

# Family Montessori School Society Policies

## I. Introduction to the school

### Philosophy & Mission Statement at Family Montessori School

The philosophy at our school is to educate children to be creative and sensitive individuals who are eager to learn. The children are encouraged to learn at their own pace, first experiencing the materials sensorially, and later developing their conscious intellect. Learning happens individually as well as in connection to their peers and the adults in the environment.

In keeping with the Montessori philosophy, we help develop the children's inner discipline through independence, living in harmony with the group, and being responsible for the environment. The children are made aware of the needs of the group and encouraged to express their own needs and feelings.

We believe that the children need to have a positive self-image, be proud of who they are, value all cultures, and embrace the diversity of our environment. We strive to provide a peaceful, caring and nurturing environment for each child.

## II. Policies

### 1) Conduct Policy

**Code of Conduct:** To provide a safe, caring, respectful environment where each person is valued for their creativity, individuality and responsibility toward each other and the school.

- i) At FMSS, Parents are expected to: View themselves as partners in the education of their children. Parents are encouraged to get involved and be a part of the FMSS community. All parents contribute to the school by way of an assigned volunteer job, or opt to pay a fee in lieu of a job. Parents also contribute to the classroom by bringing flowers for the flower arranging activities, coming on field trips, and sharing information about religious or cultural celebrations or beliefs with the children.

The Society expects parents to be supportive of our mission, values and philosophy. Parents should be committed to working together with the staff, administration and the Board to make Family Montessori the best school it can possibly be. This requires communicating openly, bringing issues to our immediate attention, and trusting that your child is in good hands.

- ii) At FMSS, Students are expected to: Arrive on time, say good-bye to whoever brought them at the door, respectfully greet the Directress and prepare themselves to enter the classroom. Once they are in the Montessori environment, students are expected to act in a responsible and respectful manner at all times. Students will learn to feel ownership of the classroom, and feel a sense of pride and joy about the work they complete each day. At the end of the day, students will politely say good-bye to each Directress before leaving with their parent or caregiver.

## 2) Registration Policy

i) **Registration Process:** Register by filling an application form and paying a processing fee (which is currently set by the Board to be \$50.00). Following the Open House in February, new parents will be invited to come for a short class observation. All children MUST have an 'informal' interview with the teachers. We try to keep a balanced boy/girl ratio, as well as a balance of the different age groups.

- **Preschool- Policy**  
The choice of a morning or afternoon spot will be considered but cannot be guaranteed, as balancing the ratio of gender and ages will be necessary to achieve optimum classroom conditions.
- **Kindergarten- Policy**  
The Montessori Casa program is a 3-year cycle. However, in the unlikely event that there are more kindergarten applicants than spaces, the Directresses, in conjunction with the Principal, will review the applicants and offer spaces for the Extended-day program based on balancing gender and other considerations.

## 3) Payment Policy

Tuition for the 2010-2011 school year is:

**Pre-school Program:** \$3850 per school year, in addition to \$150 deposit

**Extended Day Program:** \$6850 per school year, in addition to \$150 deposit

FMSS is a non-profit society that employs a highly trained professional staff devoted to the education and well being of your child. Our staff's livelihood depends upon full and stable enrollment and families making a three-year commitment to the school.

i) **Deposit** - Due to the limited number of children that may be enrolled in the School, **a non-refundable deposit of \$150** ("Deposit") shall be provided by parents at the time of acceptance to FMSS, which shall be in addition to the Tuition Fee. The purpose of the Deposit is to guarantee the enrollment of child in

the School for the term set forth in their contract. The Deposit shall be non-refundable under any circumstance.

ii) **Tuition** – Upon signing the contract, parent shall pay to the order of the “Family Montessori School Society”, the yearly tuition due. Payment may be paid in full (with 3% discount), by term installments or by ten installments (by post-dated cheques). All tuition cheques are required at the time the parent executes the contract in order to maintain the student's spot at the school.

iii) **Over-due Accounts** - All overdue accounts are charged interest at 18% per annum on the last day of each month. No student will be permitted to re-enroll until all fees, expenses and interest charges from the previous year are paid in full.

