



PATHWAY · MONTESSORI · SCHOOL

Parent Handbook

“The education of a very small child does not aim at preparing him
for school but for life.”

Maria Montessori

608 W. Jefferson Street, Tupelo, MS 38804
pathwaymontessori@gmail.com 662.610.0109

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Pathway Montessori School reserves the right to amend this handbook as needed and will provide notice of such to parents. By acknowledging your receipt and review of the handbook you are also agreeing to abide by any terms and conditions stated in these amendments.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Hours of operation are: 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, August through May with Summer Program available in June and July. Days of operation during summer are MWF
Early Care and After/Late Care are not available.

On rare occasion, the school could close due to the church's need for the space. Parents will be given plenty of notice to make other child care arrangements.

Telephone: (662) 610.0109

Email: pathwaymontessori@gmail.com

Licensed with the Mississippi State Department of Health

In cases of inclement weather, Pathway Montessori School will follow the closings and early dismissals of Tupelo Public School District.

Pathway Montessori School is an affiliate member of American Montessori Society. AMS is a membership organization, a collaboration of teachers, administrators, schools, families, and others

who prize Montessori education. AMS assists in maintaining high standards for Montessori schools and teacher education programs.

ADMINISTRATION

Owner/Director Marsha McKinney Kiste (662-610-0109)

BRIEF HISTORY

Pathway Montessori School was founded in 2012 by Mary Howard King and Marsha McKinney Kiste with a desire to offer a Montessori experience to some of the area's youngest children. With gratitude and appreciation for All Saints' Episcopal Church, Pathway Montessori School operates in its current location. The name Pathway Montessori was adopted to symbolize a course of discovery and exploration for learning.

MISSION STATEMENT

We seek to provide a safe, pleasing, enriching, and nurturing environment based on Maria Montessori's principles and philosophy. We offer an environment with intriguing materials, where all children can spontaneously investigate, explore, and discover. Our approach is to allow each child to learn at his or her own best pace and honor the child's needs to the fullest extent.

MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY

The primary goal of a Montessori program is to help each child reach his or her full potential in all areas of life. The materials and the environment promote the development of physical coordination, emotional growth, social skills, and cognitive preparation. The hands-on curriculum allows the child to experience the joy of learning and to develop self-esteem as well as independence.

The Montessori teacher functions as a guide to learning. Being a role model and respecting each child as a unique individual is the approach used to nurture the development of the child. Through careful observation the teacher is able to determine which new materials to introduce to best aid in their growth and development.

Dr. Maria Montessori designed a number of multi-sensory, sequential and self-correcting materials after careful observation of the kinds of activities and manipulatives that children enjoy and encourage self-directed learning. These materials facilitate the learning of many skills and concepts that children carry with them throughout their life.

Each Montessori classroom environment operates on the principle of freedom within limits. The ground guidelines are based on the fundamental Montessori beliefs of respect for self, respect for each other, and respect for the environment. Through this, the children are able to function and "work" in a safe, nurturing, and positive climate.

ENROLLMENT AND ADMISSION

Children ages 2 months to pre-K will be admitted into Pathway Montessori School. Kindergarten is not available.

Pathway Montessori School does not discriminate between applicants on the basis of race, sex, creed, national origin, or disabilities. The school is not affiliated with any religious group.

All infant, toddler, and early childhood students will be accepted on a conditional basis. Parents or guardians may be asked to withdraw the child if Pathway Montessori School determines, in its sole discretion, that the learning environment is not meeting the child's needs or that the child's presence is having an adverse effect on the learning environment.

Each child must be current with immunizations for admission. A C-121 form must be completed by the child's primary physician or by the Mississippi State Health Department. Other required forms must be completed for admission: Emergency Card, Handbook Signature Page, and Photo Release Form.

Pathway Montessori School openings are filled from the waiting list with applications submitted during the open enrollment period. Children who are not selected during this time will remain on the waiting list.

Any enrolled student may be at the School up to 5.5 hours per day or 27.5 hours per week.

A parent or guardian must give the School two (2) weeks' notice before withdrawing a student. No refund of fees or deposits will be given.

PAYMENT PROCEDURES

Enrollment Fee: Parents or guardians agree to pay a non-refundable \$250.00 enrollment fee. This fee guarantees the student's place in the school.

Re-enrollment Fee: For returning students, parents or guardians agree to pay a non-refundable \$225 re-enrollment fee. This fee guarantees the student's place in the school.

