoted to fostering the acquisition of good manners and habits, to take their places in their culture.

The years between 6 and 9 are the years when children begin to think in abstract terms, often showing a passionate interest in issues of fairness and justice. Having spent the previous years focused deeply on their own autonomy, they now begin seeking to work with others.

The years between 9 and 14 are the years when the children continue to look outward from themselves. They prefer working together and will often choose group projects over individual tasks. They begin to foster genuine interest in others, their culture, and their community.

Dr. Montessori recognized that the only valid impulse to learning is the self-motivation of the child. Children move themselves toward learning. The teacher prepares the environment, directs the activity, and offers the child stimulation, but it is the child who learns, who is motivated through work itself (not solely by the teacher’s personality) to persist in a given task.

If Montessori children are free to learn, it is because they have acquired an “inner discipline” from their exposure to both physical and mental order. This is the core of Dr. Montessori’s philosophy. Social adjustment, though a necessary condition for learning in a schoolroom, is not the purpose of education. Patterns of concentration, thoroughness and “stick-to-itiveness” established in early childhood produce a confident, competent learner in later years.



Montessori teaches children to observe, to think, to judge. It introduces children to the joy of learning at an early age and provides a framework in which intellectual and social discipline go hand-in-hand.

Learning Objectives

- Develop and foster an abiding curiosity
- Develop initiative and persistence
- Develop sensory-motor skills in order to sharpen the ability to discriminate and judge
- Develop social skills
- Acquire the basic skills necessary for a lifetime of learning
- Help develop each child's innate, ultimate potential through high self-expectations

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that no human being is educated by another person. He or she must do it by him or herself or it will never be done. A truly educated individual continues learning long after the hours and years he or she spends in the classroom because that person is motivated from within by a natural curiosity and love for knowledge.

Dr. Montessori felt, therefore, that the goal of early childhood education should not be to fill the child with facts from a pre-selected course of studies, but rather to cultivate the child's own natural desire to learn.

In the Montessori classroom, these objectives are approached in two ways:

1. By allowing each child to experience the excitement of learning by his or her own choice rather than by being forced; and
2. By helping the child perfect his or her natural tools for learning, so that the child's abilities will be maximized for future learning situations. The Montessori materials have this dual, long-range purpose in addition to their immediate purpose of giving specific information to the child.

Governance

McGuffey Montessori School is state-chartered school operated by the McGuffey School Foundation and is a 501(c)3 non-profit foundation. All parents and legal guardians of current McGuffey students are members of the foundation. Members elect representatives from the parent body to serve on the WHMS Board of Trustees.

The primary responsibility of the Board is to set policy which supports the long-term health of the school. Their role includes hiring, supporting and evaluating the Head of School while the Head of School and the staff handle day-to-day school operations.

The trustees meet 6-10 times a year, usually on the second Tuesday of the month from 7:00-9pm in the Main Building. Meeting dates are posted on the school public calendar. Board meetings are open to the membership (parents and guardians).

The school Bylaws and Board Minutes are available online.

To apply for a position on the board of trustees or to nominate someone, please send a completed Board Application to the current Chair. The application is available on the school website. Applications are reviewed by the board. Elections are typically held in the spring semester for three-year terms beginning July 1.



General Information

5128 Westgate Drive
Oxford, OH 45056

office@mcguffeymontessori.com
(513) 523-7742 (Office)

Staff List and Contact Information

Classroom Staff

Amy Bartel	Art Teacher <i>Art for Grades 1-8</i>	(315) 369-5226 <i>abartel@mcguffeymontessori.com</i>
Wendy Duvall	Lower Elementary Lead Teacher	(513) 593-4947 (mobile) <i>wduvall@mcguffeymontessori.com</i>
Alli Huff	Lower Elementary Assistant and Extended Care Coordinator	
Susie Lute	Upper Elementary and Middle School Co-Teacher	(513) 593-4948 (mobile) <i>slute@mcguffeymontessori.com</i>
Mary Murray	Lower Elementary Assistant	(630) 292-3565 (mobile) <i>mmurray@mcguffeymontessori.com</i>
Elizabeth Taylor	Primary Co-Teacher, Music Teacher	(513) 461-1660 (mobile) <i>etaylor@mcguffeymontessori.com</i>
Andrea Taulbee	Primary Co-Teacher	(513) 545-7901 (mobile) <i>ataulbee@mcguffeymontessori.com</i>
Hayley Tucker	Primary Classroom Afternoon Assistant	(513) XXXXXXX <i>htucker@mcguffeymontessori.com</i>
Mark Radlinski	Upper Elementary and Middle School Co-Teacher	(513) 720-4321 (mobile) <i>mradlinski@mcguffeymontessori.com</i>
Kadriye Walsh	Middle School Mathematics Teacher	(513) 509-6715 <i>kwash@mcguffeymontessori.com</i>
OPEN	Primary Classroom Assistant	

Administrative Staff

Jennie Wright	Office Manager	(513) 523-7742 <i>jwright@mcguffeymontessori.com</i>
Renee Armstrong	Office Assistant, Extended Care	(513) 523-7742 <i>office@mcguffeymontessori.com</i>



Casey Daubenmire	Office Assistant	(513) 523-7742 cdaubenmire@mcguffeymontessori.com
Sue Meabon Bartow	Associate Head of School	(513) 523-7742 (513) 255-5375 (mobile) smeabonbartow@mcguffeymontessori.com
Mike Desmier	Business Manager <i>Mike works offsite and part-time.</i>	(513) 802-4784 (mobile) mikedesmier@gmail.com
Nancy Hawthorne	Head of School	(513) 593-3055 (mobile) nhawthorne@mcguffeymontessori.com

Support Staff

We are grateful for a wide complement of staff who help us across the school. This list can evolve over the course of the year. These are the people who will start the year with us:

Sue Bartow, Susan Guidi, Melissa Martz—*Substitutes*
 Renee Armstrong, Judith Bolenbaugh—*Early Care*
 Alli Huff, Alana Brownfield, Drew Cox, Natalie Musolf, Amy O’Conner—*Extended Day*

School Hours

Arrival

7:30-8:45am	Early Care	
8:45-9:00am	Drop-off Window	8:05-8:15am for Grade 7, 7:50am for Grade 8
9:00am	School day begins	8:15am for Grade 7, 7:55am Grade 8

Dismissal on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays

3:30pm	School day ends
3:30-3:40pm	Dismissal and Pick-up Window
3:30-5:30pm	Extended Day

Dismissal on Wednesdays

McGuffey follows Talawanda School District’s Early Release Schedule every Wednesday.

2:45pm	School day ends
2:45-2:55pm	Dismissal and Pick-up Window
2:45-5:30pm	Extended Day

Office Hours

The school office is open from 8:30am-4pm when school is in session. Summer hours are typically 8:30am-12:30pm on weekdays.



School Office

The school office is located at the back of the garage opposite the kitchen entrance to the Main Building (white). The office is open from 8:15am to 4:00pm. The answering machine may be used for short periods of time during the school hours. We make every effort to monitor messages, but if you have a more urgent message, please call back in a few minutes.

You can also email the office at office@mcguffeymontessori.com. Several staff members check this email account regularly during and after school hours.

Any information related to changes to your child's transportation or after-school plans made the same day should be telephoned into the office.

Please do not text or email staff with same-day changes. This puts pressure on staff to check their phones during other responsibilities and if they are not at school that day, your message won't get to where it needs to go.

Absences and Tardiness

Parents are requested to call the office by 10:00am if your child will be absent. If the office is not yet open, you may leave a voice mail message. If a call has not been received, the school will contact the parents.

We do not have make-up days or refunds for illnesses or absences. If you know your child will be tardy, please let us know in advance, if possible. Please include the reason that your child will be absent so we may comply with state regulations in regard to contagious diseases.

Arriving on Time

It is critical for children to be at school on time so that they benefit from the routines of starting their day with their peers. Chronic late arrivals can impede social and academic progress. Late-arriving students also disrupt the flow of the day for other children in their class, requiring attention from an adult to get settled. We depend on your family's full support in this area. If your child is habitually arriving late we may need to meet with you to work out a solution.

Preschool Attendance

Although attendance for preschool is not required, a regular routine is important to your child and the classroom community as a whole. We ask that you do your best to be respectful of our classroom culture.

Excused Absences

Absences are considered excused if they are caused by illness, doctor appointments, serious illness or death in the family, or recognized religious holiday of the student's faith. We reserve the right to require documentation.

Attendance and Making Up Work

Traditional Montessori class work is difficult to make up outside of the classroom. We will try to have general practice and practical life assignments that can be done at home or on vacation but understand that it may not be of the same caliber as being in school. Our staff puts a lot of lessons for your child to do at home. Reading and practical life opportunities are things that should fit naturally into your home life when a student is unable to attend school.



Annual Events/Dates

New Parent Meeting/Orientation: Orientation for new parents just before the school year begins.

Back-to-School Picnic: Held the second or third Friday after school begins to catch up on summer news and welcome new families.

Celebration of Learning: A chance for you to visit school with your child and allow them to show you what they do all day. Held in January or February, late afternoon into early evening. Students will spend time during the week preparing for your visit by cleaning the room, decorating, and even preparing a snack for you to enjoy while you're here. If you will be visiting multiple McGuffey classrooms for siblings, try to make a strategic plan that allows your child to be "the star" for part of the evening.

Cloud Club: An optional extra-curricular program for students in Grades 6/7/8 that allows students to attend professional performances in Oxford, Cincinnati and Dayton. Families provide transportation and share rides as needed.

Curriculum Meetings: Held in September, these meetings are an opportunities for teachers to present an overview of the McGuffey curriculum for the year. It's a great opportunity to ask questions of a general nature. These meetings are held in the evening and are announced in the newsletter and on the website.

Moving Up Ceremony: We hold one ceremony for all students moving from one class to the next or for those leaving for high school. To accommodate weather and parking we hold this at Cobblestone Community Church. All families are invited to attend this wonderful ceremony honoring the growth and development of our students.

Harvest Supper: This is a chance to share food and socialize with alumni and friends of the school in the fall. This also serves as our annual meeting, sponsored by the Trustees to announce plans and goals, solicit support, acquaint new families with the school operation, and answer questions.