All NSF cheques will be charged an administrative fee of \$25.00.

iv) **Termination by Parent** – If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the School they must give thirty (30) days' written notification to Society (“Notice of Withdrawal”). A Notice of Withdrawal, stating the effective date of termination, may be completed by way of an email to the school at [familymontessori@telus.net](mailto:familymontessori@telus.net), or a signed letter, which should be delivered to the office at the school during regular office hours. Upon receiving the Notice of Withdrawal from a parent the Society shall return all tuition fees paid (including post-dated tuition cheques, if applicable) by the parent for the period commencing the second calendar month following the effective date of termination and ending the last month of the current school year, less any amount then owing to FMSS (if applicable).

v) **Termination by the Society** - Society expressly reserves the right to require the immediate withdrawal of a child at any time from the School in the event that (a) the Directresses and the Principal determine that the child is not benefiting in a meaningful way from the Montessori teaching method, (b) the child engages in any unacceptable conduct (which is defined as behaviour that creates unsafe conditions, including but not limited to acts of bullying, physical violence and illegal acts), or (c) any portion of the Tuition Fee is owing to the Society for a period of more than ninety (90) days. The Directresses and Principal will inform parents of the effective date of withdrawal (last day of class for the child) by way of a written letter. Upon receiving the Notice of Withdrawal from the FMSS staff, the Society shall return all tuition fees paid (including post-dated tuition cheques, if applicable) by the parent for the period commencing the second calendar month following the effective date of termination and ending the last month of the current school year, less any amount then owing to FMSS (if applicable).

vi) **Payment for Services/Contributing to the Society** - FMSS is a non-profit society comprised of parents of enrolled children and its viability relies upon the participation of parents. To that end, the Society requires that every parent of an enrolled child contribute to the Society by either:

- a) Rendering a service to the Society or,
- b) Paying a service fee of one month's preschool tuition per year of child's enrollment in lieu of providing a service to the Society.

If the parent chooses to render a service to the Society but fails to do so, the Board deems the parent non-compliant. The parent shall be issued a written reminder to this effect. Further non-compliance shall result in the levy of the said service fee.

#### 4) Behaviour Policy

i) **Discipline Policy:** In keeping with the Montessori philosophy, our policy is to help the children to arrive at inner discipline through concentrated work. However should a child have trouble settling into the class on any day, the child will be redirected to work in close proximity to the teacher.

If the child is still unable to settle down, the teacher will intervene and may need to seat the child with her until the child is able to calm down. The parents will be informed of this at the end of the class.

If behaviour becomes extreme, and depending on the circumstances, the parent may be called to conference with the child and teacher while the incident is still fresh in the child's mind. Recollection of an incident a few hours later is distant and unrelated for a young child.

A report of the incident will be noted on an incident report form by the teacher involved.

ii) **Unacceptable Conduct:** At FMSS the definition of unacceptable conduct is: any behaviour that creates unsafe conditions including, but not limited to, acts of bullying, physical violence and illegal acts.

Procedures to be followed in such circumstances:

1. Verbal notification to each parent involved.
2. Consultation with parent and teacher.
3. Written plan for subsequent action and follow up review.
4. If required, notification will be given to the relevant authorities and members of the school community.

#### iii) **FMSS Bullying Prevention and Management Policy**

Family Montessori School Society encourages students to show respect for differences in race, gender and religion while fostering a school environment

free from all forms of bullying & intimidation whether physical, social, emotional or verbal.

The school focus, following Montessori's Peace Education, is on preventative measures for such behaviours, by teaching children how to:

- be caring and courteous to others,
- cooperate with others,
- deal with angry feelings and
- be assertive without being aggressive when standing up for themselves.

Family Montessori School Society requires parents to report any known incidents of bullying to their child's teacher and/or the Principal.

FMSS also uses the booklet "Call It Safe" and a chart of bullying behaviours and their severity as reference materials for preventing and managing intimidation and bullying. There are procedures and a form for reporting a concern or incident to the Society. All of these materials can be found in the School's Policies and Procedures binder, which is available in the hallways at both FMSS school locations.