Other Fees:

Snack Fee: For 10-month enrollment plan, an annual snack fee of \$150.00 is paid by August 1st for children ages 12 months and older, or the snack fee may be paid monthly by the first of each month. A \$15.00 snack fee is paid for each month of Summer Care and is paid by the first of each month.

Tuition: Tuition is due on the first of the month. Invoices are emailed to families on the 25th of each month. A \$35.00 late fee will be applied to payments received after the tenth of the month. THIS WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED. There is no deduction in tuition when a child is absent from school due to illness, vacations, early withdrawal, or for any other reason. There will be a 10% sibling discount. The first child in a family pays full tuition. The discount will be applied to all younger siblings in a family. The discount does not apply to the enrollment deposit or other school fees.

No credit cards or debit cards are accepted. Only personal checks and cash (in labeled, sealed envelopes) will be accepted as payments for tuition. A \$35.00 ISF charge will apply to any checks that are returned for insufficient funds.

ARRIVAL, DEPARTURE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Parking at the School: Parents should enter the parking lot of All Saints' Episcopal Church from Jefferson Street. They should park in an open and available space that does not block other vehicles from entering or exiting the church's parking lot. The entrance to the School is on the west side of the education building through the large, double red doors. Parents and guardians should be mindful that the parking lot is shared with the church, and sometimes there may be other activities at the church that limit the availability of parking.

Arrival: A parent, guardian, or other authorized adult will walk each student into the School each day. That person will be responsible for signing in the student at the entrance to the classroom. The child's Work Cycle begins at drop-off so it is important for the child to arrive at 9:00 a.m. The Work Cycle includes arrival and putting personal belongings away, work time, snack time, restroom, circle time, outside time, lunch.

While we recognize that separation is difficult for some children and parents, it is easiest on the class, as a whole, if "good-byes" are limited and short. Please leave your child as quickly as possible so as not to prolong goodbyes and making it difficult for your child or other children whose parents are not able to spend so long. Your "goodbye routine" should be the same each day so that it builds confidence and independence in the child. Lingering can send mixed signals to the child about your trust in the people who care for the child and the environment.

For days when the separation is especially difficult, we have a chair in the hallway where a parent may sit with and comfort the child in peace without disrupting the environment. Please use this spot for any prolonged goodbyes.

Early Arrival: Our teachers set aside time to prepare the environment in the mornings from 8:30-9:00 a.m. each day. **The School does not provide early care for children.** However, we do recognize that *occasionally* a parent may need to drop off the child a few minutes early. If this happens, please call ahead of time to let the teacher/staff know about the need for early care.

Late Care/After Care: The School does not offer extended hours for care in the afternoons. Children must be picked up at 2:30 p.m. each day.

Departure: A parent, guardian, or other authorized adult will walk into the School to pick up the student each day. That person is responsible for signing out the student at the entrance to the classroom.

❖ *The School must have written authorization for additional adults to sign in or sign out a child.*

Transportation: Pathway Montessori School does not transport children to or from School. Nor does it transport children to other outside activities.

Late Arrival: The School recognizes that with young children, mornings can be unpredictable, and sometimes students may arrive late. The School will appreciate a phone call to notify a late arrival.

Late arrival means missed opportunities for learning so we hope every effort will be made to arrive on time. The classroom operates on a 3-hour Work Cycle that includes routines for arrival, work time, snack time, restroom, circle time, outside time, lunch. Latecomers disrupt the classrooms and cause distractions for the children already engaged in an activity or in circle. Sometimes children who arrive late will miss out on special activities such as music, art activities, atrium, etc.

For occasions when late arrival is unavoidable, please enter the classroom as quietly as possible with as few distractions as possible. The parent or guardian may leave the child inside the classroom door, drop the child's belongings inside the classroom door, and quietly leave. The teachers will assist the child in settling into the routine.

Late Departure: The School expects the parent or guardian to pick up the child at 2:30 each day. If an emergency comes up where the parent or guardian cannot pick up the child on time, then the parent or guardian must call to notify the School. One of the teachers will remain with the child until an authorized adult arrives to pick up the child. After 15 minutes without notification from a parent or guardian that the child will be picked up late, a staff member will begin calling other authorized adults on the child's emergency card to come and pick him/her up from the School.

❖ *Continued or excessive tardiness in picking up a child may result in dismissal from the School.*

PROGRAM AND DAILY ROUTINES

Infant/Young Toddler Program: Our infant environment is designed to allow the child freedom of movement to creep, crawl, scoot, and roll over. We follow the child's own individual schedule for feeding, napping, and diapering. The child has opportunities for music, language, self-discovery, baby sign language, and outside play each day.

