



Student Handbook

School Year 2026-2027

Children's House Montessori is 501 (c) (3) Non-Profit

EIN: 27-0710534

Primary Campus (3–6-year-olds):

4021 Range Rd.
Rapid City, SD 57702
(605) 791-0466

Elementary Campus (6–12-year-olds):

3520 West Main Street
Rapid City, SD 57702
(605) 341-0824

email: director@chkids.net

Website: www.chkids.net

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A SPECIAL NOTE

Thank you for joining 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.

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

MISSION STATEMENT

We will prepare a safe and nurturing Montessori environment for all children. 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 it continued to expand and we now serve students from ages 3 to 12.

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 the 3520 West Main Street location in the summer of 1996. In 2022, the school expanded to a second location at 4021 Range Road to house our growing primary classrooms. The West Main Street location remains home to our elementary classrooms.

Children’s House Montessori became a nonprofit state accredited school in 2001. The school announced in January 2026 that it will not renew its South Dakota Department of Education accreditation and will instead pursue the highly reputable and rigorous accreditation with the American Montessori Society (AMS). This change will take effect at the start of School Year 2027-2028.

Children’s House Montessori, as a non-profit organization, is guided by a board of directors. A current list of board members is available on our web site.

DEFINITIONS

PRIMARY: This includes all students in the 3 to 6-year-old Primary Program including 5 Morning Primary and 5 Full Day and what was previously considered Kindergarten.

PRIMARY CAMPUS: This location opened in August 2022 and is home to our classrooms for students ages 3-6. It is located at 4021 Range Road.

ELEMENTARY: Students in Lower Elementary (ages 6-9 or 1st-3rd grade) and Upper Elementary (ages 9-12 or 4th-6th grade).

ELEMENTARY CAMPUS: Located at 3520 W. Main Street and houses our Lower and Upper Elementary classrooms.

GUIDE: Montessori classrooms typically refer to a teacher as a guide. The words teacher and guide are often used interchangeably in our communication.

MIXED-AGE CLASSROOMS

The Primary classroom includes students from 3 to 6 years old (preschool and Kindergarten). We offer half day and full day programs for students who are 3 years old on and completely self-sufficient in toileting.

The Lower Elementary classroom has students from ages 6 to 9 years old or 1st to 3rd grades. The Upper Elementary encompasses 9 to 12 years old or 4th to 6th grade.

YEARS/LEVELS AT CHM (GRADES)

Year/Level	Description/Formerly Called
Primary Year 1* - 5 Mornings	5 Morning Preschool
Primary Year 1 – Full Day	5 Full Day Preschool
Primary Year 2 – Full Day	5 Full Day Preschool
Primary Year 3* – Full Day	Kindergarten
Primary Year 4* – Full Day	Optional “Golden Year”
Lower Elementary Year 1	Grade 1
Lower Elementary Year 2	Grade 2
Lower Elementary Year 3	Grade 3
Lower Elementary Year 4*	Optional “Golden Year”
Upper Elementary Year 1	Grade 4
Upper Elementary Year 2	Grade 5
Upper Elementary Year 3	Grade 6
Upper Elementary Year 4*	Optional “Golden Year”

*Primary Year 1: A student’s first year at primary may either be as a 5 Morning or 5 Full Day student. After their first year, the student must enroll in the full day program.

***Primary Year 3 – Full Day:** This is what is considered Kindergarten in conventional school settings.

***Year 4 Optional “Golden Year”:** For students who need an extra year at this classroom level. This is a decision that would be decided on with you, the school administration, and your child’s teacher.

PARENT ORIENTATION

Before school starts, we will gather with parents and caregivers to provide an orientation on our school, answer questions, and set expectations. We appreciate at least one representative from each family attending the orientation. For our Primary families, we politely request that you attend the orientation without your child. We appreciate the opportunity to have your undivided attention during this time. For our returning families, we appreciate if you attend the orientation even if this is not your first year at the school. It’s an opportunity to hear about any changes and also to meet other families. Elementary students are welcome to attend their orientation. If you are not able to attend the scheduled event, please reach out and we are happy to go over the details with you. We will notify you via email and through the web site the dates and times of orientation.

FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL SCHEDULE

The first week of school is abbreviated as we transition into the school year and provide orientation to the students. The schedule is sent to you a month prior to the school start date. It is also available on our web site under the Current Families section.

SCHOOL YEAR HOURS OF OPERATION

School year calendar available for download on the school’s web site.

PRIMARY CAMPUS HOURS

Drop off between 8:00am-8:20am. Dismissal for morning only primary students is from 11:15am-11:30am and full day primary dismissal is from 2:45-3:00 pm. Before Care offered at 7:30am and After care offered from 3-6 pm as a separate registration (see below for more information).

