



Primary Parent Handbook

Primary Parent Handbook

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Welcome

Welcome to Lifetime Montessori School! Lifetime Montessori School provides an educational program of excellence based upon the original Montessori principles of humanity, focusing primarily on the fundamental law of self-construction. At Lifetime Montessori School the child develops his or her own will, self-control, concentration and intellect. Utilizing time-tested Montessori principles engenders self-esteem, independence and a sense of responsibility. We are honored that you have chosen our school to nurture, support and love your child. Thank you.

Students of Lifetime Montessori School

Lifetime Montessori School currently accepts children ages 18 months to 5. Children begin their education in the Primary environment at the age of 2 ½ to 3 and continue in the same environment through Kindergarten. When the child is ready, around the age of 6, they can move on to a Montessori Elementary environment or enter First grade in the local Public School System. We offer a 5 day program for the primary students. We offer a half day program for children under the age of 4.

The Three-Year Cycle

It is very important for all of the families to realize that the Primary Program of Lifetime Montessori School is at least a three (3) year program. We expect all children to complete Kindergarten with their teachers. Our education, experience and knowledge aid us in preparing and managing the classroom for your child to thrive via this very special philosophical aspect of the Montessori method, which is that all children need to experience a Three-Year Cycle in the same environment.

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Every year is an important year for the child. The first year is one in which they are familiarizing themselves with the environment, learning how to care for the self and the environment. The children begin to learn to focus and to concentrate. Many changes occur as the child finds confidence in achieving important self-related goals. As the child looks around in their new environment they notice older children working on fascinating materials. The Montessori method has found that the younger children in the classroom respond faster when emulating the older children.

The second year is just as important. An ease and comfort of the environment allows your child to jump right into choosing work – no adjustment time is wasted. Your child now has concentration and can learn how to teach themselves anything they show interest in. The child has the world to explore and a willing Guide ready to show them how to access that world. The child notices the older children using materials just out of their reach, giving the child motivation to practice their lessons further.

The third year is the most important year. Not only is the child more capable of learning even greater riches through the now very familiar materials, they are now at the top of the class. The child can truly feel confident, secure and independent with high self-esteem. The child now shares work and lessons with the smaller children in the class, solidifying the knowledge of all that they have learned in the past years. And then those new, young children look up to your now older child and the cycle starts again.

In this way, each child is allowed to experience being the “youngest”, “middle” and “oldest” child, which could never happen otherwise. Through this comfortable exploration in a known environment with the help of the child’s peers and teachers, the child is provided with the security and consistency so important at this age. This also means that parents and teachers will develop a close working relationship on behalf of the child. The child is the focus of our school. We feel it is important that all of the people in the child’s life (parents, teachers, peers) work together to help the child. Please take this information to heart because we teach a Three-Year Cycle at Lifetime Montessori School and require your commitment to this stimulating program. Thank you.

Classroom Guidelines

The Montessori Environment is a prepared environment designed to aid your child in their search for independence, concentration and happiness. Children need an interactive, hands-on, educational environment to become self-motivated and successful learners. Here, children are free to explore with their senses in order to fully understand the world around them. **They are free to learn at their own pace.** We never push a child academically; the child learns through their own explorations and from others in their environment. Interaction with their peers in a real life community is necessary. Children require ample time and space to practice and perfect their abilities. The Montessori materials provide children with a variety of interactive experiences including learning activities of practical life, sensorial, language, math, science, history, culture, art, etc. Dr. Montessori found that children need more than just academics; they need to be allowed to explore their world and society.