Halloween: Students are allowed to wear their Halloween costumes on the school day after the Oxford Community Trick or Treat night. This helps ensure that costumes are not damaged accidentally at school before trick or treating. Depending on your child's costume, please send a change of clothes if you anticipate they will not want to stay in it all day. We ask that children not wear costumes that are scary or gun-related. Thank you for adhering to our school policy by not sending candy with your children to school.

Last Day of School Picnic and Egg Drop: A lunchtime picnic held on the last day of school for McGuffey students and their families that concludes with the tossing of student-designed containers for raw eggs off of the roof of the school. Students are allowed to leave with caregivers following the egg drop.

School Musical: This is an all-school performance that typically takes place in the spring. The musical is a significant part of our music curriculum and our broader goals for our students. Among many things, the performance is approached as a service to the community. Formal rehearsals take place during the school day with some special rehearsals outside of school for students with more significant responsibilities. Performances are held in the evenings or on the weekend at the Oxford Community Arts Center. Parents receive access to digital versions of the



music to enable their child to practice the music at home. There are many opportunities for parents to help with preparations and onsite support to make this a successful event.

SOAR Program: An all-school running and walking program that inspires fun and fitness during the noontime recess. Students may seek sponsors to pay them for distance covered to raise funds for the school playground and sometimes other non-profits. Held for two weeks in the fall with an additional event in the spring. The fall event this year will include a weekend hike.

Trivia Night: This is the school's biggest fundraiser. Donated services or products and student artwork are auctioned. The festive evening event includes a meal and trivia contest. Trivia Night is held the first Saturday of February from 6–10pm. Save the date!

Valentine's Day: McGuffey has a tradition of celebrating friendship on Valentine's Day throughout all the grades. Over the winter break we will publish a list of the names of the students in each class so that your child can prepare Valentines for their classmates. These may be store-bought or handmade. Please keep our food guidelines in mind and refrain from sending sweets just as we do on other days.

Annual Event Dates for 2019/20 (subject to change)

August 8: New Parent Orientation, 6-7:30pm

August 10: Classroom Visits, 3-4:30pm

August 30: Back to School Picnic, 5:30-7:00pm

September 5: Curriculum Night

6:00pm Primary (PreK + Kindergarten)

7:15pm Lower Elementary (Grades 1/2/3)

September 12: Curriculum Night

6:00pm Upper Elementary (Grades 4/5)

7:15pm Middle School (Grades 6/7/8/9)

October: SOAR Students Outside And Running

October 18: Harvest Supper (Rain date, Oct 28)

December 17-20: Glen Helen Outdoor Education Trip (Grades 4-9)

January-February: Ice Skating + Taekwondo

January 31: Celebration of Learning, 4:30-6:30pm

February 8: Trivia Night Fundraiser, 6pm

April: Read-a-thon

April 29 + 30: School Musical, two performances, *No Extended Day on these days.*

May 15: All School Concert and Moving Up Ceremony

May 20: End of School Picnic/Egg Drop*



Google Calendar

The school calendar is available for subscription through Google on our website.

Vacation Calendar

The school tries to implement a vacation schedule that will accommodate our families with children in this district as well as our families with parents who work at Miami University.

VACATION CALENDAR 2019/20

McGuffey's vacation days do not always correspond to those of the Talawanda School District. Dates that we are closed when Talawanda is open are marked with an asterisk*. There are other days that Talawanda is closed and we are open.

September 2: Labor Day

October 11-13: Fall Break

November 7: No School (Primary ONLY), Parent-Teacher Conferences*

November /9/9: No School (ALL Classrooms), Parent-Teacher Conferences*

November 27–31: Thanksgiving Break

December 20–January 6: Winter Break*

January 20: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

February 15–18: President's Day Weekend (four days)

March 9: No School, Teacher Work Day

March 19: No School (Primary ONLY), Parent-Teacher Conferences*

March 20: No School (ALL Classrooms), Parent-Teacher Conferences*

March 21–29: Spring Break

April 10: Good Friday

May 20: End of School Picnic/Egg Drop*

May 21-22: Calamity Make Up Days (if needed)

* Notes exceptions to the Talawanda School District Calendar.



Transportation

Arrival and Departure

It is very important that arrival and departure times be closely adhered to. The time before class is vital for teacher preparation to ensure a smooth and productive day. Students are not allowed in the buildings before 8:45am unless they are signed up for Early Care. Students not picked up by the end of car line are sent to Extended Day and will be billed at the drop-in rate.

Student Arrival

Primary children are not allowed to walk by themselves from the parking lot to the classroom. There will be two teachers in car line to meet each student. Younger children will be walked to their classrooms.

Do not leave a child at school unless they have been handed off to a staff member. We ask that parents do not come into the classrooms to talk to teachers before class. After school, the teachers are usually available for short questions. All special daily communications should be written down and given to the greeting teacher, as verbal communications are easily misunderstood or forgotten.

We also ask parents to allow their child the opportunity to carry his/her own coat and bag and to walk into the school under his/her own power (not carried in). ~~If you wish to walk your child to the school, you may park in the Ogle-Young Funeral Home parking lot or along the east side of Westgate Drive in front of the annex only.~~ **On hold until further notice.**

Departure: Parents must pick up their children in the car line. Please adhere to the guidelines in the next section. ~~If you wish to walk your child out of the school, you may park in the Ogle-Young lot and walk in to pick up your child.~~ Any child not picked up by the end of the pick-up period will be entered into the McGuffey afterschool program until their transportation arrives, and parents will be asked to pay the drop-in rate for participation in that program.

Early Pick-Up: If a child needs to leave school prior to the end of the day, an adult must come to the office to sign them out.

Alternate Adults: Even if they are on the approved transportation list we require a written note when your child first arrives to state the name and description of an unfamiliar person whom you desire to pick up your child. Please make sure that this person has a picture identification to show the staff. We will not allow any child to leave with a person we do not know and whom we have not been notified of previously.

Car Lines and Bus Courtesy

In order to ensure the safety of all students, it is important that everyone carefully observe car line guidelines. Because these guidelines evolve each year depending on several variables, please follow staff guidance during car line and see the website for the most up-to-date information. Be sure to pass this information on to anyone who may be transporting your child to or from school.



For car drop-offs and pick-ups during designated times: Cars should pull into the circular driveway, proceed with caution until they reach the child loading zone, and then exit back on Westgate Drive.

General Guidelines

- Please stay alert and follow staff direction.
- Please stay with your car during car line. Do not walk away from your car to retrieve your child as this causes backups in the line.
- Staff will take your child from you or bring your child to you.
- Please consider the people waiting behind you. If you are waiting for your child to come to the car, please **pull forward** as far as you can to allow children to enter cars behind you.
- Staff assisting with car line dismissal may ask drivers of late students to go around the circle again to wait for their student.

Safety Reminders: It is McGuffey policy to require appropriate child restraint equipment when loading in car line. We try to keep an extra child seat and booster seat in the office should there be an emergency and you need to borrow one.

Please be courteous of the bus: If the bus is in front of the school, you may pull around the stopped bus to enter the circular driveway as long as the bus does not have any flashing lights or turn signals on. Proceed with extreme caution when passing the parked bus.

Bus Transportation

The Talawanda School District provides bus transportation to McGuffey for students who reside within the district, beginning in Kindergarten. A transportation form is available on the Talawanda website to begin or update transportation information with the district. Please inform the main office of any changes to your child's transportation. Students ride their local elementary school bus and transfer to a bus designated specifically for McGuffey students.

Due to schedule restrictions, be aware that students taking the bus in the morning typically arrive five minutes after the school day begins. Since students in Grades 7/8 begin classes this year at 8:30am, riding the bus to school is not an option.

Parking

~~During drop-off and dismissal, parents may park in the adjoining lot for the Ogle-Young funeral home next door or in the area directly in front of the annex building to walk up to get your child. We have permission to park at Ogle-Young as long as a funeral is not in progress.~~ **On hold until further notice.**

The entire curb area in front of the school between the funeral home and the exit driveway is a **no parking zone** between 8:00am-4:00pm on school days.

During the day, the school parking lot is limited to staff, authorized personnel, and medical emergencies. There are two parking spaces in the driveway that are parallel to Westgate Drive where visitors and an open area by the garage where parents may park for brief periods during the school day as long as it is **not during pick-up and drop-off periods.**

During special school events in the evenings, please look for instructions from the school about where to park. **Thank you in advance for helping all the residents of Westgate Drive view McGuffey as a good neighbor with excellent parking manners!**



Daily Life at McGuffey

Children's Responsibilities

McGuffey strongly encourages individual responsibility and caring. Students are expected to be responsible for their own learning by being academically honest and conscientious. They are also expected to be responsible in regard to school property, their own belongings, and those of others. Some accidents are unavoidable; responsibility is shared by those involved. Caring includes the recognition of the rights and worth of each individual student, parent, and teacher. Nurturing is encouraged, as is genuine concern for the feelings and needs of others.

McGuffey students clean up after themselves and each other. Older students have daily or weekly chores. They quietly and quickly report problems or concerns such as injured classmates and clogged sinks. Older students look after younger ones at school, on the bus, and outside of school.

Setting Your Child Up for Success

No curriculum can make up for lack of sleep or boundaries at home. Be sure to provide your child with a good night's sleep and be mindful of the effect that screen time can have on their ability to wind down for bed.

Please also be sure that your child has an adequate breakfast. Unless your child participates in our Early Care program, there is not time for them to eat breakfast when they arrive at school. Instruction begins promptly at 9:00am.

Younger children are easily distracted or not hungry first thing in the morning. Many parents find it helpful to leave ten minutes early and take the long way to school to allow their children to eat in the car where they are limited in terms of mobility and distractions.

Areas of Study

In addition to the core content areas of Geography, History, Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science, students will also study Astronomy, Botany, Ecology, Health Sciences, Matter and Energy, Microscopic Study, Practical Life, Technology, and Zoology during their time at McGuffey. Since students spend several consecutive years in the same classrooms, the curriculum in these classrooms operates on a three-year rotation (or two years in the Primary classroom). This allows students to deepen their understanding of core content and connect it to new fields of study.

Snacks, Lunches, and Food at School

Snacks

A healthy snack will be served daily in the morning. Snack will usually consist of a fruit and vegetable but may sometimes include something that is brought in or prepared by students as part of their social studies or practical life curriculum. Primary students will also have a milk or milk alternative available.



Snacks will offer a combination of traditional and diverse foods, perhaps even originating from a different country. The cost for snacks is built into tuition and alleviates the need for parents to take turns bringing snacks into the classroom or, for older students, the need to pack a snack.