Parents provide diapers, bottles, baby food, and lunch if applicable. If the child is eating table foods, the School provides the snacks and wipes.

Older Toddler and Early Childhood Programs: Both environments are designed to meet the needs of the child through language, math, sensorial, practical life, music, and art opportunities. We encourage free exploration that builds independence. Weather permitting each child has outside play time every day.

Children will share the same basic schedule for lunch and rest time. Diapering and/or toileting will be according to their own individual needs. Parents provide diapers, nap mats (for children 12 months and older), and lunch. The School provides the snacks and wipes.

Clothing and Storage: *Clothing for children should be comfortable and easy-to-clean. Clothing should be easy to take on and off so that each student is building those self-dressing skills when appropriate.* Clothing should be labeled with the child's name. Each child should be dressed appropriately for the weather so they can enjoy outside play time each day. In cold weather, this should include hat, mittens or gloves, and coat. There should be at least one change of clothes kept at the School.

Each child will have use of a storage drawer at the School. The storage drawer will be used for keeping extra clothes, diapers, nap mat (if applicable), blanket, and any other personal items. The parent or guardian will be notified when an additional change of clothes is needed or if the diaper supply needs to be replenished. The School will not provide diapers, but it will provide wipes.

Toileting and Diapering: The infant/young toddler room contains a diaper-changing area with a hand-washing lavatory.

Children in the Older Toddler and Early Childhood Rooms are expected to wear pull-ups, training pants, or underwear and are provided opportunities to use the restroom throughout the day.

Children who are still diaper-wearing age will wear disposable diapers while at the School.

A parent conference is required before toilet training begins at the School.

Children will observe caregivers wearing gloves and masks while diapering.

Infant Feeding: Staff members will wash their hands with soap and water before and after each feeding. The child's hands will be washed with soap and water before and after each feeding.

Infants are held while being bottle fed. Bottles are never propped at any time. With parental consent and when an infant is old enough to hold his/her own bottle, the child may feed him/herself without being held. The bottle will be removed from the child once the bottle is empty or when the child has fallen asleep.

Parents must send the bottles prepared to serve. The bottles will be placed in the refrigerator at morning drop off. At bottle time, the teachers will warm the bottles under warm running water.

The school is not responsible for cleaning the bottles.

The used bottles will be placed in the child's diaper bag to be carried home daily and washed by the parents.

Breast feeding mothers (to include staff members) may breast feed their children or express milk in the southern nursery room next to the School's classrooms. Staff members are trained in the safe and proper storage and handling of human milk. Training materials are available through the Mississippi State Department of Health.

Baby/infant foods that are stored or prepared in jars will be served from a separate dish for each infant and/or toddler. Any leftover food from that serving dish will be discarded. Leftovers in the jar will be labeled with the child's name, dated, refrigerated, and used within the next 24 hours or discarded.

Extracurricular Activities:

The School does not participate in activities off-site from its premises, such as gymnastics, dance, etc.

The School does not participate in swimming activities on-site or off-site.

Photography: Children will not be photographed without written consent from a parent or guardian. The written consent form will be available in the enrollment packet from the School.

Sun Safety: Children are allowed outside play time each day if weather permits. The School provides sunscreen and will apply sunscreen to each child before going outside. If a child has an allergy to certain sunscreens, then the parent or guardian will provide sunscreen for that child.

Discipline and Behavior Issues: All behavior issues are initially handled in the classroom. If a child's misbehavior persists, another staff member may offer assistance to the teacher so the classroom is not disturbed and we focus on helping the child. Discipline is always offered with a solid understanding of the child's developmental abilities with a view towards helping the child regain control while raising his/her awareness to the needs of the other members of our classroom community. We follow the basic rules of "helping everyone" and "hurting nothing" – this usually covers any intentional or

non-intentional infraction. Behavior guidance is accomplished in an unobtrusive, quiet, and constructive manner.

Positive redirection: is used to move a child to a more acceptable alternative behavior.

Calming Area / Cool-Down Time: A child that does not respond to redirection, and continues the same unacceptable behavior, must sit in a calming area away from the other children for 2-5 minutes depending on the child's age. The child will be patiently and calmly spoken with about finding a positive way to interact with his/her classmates.

****This does not apply to children under two.**

If the behavior continues, a behavior plan will be developed by the teachers, shared with and approved by the parents. Parents are encouraged to discuss any questions or concerns regarding discipline with the child's teacher, preferably in person or a phone call.