Our classrooms are communities. The children care for the environment they learn in, along with the people within. Children will have a job within their community. Our school and classrooms only have one rule and that is the rule of respect. Respect fulfills so many needs within an environment. When a child follows the rule of respect, they will never say or do anything to hurt another child. With respect, the child will care for everything within their environment. Most importantly, with respect, the child will care for their own self. Respect will carry a child confidently and happily through the rest of their life. We ask that you help in fostering this respect. Respect comes in many forms. We respect people by listening to their words and looking them in the eye when we speak with them. We respect people by giving them common courtesies like saying “Excuse me”, “Please”, “Thank you” and “Your Welcome”. We respect the environment by not throwing trash on the floor, by not harming animals, by caring for books we read, etc. These small considerations show respect and model respect for our children. This leads to a child feeling appreciated and cared for. Once a child feels respect, they will in turn give that respect to their immediate environment, including the animals and people within it.

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Admissions Policy

It is the policy of Lifetime Montessori School to admit students without regard to race, culture, color, creed, national and ethnic origin, sex, religion or disability. When the parent or legal guardian of a child identifies that a child has special needs, the Head Teacher and the parent or legal guardian will meet to review the child's care requirements. Lifetime Montessori School does not discriminate on the basis of special needs. The program accepts children with special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided for the child. In staff hiring and student enrollment we encourage diversity.

Parents will be given a 30 day notification of any tuition changes. We ask the same of you. If you need to leave LMS for any reason, please give the school 30 days written notice so that we may fill the spot. If you need to modify your daily or daycare schedule, please give us at least two weeks notice to be sure we have the space to make those changes.

Consistent with our philosophy of providing the best and most relevant service, all admissions are on a trial basis. We reserve the right to observe and evaluate each child to see where he/she would best fit within our environment and without.

Classroom Procedures

The children of each classroom learn through special lessons or presentations given individually by the teacher. There is a process that the child should follow in their classroom. Please go over these procedures with your child before the first day of school.

1. You may only take work from a shelf that you have had a lesson on.
2. Please take your work to a table or a mat and sit down.
3. You may practice work that you have had a lesson on, as often as you would like, any day that you are in school.
4. Please put all of the material back in order and where it belongs on the shelf.
5. Please remember to push in your chair or roll up your mat.
6. If you watch a child at work, please stand with your arms at your sides, or behind your back and please do not speak, as we do not want to distract the child working.
7. If while watching a child work, that child asks you to leave, please respect their wishes and go choose your own work.
8. When you need to speak to a teacher or another child who may be busy, please rest your hand on that person's arm or shoulder and wait patiently for them to call upon you.

Thank you for helping your child in adjusting to this new environment with these rules. We appreciate any consistency that can be offered at home.

Arrival and Departure

School Attendance is required 5 days a week, except for holidays.

Please see the school calendar for details.

Grasshopper and Firefly Rooms:

School starts promptly at 8:30

Please drop your child off between 8:15 and 8:30.

School ends promptly at 2:15.

Please pick your child up between 2:15 and 2:30.

Bumblebee, Caterpillar and Dragonfly Rooms:

School starts promptly at 8:45

Please drop your child off between 8:30 and 8:45.

School ends promptly at 2:30.

Please pick your child up between 2:30 and 2:45.

Every child entering Lifetime Montessori School is capable of walking into the school by them self or with a friend or teacher, and what a great feeling of independence when a child realizes that their parents trust them! Please do not carry your child in as this communicates a dependent

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message to the child and discourages independence. We ask that parents add to their child's independence by dropping their child off in our drop-off line every morning. Parents pull to the front of the line, wait in their cars, and our teachers help the children out of their car seats and into the building where they can walk on their own, or with a friend or teacher if needed, to their classroom. Please make your goodbyes **cheerful and brief**. Make sure that when you say good-bye you tell them what a wonderful day they will have! If you show hesitation then the child may feel that this isn't a safe or fun place and could feel anxiety. We want school to be a wonderful experience for each child and you can help in many ways.

When it is time to pick your child up, please enter the same line and **wait in your car** for your child to be brought to you. The teacher will open the door and buckle your child into their car seat. *It is very important that you do not get out of your car* as this is a busy and potentially dangerous time for your child to be running over to meet you. We have many families needing to pick up siblings elsewhere and we need arrival and drop-off to be quick and efficient. Your attention in this matter is greatly appreciated.