Lunches

McGuffey does not provide lunch service; therefore, each student must bring his/her own lunch. Children require a great deal of energy to engage fully in the learning activities of the school day, so only nutritious foods should be packed for lunch and snacks. McGuffey strongly encourages high protein, healthy fats, and complex carbohydrate foods that allow for a longer energy period. Students are not permitted to share items from their lunch.

Please do not pack soda, chewing gum or candy. In addition, please refrain from sending red Jello or any artificially colored drinks. These things in particular are a challenge to get out of carpets.

We ask that parents try to send low sugar desserts if sending a dessert at all. Some families send desserts on certain days of the week instead of making it an everyday thing. These can be homemade or store bought. The Primary Classroom has a no-dessert policy.

In addition to the health, academic and behavior implications, sugary foods can create jealousy, trading and sometimes stealing. Avoiding these foods also helps keep our classrooms and materials clean. There are many low-sugar dessert options. These can include some types of muffins, granola or protein bars, graham crackers and fruit.

We encourage you to involve your child in planning and packing their own lunches at an early age. This helps them have ownership over their lunch—which makes them more likely to eat what is packed—and develops confidence and habits of self-care. You could start with having them plan one aspect of it each week. Set guidelines and then let them find foods they like within those guidelines. Even making dessert and freezing portions ahead of time is a great way to plan ahead and create some important experiences and memories together.

Drink Containers

For Primary and Lower Elementary, please make sure your child's water bottle has a sports cap to prevent spills. This may sound like a small detail but open container drinks tend to spill on other children's lunches, creating a complicated problem to solve in the midst of students' hungriest time of the day.

For safety reasons in Primary and Lower Elementary, we do not allow the use of glass bottles in lunches. Glass drink containers with the silicone covering can be used in the Upper Unit (Grades 4-8).

Food Allergies and Sensitivities

Occasionally, students prepare foods as a learning experience. Be sure that your TADS enrollment information notes food allergies, modified diets, or dietary restrictions. It is your responsibility to inform and educate the staff about your child's needs.



Birthday Celebrations

Our lunch guidelines extend to birthday treats. With 17-28 students in a class, it would be easy to have an extra dessert every week of the school year. The other aspect of this is that celebrations don't always have to be accompanied by sugar.

There are many great alternatives to desserts that can be prepared at home or even purchased when short on time. Muffins, granola bars, graham crackers, cheese and crackers or fruit would all be great alternatives. A fun alternative to a snack could be to share a special skill or talent with the class, or to donate a game or book to the school in honor of your child's birthday.

Look for more specific information about birthday celebrations, food allergies and sensitivities in your classroom section in this handbook.

Lost and Found

Clothing items found at school will be placed in the lost and found in the main office after attempts to identify its owner. **Labeling everything** will help ensure that your child's belongings return to them easily. Buttons, hair clips, etc. will be placed in a small jar. Please periodically check the lost and found box for missing items. Items unclaimed at the end of the school year will be donated to charity.

Illness

If your child contracts a contagious illness (other than a cold), please inform the school office so that other parents may be advised. The state requires us to ask this when you call your child in ill. This includes ailments such as strep, Fifth disease, and contagious skin conditions. Please do not bring a sick child to school. Aside from the possibility that the illness may be transmitted to another child, we expect that every child can participate in all activities on the day's agenda. If your child cannot participate in every possible activity, please do not bring them to school.

It is school policy that a child must not return to school until 24 hours after symptoms subside. This includes fever, vomiting, and diarrhea. Please see page 30 of this handbook for a comprehensive list of symptoms of communicable diseases. If the child is prescribed antibiotics, they must have been on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school.

Internet

McGuffey Montessori is pleased to offer access to the Internet for students in Grades 1-9 on school owned devices. Students using the Internet at school must demonstrate responsible behavior online just as they do in a classroom or other area of the school. The same general rules for behavior and communications apply.

The purpose of school-provided Internet access is to facilitate communications in support of research and education. To remain eligible as users, students must act in a manner consistent with the educational objectives of teachers.

School access to the Internet is a privilege that entails responsibility. The school will take every reasonable precaution to ensure that a student will not access objectionable materials. Teachers



carefully monitor students' use, letting them know how to use computers appropriately and to protect their digital trail. Students are not allowed to use the school Internet on their personal devices. Inappropriate use will result in loss of access for a period of time based on the severity of the abuse and effects on academic performance.

Partners

"Partners" is a McGuffey program pairing older students with younger ones that provides benefits to each group. Older students encounter unique opportunities to learn about learning, child development, and psychology through observation and experience, while younger students receive support in early learning situations, and the opportunity to develop friendships with older, more experienced students.

As partners, the older students get to be the expert, to be looked up to, and have the chance to coach, encourage, and support younger students. With adult supervision and counseling, partners model and mentor organizing, study, game, group, and social skills. Experiences as a mentoring partner reinforce prior learning opportunities for upper unit students, providing chances to revisit old activities or concepts from another vantage point, to learn in greater depth, and to relate to the material with a new set of experiences.

Many who have tried teaching, even briefly, feel that one never understands or learns better than when one teaches. Often the person doing the explaining is the person who is doing the learning, and in a spiral of reinforcement, the role of teaching makes one a better, more organized learner.

Younger partners benefit from the big-sister/big-brother style mentor, someone acting as an anchor and providing support in the challenging but caring environment of McGuffey, and an ally on the journey of learning, growing, and becoming.

Care of the Environment

Tidying up the classroom and helping to keep it organized and maintained is an important part of a Montessori student's learning experience. The goal is for the students to participate in maintaining their classroom as a calm, beautiful, organized, and attractive environment. At the start of each year, the teacher focuses on orientation activities and rules of the classroom that encourage the students to return materials to their proper places and clean their work areas when they have finished an activity.

Additionally, as students move up in the Montessori classroom system, they take on a greater level of responsibility for taking care of their learning environment. Students in Lower Elementary participate in a rotating schedule of daily jobs related to maintaining their classroom, such as cleaning their tables, organizing book shelves, emptying trash cans and recycling bins, and sweeping both their indoor classroom and the sidewalks in their outdoor classroom. Students in Upper Elementary and Middle School also have a rotating schedule of daily jobs, along with taking on tasks that benefit the entire school, such as clearing the trail in the wooded area behind our outdoor classroom and organizing the books in their classroom library, which is open to students from all classes.



Parents at School

Parents are welcome to come visit school and to bring grandparents or special friends to visit when in town. Advance notice will help ensure that the day can accommodate you. This is especially true for the Primary classroom. We ask that you wait until the first month of school is over before coming in to visit or observe. Please communicate with your child's teachers directly about setting this up. The head of school is happy to give your guests a tour of the school when her schedule allows!

For all classrooms it can be a nice treat to have lunch with your child and his/her class. Again, advanced notice is the best way to ensure we can accommodate you.

As you consider McGuffey for future grades, we encourage you to consider observing in older classes once the start of the school year has settled down. You can arrange this with the head of school try to offer formal opportunities for this during the school year.

Through our Family Work Hours program, students should often see their parents or parents of their classmates involved around the school. For more information on the Family Work Hours Program, see page 26.



Communication

Staying Informed: Website/Email

There are many ways we stay in touch with you about the day-to-day events of the school:

- **Monthly email**, from your child's teachers. Once a month, teachers will email a summary of what has happened in the previous month, and what to expect in the coming month.
- **Weekly News Email**, from the Head of School.
- **School blog**, appears on the main page of our website and is available to subscribe to on the home page.
- **Montessori Compass**, a web-based program we use to track your child's progress through the Montessori curriculum.
- **Progress Reports**, available at the end of each semester.
- **Classroom blogs**. The Primary Classroom maintains its own blog that is updated several times a week. This blog is open to the public and can be checked by parents, grandparents and prospective families.

If you do not check email or the website on a daily basis, please contact a teacher to discuss other communication options. It is critical that we establish an effective line of communication to facilitate your McGuffey experience.

Contacting Your Child's Teacher

The most effective form of communication is to contact a teacher via email, which can be easily followed up with an email or phone conversation. Emergency calls and changes to transportation should always be routed through the main office.

Teachers are not available for casual conversation the half hour before and after school. This time is reserved for staff communication and preparation for class. If you would like a conference, please contact the classroom teachers in advance. Advance notice will help staff navigate their own family obligations in the evenings.

Our commitment to the care and instruction of your child does not permit us time to transfer materials or messages from one family to another. The one exception is to hold a car seat for a child who is going home with a friend.

Lines of Communication

Whenever possible, we ask that you follow these guidelines of communicating with the school about your child's experience at McGuffey.

Parent to Teachers

Working directly with your child's teachers is the most effective way to resolve any issue and to build a solid partnership between school and home for future work on behalf of the child. Speaking to anyone else about the issue may be tempting, but it is not in the best interests of your child, the teacher or your child's learning community.



We feel strongly about viewing our mission as a partnership with families. Effective partnerships involve honesty, trust, and patience. Some popular literature asserts that to advocate for their children, parents must take an adversarial relationship toward their school. Our experience is that such an approach is almost always counterproductive.

You are, by definition, your child's advocate. At the same time, the school is also an advocate for your child. We each bring our own view of what is happening and what is in the child's best interest. Teachers' experience and training help them to evaluate and make sense of their observations of your child. Our goal is to work together with you—on the same side of the table rather than from opposing sides—to develop mutual understanding in the interest of your child. This mirrors the approach that our students take in their own problem solving experiences during the school day.

Whenever an outside specialist—such as a speech and language therapist, tutor, educational diagnostician, psychologist, counselor, occupational therapist, or physical therapist— is working with your child or conferring with you, it is beneficial for the school to receive copies of written reports in order to broaden the support network.

Parent (or Teacher) to Head of School

At times either you or your child's teacher may feel the need for an additional perspective on the issues under discussion. If that is the case, either the teacher or the parent may arrange a meeting to include the parent, teacher, and Head of School. In either event, it is expected that the parent and teacher have made a concerted effort to work through the issue before meeting with the Head of School.

As outlined in our enrollment contract, the school reserves the right to discontinue enrollment or not to re-enroll the student if the school reasonably concludes that the actions of a parent (or guardian) make such a positive and constructive relationship impossible or otherwise seriously interferes with the school's accomplishment of its educational purposes.