The term "discipline" comes from the word "disciple" and it means, literally, "to teach." The Montessori approach to discipline is to help children learn they are responsible for what they do and that their actions and choices have consequences. When a child is disruptive, a teacher will offer support and understanding, including an attempt to help the child understand his or her own behavior and to find alternative approaches to solving the problem. If a child is experiencing difficulty, he or she is given time and peace to think about the situation, to express his or her honest feelings, and to come to an increased understanding about it. As the situation becomes resolved, the child is invited to join the teacher in constructive activity as a means of re-integrating into the classroom. The adults take care to relate to the children according to their age, developmental level and temperament.

No physical punishment is used at the school. Discipline is not associated with food, nap-time, or toileting. The teachers will work with the children to help them to use words to express themselves rather than acting out or becoming passive when they are disturbed. If unacceptable behavior persists, the teacher will consult with the child's parents. The belief is that through parent-teacher cooperation and consistency, improved behavior will result. We have 3 basic ground rules in the classroom to guide us along the way:

We take care of ourselves. We take care of each other. We take care of the materials in the classroom and on the playground.

Whether a problem involves only two people or the whole class, we try to help the children learn how to solve problems on their own. We encourage children to come to a mutual resolution through talking about the problem, listening to each side and understanding the differing points of view. There is no physical punishment or disciplinary action administered to the child. There is no verbal abuse. No belittling remarks are used with the child.

The staff members follow the guidelines of reminding children in a positive tone of what the ground rules for the classroom are and consistently call upon the child to uphold these rules. Parents will be contacted if a child's behavior necessitates a call.

The staff members are role models for the children in treating the child, parents, and each other with respect and care and dignity.

Parent Involvement: The School expects the parent or guardian to continue to be the child's primary teacher, so collaborating with the teachers and the School is vital to the child's experience at the School. We report daily to the parent or guardian regarding the child's experiences at School. We

encourage the parent or guardian to communicate any particular needs or changes in the child's life to the School.

We also encourage families to incorporate Montessori methods and philosophy at home. At the end of the Parent Handbook there are resources for parents listed that are helpful in learning more about Maria Montessori and her methods of educating young children. The School will offer occasional Parent Education Nights that will also be helpful in implementing "Montessori at Home."

Observation is an important part of the Montessori Method. Parents and guardians will want to make time to visit the School to observe their child in the classroom. It is best if parents begin their observations after the first month of school. This allows the child time to settle into his/her new environment. Please take time to look at the Montessori resources listed at the end of the Parent Handbook for more information regarding the importance of observation.

Pathway Montessori School, LLC requires the parents of enrolled children, at all times to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect while on school premises.

HEALTH AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Immunizations: The School must have on file a C-121 form, completed by the child's primary physician or the Mississippi State Department of Health, for each child stating that the child is current with the required immunizations. A child may not attend school until immunizations are current. It is the parent's responsibility to provide an updated copy of the C-121 form during the year as immunizations are received.

Snacks: An annual snack fee is assessed to families whose children eat snack from ages 12 months and older. Snacks are purchased by the School. Snacks at the School meet the guidelines set forth by the Mississippi State Department of Health. Each day snack will consist of two out of four food groups: meat or alternate, vegetables or fruit/juice, bread or alternate, milk.

Lunch: Students will bring their own healthy sack lunches. Pathway Montessori School does not provide hot lunch for the students. A student's lunch should meet the following requirements:

- a. **Each child's individual lunch will be clearly labeled with the child's name**
- b. The food brought from one child's home will not be fed to another child.
- c. Children are not allowed to share food.
- d. The child's lunch should meet the child's nutritional requirements and standards set by Mississippi State Department of Health regulations.
- e. If a child's lunch does not meet the minimum nutritional standards, the School will supplement the lunch with items that meet the nutritional requirements.
- f. The School will notify a parent or guardian in writing if a child's lunch does not meet the nutritional requirements for the child. The notice will contain instructions as to what foods are proper for a sack lunch.

Sick Child: If a child is showing symptoms of illness, he/she should be kept at home. If a child develops symptoms of illness while at the School, he/she will be sent home. If a child becomes ill while at school, the School will separate the child from the other children and will contact a parent or guardian to come and get the child. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, then the School will contact other authorized adults from the child's emergency card to pick up the child. The child

should not return to school until he/she is symptom-free for 24 hours. Symptoms of illness include vomiting, fever, diarrhea, infectious discharge from the eye or nose, and communicable diseases. Even if a parent believes that diarrhea is the result of teething in an infant/toddler, a parent will be asked to come and pick up the child. We cannot take any risks.