ELEMENTARY CAMPUS HOURS

Drop off between 8:00am-8:15 am and pick up between 3:00pm-3:15 pm. Before Care offered at 7:30am and After care offered from 3-6 pm as a separate registration (see below for more information).

BEFORE SCHOOL CARE

Before school care is available to students starting at 7:30am each regularly scheduled school day. It starts the second week of school (see calendar for start date). Parent or guardian is responsible for signing in the student in the Before School Care binder. Before school care is charged \$5 per use, regardless of start time. Enrollment will take place on our web site via TUIO.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE

After school care is available on either a monthly or drop-in basis from 3-6 pm Monday through Friday. It will be held only days when school is in session for the full day. If there is an early dismissal, there will not be after school care. It will commence the second week of school (see calendar for start date). Enrollment will take place on our web site via TUIO.

SUMMER CAMP

Summer Camp is offered for each summer for current CHM students as well as any eligible student in Rapid City. Camp is offered to children ages 3 to 12 years old.

DROPPING OFF STUDENTS

Please park in designated spaces and walk your child to the front door. **DO NOT** park at the ends of the buildings or idle in a non-parking area. At the Primary Campus, the parking lot is one way and pull through with the driveway circling the building for exit. Even though the Primary parking lot is pull through, we still ask you to park and walk your child to the door or gate for drop off.

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. The teacher will open the door or playground gate and greet your child at the start of each day.

PICKING UP STUDENTS

For your child's protection, we will not release any child to someone other than a parent or persons listed as an Authorized Pick Up. **Please let the person who is picking up know that we will 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. Please call or email your teacher or the director to let us know if there is a change in the person picking up your child.

PUNCTUALITY

It is imperative that arrival and dismissal times are closely adhered to. The time before and after class is vital for teacher preparation to ensure a smooth and productive day.

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.

Realizing everyone confronts difficulties occasionally, we ask that if you will be late, please call to inform the school. We appreciate your efforts to ensure this situation does not happen often.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

At Children's House Montessori, consistent attendance is essential to a child's academic, social, and emotional development. The Montessori environment is carefully prepared to support continuous, hands-on learning, and each day builds upon the last. Regular attendance helps children develop independence, confidence, and a sense of belonging within their classroom community.

Philosophy

Montessori education is based on consistency, routine, and uninterrupted work cycles. When children attend school regularly and arrive on time, they are better able to engage fully in lessons, build strong peer relationships, and make steady progress. Frequent absences or late arrivals can interrupt a child's learning rhythm and may make it more difficult for them to fully benefit from the Montessori experience.

Expectations for Attendance

- Students are expected to attend school each day that school is in session unless they are ill or there is a family emergency.
- Families should make every effort to schedule vacations, appointments, and activities outside of school hours or during scheduled breaks.
- Regular and punctual attendance supports not only your child's development but also the consistency and harmony of the classroom community.

Arrival and Punctuality

- Children should arrive on time so they can begin the morning work cycle with their peers.
- Late arrivals can be disruptive to both the child and the classroom environment, as they may miss important lessons and the calm start to the day.
- Repeated late arrivals may result in a conference to discuss ways to support a smoother start to the school day.

Absences

- If your child will be absent, families are asked to notify the school office as soon as possible.
- In the case of extended illness or planned absences, please inform the school in advance so we can support your child's transition back into the classroom.
- While teachers cannot recreate the full classroom experience, they may offer guidance on helping your child reestablish routines after an extended absence.

Illness Guidelines

To maintain a healthy environment for all, children should remain at home if they have:

- A fever within the past 24 hours
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- Contagious symptoms that would prevent full participation in the school day

Children should return to school only when they are well enough to participate comfortably in all activities, including outdoor time.

Impact of Frequent Absences

Because Montessori learning is sequential and experiential, frequent absences can affect a child's academic progress, social integration, and sense of classroom stability. If a pattern of absences develops, school staff may reach out to partner with families to support improved attendance.

Partnership with Families

We value our partnership with families and recognize that occasional absences are sometimes unavoidable. Our goal is to work together to support each child's success by maintaining consistent attendance whenever possible. By prioritizing regular school participation, we help children build strong habits, meaningful relationships, and a deep love of learning.

Policy Review

This attendance policy is intended to support the well-being and educational growth of every child. The school reserves the right to review attendance concerns with families and collaborate on solutions that best support the child's development.

ILLNESS POLICY

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. The staff waiting with your child may wear a mask. You will be contacted to come pick up your child as soon as possible. Please ensure the contact information on your emergency card is current and accurate.

