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Student Handbook

2021-2022

**501 (c) (3) Non-Profit
Employer Identification Number: 27-0710534**

Children’s House Montessori School

PHILOSOPHY

The basic idea of the Montessori philosophy of education is that children carry within themselves the person they will become. Montessori educators say the world of the child is full of sights and sounds which initially appear chaotic. From this chaos children must gradually create order, learn to distinguish among 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 inherently possesses a certain order and allows children to learn at their own speed, according to their own capabilities and in a non-competitive atmosphere. The acquisition of good manners and social graces are integral along with responsibility to community and fellow human beings.

Dr. Montessori recognized the only valid impulse to learning is the self-motivation of the child. The teacher prepares the environment, directs the activities and offers the child stimulation, but it is the child who learns, who is motivated through work to persist in a given task. Children who have acquired an “inner discipline” from their exposure to physical and mental order are the children who are free to learn. This is the premise of the Montessori philosophy. Montessori teaches children to observe, to think, and to discriminate. 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.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- To develop a positive attitude toward school and an enthusiasm for learning
- To develop a sense of high self-esteem and self-confidence
- To develop and foster an abiding curiosity
- To develop habits of concentration, initiative and persistence
- To develop an organized, sequential approach to problem solving and academic skills
- To develop self-motivation
- To develop independence, self-knowledge and self-discipline
- To develop sensory-motor skills in order to sharpen the ability to discriminate
- To develop and embrace socially acceptable behavior
- To help each child reach their ultimate potential through high self-expectations
- To build positive relationships with adults and other children
- To develop an understanding of the importance of contributing to a community
- To realize their own “spirituality” (their inner spirit) and use that understanding to be a person willing to serve the common good of man

Please join us as we share this stimulating time in your child’s life. We look forward to sharing our enthusiasm and our excitement about the Montessori approach to education with your family.

MISSION STATEMENT

We will prepare a safe and nurturing Montessori environment for all children while maintaining South Dakota Department of Education (SDDOE) accreditation. Our classroom community, including our families, will be one where mutual respect and empathy are modeled and respected. We will meet all students at their individual developmental level and inspire them each day to reach their full potential – socially, physically, academically, and spiritually. We will encourage them to challenge themselves by highlighting their successes and assisting them as they refine their areas of difficulty. We will advocate for their individual and collective rights. Our classroom will be a joyful place where children can develop relationships and build self-confidence. Intrinsic gratification and pride in their accomplishments will be their motivation as they develop the love of learning. We will strive to make every day an excellent day for each student.

CHILDREN'S HOUSE HISTORY

Children's House began as a Montessori preschool founded in January 1990 by Janell Jewett. Having done her Montessori studies in London, England and her internship in West Germany, she wanted to bring a Montessori educational opportunity to the children and their families of Rapid City. Children's House opened its doors to one class of 5 preschool children and one guide but began to grow rapidly. With the growth, kindergarten classes were quickly added and Children's House, a Montessori Preschool soon became Children's House Montessori school. A 6- to 11-year-old classroom was added in 2000.

The school, which is incorporated, has gone through facility changes. What began in a little house with a small back yard on Clark Street, moved to its current location in the summer of 1996. With over 1 ½ acres of wooded land, a completely renovated primary building, a new addition to the elementary building, two playground areas, a sledding hill, pumpkin and butterfly gardens and a playhouse, Children's House continues to offer learning opportunities for young people of Rapid City.

Children's House Montessori became a nonprofit State accredited school in 2001 and adheres to the requirements set down by the South Dakota Department of Education while following the tenets of a Montessori curriculum using Montessori materials.

ADMISSION POLICY

Children's House Montessori admits students of any race religion, color, national and ethnic origin. Students are afforded all the rights, privileges, programs and activities available. Children's House Montessori does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational and admission policies.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The morning classes begin at either 8:15 a.m. or 8:30 a.m. and end at 11:15 a.m. or 11:30 a.m. respectively. The kindergarten program hours are 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Dismissal times for the morning classes are 11:15 & 11:30. Dismissal time for the afternoon class and kindergarten is between 2:45 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

The elementary program begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m. Dismissal time for elementary is between 2:45 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

It is imperative that arrival and dismissal times are closely adhered to. The time before class is vital for teacher preparation to ensure a smooth and productive day. Teachers have little time between classes so prompt pick-up time is also a necessity.