Changes in Home Situation

Please inform your child's teacher if there is a change in the home situation: death, divorce, relocation, a new baby, extended travel by a parent, or extended visits by friends or relatives. A change at home will often be reflected simultaneously or subsequently in behavior at school. Communication from parents will enable the teachers to help the child adapt as the need arises.

New Parent Orientation

A New Parent Orientation is held in August, prior to the start of school. This meeting allows parents to meet the staff, tour the classroom, review the upcoming year, and ask questions. Parents will be notified of the exact date and time, and all are strongly urged to attend. Since this time is geared for adults, and is not a "hands-on" experience for children, please make arrangements to leave your children with a caregiver.

Before your child starts school, we may also wish to meet with new parents one-on-one for an individual conference. This allows us time to discuss your child and expectations for the coming year. Again, this will be a time for adults only, so please arrange for childcare.



Montessori Compass, Progress Reports, Parent-Teacher Conferences

McGuffey utilizes a web-based program called Montessori Compass to track each child's progress through the Montessori Curriculum. This fall we plan to provide parents with access to this site, allowing you to learn more about what your child is learning throughout each week.

Progress reports are completed within Montessori Compass twice a year in December and May.

The school schedules Parent-Teacher Conferences in November and March, allowing each family to meet with their children's teachers for 20 minutes. In addition, parents and teachers are encouraged to schedule conferences when needed. Either the parents or the teacher(s) may request a conference for a specific purpose or as an aid to continuous communication about students and their progress. When possible, conferences with parents of children new to the school are scheduled to occur before school begins, with follow-up communication by phone, note, email message or conference as required.

On days of Parent-Teacher Conferences, there is no school for students. These dates are indicated on our calendar. On these days, we try to offer childcare to you at no charge during your conference time slot.

Confidentiality

McGuffey staff and volunteers sign a Confidentiality Agreement that restricts them from being able to disclosing student information or school issues. Staff participates in a workshop each year to review this policy so that everyone understands what it means in practice. This document is available for any parent to review in the office.



Staff Code of Conduct

OVERALL MISSION

- My primary focus will always be the wellbeing and best interest of our students and the school's mission.
- I will not discriminate on the basis of all markers of diversity and identity. I will consciously teach children to accept, respect, and celebrate the rich diversity of the larger community.
- I will be reflective and open to feedback about how I can improve my ability to pursue our mission and maintain healthy relationships with my colleagues, our students and their parents.
- I will take responsibility for my professional and personal growth by seeking resources and support for areas that I, or my supervisor, have identified as growth opportunities.

PARENTS

- My communication with parents will contribute to a constructive and positive partnership between the family and the school in support of each child's educational development. I will seek assistance from the Head of School when the issue is more sensitive or if the relationship with the family seems fragile.
- In collaboration with the Head of School, I will promptly consult with parents if we believe a student needs additional support.

COLLEAGUES

- I will follow the established Grievance Procedure in our Employee Handbook if I am having a conflict with another staff member. If a colleague is having a conflict with another colleague, I will encourage him/her to follow the Grievance Procedure.
- I will keep all internal communication and student information, including enrollment information, confidential and will not share this information with parents, board members, former staff members or other parties.
- My public behavior and use of social media reflects on the school and I will consciously work to present our school values of peace and acceptance.
- I will consciously work to build positive and constructive relationships with my colleagues through my communication, work ethic and my follow through on commitments.

Board Approved 6.12.18



School Policies and Programs

How Tuition Works

Tuition Payments

Families who are re-enrolling pay a deposit in April/May to hold a space for their child for the next school year. The balance of tuition may be paid in one, two or ten installments, in addition to the deposit. The ten-installment plan is paid in the months of June through March.

Families enrolling after June pay the deposit and then pay the balance of tuition in one, two or monthly payments across the months remaining through the following March. For example, a family enrolling in August (and not paying in one or two installments) will have their balance divided between monthly tuition payments in August through March.

The tuition deposit is \$600 for full-time students and \$300 for part-time students. This amount is applied to the tuition balance.

Discounts

Families enrolling more than one child receive a sibling discount. This discount is 6% for each additional child enrolled at an equal or lesser rate.

Families paying tuition in one payment receive a \$200 discount for full-time enrollment and \$100 for part-time enrollment. This discount is only available to families who enroll prior to the start of school.

How Payments Work in TADS

McGuffey partners with a third party company to manage tuition. Each family sets up an account and works directly with TADS to make payments and keep their account current.

- All payments are made directly to TADS. No checks for tuition should come to school. McGuffey also uses TADS for Extended Care billing.
- The fee for setting up this tuition account is \$45, payable to TADS. This fee is waived for families paying in one or two installments.
- Payments may be set up for the 1st or the 10th of the month by automatic withdrawal from a bank account or by credit card. TADS will email a reminder for each automatic payment 15 days prior to the transaction.
- A 3% processing fee is applied for paying with a credit card. TADS accepts American Express, Mastercard, Visa and Discover.
- Late payments will result in a \$29 fee from TADS. With automatic payments, this should be a rare issue.

Receipts for Taxes

For tax and childcare receipt purposes, you may generate statements from within your TADS account at any time during the year.



Financial Policies

Clear financial policies are critical to the functioning and sustainability of any organization. As any organization, we have staff salaries and bills to pay as well as buildings to maintain. We operate on a very tight budget, built on each tuition commitment that is made. We work hard to keep costs down and to make wise decisions about resources.

Committing to the Tuition Agreement means that you are committing to paying the entire tuition amount regardless of whether you change your mind about enrolling your child and regardless of which payment plan you select.

Tuition deposits are non-refundable and all enrollment contracts become binding ten days after they are electronically signed in TADS. We cannot emphasize this enough. This is the purpose of a contract. The school has no choice but to move to collections for unpaid balances. Unpaid balances impact the entire school community through reduced abilities to pay for programming.

- All tuition and fees must be paid using TADS, our online tuition management system. The school does not accept checks. This ensures that each family's accounting is fully recorded in TADS.
- Tuition may be made in one, two or ten monthly installments between June and March on either the 1st or 10th of the month. There is a \$45 fee payable to TADS to pay in more than two installments. All payments are to be made using either automatic debit (ACH) or credit card (with an associated fee).
- Tuition deposits are non-refundable and all enrollment contracts become binding ten days after they are electronically signed in TADS.
- Late payments will incur a \$29 fee from TADS. This fee is imposed by TADS, McGuffey does not receive any portion of this.
- Families are expected to keep their tuition/fees accounts up to date. If a family cannot make timely payments they should communicate with the school's business manager immediately.
- Students with tuition accounts more than thirty days in arrears will be withheld from classes until the account is brought up to date.
- Students with Extended Care accounts more than thirty days in arrears will be withheld from the program until the account is brought up to date.
- If a family is delinquent in tuition/fees, all school records are withheld until all payments are received. This includes report cards, access to Montessori Compass and any online grade reporting.
- Delinquent tuition and fees for students who are no longer with the school are referred to a collection agency.
- Families are offered re-enrollment contracts only if they are up-to-date on payments from the current/previous year. This means that the child's place in class is at risk if there are applications for those positions.
- Family Work Hours are to be worked/paid by the semester. At least half of a family's work hours must be recorded or paid by January 5th with the balance worked or paid by June 5th. On January 6th and June 6th, families will be billed for the balance of half of their hours. This amount will be added to their TADS account. Unpaid balances at the end of the year will result in a hold on school records and re-enrollment. The balance will go to collections on July 1st. It is each family's responsibility to seek and fulfill work opportunities throughout the year. Unworked hours are billed at \$20/hour.

Rev 5.24.16



Family Work Hours Program

McGuffey has had a tradition of having families help with the operations of the school. On the surface, Family Work Hours help keep tuition lower by allowing families to provide services that we would otherwise have to pay someone to do.

At a deeper level, Family Work Hours breathes life into the home/school partnership by providing authentic pathways for families to be an integral part of the school. Every act of service to McGuffey models for our children that we all have the ability to impact things that are important to us, and that important things take “work” to maintain. Whether its weeding a flower bed, stuffing envelopes, selling Shop Local Cards or serving on the Board of Trustees, it's all equally valued and all necessary for our school community to thrive. When our school community thrives, so do our children.

This said, we understand that it can be very challenging for many of our families to fit Family Work Hours into their schedules. We recognize that you probably contribute to other organizations to model this service for your children. Therefore we offer the ability for families to “buy out” their Family Work Hours at a rate of \$20 per hour.

Each family is responsible for 30 work hours per year. Families with part-time students will be responsible for a pro-rated amount of hours. The school maintains an ongoing list of available jobs online. You can find a link to this on the Parent Tab of the website.

The responsibility for seeking opportunities to fulfill these hours lies with each family. Some jobs are ongoing, some jobs will be one-time tasks or intermittent. If a parent commits to a job but does not fulfill it in a reasonable time frame, the job may be reassigned.

All hours worked must be recorded in the Log Book located in the kitchen of the Main Building. To record hours in the book, parents can use the online form in the Parent Tab, email Ingrid, or enter it into the book in person. Hours not completed by June 30th for the prior school year are billed to the family. Families who habitually do not complete hours may be billed early for a portion of their hours in future years.

Discipline Policy

Controlling impulses and learning to make appropriate judgments is a part of a child's social and emotional development. Because of this, discipline never embarrasses or ridicules a child, but instead helps them recognize a misstep and often provides an opportunity to make amends. This allows a child to learn from the experience while strengthening their self-esteem. We do not allow the use of corporal or physical punishment.

The following techniques are used:

- Setting clear, consistent, and age appropriate limits in the classroom.
- Encouraging children to take responsibility for their own actions through the use of logical consequences. For example: “When you poured water on the floor, it got wet. Please use a washcloth to clean it up.”
- Using a clear, calm, and low voice with the children to represent the appropriate voice level to be used. This same technique is used to modify language and behavior.
- Redirecting the child to more appropriate activities.



- Helping children to resolve conflict through communication. Facilitating the peace process in a kind and respectful manner allows the children to negotiate a solution that is acceptable to all involved and in alignment with school philosophy.
- If repeated redirection is not effective, children will be asked to work by themselves or to leave the classroom to sit in an adjacent, supervised quiet space until they can follow classroom rules.
- If a child is not controllable within the classroom, they may be taken to the Head of School for additional counseling.

If a child is consistently displaying inappropriate behavior, despite our efforts, we will communicate our concerns to the parent or guardian and work with them to rectify the situation. In the event that the behavior continues, we may ask you to withdraw your child from the school. This policy is in place for the protection of all of our children.