WHEN YOUR CHILD IS TOO SICK

Talk to your child's doctor or health care provider if you are unsure if they should stay home from school. As a general rule, your child should not go to school if they have:

- A fever over 100.4° Fahrenheit (F) or 38° Celsius (C) – Your child can return to school after they've been fever-free for 24 hours without antipyretics. Antipyretics are medicines that treat or prevent fever.
- Signs they are weak and tired. This is common with the flu.
- Diarrhea – Having loose poop (stool) more often than isn't caused by a change in diet.
- Throwing up (vomiting) – More than 2 times in a 24-hour period.
- Coughing that disrupts normal activity.
- Wheezing or shortness of breath.
- Pain from earache, headache, sore throat, or recent injury.
- Continuous runny nose that may be hard to manage at school.
- Yellow or green drainage from the eye(s).
- A new rash – Not all rashes mean your child must stay home from school. Check with their doctor or health care provider.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASE

A contagious disease is one that can be spread by close contact with a person or object. Your child must stay home from school if they have a contagious disease.. They may be contagious **before** showing any signs of illness. Please notify the school if your child has been diagnosed with any of the following:

- COVID
- Chickenpox
- The flu
- Pinkeye (conjunctivitis)
- Strep throat
- A cold
- Measles
- Whooping cough (pertussis)

COLDS

Common colds are the main reason children miss school and adults miss work. Each year in the United States, there are millions of cases of the common cold. Adults average 2-3 colds per year and children have even more, according to the National Institutes of Health.

Colds are so common that if kids stayed home every time they had one, they'd never graduate. It's all right to send them to school with a case of the sniffles as long as they follow some tips to keep from spreading their germs.

Teach your child to wash their hands frequently, and ways to sneeze to avoid other people. Either use their elbow, or a tissue to keep the impact to a minimum. Teach your child to blow their nose and sanitize or wash their hands afterwards.

If the symptoms of your child's cold disrupt normal activity, such as excessive coughing or a lot of sinus drainage, please keep them at home.

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

SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO ILLNESS

If a large percentage of our teachers are ill and we are not able to find suitable substitutes, we may have to cancel classes for a few days until the teachers are healthy enough to return to school.

NOTIFICATION

Please notify the school where your child attends if your child will be out sick that day. The Range Road (Primary Campus) main phone number is 605-791-0466. The West Main Street (Elementary Campus) main phone number is 605-341-0824. You can also email or text your classroom teacher. Please inform us if your child does have a communicable disease (Covid, chicken pox, lice, mononucleosis, etc.) so that we are able to notify the other classroom families. The identity of the child and family will be kept confidential.

IN-CLASSROOM ENRICHMENT

We are always seeking ways to enrich our curriculum with outside resources. We do this through field trips, presentations, and workshops. Each year we contract with outside instructors to come in and do six-week in-class workshops with our students. This has included art, yoga, music, theatre, STEAM and Destination Imagination, but varies year to year depending on student interest and instructor availability. If you or someone you know has a special skill that you think our students might be interested in, please contact us!

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;
- attend community education events that the school offers;
- 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 limit screen time and content to what is developmentally appropriate for your child;
- to treat teachers and staff with respect and courtesy.

SCHOOL AS A COMMUNITY

We strongly encourage families to be part of the school community through attending social events, school functions, or joining the school board or a committee. We offer opportunities for parents to volunteer in the classroom and for special events (such as the Holiday Program, Art Show, and the 5K Teacher Trot). We have two days per year where we do School Clean Up Days in which we come together to do yard work and clean up our campus. Additionally, we encourage families to organize social activities such as playdates, ice skating meet ups, book clubs, and sledding dates. If you're interested in being part of the committee that organizes social activities, please reach out to the director.

Children's House Montessori school is guided by a volunteer board of directors. Parents are welcome to attend monthly board meeting and are also welcome to join the board. If a parent doesn't wish to join the full board, but still wants to contribute, we also have committees such as Fundraising, Building & Grounds, Accreditation/Certification, Policies, Technology, and Student Welfare.

COMMUNICATION

Honest, open communication with your child's teacher is highly desirable and should be the primary contact person for questions that may arise about your child. Email or call the school at any time to discuss even the smallest issue. Some teachers will give out their personal cell phone numbers. Please be respectful of their time. Other ways to reach your teacher are through their individual classroom emails which will be shared at orientation or by calling the school or emailing the director.

Please call the campus where your child attends to report any absences or tardies.

Primary Campus: 605-791-0466

Elementary Campus: 605-341-0824

Director Email: director@chkids.net

The school will seek to inform families about events at school via a variety of methods including email, student green folders, social media, and text. We will provide a monthly newsletter and calendar to give you an update on happenings in the class, special activities and general school information. Please read the newsletter and save the calendar! We will be using a green folder to send home flyers and other school papers. Be sure to check it and return to school.

The website (www.chkids.net) under the Current Family's section and the school's Facebook page will be updated regularly. Information will also be posted on the outdoor whiteboards next to each door.