Promptness in a child's life is very important. Tardiness is very disruptive to the teachers and to the children already in class. We regard this as a preparation for continued education and expect all children to arrive on time and be picked up on time. Children who arrive late feel embarrassed and uncomfortable when entering a class already in progress. Children picked up late feel apprehension wondering if someone is coming for them.

A \$20.00 charge will be imposed for the first ½ hour or any increment of a ½ hour for any child that is picked up late (according to the school clock). You will be billed for this charge. Realizing everyone confronts difficulties occasionally, we ask that if you will be late, please call to inform your child's teacher. We appreciate your efforts to ensure this situation does not happen often.

KINDERGARTEN/ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance for elementary students (including kindergarten) is mandatory according to State law. As a State accredited school we report student attendance to the Department of Education. Any student who has excessive absenteeism (15 days or more per calendar year) **OR** an excessive tardiness record will require an explanation to state officials by the administration and the family. **Excessive absenteeism may result in student retention.** When considering school absence, please evaluate your child's attendance record and try to schedule family vacations during our regular school holidays. Excessive tardiness is documented and considered part of your child's attendance record. Every 6th tardy is equal to 1-day absence and will be considered as such in the total attendance record.

TUITION

A non-refundable registration fee is required at the time of registration. This fee, \$50.00 for the primary, \$100.00 for enrichment and \$100.00 for the kindergarten and the elementary program, does not apply towards tuition. The security deposit - \$300.00 for primary & \$400.00 for enrichment, kindergarten & elementary – will be applied to tuition; half will be applied to each semester's tuition. The registration fee and the deposit are non-refundable. Tuition must be paid prior to the beginning of each semester or through the online monthly payment option through FACTS. The tuition schedule is:

- 3 Day Program \$2070.00 annually
- 5 Day Program \$2,400.00 annually
- 3 Day with Enrichment \$3870.00 annually
- 5 Day with Enrichment \$4,800.00 annually
- Kindergarten \$5075.00 annually
- Elementary \$5075.00 annually

Checks should be made payable to Children's House Montessori. Tuition payments reserve your child's position so they cannot be prorated for holidays, illnesses or other absences. Tuition should be paid the first day of each semester or you should be enrolled in FACTS by August 24th, 2020. Tuition checks should be given to the Director, not handed to the classroom teachers. Students beginning in January will have an adjusted tuition rate.

There will be an additional materials fee for all students. This fee covers enrichment activities and materials associated with our program. This fee should be included with September's tuition payment. Materials fee is:

- Primary \$ 100.00 materials/activities fee
- Enrichment \$300.00 materials/activities fee
- Kindergarten/Elementary \$300.00 materials/activities fee

ENRICHMENT

CHM offers an enrichment class for pre-kindergarten students. The three- or five-day enrichment program is an extension of their regular class. Children attending enrichment will need to pack a healthy lunch with appropriate quantities and little or no sweets (please see the section on healthy, waste-free lunches). They may bring a small blanket/ pillow that will be used for a quiet time scheduled each day after lunch. Please send these in a **cloth bag**. They will be sent home for washing each week and should be returned the following week. Children attending the enrichment program will take part in the daily activities of the extended day while

having the luxury of completing work from their regular program, making independent choices or participating in teacher guided activities.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Children's House will cancel classes for inclement weather any day the Rapid City Public Schools cancel classes. **If the RCPS is on a delayed morning schedule due to weather conditions, our morning preschool classes will be CANCELLED.** Enrichment, Kindergarten, and Elementary classes will run on the same delayed schedule as the RCPS (ex: 2 hour delay). On blustery days you will receive a text message and email from the school's One-Call system regarding cancellations or change in class schedule. You can also watch local television stations for school related cancellations.

COMMUNICATION

Honest, open communication with your child's teacher is highly desirable and he/she should be the primary contact person for questions that may arise about your child. Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled twice during the year for the purpose of having a more in-depth discussion about your child's development, growth and adjustment to school.