When you drop your child off and pick them up in the afternoon, please sign your child in and out on our sign in/out clipboard. This is a state mandated law. We will not allow your child to go home with anyone who is not on your emergency card, so please do not send anyone to get your child who is not on this list. Anyone on your emergency list picking up your child must have their ID ready to show the Teacher every time. The time of arrival and departure with your signature next to each is required everyday. Please note that we will charge a late fee for late pick-ups, even after Enrichment classes. Our rate is \$15 for the first 5 minutes and \$1 per minute thereafter. Please be prepared to pay this fee upon picking up your child.

If you arrive early for school in the morning, please park in the lot and wait with your child. When school starts you may walk them to the school door, say a brief and happy goodbye before allowing them to walk in independently. Please be sure to arrive on time (not early or late) to pick up your child after school as we have two different schedules for pick-up. See the schedule above. It is very important that there is order at pick up and drop off times to keep the children safe and happy. Please make sure that everyone in your family understands the importance of this request, including nannies, grandparents and anyone else who may possibly bring your child to school. Thank you.

Day Care and Enrichment Classes

Lifetime Montessori School offers day care before and after school to all students. Parents may drop their child off at school at 7:30 in the morning and they may also use our day care services after school until 6:00 pm. The prepaid daycare rate is \$6 per hour. Please fill out a daycare application/schedule to let us know your daycare needs each month. We charge \$8.00 per hour (and any part thereof) for drop-in daycare. Please call the front office 24 hrs in advance to check for availability for drop-in daycare.

On certain school closures Lifetime Montessori School will offer Supplemental Daycare for those who need extra care. Dates included are Veteran's Day on November 11th, MLK Jr. Day on January 16th and President's Weekend on February 17th and 20th. The school will be open with limited spaces from 8 am to 5 pm on these days. If you will need care on any or all of these Holidays, please contact the front office to reserve your space **before** September 28th, 2011. There will be a charge associated with these dates.

We offer many stimulating Enrichment classes after school for the Primary students. Currently we offer music, sports, tumbling, Mandarin, Spanish, French and dance. Please see the front office for more classes and information. These classes are offered through third party businesses. Each business and it's staff have submitted licenses and insurance forms to our front office to ensure the safety and comfort of the children. Every business has had a trial run at the school to better understand what they offer and how they benefit Lifetime Montessori School students. Please be prompt in picking up your child from any enrichment class as your child is solely under the care of the staff involved with these classes.

Student Attendance/Ill Health Policy

Dr. Montessori found through her observations that children have a great need for order. Children need firm consistency and repetition to find their boundaries and limits set upon them by their environment and our society. In respecting this need of the child we would like to stress the importance of your consistent and prompt arrival to school every day that your child is well. If you are having a hard time getting your child out the door in the mornings please see the Director as she has many helpful ideas. It is also very important that your child comes to school everyday that they are well so that they will feel more comfortable as they are familiar and happy within their environment.

STATE LAWS REQUIRE - and, in the interest of each child's health and as a courtesy to the other children – that you KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME if you notice any sign of illness such as temperature, sore throat, headache, excessively runny nose, cough, diarrhea, vomiting etc. within 24 hours of class time. If your child needs to stay in from outdoor activities, it is best to keep them home. It is very difficult to keep one child inside while the others are all outside. We will ask any child that we see to be sick, unhealthy or contagious to be picked up and brought home immediately. We understand how hard it may be to take off work, but please consider how unhappy your child feels at school when they are sick and uncomfortable. If a child spends one extra day resting during an illness, it is probable that they will heal more quickly. Please keep your child home during signs of illness. Please let us know if your child has any contagious disease, such as chicken pox, whooping cough or measles, so other parents can take necessary action. We are required by law to keep records of contagious diseases. Thank you.