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. Let us know if any other caregivers need to be added to the school announcement contact list.

TEXT OPT-IN

School text messages sent through the One-Call system will show up from number: 79041. Some carriers reject the messages, so if you are not receiving them, you may need to "opt-in" to receive messages. You can do so by texting "YES" to 79041.

CONFERENCES

Parent Teacher Conferences are scheduled in the fall and in the spring. This is an important and precious time for you to meet one-on-one with your teacher and discuss your child's progress and development. Teachers or parents can also request special conferences at any time during the year. You can help us by writing down questions, comments or concerns you have pertaining to your child. At least one family member from each family is expected to attend these conferences, but we prefer to meet with both parent/caregivers if possible. We will make every effort to accommodate your schedule if the assigned time does not work for you.

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE POLICY

PHILOSOPHY

“At the heart of each misbehaving child is a young person who simply wants to belong but doesn’t know how.”
(p. 15)

Our school’s approach to discipline is rooted in Montessori philosophy and grounded in the principles of **Positive Discipline in the Montessori Classroom by Jane Nelson and Chip DeLorenzo**. We believe that every child is inherently good, capable of self-regulation, and deserving of respect, compassion, and a sense of belonging. Discipline is not about punishment; it is about **guiding children** toward understanding their actions, making better choices, and developing independence, empathy, and responsibility. Hence, our discipline policy is not punitive nor is it based on counting the number of infractions to warrant removal. Instead, our goal is to help children succeed in as much as our resources and training allow.

The Positive Discipline approach is most effective when it is implemented consistently throughout a child’s life. Thus, we encourage families to read the Positive Discipline books.

CORE PRINCIPLES

1. **Children Are Social Beings** (p. 11)

The desire to feel connected to others is a powerful and motivating force within us and is a fundamental part of our makeup as human beings.

2. **Behavior is Goal-Orientated (Belonging and Significance)** (p. 13)

Children feel better when they experience belonging (love) and significance (responsibility through contribution to their community). When they feel better, they do better. This is the antidote for the discouragement that children experience when they misbehave.

3. **A Misbehaving Child Is A Discouraged Child** (p. 14)

Four basic categories of “misbehavior:”

- a. *Undue Attention*: “I will belong and feel significant IF you pay attention to me.”
- b. *Misguided Power*: “I will belong and feel significant IF I’m the boss,’ or at least if I don’t let you boss me.”
- c. *Revenge*: “I feel hurt about not belonging and not feeling significant, so I will hurt back.”
- d. *Assumed Inadequacy*: “I can’t belong, and I can’t feel significant, so I give up.”

4. **Social Interest/Community Feeling** (p. 16)

While social interest seems to come more naturally to some children, it can also be taught and encouraged. This is taught using grace and courtesy lessons (p. 76), classroom meetings (chapters 15-17), and fostering relationships between younger and older students in our multi-age classrooms.

5. **Equality** (p. 17)

Children deserve dignity and respect, and to have their capabilities honored. Children do not have the

same wisdom, experience, and abilities as adults, but they can be incredibly capable when provided with opportunities to develop their potential and the beliefs that will serve them well in the future.

6. Mistakes Are Opportunities To Learn (p. 18)

A Montessori classroom not only encourages, but requires, that children make mistakes in order to learn. The idea that mistakes are opportunities to learn is rooted in trust for the child and human nature itself - a trust that the child wants to learn and to discover the world around him.

7. Kindness And Firmness At The Same Time (p. 20)

Effective discipline is based on mutual respect and cooperation, and is kind and firm *at the same time*, both guiding current behavior and allowing children to learn from their mistakes. It is supportive and encouraging.

Guidelines

Misbehavior is a symptom of a child's lack of understanding of how to find belonging or significance, or a lack of social skills. Without the understanding or skills to connect socially, children become discouraged in their attempt to connect to others.

Students will be supported and encouraged to develop skills in the following areas:

- Being safe.
- Moving with kindness and respect.
- Using materials appropriately and returning them after use.
- Moving calmly and considerately within the classroom and school.
- Being accountable for their actions and choices.
- Practicing problem solving.

Supportive Discipline Strategies

Montessori guides (teachers) and assistants will:

- Observe the child to understand the root of behavior.
- Redirect and offer choices when misbehavior occurs.
- Utilize classroom meetings to work towards collaborative problem solving.
- Collaborate with families when ongoing support is needed.
- Model respectful communication and emotional regulation.

Responding to Disruptive Behavior

If a child demonstrates behavior that disrupts learning, harms others, or violates community norms:

1. Firm & Kind Intervention

The guide may remove the child from the immediate situation to ensure safety and provide space for emotional regulation.