A newsletter including a calendar of events will be sent home with your child on a regular basis – it will also be posted on the website. This will give you an update on each class, special activities and general school information. Please read the newsletter and post the calendar! We will be using a folder to help with communication for all children. Folders will be sent home on Wednesday and should be returned to the school, in your child's backpack, on Thursday. All families should check their child's backpack each day; kindergarten and elementary students should begin to take the responsibility to share the information brought home and ensure the folders are returned to school. **Please check for these folders each Wednesday and help your child remember to return them on Thursday.** Getting into a routine of checking/emptying backpacks DAILY helps with their independence and organizational skills. There will be \$5.00 charge for lost/missing folders.

The website (www.chkids.net) will be updated regularly. We encourage you to use this as your primary source for information. Before calling the school to clarify dates or information for upcoming events, please check the website. You should be able to get any information you may need pertaining to activities/events either on the website, in the newsletter or on the calendar. Information will also be posted on the outdoor whiteboards next to each door. You can follow Children's House on Facebook at fb.me/childrenshousemontessoriinc.

We will also use our One-Call system to contact families regarding upcoming events and important notices. Please make sure your contact information remains current so you will continue to receive important notices.

CONFERENCES

Parent conferences are scheduled in November and March for preschool children and November and January for kindergarten and elementary students. Teachers or parents may also request special conferences any time during the year. You can help us by writing down questions, comments or concerns you have pertaining to your child on the space provided on your scheduled conference form. This is our time to share information about your child's development with you and your time to share your insights about your child's development with us. One family member from each family is expected to attend these conferences. We will make every effort to accommodate your schedule if the assigned time does not work for you.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Children's House Montessori places great value on the engagement of parents in the educational process. We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children and serve as role models for the development of their child's life physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically.

As partners in this process, we ask parents:

- to establish a bedtime routine for good sleep hygiene for school nights;
- to provide nourishing breakfast to increase focus at school;
- to keep a conversation going about how the child is feeling;
- drop off and pick up their child from school on time;
- actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher Conferences;
- to notify the school when the student will be absent or tardy;
- to meet all financial obligations to the school;
- to inform the school of any special situations regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health;
- to read school notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education;
- to treat teachers and staff with respect and courtesy in discussing student problems.

SUPPLIES

Each class will be responsible for helping provide supplies. You will receive a separate list indicating what your child will need to bring his/her first day of school. Other items may be requested on an as needed basis. Each student will be asked once during the school year to pick up and pay for one set of digital photos processed at Walgreen's.

BACKPACKS should be brought to school every day and should be large enough to hold student folders, hats, mittens and jackets. Even though the small ones are cute, they are not very practical.

All students, teachers and volunteers are required to wear **SLIPPERS FOR SCHOOL**. Wearing slippers assists children with their gross motor development and makes the environment a quiet place to work. Students can wear ballet slippers or plain bedroom slippers. Please **DO NOT** send character slippers or big fuzzy slippers. These only cause a distraction in the classroom. Please write your child's name clearly on the bottom of the slippers or inside the slippers. Show your child what their name looks like before you bring them to school. Slippers will remain at school. Children will put them on each day after their arrival and take them off at the end of each day and put them in the slipper basket.

BIRTHDAYS

On the day we celebrate your child's birthday, we will have a special birthday walk. If you wish to send treats for your child's birthday, please bring prepackaged items such as Rice Krispie Bars or fruit snacks. We ask that the items do not contain peanuts or tree nuts for the safety of our students. Pencils, erasers or little notepads are also great treats. Because of food allergies and restrictions, treats brought to school for birthdays will be sent home with the children in their back packs. Prior to your child's birthday we will send home a paper for you to fill out that will tell about your child's years since birth. Your child's birthday celebration will be prescheduled to ensure we do not double up our birthday celebrations.

Invitations for birthday parties need to be emailed or mailed to the invitees. They should not be given to teachers to distribute. We appreciate your cooperation with this request. There will be a school directory available for your convenience shortly after school begins.



NO CELL PHONE CAMPUS

CHM is a no cell phone campus. Because of the hazards associated with using a cell phone while driving, we ask that you do not pull into the parking lot or exit the parking lot while on your cell phone. We ask that once on campus, you refrain from using your cell phone. Your children need and deserve your uninterrupted attention while you are dropping them off or picking them up from school. We appreciate your cooperation with this request.

Students who bring a tech device to school must store their device(s) in their backpack during school hours. The classroom teacher has the authority of when devices can and cannot be utilized. The school may not be held liable for the loss, theft, or damage to personal property.