To provide a safe and secure environment for every child, McGuffey's discipline policy adheres to standards set by the State of Ohio and applies to all persons on the premises:

- There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.
- No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
- No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
- No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box, or a similar cubicle.
- No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, or derogatory remarks about himself or his family, or other verbal abuse.
- Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.
- Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten a child.
- Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toilet use.
- Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability, and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a school staff member in a safe, lighted, and well-ventilated space.
- The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the program.

Pupil Safety and Building Security

The safety of each child enrolled at McGuffey Montessori School is the highest priority of the school. All students are instructed in the proper use of indoor and outdoor equipment. Personal safety habits are explained and expected. Classroom environments are cleaned and sanitized regularly in accordance with Ohio Department of Health regulations. We participate in and comply with regular Ohio Department of Health inspections and requirements. Students are supervised at all times.

McGuffey has adopted a number of security measures in order to protect its students. All students arriving after 9:00am must check in at the Office, accompanied by a parent, before coming to class. Also, in compliance with state regulations, the school checks on every absent child whose parent has not contacted the office by 10:30am. All school doors and gates are locked at 9am.

All persons visiting the school during the school day are required to check in with the office to obtain a visitors' pass.



Upon occasion, the office may be empty. If this happens, please follow the directions on the door to the office or wait for a staff member to return. Do not enter a school building unless the office sign indicates to.

The general chaos surrounding the transitions at the start and end of the day makes these the most likely times for simple miscommunications and transportation mix-ups or more serious eventualities such as accidents or abductions. Please help the school personnel to protect your child by strictly observing drop-off and pick-up procedures and by making sure the office is aware of any and all transportation changes in a timely fashion.

Smoking Policy

Smoking is not permitted anywhere on school grounds. This policy applies at all times, not just when school is in session.

Fundraising

At McGuffey, every family is expected to participate in fundraising in some way. We try to make fundraising as easy as possible and have made a concerted effort to find ways to raise funds with the things you are already doing in your everyday life.

Please make an effort to help support McGuffey through these programs! You can find more information on our website: www.mcguffeymontessori.com/fundraising.

Health and Dental Forms

McGuffey follows the laws of the State of Ohio and the adopted policies of the Talawanda Board of Education regarding health and immunization. The school maintains an immunization record, physical examination record, and dental records for each student.

All preschoolers and Kindergarteners are required to have a physical examination and signed Health and Dental form. All students who are new to McGuffey require the same forms as well.

Starting in Grade 1, the school only needs to receive updated vaccination records. Periodic health and dental examinations are strongly recommended for continuing students. Pursuant to state law, we communicate updated information about student vaccinations each fall.

Families who do not vaccinate their child need to submit a letter for our files indicating the reason. Ohio allows exemption based on religious, medical or philosophical reasons.

Health and Dental forms can be found on our website for use throughout the year when you are taking your child to their check-ups. If these forms are required for your child, they are available through your TADS account.

Required Health and Dental forms and Vaccination updates should be uploaded directly to TADS.



Medication Storage and Administration

McGuffey Montessori School designates the Office Manager and assigned parent volunteers or teachers to provide health care to ill or injured students. McGuffey further designates these personnel to administer authorized medication to students, in compliance with ORC Section 3313.713 as set forth below.

Prescription Medication

No drug prescribed for a student shall be administered to a student until the following occurs:

1. The parent must submit a completed Medication Administration Form, which includes essential information about the medication and the administering physician's signature. This form is available from the school and on our website (www.mcguffeymontessori.com) and includes information about the name of the drug; the dosage, dates, and times of administration; any adverse reactions that should be reported to the prescriber; contact information for the prescriber; and any special instructions for administration.
2. The drug is received by the person authorized to administer the drug to the student for whom the drug is prescribed in the container in which it was dispensed by the prescriber or a licensed pharmacist.
3. The parent, guardian, or other person having care or charge of the student must submit a revised statement signed by the prescriber to MMS if any of the information provided by the prescriber pursuant to #1 of this section changes.
4. If a drug is to be administered to a student, MMS shall acquire and retain copies of the paperwork required in section #1. Copies will be given to (in the case of the Office Manager) or shared with the person authorized to administer drugs to the student.

Over-the-counter medication

When children require over the counter medication to be given at school, the following procedure is to be followed:

1. Over-the-counter medication for one-time, occasional, or continued use must be transported to the main office by a parent or caregiver. It must be in a suitable container (preferably the original container) that is labeled with the student's name, name of medication, dosage, and times of administration. It will be stored in a locked cabinet in the main office or in a locked box in the refrigerator, if necessary, and will be dispensed by the office manager, a teacher, or afternoon office person.
2. No medication, either over-the-counter or prescription, is to be transported to or from school by a student.
3. Medications will be stored in a locked cabinet in the main office or in a locked box in the refrigerator, if necessary.
4. It is the responsibility of the parent to pick up unused medication.
5. **McGuffey staff are not allowed to administer over-the-counter medications that have not been provided by the parent or guardian.**
6. Persons who are authorized and administer drugs to students and who have a copy of the most recent information required in the statements above prior to administering the drug cannot be held liable in damages for administering or failing to administer drugs unless they act in a manner which constitutes gross negligence or wanton or reckless misconduct. §RC 3313.713(F)



Communicable Diseases and Conditions

When a communicable disease or condition is identified, a sick child will be isolated in the office or in the main building. The child will be evaluated and observed. The parent(s) or guardian are contacted and asked to remove the child from school. There is a communicable disease chart located in the main office.

A child with any of the following signs or symptoms will be considered to have a communicable disease or condition and must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to school:

- Diarrhea (3 or more loose stools within a 24-hour period)
- Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make whooping sounds
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Redness of the eye or eyelid, thick and purulent discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching, or eye pain
- Temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit
- Untreated infected skin patches, unusual spots or rashes
- Unusually dark urine and/or grey or white stool
- Stiff neck with an elevated temperature
- Evidence of lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestations
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Vomiting more than one time or when accompanied by any other symptom of illness
- Child is irritable, continuously crying or requires more attention than we can provide without jeopardizing the health and safety of the other children

Mildly Ill Children

Any child who does not feel well enough to participate in the school activities but is not exhibiting any of the symptoms listed above will be asked to rest in the office for a period of time. If the circumstances don't improve, the child's parent will be called and together with the office staff will determine if the parent will remove the child from school.

Emergency Changes to the School Schedule

While McGuffey consults with Talawanda on weather and calamity closings and delays, we do not necessarily follow their decision. The head of school makes the final decision using the best information to which we have access.

Talawanda has many more factors to consider and has to make a decision for all buildings and start times based on conditions well before 5am. McGuffey's later start time allows us more latitude to allow for roads to be cleared or weather patterns to become firmer.

We use email, a group texting service and our website to communicate a delay or closing. Decisions are typically made by 6:30am, sometimes the night before. Delays may turn into closings depending on the conditions.

School Delay

When necessary, we will use a 90-minute delay to allow for improvements in road safety or more clarity about the forecast.



School Delay Impact on Early Care

Early Care may be canceled if there is a school delay. Our ability to provide before school care on these days depends on the ability of Early Care staff to travel safely and flex their work hours. Availability of Early Care will be included in the announcements about a delay.

School Delay Impact on Wednesday Early Dismissal

If a delay occurs on a Wednesday, the early dismissal usually scheduled for that day is cancelled and school is dismissed at the usual 3:30pm time.

Emergency Early Dismissal

Early dismissals happen rarely, but when they do, we do our utmost to reach every family by email, telephone or text before they occur. Please be sure that your emergency numbers are up-to-date and correct. If weather conditions are deteriorating, local radio stations broadcast early-dismissal information continuously.

McGuffey Calamity

In the unlikely event that our school experiences a calamity unique to us, we will notify parents by email and group text, depending on the time of day such information and decisions need to be shared. It is very important that you keep us informed during the year with up to date contact information.

If we must, for any reason, leave the school grounds with your child, we will leave a note taped to the inside of the window on the front door telling you where your child has been taken. If you cannot get to the school, call Nancy Hawthorne (593-3055) or Jennie Wright (523-7742). If you are unable to reach us, you may call the Oxford Police, as we will have advised them as to the whereabouts of any child we take away from school.

Emergency Announcements

Parents will be contacted by phone, group text, or email message if any emergency situation develops. Please be sure that the phone numbers and email addresses listed on the white emergency form are kept up-to-date. Don't forget to inform us of changes to your contact information during the year.

Outside Resources

Parenting and supporting healthy development is a journey that brings many challenges. One of the many gifts of parenting is that these challenges often provide us important opportunities to grow.

Few of us are fully equipped to handle the family stressors of today using the tools we received in our own development. We encourage families to seek a wide range of outside support along this journey. Support can take the form of books and articles, professional counselors, speech, occupational and physical therapists, and even a nutritionist's help in supporting healthy eating habits.



Below are a variety of outside resources that you may find helpful. We are always expanding this list so please feel free to pass along your own recommendations.

If you would like to speak with a family that has used these resources, please contact the Head of School for more information.

Counselors/Social Workers

Montessori principles call for honoring and respecting the individuality and sensitivities of children. To understand and respect developmental stages and behaviors, we regularly recommend counseling to families. If we make this suggestion to you and your family, please know that this is not unusual. We take the view that we can take care of our emotional selves just as we take care of our physical selves. Sometimes, working with a professional counselor or social worker can keep a small issue from becoming large enough to derail success later.

As children go through the normal challenges of growing up, there will undoubtedly be crises to address. Having a relationship established with a counselor before a crisis hits means not losing time to filling someone in on your history and, in many cases, may avert a full-blown crisis from occurring in the first place. We have compiled a list of possible local resources but recommend you find a competent professional that you trust.