2. Peace Table or Positive Time Out (Positive Time-Out p. 165).

The child may be invited to the peace table to resolve conflicts or process feelings with adult support.

The child may also use the Positive Time Out area in the classroom to help with cooling down or self-regulating.

3. **Three Rs of Recovery (p. 211)**

The child may be invited to make amends (e.g., helping clean up, writing an apology, or contributing positively to the community). The Three Rs of Recovery are: 1) **Recognize** the mistake with a feeling of responsibility without blame or excuses. 2) **Reconcile** by expressing understanding of hurt feelings. 3) **Resolve** the problem, when possible, by working together on a solution, asking what it will take to make things right, or asking for forgiveness.

4. **Individualized Support Plan**

In cases of repeated behavior, a collaborative plan involving the guide, administrators, family, and outside resources will be developed to support the child's needs.

Exclusionary Measures (Last Resort Only)

Removal from the classroom will only be considered:

- If the child poses a danger to self or others.
- If all supportive interventions have been exhausted.

In such cases, the school will:

- Clearly communicate reasons and expectations with the family.

Family Partnership

We value open communication and collaboration with families. Respectful and gracious check-ins, parent education on Montessori Philosophy and Practice and Positive Discipline, and consistency between home and school are essential to the child's success.

Conclusion

Discipline in the Montessori classroom is a **holistic process** aimed at nurturing inner discipline, social-emotional growth, and responsible freedom. Our goal is to **educate the whole child** and guide each student to become a respectful, resilient, and compassionate member of their community.

SNACKS

Children's House Montessori will allow peanuts and peanut related items in the classroom if no students are allergic during that school year. This is determined on a year-by-year basis and will be announced at orientation. If you're not sure, you can ask your teacher if it's okay to send peanut products to school.

However, for all-school events we will only serve non-peanut items and request that any family donating or preparing a food item ensure that it is free of peanuts.

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.

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.

SNACK SCHEDULE

Each family will be asked to provide snack for the classroom a minimum of one week per year. You will receive a schedule at orientation with your assigned week. 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 25 students for the week) for group snack.

Children with allergies or other diet restrictions are welcome to keep their own box of crackers at school (such as gluten-free or dairy-free crackers). These will be provided to your child individually.

LUNCH

Children attending full day school will need to pack a healthy lunch with appropriate quantities. 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. If you wish to pack a hot lunch, please put it in a thermos. Children will not have access to a microwave. 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 you can also send a water bottle with them. If you choose to send a drink other than water, ensure that it is not overly sugary or caffeinated.

REST TIME

Full day primary and Kindergarten students will have a 30-minute rest period each day after lunch. Teachers explain to the students that it's a time to rest their bodies and minds. If a child is still sleeping by the time rest time is over, the teachers will allow the child to sleep up to an additional 30 minutes before waking them.

Families will send to school a small blanket and pillow stored in a cloth bag or a roll up rest time sleeping bag. No full-size pillows or blankets please as space does not allow. This will be kept at school and sent home on Fridays to be washed and brought back to school on Monday.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

In general, we ask primary families to provide supplies for general use (such as tissue, paper towels, etc). Elementary students will receive a list from their teachers with supplies for individual use, but may also include a few items for classroom use. The School Supply list will go out to families in August. We will also ask

families to contribute for special classroom events such as Harvest Feast, Holiday Party, Valentine's Day, and the Art Show. These assignments will go out in the weeks prior to the event.

School supplies and enrolled siblings: if you have a child in Primary and in Elementary, it is only necessary that you purchase the items that are for individual use. You do not need to purchase supplies for general use. If both of your children are in Primary, it is only necessary that you purchase one set of items. We hope that this will help offset the cost of school supplies for your family.

FLOWER SCHEDULE

At Primary, each student will bring a bouquet of flowers to school once per year. The student will cut and arrange the flowers in vases to display throughout the classroom. You will receive a schedule with your assigned week during orientation.

BACKPACKS

Backpacks should be brought to school every day and should be large enough to hold the student's green folder, hats, mittens and jackets. We recommend regular size backpacks even for Primary students. Small ones are not very practical.

SLIPPERS

All students, teachers and volunteers will keep a pair of indoor shoes or slippers at school. Having a designated pair of indoor footwear assists primary children with their gross motor development, makes the environment a quiet place to work, and keeps the floor from getting dirty. Students can wear ballet slippers, plain bedroom slippers or other indoor shoes slip-on shoes such as Toms, Crocs, sandals, flats. We recommend that they have a rubber soled bottom or anti-skid bottom. 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. Teachers will periodically send slippers home for cleaning or to be replaced if your child has outgrown them.