PICKING UP STUDENTS

For your child's protection, we will not release any child to someone other than a parent or persons listed on the Emergency Information Form. Please call the office to let the staff know if there is a change in the person picking up your child (we like voice confirmation for security purposes). **If you are not picking up, please let the person who is picking up know that we may ask them to show proof of identification prior to releasing your child.** We do not mean to offend anyone by asking for identification, we do it for your child's safety. Please advise a teacher if your child will be picked up by someone other than you. It is imperative that you keep the school up-to-date on phone numbers, emergency numbers and all pertinent information.

LOADING AND UNLOADING

Please park in **designated spaces** or on West Main Street west of the sign. **DO NOT** park at the ends of the buildings – it creates a scenario for accidents. Keeping traffic moving ensures less congestion on West Main Street. Keep your child **IN HAND** while crossing the parking lot both before and after school. Do not allow them to run across the parking lot alone. Larger vehicles cannot see the children when they are backing up. We will visit with the children about parking lot safety and we ask that you please do the same.

We would also request that the morning classes depart the parking lot soon after drop off and pick up. The reason for the 15-minute staggered start time is to eliminate parking lot congestion. If the 8:15 class parents remain in the parking lot, it causes congestion when the 8:30 class arrives. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Bullying involves an imbalance of power which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves. This may be seen or felt physically, emotionally or psychologically and includes social isolation or intimidation as well as any threat of violence. The Anti-Bullying Policy will be available in the policy binder in the office and also on our website: <http://www.chkids.net>.

SNACKS

Children's House maintains a **NO PEANUT AND NO TREE NUT environment**. Please do not send any peanuts or peanut related products or any tree nuts or tree nut related products to school with your child. We maintain a nut-free environment for the safety of our students. If you have any questions about a product, please ask the director before bringing the product on campus.

At the beginning of the school year we will enjoy our snack together. As the children become familiar with pouring, serving and cleaning up, we will go to individual snack time. This allows for your child to choose when they would like snack and it encourages their independence.

Except for special occasions, the drink of choice will be water. We believe this is the healthiest choice and the one that generates the least concern for food allergies. At least once during the year, each child will be asked to bring **2 boxes of crackers** (healthy crackers, please) **and a large bag of fruit or vegetables** (enough for 26 students for the week) for group snack.

Children's House will encourage positive environmental awareness and application at every possible opportunity. To this end the children will use glass plates, plastic or glass glasses and cloth napkins. All jars and cans are rinsed according to guidelines set down by Waste Management and picked up weekly as part of our commitment to the earth and our children. All aluminum cans will be have the tabs removed (these are given to McDonald's for the Ronald McDonald House) and crushed by the children in a practical life activity. If you would like to provide empty pop cans for this activity, please rinse them out and bring them dry and bagged.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HEALTHY, WASTE-FREE LUNCHES

(Kindergarten, Elementary, Enrichment)

We encourage you to pack a healthy, waste-free lunch. This could include a sandwich or another main dish, fresh fruit and/or fresh vegetables in a **reusable** container/s. Please include a cloth napkin, **reusable** silverware, drink containers and lunch boxes. If you include a treat, please make sure it is small. Children will be required to eat their regular lunch before having their treat. We will have water for them to drink but if you send a drink, please ensure it is healthy. We also ask that your child's lunch not contain peanuts or tree nuts for the safety of our students, even if your student is not allergic. If you would like a list of alternative products, please ask the director.

CLOTHING

Play clothes are encouraged-**simple** (clothing with no advertising logos or cartoon characters is preferred), **washable** (we never know when a painting opportunity may present itself!) and **easy to manage**. Jogging suits or elastic waist pants are great for the primary students. Dressing and bathroom needs are areas in which independence is especially emphasized. In order for the preschool children to become self-sufficient, their clothing must be easy for them to fasten and unfasten. Bib overalls and belt buckles are very difficult for most children to manage. Elementary students should ensure their clothing is appropriate for a school setting and is void of advertising, cartoon characters or trendy topics.

Please **do not send your child to school wearing cowboy boots, clogs or flip flops**. They can be dangerous and are a deterrent to active participation in all aspects of school activity. Sneakers or rubber soled shoes are recommended. Velcro shoes are preferred unless your child can tie. Remember the children take off and put on their own shoes at school. If you are having difficulty getting your child's shoes on, your child will have difficulty getting them on!!