## 5) Privacy Policy

**Privacy Act:** Family Montessori School Society (FMSS) is required to collect personal information about you and your child in order to register your child at the school and assist the school authority in making an informed decision as to your child's suitability for and appropriate placement in the school. FMSS is also required to collect personal information that will allow the school to respond immediately to an emergency.

i) FMSS acknowledges that there will be no disclosure of personal information to unauthorized personnel or to third parties who are not directly involved in school management or the care, supervision and instruction of your child, unless written authorization from a parent or legal guardian is provided to the school. The school will store all digital and hard copy personal information in a secure location.

Information about the FMSS Privacy Policy is available in the School's handbook in the reception area of each classroom location. Questions about the Privacy Policy should be addressed to the FMSS privacy officer.

## 6) Appeal Policy

### **Appeals/ Levels of consultation**

i) Any individual who wishes a reassessment of an administrative or Board decision may file a formal appeal. Usually, the appeals procedure is processed in the following manner:

- By the staff member and/or teacher who is accountable for the original decision;
- By the principal and teacher concerned;
- By the board of directors of Family Montessori School Society;
- At each level of appeals, every attempt will be made to resolve the issue.

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the board of directors. A copy will be presented to any parties directly involved in the matter. The Board of Directors shall review this information and submit a written report on their decision to all parties concerned in a timely manner.

ii) Kindergarten children and appeals: The appeal procedures for the Kindergarten children and their parents are based upon the guide provided by the BC Ombudsman for use in the public school system, and reflect the FISA Best Practice Guidelines for Independent Schools.

These guidelines include:

- The right to be treated with respect and dignity
- The right to be heard and have a student's position made by a parent(s) or an advocate
- The right to receive reasons for a decision
- The right to know allegations against you, and if documented, copies of the documents upon which the decision was based
- The right to appeal a decision to the Board
- The right to assurance for no retribution for pursuing an appeal or review

Paperwork relating to this and an appeal form can be found in the Kindergarten binder located in the reception area of each school location.

## 7) Absences/Illness Policy

### i) **Absence:**

**Preschool and Kindergarten:** FMSS requests a telephone message or an email if the child is unable to attend school.

**Kindergarten Only:** Independent School policy requires signed absence notes for all Kindergarten children

ii) **Illness:** Parents are encouraged to keep children at home if they are not feeling well (i.e. fever, coughs, colds, and runny noses). This helps to prevent the spread of illness to peers and adults. With a serious illness such as chicken pox, lice, croup etc... *parents must inform the school* so that other families can be

alerted of the need to watch for symptoms. In such cases FMSS follows the guidelines set out by Vancouver Coastal Health Authority.

Coming to school when unwell gives the child a negative feeling about school and parents may encounter resistance from the child about coming back. If the child becomes unwell at school the parents will be contacted so that the child can be picked up. In serious cases, if no contact from the Emergency card is reached, the child will be sent to B.C. Children's Hospital, accompanied by one of his or her Directresses.

iii) **Administration of Medicine:** The parent and the child's doctor must sign a form before staff can administer medication. (Prescription excluded)

## 8) Allergies and Anaphylaxis Policy

i) **Food Allergies:** While it is impossible to eliminate all potential allergens from the school environment, FMSS strives to provide the best possible allergy-aware environment for the children enrolled. Parents must fill out Allergy information forms provided by the Health Department detailing relevant medical procedures.

Medication at school must be current; any changes to medical information MUST be given to the teachers.

**Nut products are not allowed. We are a NUT AWARE school.**

Besides obvious items such as peanut butter, many snacks also contain nuts or traces of nuts. We encourage you to read the labels of products you send for snack (s).

- The teachers will advise you of allergies at the start of each school year. This information will also be listed on the snack schedule posted each term.
- Children with food allergies are strongly advised to bring their own snack.

### ii) **Anaphylaxis:**

The Ministry of Education has implemented the 'BC Anaphylactic and Child Safety Framework', in accordance with the *Anaphylaxis Protection Order and Bill M201: The Anaphylactic Student protection Act, 2007*. This framework requires Boards to include the following in their policies:

Definition of Anaphylaxis: **a sudden and severe allergic reaction, which can be fatal, requiring immediate medical emergency measure to be taken.**

Process for indentifying anaphylactic students: The school maintains records and has the Allergy and Anaphylaxis forms for identified students in the office and kitchen of each classroom location.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for:

- Notifying the school Principal when a child is diagnosed as being at risk of anaphylaxis
- Providing the school with updated medical information annually (**\*MUST** fill out the Anaphylaxis form) or whenever there is a significant change related to their child(ren)

- Providing appropriate (current/up-to-date) medication for their child to keep at school and to take on school trips

FMSS has information from the Allergy Asthma Information Association ([www.aaia.ca](http://www.aaia.ca)) available for staff and parents. This includes an Epi-Pen trainer and a DVD.