Entering the Classroom

It is very important that all adults understand a very important aspect of the Montessori environment. Dr. Montessori saw (and we still see today) that our world, our society is made for adults. Everything the child comes into contact with is adult-sized and it is very rare for children to have real things of their own. A Montessori environment is created solely for the children. Every single thing is made with the child in mind. Even the teacher's desks are very small so that they blend into the environment. The pictures are hung at the child's eye level. The lamps, chairs, tables, shelves and materials are all made specifically for children. Most importantly these are real objects, not plastic, but real wood, glass and metal objects just like adults use. You can begin to see what a wonderful sanctuary this is for children! We call this place the "Children's House" and the teachers understand that they intrude upon this special space and try to always kneel or sit. The children understand quite quickly that this is *their* place and when adults enter *their* environment they become uncomfortable. We ask you, please, to stay outside of the classroom. We have created spaces for parents to observe their children and the classroom. It is a special privilege for parents to use the "observation chair" which is placed just inside the classroom door so that the parents will not be distracting the children from their work. Please use this chair for quiet, reflective moments of pure observation. If you need to come in to the room for any reason, please allow an office staff person to get the teacher or your child. Please make sure that everyone in your family understands the importance of this request, including nannies, grandparents and anyone else who may possibly have contact with our school. Thank you.

Dress for Success

We ask that you send your child to school dressed in comfortable, non-restrictive clothing. It is most important that the children can remove their own clothing if needed. We are fostering independence and if your child needs to ask for help in using the bathroom because of a complicated belt buckle, then they will not be independent in that moment. We know how adorable children's clothes can be, but it is in the best interest of the child that they wear loose fitting, casual clothes. Please dress your child in pants with elastic waists, roomy shirts and, if needed, short dresses (so the hem does not drag, get stepped on, or fall in the toilet!). We also ask that you send your child with appropriate shoes. Your child may not come to school in shoes without a tread like Crocs (too slippery). The shoes must be comfortable and preferably sneakers. In contemplating shoes for your

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child, please buy something that they can put on and remove on their own. If your child is just entering our program, they should be in Velcro shoes so that they can put them on and take them off as they please. Around the age of 4 we begin teaching the children how to tie and we would ask that at that time the child come to school in tie shoes so that they may practice.

Please bring a spare change of clothes (socks, underwear, pants/shorts and top) to your teacher. Your teacher will let you know when replacement items are needed. Please **label all clothes** brought to school, especially jackets as those are often misplaced. We urgently ask you: **Please do not allow your child to wear clothes depicting violent acts or cartoon characters.** It is very important that we keep Lifetime Montessori School a neutral, friendly place and we do not condone violent play of any kind. Thank you.

Medication and Medical Emergencies

If your child must use medication during school hours you may bring it to the office at the appointed time and administer it yourself. We do not have a nurse and are not allowed to give medication to the children. Exceptions may be made under certain circumstances, please see the Director for more information if needed. Please do not send medicine in lunch boxes, as other children will have access to it. Please refrain from sending cough drops. Thank you.

If your child has a medical or dental emergency we will first call the necessary emergency services and then contact the parents. If a child needs to go to the Hospital then a staff member will accompany them if a parent is not available and stays until the parent has arrived. It is very important to completely fill out your emergency information paperwork so that the staff can call anyone needed in an emergency.

Field Trips

As the children are quite young, we will not be going on field trips as a rule. If an event does come up, then we will provide you with rules, regulations and transportation arrangements as needed.

Nutrition/Lunch

As you can imagine we stress healthy snacks and lunches for you and your children. We offer snacks of fruit, grain, vegetables or dairy every morning and afternoon. We try to introduce your child to many new fruits and vegetables so they may discover what they enjoy. We ask the same of you for breakfast and lunch.