All children, teachers and volunteers will be required to remove their shoes upon entering the school. You may send a rubber or leather sole slipper for your child. These should remain at school and your child's name **MUST** appear somewhere in the slipper.

Think of the changeable weather and dress your child warmly. Provide sweaters and jackets (also mittens, caps and boots in winter) even on sunny fall and spring days. We will spend some time outside everyday in all but the worst of weather. A jacket in the fall and spring and dry socks in the winter for the

kindergarten/elementary students kept in the backpack can be lifesavers. Remember, if the zipper on your child's coat doesn't work for you, it won't work for us!

*Please ensure **ALL REMOVEABLE CLOTHING IS MARKED** with your child's name. It is not unusual for more than one child to have identical coats, boots, mittens or sweaters.

TOILET PROCEDURES

All children attending CHM must be **TOTALLY** proficient with regards to bathroom needs and procedures. We will ensure children know where the bathroom is and that they know the rules about flushing toilets and washing hands. The children are allowed to go to the bathroom at any time. In case of an accident, you may be notified. If your child has an accident, be assured your child's personal well being will be our main priority and the situation will be handled discreetly to avoid any embarrassment for your child. If you have concerns about your child's independence, a pair of socks, underwear and pants can be stored in a Ziploc bag at the bottom of their backpack.

HOLIDAYS

The holidays we celebrate at CHM are Harvest/Thanksgiving, Winter, Valentine's Day and Spring. Special in classroom activities will be planned in conjunction with each holiday. Our party days are kept very low key. Each child will be asked to bring special assigned treats or party supplies to one party during the year. Specific assignments will be given to each child one week prior to the party they are providing for.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND BIRTH CERTIFICATES

Please keep your child's immunization record up to date by submitting a copy to the office. All new students should submit a copy of their birth certificate upon enrollment. *Kindergarten students and any elementary student new to CHM must submit their immunizations on the form provided by the State Department of Health. **This form MUST BE turned on or before the first day of school.**