## 9. Food Policies

i) **Snack Procedure:** Snacks are provided by parents on a weekly basis, and a snack schedule goes home once a term. Children help with the preparation of snack under adult supervision. Children are free to eat snack at the snack table once it has been served, as long as there is an open chair and they have washed their hands. Parents are advised to inform teachers of ANY cultural, religious and individual food preferences. This information will be added to the snack list that goes out each term.

Group snack is served on special occasions.

ii) **Birthdays/Celebrations:** Parents can send a special treat for the occasion (such as, cookies, muffins, rice crispy squares, etc.), that is free of icing, frosting or chocolate.

iii) **Nut products are not allowed. We are a NUT AWARE school.** As stated above, please do not send any products to school that contain any *traces* of nuts.

## 10. Safety Policies

i) **Fire and Earthquake Drills:** In accordance with Ministry policy, FMSS conducts earthquake and fire drills once a month.

As per Licensing and Independent school requirements, the drills will alternate.

ii) **Emergency Evacuation:** FMSS has developed a detailed Emergency Evacuation plan to be implemented by staff in all Emergency situations. In the instance of a serious unexpected emergency, parents will be contacted provided phone service is available. Out-of province contacts will be notified should this become necessary due to the phone lines being down.

Should it become necessary to move to another area, a notice will be posted on the door advising of where to collect children- if possible the message on the answering machine will be changed to say where we are.

iii) **Pick-up and Drop-off of Children:**

8:30 am to 11:30 am. Door closes at 8:40 am. **No admittance after this time.**

12:45 pm to 3:45 pm. Door closes at 12:55 pm. **No admittance after this time.**

By a written note, the teacher must be informed if your child is going to be picked up by someone other than yourself or the authorized adult, or if your child is going to be visiting a friend from school after class. Always collect your child from a teacher.

Children will only be released to persons authorized to do so as per the *Parent Child Information form* (and/or 'Persons authorized to pick-up' sheet) you fill in with your Registration package. Children will not be released to unauthorized persons **under any circumstances**. If an "Unfit person" arrives to pick up child, staff will call another authorized person to ensure that a suitable adult will come and collect the child.

v) **Late Pick-up:** The responsibility of any child left at school one hour beyond pick-up time will be transferred to the Ministry of Children and Families. A notice will be posted on the school door indicating where to contact the authorities.

After a set grace period of ten minutes, lateness is recorded on the attendance sheet. The Member-at-Large and School Secretary will be given this information and will deal with it. A \$1.00 per minute late fee will then go into effect if the late pick-ups become a chronic issue.

vi) **Custody Orders:** Staff **must** be advised if there are custody orders in effect. It is necessary that a copy of custody orders/restraining orders be kept in your child's file.

## 11. Toileting Policy

i) **Bathroom Procedure:** Children can use either bathroom when needed. If an accident occurs, the wet clothes are placed in a plastic bag and sent home with the child. All children should have a spare change of clothes at school.

ii) As per Board policy, children **MUST** be toilet trained. Teachers will help the child in case of an 'accident' but will not change diapers.

We ask that you do not send your child to school in diapers or pull-ups unless your child has a medical condition. It encourages the independence we are working towards for your child when they come in regular underpants, and helps to reinforce that mistakes are part of the learning process.

## 12) Anti-Smoking Policy

The Board of family Montessori School Society (the "Board") is concerned about the health and safety of all its students and staff. The Board is committed to providing a healthy smoke-free working and learning environment.

i) In accordance with Bill 10-Tobacco sales (Banning Tobacco and Smoking in Public Places and Schools), Amendment Act 2007, the Board prohibits all persons from smoking or using tobacco, or holding lighted tobacco, in or on school property.

The Board also believes that, in the interest of promoting good health practices, non-smoking role modeling by staff, together with an effective health education program, will be a significant factor in encouraging future non-smoking behaviour in our students.