BIRTHDAYS

PRIMARY CLASSROOM

On the day we celebrate your child's birthday (or half birthday if their birthday occurs during the summer), we will have a special birthday walk. This event is prescheduled and we encourage parents/caregivers to attend. Prior to your child's birthday walk, we will send home a paper for you to fill out about your child's years since birth. You will be asked to provide three pictures to show the class – a picture of your child as a baby, with family, and a favorite. These pictures will be kept in the Birthday Walk book until the end of the school year. The students like to flip through the book throughout the year and see their classmates' photos. Although it is not necessary, some families choose to bring a birthday treat for the class. Your child will put these into

individual backpacks to go home. We recommend non-food items as many families have dietary restrictions. Items such as pencils, erasers, small notebooks, or crayons are thoughtful and inexpensive gifts.

ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

The elementary classrooms do not have a formal celebration like the Birthday Walk, but families are welcome to send to school on your child's birthday a special treat for the class to share. Please discuss it in advance with your classroom teacher and be prepared to accommodate students with allergies or dietary restrictions.

INVITATIONS

Individual invitations for birthday parties need to be directly emailed, mailed, or handed to the invitees. If you are inviting everyone in the class, the teacher can distribute the invitations into backpacks for you. The school will not distribute invitations unless it is to each person in the class. There will be a school directory available for your convenience shortly after school begins.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Children's House will cancel school for inclement weather any day that Rapid City Area Schools (RCAS) cancels classes. **If the RCAS is on a delayed morning schedule due to weather conditions, our morning half day primary classes will be CANCELLED.** Full day primary and Elementary classes will run on the same delayed schedule as the RCAS (ex: 2 hour delay).

Exceptions to RCAS School Cancellations: CHM retains the right to not follow RCAS school closures if the circumstances do not pertain to our school community or campuses. For example, RCAS will occasionally cancel school when there are extreme temperatures (hot or cold) due to building or bussing concerns. CHM will evaluate these circumstances on a case-by-case basis. If you choose not to send your child to school on these days, their absence will be excused.

You will receive a text message, phone call, and email from the school's One-Call system regarding cancellations or change in class schedule. We will also post it to our Facebook page.

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.

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 primary 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 at school

Think of the changeable weather and dress your child warmly. Provide sweaters, rain gear, jackets, snow pants (also mittens, caps and boots in winter) even on sunny fall and spring days. We will spend some time outside every day in all but the worst of weather. A jacket in the fall and spring and dry socks in the winter kept in the backpack can be lifesavers. Ensure that the zipper is working on your child's coat and work on practicing with your child how to don and zip their own coat.

*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.

If you are missing any items, any school staff can point you to the Lost and Found area.

ITEMS NOT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

Students are not allowed to bring toys, gadgets, stuffies, books, cards, electronics, etc. to school. There are specific times when you're allowed to bring personal items to school such as for your child's Birthday Walk or an item that you have expressly cleared with your lead teacher. Other than that, these items can become a distraction and can also create unnecessary strife and competition between students. We strive to protect the integrity of the classroom space and we appreciate your help in monitoring any items that your child wants to bring to school. If a child does bring something to school, we will ask them to keep it in their backpack. If they are not able to do that, we will hold on to it and give it to you at the end of the school day. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to any of our staff. The school may not be held liable for the loss, theft, or damage to personal property.

RECESS

Half day students will have one recess per day while all full day students will have a minimum of two recesses per day (sometimes more if the weather permits). If the wind chill falls below 10 degrees F or if the heat index rises about 100 degrees F, we will have recess indoors.

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 AND SPECIAL EVENTS

The events we celebrate at CHM are Harvest Feast (November), Holiday Party (December), Valentine’s Day (February), Art Show (May) and Wheels Day (May). See school calendar for dates. Special activities will be planned in conjunction with each event. Classroom 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 no later than one week prior to the party.

WHEELS DAY AT PRIMARY

For Wheels Day, students are invited to bring their bike, scooter, strider, or tricycle to school. Helmets are required to participate. In the Primary classroom, students will learn bike safety and will be allowed to drive their bike around cones in the parking lot. Elementary students do not participate in a Wheels Day activity, but will offer other activities as interest arises.

ART SHOW

Parents are invited to attend the Art Show which is a compilation of the students’ artwork throughout the year. This takes place in May and the date is on the school calendar. The students prepare special treats and families are asked to donate supplies. The artwork is displayed and families take it home at the end of the event.

SCHOOL EVENTS				
Event	Location	Time	Parents Attend?	Volunteers Needed?
Halloween Trunk or Treat	Primary Campus Parking Lot	After school/evening	Yes	Yes
Harvest Feast (Nov) – students will prepare and share a meal together	Classroom	During school hours but school is on a shortened schedule	No - but teachers may ask parents to contribute food	Yes in Primary – during the days leading up to it to cut vegetables
Holiday Party (Dec) – students will wear their PJs, share a special treat, and watch a movie	Classroom	During school hours	No - but teachers may ask parents to contribute food	No
All School Holiday Party – Holiday Concert & potluck	Local church	After school/evening	Yes and grandparents and any other family	Yes. Help with set up and clean up.