Mia Biran, PhD
(513) 360-4955

Andrew Garrison
Sees adolescents
(513) 523-6698

Barbara Brewer, PhD
Late adolescence
(513) 280-8111

David Loy
Sees adolescents
(513) 523-6698

Susan Callan, LISW
Sees patients age 12 and up
(513) 310-6689

Patrick Nelson, PhD
Specializes in adolescent counseling
(513) 523-0197

Barb Chenault, LISW
(513) 523-5897

Susan Vallade, LISW
(513) 523-4929

Susan Fortney-Harlan, LISW
(513) 523-1706

Speech Therapy

Miami University Speech and Hearing Clinic
(513) 529-1809

Occupational and Physical Therapists

For a variety of reasons, the Oxford area has often lacked a Pediatric Occupational Therapist. The connection between a child's physical coordination and their brain development is remarkable. Several of our families have used the following resources over the years for assessment, sensory integration, attention issues, etc:

Cincinnati Occupational Therapy Institute
(513) 791-5688

Triangle Therapy Services, Eaton
(937) 456-6505



Attention Deficit Issues

ADD and ADHD have become common diagnoses in today's world and there are a wide variety of paths to consider. In addition to consulting your pediatrician, below are a few of the resources that our families have used with success:

The Affinity Center, Cincinnati
(513) 984-1000

Susan Vallade, LISW, Oxford
(513) 523-4929

Functional Vision Assessments

Several of our families have found great benefit in having their children undergo a "functional vision" exam. This exam can identify underlying vision causes for delayed reading or physical coordination.

Nova Vision Care (Dayton area)
(937) 320-0300



Extended Care

McGuffey Montessori is pleased to offer before school and after school care. Our staff knows our students and our philosophies about working with children will guide them to activities of their choice. We occasionally offer clubs integrated into our after school program. Clubs have included Spanish, Writing and Guitar. The office handles all scheduling for Extended Care and clubs.

Early Care

Only available for Kindergarten through Grade 9

7:30–8:45am

Semester \$575

Breakfast ends 8:15am

Weekly Reserved \$40 / Daily Reserved \$12

Drop-In \$16

- Hot organic oatmeal with healthy toppings and hard-boiled organic eggs offered daily.
- Option to bring in own breakfast items to supplement our offerings. Microwave is available for use.
- Breakfast ends at 8:15am.

Extended Day

Separate Programs for Primary and Grades 1-9

3:30–5:30pm daily

Semester \$780

2:45-5:30pm Wednesdays

Weekly Reserved \$62

Daily Reserved \$17 / Wednesday \$23

Drop-In \$22 / Wednesday \$28

- Students should bring extra food in their lunch to use as a snack during extended day.
- Some parents find it helpful to label a snack in their child’s lunchbox specifically for Extended Day.
- Spending time outside is strongly encouraged throughout the year except on days when the playground or temperature is untenable.
- Personal electronics may not be used in Extended Day.
- We will monitor the need for homework support for the older students as the year progresses. Staff is aware how helpful it is on everyone’s evenings if homework can be started and even completed before students are picked up to go home.
- Families with more than one child enrolled in Extended Care will receive a 40% discount on the second and third child’s non-semester Extended Care. Semester rates will be discounted 20%.
- Extended Day will not be offered the two nights of our school musical. Students will need to be picked up at the regular dismissal time. This will allow families and staff time before the show.

Before leaving Extended Day, children will be asked to put anything away that they were playing with. By 5:10pm all students are asked to begin cleaning up and getting ready to leave.

Extended Day is over promptly at 5:30pm. Please arrive in time to sign your child out, collect their things and leave by 5:30pm. Staff needs to leave on time for other commitments. If an emergency occurs and causes you to be delayed, call the school. Regardless of a phone call, late pick-ups will result in \$15 fee plus \$1 for each minute past 5:30pm. Families who are habitually late will be asked to find alternative after-school care for the remainder of the year.



Both Early Care and Extended Day

Just like during the school day, no personal toys should be brought (books are okay).

Semester Rates

This is the least expensive option bringing early care to an average hourly rate of \$5.50 and extended day to an average hourly rate of under \$4.50, both competitive hourly rates. Each semester is billed in five equal monthly installments through TADS (August-December and January-May). Families using this option will sign a separate contract in the fall. The semester rates cannot be pro-rated.

Reserved Rates

The reserved rates apply when you have reserved space by 3pm on the Friday prior by calling or e-mailing the office. Advanced notice allows us to plan for food and staffing levels. By receiving the reserved rate, you commit to paying for care on those days whether or not your child attends.

Billing

Families are invoiced monthly using their TADS tuition account at the end of each billing period. Students may be withheld from participating in Extended Care programs if their account is more than 30 days past due.



Primary Classroom

Montessori for Ages 3-6

Children between the ages of 3 and 6 enter a period of what Maria Montessori called conscious absorption. Although they are still very much absorbed in the immediate environment, children at this stage start to focus inward, become aware of choices they can make, and want to make these choices. These children are drawn to whatever objects and actions allow them to achieve personal satisfaction and develop personal interests and skills. One important goal of Montessori early childhood programs is to follow each child's lead and help the child develop into a self-confident, competent individual.

Over many years of working with children, Montessori herself and many other Montessori teachers have found that after some time in a carefully planned and managed environment, most children begin to approach their studies with enthusiasm, work with little direction, treat others in a respectful way, and work quietly on their own or with others. The Montessori word for this mental state is normalization. To facilitate this normalization, teachers gradually give children more and more practice making their own choices. Teachers observe each child's activities carefully and regularly so that they know when each child is ready to move on to something else, and they offer frequent presentations, helping children to discover their interests.

Because Montessori believed that birth-6 was such a crucial stage for the development of the conscious mind, Montessori early childhood programs pay particular attention to providing an environment that allows children to concentrate and to experience certain kinds of consistent behavior from their teachers. The Montessori environment provides sensory and motor experiences that lay the subconscious groundwork for developing academic skills. For example, three-year-olds working with a specific material called metal insets develop the fine motor skills they will need later when they become interested in printing and writing.

The period of time from birth-6 is also characterized by certain sensitive periods, periods of time when, given ample opportunities, children are absorbed by and focus their attentions and energies on one thing, sometimes seeming driven to develop a certain skill to the exclusion of all others. Other terms for these periods are "critical periods" and "windows of opportunity." Montessori believed that children could learn more quickly and easily in a sensitive period than at any other time—again, if given opportunity and guidance. Rather than punish such absorption or try to redirect it, Montessori advocated making it possible for children to follow their inclinations.

First Days of School

Thank you in advance for not coming into the classroom at the beginning of the school day. Should your child be hesitant to leave you when taking him/her to the classroom, be confident that a child will almost always become happy within minutes after a parent has left, especially when s/he becomes involved with the interesting activities in the school. The staff is trained to meet your child's needs with great sensitivity. If your child continues crying more than 15 minutes after you have left, we promise to call you.



Setting Your Child Up for Success

Be sure to provide your child with a good night's sleep. As a rule of thumb, a preschool child who has to be at school by 8:45am should be in bed by 8:45pm.

An adequate breakfast sets your child up for a successful day in school. Instruction begins at 9:00am, therefore we are unable to provide time and space for children to eat breakfast in our classroom. Children this age are easily distracted or not hungry first thing in the morning. Many parents find it helpful to leave ten minutes early and take the long way to school to allow their children to eat in the car where they are limited in terms of mobility and distractions.

Daily News (Sharing)

Each day during lunch, children will have an opportunity to share "news." This could include photographs, found items, a story, or something that relates to what we are studying in class. If there is a physical item to share, we ask that the child place it in the News Bin, where it will be safe until lunch. Although we know our students are excited about their toys, we ask that those items not be brought to share.

Kindermusik

Elizabeth Taylor, a certified Kindermusik teacher, teaches music to our class! For those of you unfamiliar with Kindermusik (www.kindermusik.com), it is a nationally known music curriculum for children. Kindermusik is often paired with the Montessori curriculum because of their similar ideologies. Each family will receive access to the Kindermusik website where new downloadable music and materials will be available each month.

Given the importance of music in children's development and education, many parents have asked if pre-school or kindergarten is the right age to begin private music lessons. The answer is no, particularly because your child receives Kindermusik classes each week. Kindermusik is a music lesson. The parent's job is to practice Kindermusik 1–3 times each week with their child through the digital materials; download the music to listen to in the car, dance and sing along, watch the videos and play the games with each month's Kindermusik download. The age to start private music lessons would be first to third grade.

Kindermusik is available to students who attend full-time or Monday-Wednesday-Friday.

Lunch

See additional information on page 18.

Please do not pack soda, chewing gum or candy. In addition, please refrain from sending red Jello or any artificially colored drinks. These things in particular are a challenge to get out of carpets.

The Primary Classroom has a no-dessert policy. In addition to the health, academic and behavior implications, sugary foods can create jealousy, trading and sometimes stealing. Avoiding these foods also helps keep our classrooms and materials clean. There are many low-sugar dessert options. These can include some types of muffins, granola or protein bars, graham crackers and fruit.



We encourage you to involve your child in planning and packing their own lunches at an early age. This helps them have ownership over their lunch—which makes them more likely to eat what is packed—and develops confidence and habits of self-care. You could start with having them plan one aspect of it each week. Set guidelines and then let them find foods they like within those guidelines. Even making dessert and freezing portions ahead of time is a great way to plan ahead and create some important experiences and memories together.

Drink Containers

For Primary, please make sure your child's **non-glass water bottle has a sports cap** to prevent spills. This may sound like a small detail but open container drinks tend to spill on other children's lunches, creating a complicated problem to solve in the midst of students' hungriest time of the day.

Snacks

A healthy snack will be served daily in the morning. Snacks will offer a combination of traditional and diverse foods, perhaps even originating from a different country. The cost for snacks is built into tuition and alleviates the need for parents to take turns bringing snacks into the classroom.

There will be a complete snack, containing items from two of the four food groups, such as: Fruit/Vegetable group + Milk or a milk alternative group = Complete snack

All snacks will take into consideration allergies and food restrictions within the class.

Clothing

The school encourages students to wear comfortable, serviceable clothing, worn in layers to peel off or put on as temperature changes require. Play clothes are encouraged—simple, washable, sturdy, and easy to manage. When selecting pants for children, check to see if the child can fasten and unfasten them without help. Overalls are not recommended. Children should always try the zipper or buttons on a coat before parents purchase it. Some zippers and buttons are frustrating to the children and almost impossible for even an adult to manage. Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes are recommended. Please select shoes that will allow a child to participate in all aspects of school activity. Ideally, these are easy slip on/off shoes. No laces if your child cannot tie them his/herself.

We recommend allowing your child to select his/her own garments to wear to school, within limits. This can best be done with parents the night before school. Low coat rods and orderly drawers assist the child in developing their independence.

The Primary classroom is not the best environment for “fancy clothes.” Although we do our best to minimize the mess, accidents do happen. Dirt and mud are often a byproduct of exploration, which should be considered when selecting which clothes to send to school.