Breakfast is a very important meal in the day and we ask that your child get some form of protein during breakfast as they are expending a lot of energy during our 3-hour work period. Fruit is also important as it is a complex carbohydrate and will last longer than the quick fix of pop tarts or other like items. We suggest eggs, whole grain breads or muffins, fruits, hot cereals, and yogurt as a good start to the day. These foods have "staying power" and your child will be happy to work all morning. Proper food will feed the brain, allowing it to function at a higher level!

We ask the same for lunch. There are still another 2 hours of school after lunch and your child will need lots of energy. Please send **Protein**: meat, fish, chicken, boiled egg, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese, almond butter etc., **Vegetables**: carrot, tomato, celery, cucumber, jicama, peas, corn etc., **Fruits**: banana, apple, orange, grapes, melons, peaches, plums etc., **Grains**: please send whole grain foods, seeds and nuts other than peanuts. Please cut food into bite size pieces for further independence of the child. When a child does not like a food in their lunch box we will wrap it back up and send it home to you so that you may discuss with your child why they did not like it and therefore not send it again. We request that you do not bring desserts to school. The Montessori method has a strong base in real-life activities and materials. For this reason we ask that you supply "real" and healthy items in your child's lunch, not heavily processed and packaged foods like lunchables and go-gurts. Thank you.

Items from Home

We know that some children feel the need to bring things from home to school, whether for comfort reasons or just to share with friends. We do understand this need but have seen the

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unhappy consequences of allowing this. Please discourage children from bringing anything to school from home. If something does come we will hold it for the child outside of the classroom. Too often others touch a child's favorite toy or animal, which will often cause the owner distress. Please avoid this by leaving all cherished items in the car. We do have a "show and tell" occasionally. For this we allow children to share thoughts, dreams, experiences and educational items like books, seashells, plants, rocks etc. Please keep in mind though that sharing these items may still cause your child distress and may not be worth the effort. Also, please do not send any jewelry, purses, money, sunglasses or makeup to school. You would be surprised at how often this is an issue. Even Chap Stick is discouraged as children share it (and their germs). We take your child's work very seriously and ask that nothing be done to distract them from it. Thank you.

Parent Communication and Participation

Unfortunately the teachers are not available to discuss your child's day at arrival or dismissal time as that time is needed to say hello and goodbye to the children. If you need to speak with your teacher you may call the office to leave a message for the teacher to call you back during their break or after school, you may send a note into school with your child asking the teacher to call you, or you may call the teacher after school as the teachers stay until 3:30 each day. We conduct Parent-Teacher conferences twice per school year in order to keep you updated on your child's progress. These conferences are required for all parents at Lifetime Montessori School and are crucial to your child's success. Each teacher has also made their email address available for parents to contact them. Open and ongoing communication with all our families is of the utmost importance to us. Parent participation takes many forms: observing your child in the classroom setting, sharing one of your talents or skills with the class; assisting with material preparation, field trips or fundraising activities.

Grievance Policy

If a parent is having a problem with any aspect of the classroom then we ask that they first meet with their child's teacher to discuss the issue. If the issue cannot be resolved then a meeting should be set up with the parent, teacher and Director. If the parent is still not satisfied with the Director's end decision then the parent should notify the Board of Directors in writing. Parents should follow the same procedure if unsatisfied with a policy or program at Lifetime Montessori School.

Discipline Policy

Each teacher finds their own voice when it comes to disciplining the children. We do not believe in punishments or "time outs" for a child having problems working, concentrating, listening etc. Each teacher will find a way to help the child through any work related problems they may be having. The Director is always available to consult or brainstorm new ideas for working with children. There are only certain times when a teacher may have to rely on removing a child from the environment and that would be when a child's behavior is disruptive, cruel or unsafe to the child or others. These behaviors cannot and will not be tolerated by the staff of Lifetime Montessori School. If we have a child continuing to be unsafe after we have explained our concerns to them, then they will be removed from the classroom. We cannot endanger other children. We stand by our non-negotiable discipline on aggressive behavior. Every time a child is physically aggressive to another person they will be removed from the immediate environment. If their aggression is severe (example: biting) your child must go home immediately. We feel this is so important for the safety for all of the children in each environment. We also hold a firm stance on hitting: most children will be sent home for hitting another person, but we do understand that every situation is different and this option may be discussed between a Teacher and the Director before a decision is made. There will be no corporal punishment or violation of children's rights at Lifetime Montessori School.