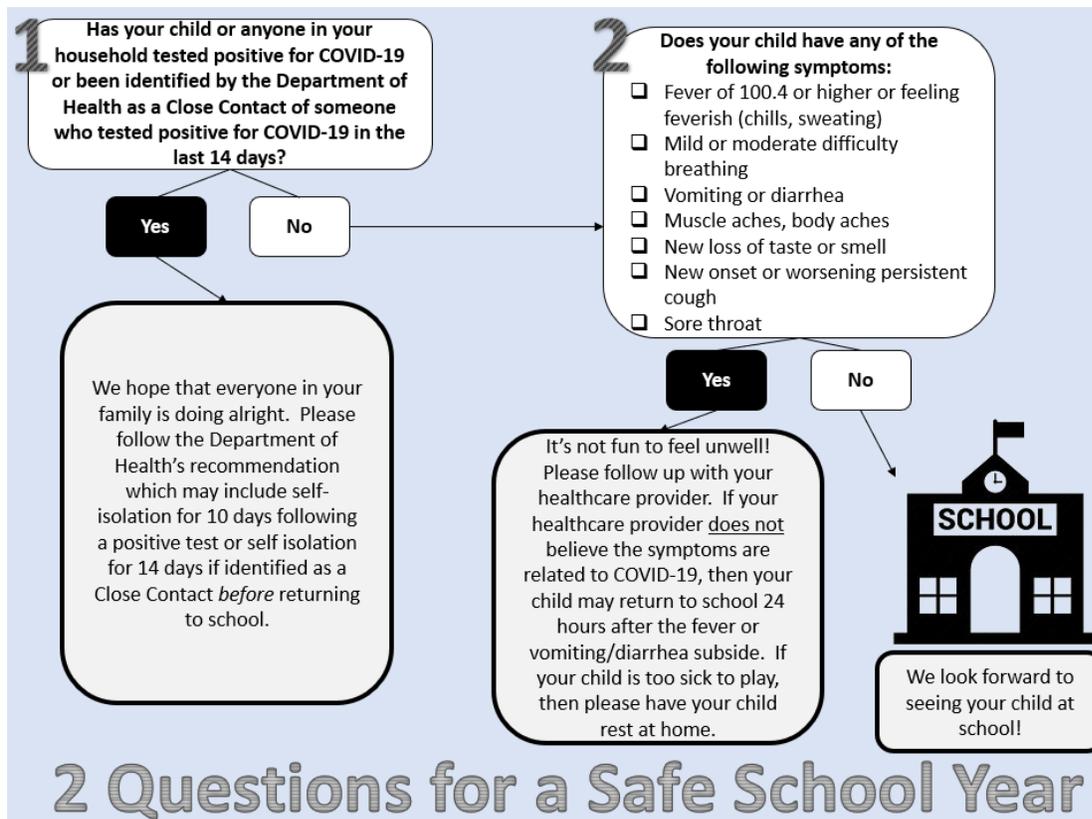
MEDICAL RELEASE

CHM does not administer medications. If your child is in need of medicine during their time at school, parents/guardians will need to make arrangements for that dosage to be administered. If your child has a severe allergy and requires an Epi-pen, a dose must be secured in the school lock box, a medical release form must be completed and staff informed on the usage of the Epi-pen. It is imperative that all allergies are noted on the Emergency Card and updated as needed. Please note that cough drops are also medicine and will be kept in the office as well, with parent form completed.

ILLNESS

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to all of us. Your child may be sent home if any symptoms of illness appear during the day. In such cases your child will be isolated from the others and made comfortable in the office. If your child has symptoms of COVID-19, the staff waiting with your child must wear a mask and put on protective eyewear. Your child may be asked to put on a mask (we have some fun ones to choose from!). You will be contacted immediately to come pick him/her up. Please ensure the contact information on your emergency card is current and accurate.

When trying to decide if you should send your child to school, here is a decision tree:



Please notify the school if your child does have a communicable disease. The identity of the child and family will be kept confidential. The school will send home notes at the onset of a communicable disease (as in the case of chicken pox, mononucleosis) or head lice.

Your child may come to school if a cold is over but a minor nasal drip remains. **If your child is too sick to play outside, they are too sick to be at school.**

In case of an accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent/guardian. If we cannot reach you, we will call the person listed on your Emergency Information Card and finally your physician. If necessary, we will call an ambulance. The school will maintain a consent form agreeing to this arrangement. It is imperative that you keep the school up-to-date on phone numbers, emergency numbers and all pertinent information.

FACILITIES

- Thoroughly clean and disinfect areas using EPA-registered disinfectants. Use extra care when disinfecting high-touch areas such as floors, doorknobs, tables, handles, etc
- Entrance doors to all facilities will be wiped down before/after students enter in the morning, mid-day, and after students leave
- Bathrooms cleaned daily
- Sanitize all chairs and tables in between uses
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers will be provided for each classroom.
- Additional measures to remind students of hygiene practices will be put into place
- In the event of an any communicable disease outbreak, we will work with the South Dakota Department of Health for more advanced cleaning protocols.

SECURITY ACCESS POLICY

For increased safety of all members of the Children's House Montessori community, a keyless entry security system for entrance into the school has been installed. The doors will remain locked at all times. Only contracted staff and approved board members will have a keyless entry device (Fob). Families will have access through the office door and their child's classroom door according to the student's class schedule. Families using Before School Care may drop off their children through the office door beginning at 7:30 a.m.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The Crisis Plan is available for review in the office.

1. In the case of a lockdown, no unauthorized person will be allowed to enter or leave the building.
2. During emergency situations or a school lock down - STUDENTS will only be released to parent/guardian or designee on the student emergency form once authorities and/or administration have declared it safe to release students.
3. A STUDENT RELEASE STATION will be established, when necessary, in an area that is accessible and in close proximity to the effected school. All parents or designees who come for students must sign out their child.
4. THE SCHOOL will be in contact with various local emergency services during any type of emergency. We ask for family help and cooperation in the following areas: DO NOT call the school. Communication lines must remain open for emergency calls. DO NOT immediately drive to the school following an emergency. The school access route and street entrance areas must remain clear for emergency vehicles.

*Information will be available via our One Call text and email service.

“Joy, feeling one's own value, being appreciated and loved by others, feeling useful and capable of production are all factors of enormous value for the human soul.” - *Maria Montessori*

Thank you for sharing your child with us!