Valentine's Day (Feb)	Classroom	During school hours	No but teachers may ask parents to contribute food	Yes at Primary. Parents can sign up to help students distribute valentines
Art Show	Local church	After school/evening	Yes	Yes. Help with set up and clean up
Wheels Day	At Primary	During school hours	No	Yes. Help with set up, safety, and clean up.

ADMISSIONS & ENROLLMENT

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 it educational and admission policies.

Enrollment for the new school year takes place each February for returning families and March for new families.

TUITION

The CHM Board of Directors sets tuition rates and those are published in February for the upcoming school year.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Ages 3-5: Early Childhood Connections - Starting Strong. Through CHM's partnership with Starting Strong, families can apply for a scholarship to help offset the cost of school for children ages 3-5 years old. To learn more visit their web site - <https://www.earlychildhoodconnections.com/program-information>

Ages 6-12: South Dakota Partners in Education (SDPE) provides scholarships to families with students attending K-6th grade who meet income eligibility guidelines. Please click below to visit the SDPE web site for more information on eligibility and application - <https://sdpartnersinedu.org/>

PAYMENT POLICIES

A non-refundable application fee of \$100 is required for all programs for both new and returning families. A non-refundable tuition deposit is required at time of enrollment to secure the student's spot. The deposit is \$300 for 5 Morning Primary and \$400 for all other programs. A student's spot is not secured until this deposit is paid. The deposit is applied to next year's tuition. The deposit is forfeited if the student does not attend CHM.

School Year Financial Commitment - After July 1, families assume responsibility for payment of tuition for the entire school year. If a student withdraws after July 1, families will not be provided with a refund. If there is a balance owed, families commit to making those payments until the financial obligation is fulfilled.

Students are required to be self-sufficient in toileting. If a child is not toilet trained by the first day of school and does not attend CHM in the fall, the family is still responsible for paying the entire school year tuition.

TUITION AGREEMENT

During enrollment, families will be asked to sign a Tuition Agreement which is a contract between the family and the school. Agreements notify the school of the family's commitment to pay tuition and sets up a payment plan schedule.

PAYMENT PLANS

All monthly payment plans will be made on the 1st

1 Payment: July 1

2 Payments: July 1 and Nov 1

10 Monthly Payments: July 1 to April 1

DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE

Receive a 2% Pay in Full Discount when tuition is paid by July 1.

Each sibling after first enrolled child receives 25% off of their tuition.

Refer a new family to CHM and receive \$100 off of your tuition.

The following payment plan and transactions fees (subject to change) are paid directly to TADs:

\$20 to set up a payment plan of 1-2 transactions

\$55 for more than 2 transactions.

Electronic bank payments will incur an Electronic Processing (ACH) Fee starting at \$3 per transaction. As payment amounts exceed \$1,000, the fee will assess at 0.3% with a maximum fee of \$7.

Credit card payments are charged a 3% transaction fee.

In addition, TADS charges a \$50 late fee for any returned payments.

You may submit a check directly to the school for School Year Tuition only if you are paying in full otherwise all payments must be made through TADs.

REFERRAL CREDIT

If you are responsible for the enrollment of a student new to CHM, you will receive \$100 towards your tuition. Said student will need to mention you by name on the application form.

COPY OF ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT

Electronically signed at time of enrollment in TADs.

I/We wish to enroll our child at Children’s House Montessori School (CHM).

I/We understand that:

1. I/We are our child’s primary educator.
2. I/We are entering into a partnership with CHM and we agree to work closely with our child’s teachers to help our child grow emotionally, socially and academically.
3. I/We will strive to be involved in the school community and support the activities throughout the school year.
4. I/We will know and comply with the school policies and procedures outlined in the Student Handbook.
5. I/We agree that our child’s success at CHM is dependent upon regular attendance and punctuality. We will strive to ensure our child arrives on time, maintains regular attendance and if an absence is necessary, we will notify the school in a timely manner.
6. I/We agree to strive for healthy routines and habits around sleep and nutrition, and fostering developmentally appropriate independence.
7. I/We agree to moderate and limit screen time use for our child based on current research and recommendations for our child's age.
8. I/We are committed to volunteering at least 10 hours per school year by attending school clean up days, helping with special events, organizing social activities for families, or joining the board or a board committee.
9. I/We agree to attend a minimum of one parent education opportunity.
10. I/We agree that our child must be potty trained by the time they start school.
11. I/We are aware of and agree to the following financial responsibilities and commitments to CHM:
 - a) I/We are to pay the non-refundable application fee to Children’s House Montessori.
 - b) I/We are to pay the deposit and that deposit will be applied to the tuition.
 - c) I/We understand that the deposit secures our child’s spot at Children’s House Montessori.
 - d) I/We understand that we forfeit the deposit if our child does not attend CHM.
 - e) I/We understand that if we withdraw our child after July 1, we will not receive a refund for any prepaid tuition amounts and we will be responsible for paying the remaining tuition if such a departure occurs.
 - f) I/We understand that if our account is more than 30 days past due on November 1, we will be asked to withdraw our child from the second part of the school year unless the account can be made current by November 15.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND BIRTH CERTIFICATES