Homework

We feel that schoolwork is work that occurs only at school and homework is work done in the home; therefore, in a Montessori environment, the children are not given school work to take home.

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We will send nothing home for your child to work on. We have found that when children do school work at home (math problems, learning their sounds, etc.) they then have no interest in the work provided to them at school. We do encourage appropriate work to be done in the home like baking, cleaning, caring for pets and the outdoor environment, etc. We also do not regularly send home paperwork from the classroom. Occasionally a child will create a book that may be brought home, but the work done in the school environment is work that stays in the environment. Only after much practice and perfection, might a child bring home a book of math problems, words they have written or parts of a flower book (for example). Please understand that the work your child is doing is solely for themselves, not for others to see. **We encourage the child to be proud of their work, not to look for approval from others.** When the child loves their work, then they will want to work for themselves and will therefore be much better at what they accomplish.

Birthdays/Holidays/Celebrations

On each child's birthday (or a date of your choice if their birthday is not during the school term), your child may bring a special educational gift for the classroom (like a special book). Please ask your child to wrap their gift and present it to the classroom on their special day. The child will then be allowed to open it and share it with all of their friends.

Please do not send party invitations or gifts to distribute as this causes hurt feelings if each child is not included in your child's "out-of-school" birthday celebration. We recommend using Evite and will provide email addresses as needed.

On the date selected for your child's celebration, the children in the class put on a program called THE CELEBRATION OF LIFE. The birthday child walks around a circle (representing the sun), which includes cards with the months of the year. As your child walks around the "sun", a story is read about your child. We ask that you prepare the story along with a picture of something your child did in year one, two, three etc. Children enjoy hearing about their life no matter how many times it is done. We will take good care of the pictures and return them to you after the pictures have been on display for a week or two. In ensuing years you will add on to the story and send the same pages plus one for the next year's celebration. If you would like to bring in a snack to share, please make sure it is healthy and it does not include chocolate, nuts or frosting. Please see your teacher for more information and please make all celebration arrangements in advance with the head teacher.

There are many celebrations and holidays in each nationality. These special days make life interesting and full of heritage. The children have the opportunity to learn about the culture of other children. Each family is invited to share any special holiday they celebrate with the class. We ask that you come to give a short presentation about what the name of your holiday/celebration is and how the children of your nationality celebrate it. You may come dressed in the clothing of your country and bring traditional food to further impress upon the child the beautiful differences and similarities of our world. We ask that the presentation be brief, specific, simple and non-denominational. Please make arrangements in advance with your teacher. Look in the class newsletter for the days that will be celebrated and intersperse your own special ones into the class calendar.

Religion

Lifetime Montessori School has no affiliation with any religious orientation or organizations.

Smoking/Drugs/Alcohol

SMOKING, DRUGS OR ALCOHOL IS NOT PERMITTED ON SCHOOL PROPERTY AT ANY TIME.

Soliciting

There shall be NO soliciting on the premises except by salespersons previously cleared by the Directors or Board of Trustees. The school roster is for personal use only and may be not used for solicitation unless approved by the Administration.

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Parent Handbook Agreement

*Please sign and return this sheet to the LMS office within two weeks of receiving your handbook.
If you have any questions, you may address them with the office at that time.*

I, _____, have read and understand the information outlined in the Lifetime
Parent/Guardian

Montessori School Parent Handbook. By signing below, I agree to follow the policies and procedures described in the Handbook.

Signature _____ Date: _____
Parent/Guardian

Signature _____ Date: _____
Parent/Guardian