If they choose, children will go outdoors in most weather, so clothing for exceptionally warm or cold days is important. On cold days, mittens or gloves and a hat are essential.



Please label every item of clothing your child could possibly take off at school, or you may never see it again! We can't emphasize that enough. Every year, despite our best efforts, we end up donating some remarkable clothing to those in need.

Birthdays

Children's birthdays may be celebrated on the actual birth date or the closest school day to it. We have a special ceremony we do for children on their birthday, and parents are encouraged to attend. Parents may bring simple treats that are easy for Primary students to manage. Soda, ice cream, candy, and icing are not allowed. Please feel free to speak to a teacher if you are uncertain about a particular treat.

You also might consider an alternative to food, such as a favorite sticker, a special pencil or small token. Please don't prepare "goodie bags" as it sets a precedent that not all families may wish or be able to comply with.

If you are planning a home party for your child, please do not distribute invitations or thank you cards at school. Likewise, if your child is attending a party after school, please do not send gifts to school with your child. In the past, we have found that these situations can be upsetting for those who are not invited. This can create hurt feelings and sad children. It would be more appropriate to mail invitations and plan weekend parties. The online Parent Directory will be the best resource for contacting other parents in the class.



Holidays

Because we have children from many faiths, we will not celebrate specific holidays in our classroom. We will study holidays as a part of a cultural exploration, but we will not decorate the classroom or plan celebrations around them.

Instead we will center our class gatherings and celebrations around the change of the seasons, and the sentiment that might accompany that time of year. In the fall we will celebrate the beauty of autumn and the value of thankfulness. In the winter we will explore giving and sharing. In the spring we will investigate the new life that surrounds us in abundance.

The exception to this is Valentine's Day. See Annual Events for more information.

Missing Objects

Please check your child's pockets daily (and subtly) for unusual (hard-to-replace) items. Sometimes things disappear (i.e., puzzle pieces, beads, rocks, sound-bucket objects, number tiles, labels). Never feel embarrassed about returning one of our odds and ends. The children are very honest. Sometimes they simply desire to take part of their school home with them.

Observation

Parents are welcome to visit our class in session any time after September (allowing the child a month to acclimate without distractions).

Observation in the classroom may be done by appointment and prior arrangement. Guidelines for observing in the classroom:

1. A limited number of visitors are allowed at any one time. A chair will be placed at the perimeter of the room for observation.
2. Talking is discouraged, so that the children in the classroom will not be disturbed.
3. Do not engage the children in conversation. If they inquire about your presence there, simply explain to them that you are visiting the class today.
4. If a parent has questions pertaining to his/her child's progress, the child's teacher should be called to schedule a personal conference.
5. We suggest you observe both our indoor and outdoor classrooms.
6. What to look for: joy of learning, respect, concentration, independence, happiness, ability to choose, and confidence.



Lower Elementary Classroom

Montessori for Ages 6-9

Children under six often prefer to work on their own or alongside others. However, children in the typical Lower Elementary classroom gravitate outward toward others in their immediate environment. Around the age of six, children start to become very interested in their classmates and in learning how to get along with them. From 6-9, many students in a Montessori program start choosing to work with classmates on projects of mutual interest.

As they begin to look outward from themselves, children also begin to show genuine interest in others, in their local community, the people who live around them and with whom they interact regularly, and their culture, the attitudes, beliefs, practices, customs, and social behavior of the people around them. Montessori elementary programs take advantage of this inclination by providing a wide range of opportunities for students to explore their culture through the study of history, geography, language arts, and the sciences.

This stage of development is also very affected by a sensitive period for the imagination. Imagination refers to creative ideas based on what is real—in effect, seeing the possibilities in every experience. Children at this stage can sometimes seem to be “grabbed” by their imaginations, which fuel enthusiasm for doing projects in which the children are interested. This is a major reason Montessori elementary programs include the telling of the Five Great Lessons, a series of five imaginative stories that give students an overall impression of the grand topics of the universe, the earth, and life on earth. Spanning about 15 billion years, the Five Great Lessons introduce students to the universe by stirring their imaginations and initiating their exploration of important questions. The Five Great Lessons inspire students to explore other subjects in the Montessori curriculum, such as history, geography, math, sciences, and language arts. These Five Great Lessons are often described as the heart of the Montessori elementary curriculum.

The Lower Elementary curriculum is a rich one, inspiring students to explore and give full range to their natural enthusiasm for learning. Because the children’s experiences at this level lay the groundwork for skills needed at the next level, the Lower Elementary curriculum includes ample opportunity to explore topics and present information through research, collaboration, writing and creation.



Setting Your Child Up for Success

Be sure to provide your child with a good night's sleep. Students who are tired during the school day are less likely to absorb the maximum amount of information available to them.

An adequate breakfast sets your child up for a successful day in school. Instruction begins at 9:00am, therefore we are unable to provide time and space for children to eat breakfast in our classroom. Children this age are easily distracted or not hungry first thing in the morning. Many parents find it helpful to leave ten minutes early and take the long way to school to allow their children to eat in the car where they are limited in terms of mobility and distractions.

Clothing

The school encourages students to wear comfortable, serviceable clothing, worn in layers to peel off or put on as temperature changes require. Play clothes are encouraged—simple, washable, sturdy, and easy to manage. When selecting pants for children, check to see if the child can fasten and unfasten them without help. Overalls are not recommended. Children should always try the zipper or buttons on a coat before parents purchase it. Some zippers and buttons are frustrating to the children and almost impossible for even an adult to manage.

Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes are recommended. Please select shoes that will allow a child to participate in all aspects of school activity. **Each child should have a pair of outdoor shoes, a pair of rain boots, and a pair of indoor shoes to keep at school.** Students are asked not to wear their outdoor shoes when they are working in the classroom, so a pair of slippers or similarly styled shoes are convenient and helpful. Students are never permitted to be barefooted inside the classroom.

We recommend allowing your child to select his/her own garments to wear to school, within limits. This can best be done with parents the night before school. Low coat rods and orderly drawers assist the child in developing their independence.

Please keep in mind that, although we do our best to minimize the mess, accidents do happen. Dirt and mud are often a byproduct of exploration, which should be considered when selecting which clothes to send to school.

We will be going outdoors every day unless the weather is severe, so clothing for exceptionally warm or cold days is important. On cold days, mittens or gloves and a hat are essential, and a scarf is recommended.

Please label every item of clothing your child could possibly take off at school, or you may never see it again! We can't emphasize that enough. Every year, despite our best efforts, we end up donating some remarkable clothing to those in need.

Weekly Sharing

Each week, we will be encouraging a different student to share something with the rest of the class. This could include photographs, found items, a story, or something that relates to what we are studying in class. We will be preparing a schedule and sending it to parents so that you know when your child is scheduled to share. If a student wants to share his or her pet, please



contact his or her teachers first in order to ensure that we are able to accommodate this, and in order to make a plan for getting the pet to and from school in a timely manner.

Birthdays

Children's birthdays may be celebrated on the actual birth date or the closest school day to it. We have a special ceremony we do for children on their birthday, and parents are encouraged to attend. Parents may bring simple treats. Soda, ice cream, candy and icing are not allowed. Please feel free to speak to a teacher if you are uncertain about a particular treat.

You may consider an alternative to food such as a favorite sticker, a special pencil, a small token or a book for the class. Please do not prepare "goodie bags" as it sets a precedent that not all families may wish or be able to comply with.

If you are planning a home party for your child, please do not distribute invitations or thank you cards at school. Likewise, if your child is attending a party after school, please do not send gifts to school with your child. In the past, we have found these situations can be upsetting for those who are not invited. This can create hurt feelings and sad children. It would be more appropriate to mail invitations and plan weekend parties. The online parent directory will be the best resource for contacting other parents in the class.

Holidays

Because we have children from many faiths, we will not celebrate specific holidays in our classroom. We will study holidays as a part of a cultural exploration, but we will not plan celebrations around them. The exception to this is Valentine's Day. See Annual Events for more information.

During the winter season, we will study several of the various holidays that families celebrate at this time. If you celebrate a specific holiday within your family and would like to share related information or traditions with the class, you may contact your child's teachers and ask about arranging a visit to share this holiday with the class.

Work Periods

Each day, students spend their mornings in a combination of small group presentations and engaged in individual work time. During a work period, students may choose to do any of the following: complete activities (also called "works") from their weekly work plans, or from the available works on the classroom shelves; engage in silent, individual reading; or prepare and eat a snack. Teachers will also use work periods to invite a student, or a group of students, to learn a new activity through an individual or small group presentation. These presentation times are scheduled. Some activities require students to work on their own, while other activities permit students to work with a partner or a small group if desired.

By the time they begin a Lower Elementary program, most children can sit still and concentrate for short periods of time, about 15-20 minutes. If they have received opportunities to develop and practice their ability to concentrate, as they do in a Montessori program, many children can focus for an hour and more doing a task or project that interests them.



Maria Montessori noticed that after a prolonged period of concentration or when preparing to resume a project, children seemed to seek out an apparently unrelated activity, such as going outside and swinging, watering plants, or making a snack. Studies since Montessori's time have shown that such "downtimes" spent in a relaxing activity allow children to concentrate better, reducing physical tension and invigorating the mind. Researchers have also found that when left to choose their level of activity, children are naturally self-regulating and that a temporary inability to concentrate is often a sign of a need for a change. For these reasons, our classroom schedules a three-hour work period every day, and provides ample opportunities for individual choice within this period of time.

Snacks

A healthy snack will be served daily in the morning. Students choose when, or if, to serve themselves a snack each morning. Each snack in our classroom typically consists of a fruit, vegetable and a choice of milk. The cost for snacks is built into tuition and alleviates the need for parents to take turns bringing snacks into the classroom or packing something extra in students' lunches.

All snacks take into consideration allergies and food restrictions within the class.

Parents in the Classroom

Parents may assist our classroom with a variety of activities. We appreciate your expertise on topics in our curriculum and welcome your participation in your child's education. Please let us know if you are interested in presenting a topic to our class!



Upper Elementary and Middle School Classroom

Montessori for Ages 9-15

During the Upper Elementary years, children are characterized by their **capacity for huge mental growth** and their **ability to study in great detail subjects that they are drawn to explore**. The Upper Elementary curriculum challenges the student in all subjects—not only focusing on the **acquisition of information**, but adding a layer of **thoughtfulness** to every subject and inspiring the student to **think and question**. Their work in the classroom continues to encourage students to explore, giving students increasing opportunities to immerse in subjects of interest and carry out multi-layered research projects.