All new students should submit a copy of their birth certificate and immunization records upon enrollment. Please keep your child’s immunization record up to date by submitting a copy to the office. These documents

must be submitted before the first day of school. Medical and religious exemptions are accepted – please inquire with the office for the form. Returning students entering Kindergarten and Grade 6 will be asked to submit updated immunization records.

MEDICAL RELEASE

CHM staff can administer certain medicines (such as antibiotics), but please discuss it with your teacher prior to sending any medicine to school. If your child is in need of medicine during their time at school, parents/guardians will need to fill out a Medical Administration Authorization Form. 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 we make ask you to fill out a form if you are sending to school items such as cough drops, chap stick, lotion, and allergy pills. These items may also be kept in the office.

ACCIDENTAL INJURY

All staff are CPR/First Aid Certified. In case of an accidental injury, we will treat your child with basic first aid at the school and 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 Emergency Services. 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.

SANITIZE FACILITIES

Our buildings are cleaned daily with a deeper cleaning conducted weekly. Our process for cleaning/sanitizing includes:

- 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, the doors will remain locked at all times. Only contracted staff and approved board members will have access either keyed or keyless. 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 or designated classroom door beginning at 7:30 a.m. We welcome families to visit the school at any time, but please ring the doorbell for entry.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Communicating with families will be a top priority, but will take place after the safety and security of the students and staff is ensured. Families will be communicated with via our One Call text/call and email service. We will conduct drills with the students throughout the year to practice evacuating the building safely. We will also drill our One Call system to ensure that all families are receiving the emergency notifications.

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. In the event of an evacuation, a **STUDENT RELEASE STATION** will be established at the **Westminster Presbyterian Church 1012 Sioux San Dr. Rapid City, SD 57702**. 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.

PARENT RESOURCES

ON MONTESSORI

Books:

1. *The Montessori Method* by Maria Montessori
2. *The Absorbent Mind* by Maria Montessori
3. *Children Who Are Not Yet Peaceful* by Donna Bryant Goetz
4. *Children of the Universe Cosmic Education in the Montessori Elementary Classroom* by Michael and D'Neil Duffy
5. *Montessori for Every Family – A practical parenting guide to living, loving, and learning* by Tim Seldin and Lorna McGrath

Online:

1. The American Montessori Society web site -- <https://amshq.org/>

ON DISCIPLINE

Books:

1. *Positive Discipline in the Montessori Classroom* by Jane Nelson & Chip DeLorenzo
2. *Positive Discipline: The Classic Guide to Helping Children Develop Self-Discipline, Responsibility, Cooperation, and Problem-Solving Skills* by Jane Nelson

ON SCREEN TIME

Too much screen time use for children can have a negative effect on their development of executive functioning skills, fine motor skills (i.e. pencil grip), and social emotional skills.

Parents play a crucial role in managing and reducing screen time by raising awareness, setting boundaries, and providing behavioral controls. Parental limitations and the absence of screens in bedrooms have been found to significantly reduce screen usage. Parents should also set an example by managing their own screen time. Overall, it is important for caregivers, educators, and healthcare professionals to understand the potential risks of excessive screen usage and implement strategies to promote healthy development in children, including alternative activities that foster cognitive, linguistic, and social-emotional skills. We can reduce the possible negative impacts of excessive screen time and promote children's healthy development and well-being by increasing knowledge and encouraging alternative activities that stimulate development.

At Children's House Montessori, we appreciate parents being aware of screen time guidelines for their child's age and working to build responsible screen time use in the household. Helping children moderate screen time use now sets them up for future use. Guidelines that have helped parents establish healthy habits around screen use include:

- Creating a schedule for screen use helps with predictability and cuts down on tantrums. Exceptions can be made for travel or sick days.
- Setting etiquette such as pausing when someone is talking.
- No screen time use one hour before bedtime cuts down on the risk of interfering with sleep.
- Video chatting with relatives or looking up things with a parent are considered interactive use and are positive ways to show the value of technology.
- Prohibiting unfettered access to the internet and specifically YouTube.