With their wide-ranging interests and mental development, Upper Elementary students sometimes find the classroom confining, even with the richest curriculum and the best materials. Going Out activities—small group field trips initiated by the students—and class trips, such as the annual trip to the Glen Helen Nature Preserve in Yellow Springs, Ohio (see p. 47), give these older students invaluable opportunities to reach beyond the classroom in pursuit of subjects that interest them. Through these opportunities, Upper Elementary students encounter a broader range of opinion and experience than is available within the school community itself. Any new perspectives can then be shared in class to ensure that bridges built between the classroom and the outside world are healthy and respectful. These students will be well prepared as they move into Middle School, a time when many of them will be drawn to take action and make a difference in the world.

During the Middle School years, when children are typically between the ages of 12 and 15, they begin to **experience rapid growth at all levels** and many changes. In some ways, children at this age have similar characteristics to children under three—they can be rather self-absorbed, they need adequate food and sleep to support their rapid physical growth, and they need time to just “be.” This is a time where youth both seek **independence from family**, which represents the known, **and seek connections in the wider world**.

Even more than in the elementary years, most youth in Middle School seek out the company of others their own age and prefer to carry out meaningful group projects. They are naturally drawn to causes that involve principles of fairness and justice. When offered the choice, many of these students enthusiastically take on projects that allow them not just to collect facts and analyze information, but to take some kind of action. With advanced skills and experiences in research, collaboration, and self-directed learning, students in a Montessori Middle School class will be **well prepared for the transition to high school**.

School Community

The basic tenets of respect, responsibility and cooperation are expectations across all classes. We make time in our school day to help develop each child’s ability to participate in our community. Our success will depend on your support of these efforts at home.



Setting Your Child Up for Success

Be sure to provide your child with a good night's sleep. Students who are tired during the school day are less likely to absorb the maximum amount of information available to them.

An adequate breakfast sets your child up for a successful day in school. Instruction begins at 9:00am, therefore we are unable to provide time and space for children to eat breakfast in our classroom. Children this age are easily distracted or not hungry first thing in the morning. Many parents find it helpful to leave ten minutes early and take the long way to school to allow their children to eat in the car where they are limited in terms of mobility and distractions. The Center for Disease Control recommends that children in this age range get between 8.5 and 9.15 hours of sleep per night.

Clothing

The school encourages students to wear comfortable, serviceable clothing, worn in layers to peel off or add as temperature changes require.

Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes are recommended. Please select shoes that will allow a student to participate in all aspects of school activity. **Each student should have a pair of outdoor shoes, a pair of rain boots, and a pair of indoor shoes to keep at school.** Students are asked not to wear their outdoor shoes when they are working in the classroom, so a pair of slippers or similarly styled shoes are convenient and helpful. Students are never permitted to be barefoot inside the classroom.

Please keep in mind that, although we do our best to minimize the mess, accidents do happen. Dirt and mud are often a byproduct of exploration, which should be considered when selecting which clothes to send to school.

We will be going outdoors for recess every day unless the weather is severe, so clothing for exceptionally warm or cold days is important. On cold days, mittens or gloves and a hat are essential, and a scarf is recommended.

Please label every item of clothing your child could possibly take off at school, or you may never see it again! We can't emphasize that enough. Every year, despite our best efforts, we end up donating some remarkable clothing to those in need.

Weekly Sharing

The Upper Unit version of sharing news (Montessori's show-and-tell) is called Weekly Sharing. Each student will have a chance to share something they really enjoy with the whole Upper Unit, and to talk about their topic in depth. Each student will share once during the school year.

Good topics for sharing include sports or other after-school activities that your child participates in, a trip your child has taken and what they learned from it, a hobby your child loves, activities your child is involved in that help others, a profile of a relative or other significant person in your child's life, or any similar topic.



Your student is encouraged to bring objects, photos, video clips, and any other items that will help them share their topic. They will have about 5-6 minutes to talk, and about the same amount of time to answer questions. Some guidelines for parents:

- Weekly Sharing talks should represent your child's own work as much as possible. We encourage you to support your child with options and resources. However, this is intended to be a child-led project, and your child will benefit most from the whole process if they plan their presentation on their own.
- Please DO remind your student about their sharing day as it approaches, and help them remember to bring their items in when it is their turn.
- If your child wants to share a video clip or other digital media, please contact us to find out how to send it in.
- Please let us know if you are unsure about a topic, or if you have any other questions.

Birthdays

Children's birthdays may be celebrated on the actual birth date or the closest school day to it. Students may bring simple treats. Soda, ice cream and candy are not allowed. Please feel free to speak to a teacher if you are uncertain about a particular treat. We have a range of food allergies including a severe nut allergy and peanut allergy.

Holidays

Because we have children from many faiths, we will not celebrate specific holidays in our classroom. We will study holidays as a part of a cultural exploration, but we will not plan celebrations around them. The exception to this is Valentine's Day. See Annual Events for more information.

During the winter season, we will study several of the various holidays that families celebrate at this time. If you celebrate a specific holiday within your family and would like to share related information or traditions with the class, you may contact your child's teachers and ask about arranging a visit to share this holiday with the class.

Glen Helen Outdoor Education Center

Each year, students in Grades 4-8 take a four-day class trip to the Glen Helen Outdoor Education Center in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Glen Helen's programs immerse our students in the natural world, and allow them to explore, discover, and develop an appreciation for nature. In trail groups, students will venture into the 1,000 acre outdoor classroom, connected by a 25-mile network of footpaths, with their teachers and Glen Helen's Outdoor Education staff, where they will learn about the environment and how to protect it. They will see spectacular wildflowers, 400 year-old trees, limestone cliffs with waterfalls and overhangs, and the beautiful yellow spring for which the town is named. Students leave Glen Helen with a greater bond with each other, more tolerant and more trusting, and more willing to work together.



Homework

One of the responsibilities students learn to take on as they move from Lower Elementary to the Upper Unit is having regular homework assignments. Not all Montessori schools assign homework, and even those that do implement homework will often assign a significantly smaller amount than a typical public school. In our daily structure students' time is used efficiently during the school day, requiring less need for work at home.

Each student has a folder in their backpack or bag labeled HOMEWORK, and their work will arrive in this folder. Students should put their completed work back into this folder immediately after it is finished and return it directly to their bag or backpack. Homework folders need to go to school and back every day of the week, so that teachers can provide appropriate guidance and feedback to students.

The Purpose of Homework in the Upper Unit

Homework at McGuffey is intended to allow students to reflect and expand on what they are learning at school in a new setting, and to bring ideas from home into their schoolwork. It is also a tool for practicing skills and developing independent work habits.

The Role of Parents in Helping Their Student Complete Homework

We see the role of parents as homework facilitators. Parents can help best by working with their students to establish a regular time and place to do homework, by making sure their students have all the supplies they need, by reminding them to check their folders or do their homework when necessary, and by helping their student remember to put finished work directly into their backpack so that it will go back to school on time.

Because allowing students to engage with challenges on their own is very important, we ask that parents not help their students do the academic work involved in their homework assignments. We encourage parents to ask their students to share and explain their assignments. This is a wonderful way to show your student that you value the hard work they are doing, and that you are interested in the topics they are studying.

What to Do When Your Student has Difficulty with an Assignment

Homework is a time for students to test their knowledge in the absence of peers and teachers. Students often may discover that something which seemed easy at school looks different and harder at home! This is a normal and expected part of learning, and helps students consolidate their knowledge by processing information from new angles.

Please don't let your student get frustrated if this is the case. If they are stuck and cannot complete the homework after putting in a reasonable effort and trying more than one approach, they just need to make a quick note that they're stuck, using a Post-It note or writing on the assignment in pencil.

We'll use this information to help the student complete their work. This helps homework take a reasonable and predictable length of time each day, so that it will consistently fit into busy family schedules and allow pre-adolescents and adolescents to get much-needed sleep.



Democratic Process

The students are invited to have a voice in the way their classroom functions. Weekly Democratic Meetings provide a space where the students will learn to work together, create proposals for change, communicate them with their classmates, and work to achieve consensus. The Democratic Process is an important component of our Peace curriculum as it helps our students understand that there are many different voices and different concerns in their classroom and society at large.

Work Periods

Each day, students spend their mornings in a combination of small group presentations and engaged in individual work time. During a work period, students may choose to do any of the following: complete activities (also called “works”) from their weekly work plans, or from the available works on the classroom shelves; engage in silent, individual reading; or prepare and eat a snack. Teachers will also use work periods to invite a student, or a group of students, to learn a new activity through an individual or small group presentation. These presentation times are scheduled. Some activities require students to work on their own, while other activities permit students to work with a partner or a small group if desired.

By the time they begin a Upper Elementary program, most children can sit still and concentrate for short periods of time, about 15-20 minutes. If they have received opportunities to develop and practice their ability to concentrate, as they do in a Montessori program, many children can focus for an hour and more doing a task or project that interests them.

Maria Montessori noticed that after a prolonged period of concentration or when preparing to resume a project, children seemed to seek out an apparently unrelated activity, such as going outside and swinging, watering plants, or making a snack. Studies since Montessori’s time have shown that such “downtimes” spent in a relaxing activity allow children to concentrate better, reducing physical tension and invigorating the mind. Researchers have also found that when left to choose their level of activity, children are naturally self-regulating and that a temporary inability to concentrate is often a sign of a need for a change. For these reasons, our classroom schedules a three-hour work period every day, and provides ample opportunities for individual choice within this period of time.

Snacks

A healthy snack will be served daily in the morning. Students choose when, or if, to serve themselves a snack each morning. Each snack in our classroom typically consists of a fruit and a vegetable. The cost for snacks is built into tuition and alleviates the need for parents to take turns bringing snacks into the classroom or packing something extra in students’ lunches.

All snacks take into consideration allergies and food restrictions within the class. The school is not responsible for accommodating allergies unless they have been outlined in your child’s enrollment in TADS.



Headphones/Ear Buds

We periodically have Playaway audiobooks available from Lane Public Library. However, we have a limited number of headphones for classroom use. A pair of ear buds for your child's personal use is on their supply list. You may also choose to purchase a set of noise cancelling headphones for your child to use.