Medication: Medication is administered ONLY with written permission from the parent or guardian. In order for a child to receive medication at the School, a parent must fill out a permission form and give to the teacher. Detailed instructions for administering the medication must accompany the form. Medicine must be in the original container, clearly labeled, and placed inside a zip-top plastic bag.

Allergies: Any allergies that a child has should be documented on the child's application for admission. The parent or guardian should provide written instructions on what to do in case of a reaction. If an antidote for the allergy is required, then the antidote should be provided to the School to use in an emergency.

First Aid and CPR: All staff members at the School are certified in first aid training and CPR/AED training provided by the American Heart Association.

Emergency Care: Each enrolled student must have on file written permission for the School to authorize emergency care.

The School carries full liability and accident insurance for any person on School property. Physician and hospital preferences are listed on the student's emergency card. Parents and guardians should know, however, that the School would have to take into account time factors for deciding on the most appropriate choice in case of an emergency requiring hospital care.

For emergencies requiring a physician, the School will attempt to contact a parent or guardian, but will proceed with the student to the doctor's office or emergency room. If a parent or guardian cannot be contacted, then the next person on the student's emergency card would be contacted.

For routine cuts and scrapes, the teachers and/or staff of the School will handle the problem and report it to the parent or guardian if needed.

If a parent or guardian does not wish for his/her student to receive medical care based on religious grounds, the parent or guardian must inform the School, in writing, prior to the first day of school.

In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary to transport students in staff vehicles.

Disaster Procedures:

- | | |
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| Tornado: | Sit in hallways in the tornado protection position. Children will NOT be released to parents or guardians if we are under a tornado warning. |
| Fire: | Evacuate the building. |

Emergency Relocation Sites:

Huntington Bank Arena, 375 E. Main Street, Tupelo, MS 38804

In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary to transport students in staff vehicles. Parents and guardians will be contacted using information from the students' emergency cards on file.

Dangerous Situations: For dangerous situations, including but not limited to, dealing with violent individuals, individuals entering the facility with weapons, bomb threats, or conditions posing an immediate threat to children, a staff member will secure the students' location. Once students' safety is secured, the appropriate authorities will be contacted first. Students and staff will remain in the secure location until the authorities arrive and notify the staff that the threat has been removed and that it is clear to leave the secured location.

Security: The buildings at All Saints' Episcopal Church, except for the Church Office, remain locked throughout the school day. The entrance into the Education Building, that houses the School, has a combination lock on each large, red door. The code to the combination lock will be given to parents or guardians before the school year begins. Parents or guardians may NOT share this code with anyone except authorized adults who will be dropping off and picking up their children.

Occasionally there may be a church function that will necessitate that the doors to the building be left unlocked, but the doors will be locked again once that function has ended.

If a parent forgets the code and cannot gain entrance to the building through the Education Building, the School asks that they enter the building through the Church Office. The Church Office is open Monday through Thursday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm and Friday 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Please do not call the School to come and open the doors. Staff members will be busy attending children and will not be able to leave the classrooms.

Suspected Child Abuse: Any staff member of the School who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is neglected, abused, or sexually abused will report it immediately to the Mississippi Department of Human Services in accordance with the state's Youth Court Act. A copy of this act is available from the Director of the School.

Staff members are trained in recognizing the signs of child abuse and know that their duty is to report any suspected cases.

STATE REGULATIONS

A summary of the licensing regulations is provided as an appendix to the Parent Handbook.

The Mississippi State Department of Health licensing official responsible for the inspection of Pathway Montessori School is Teresa Campbell. She can be contacted by phone at 662-489-8916, by fax at 662-489-7181, or by mail at P. O. Box 1148, Pontotoc, MS 38863.

The toll free number for the Child Care Facility Complaint Hot Line is 1-866-489-8734.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Websites:

American Montessori Society:

www.amshq.org

The Montessori Foundation:
North American Montessori Teachers' Association:
Association Montessori International USA

www.montessori.org
www.montessori-namta.org
www.amiusa.org

Books:

The Absorbent Mind by Maria Montessori
The Montessori Method by Maria Montessori
From Childhood to Adolescence by Maria Montessori
Montessori the Science behind the Genius by Angeline Stoll Lillard
Nurturing the Spirit in Non-Sectarian Classrooms by Aline Wolf

PATHWAY MONTESSORI , LLC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO DISMISS ANY CHILD AT ANY TIME, WITH OR WITHOUT CAUSE. THE DECISION WILL BE MADE AT THE SOLE DISCRETION OF PATHWAY MONTESSORI SCHOOL, LLC.

***Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal.

PARENT SIGNATURE PAGE

Pathway Montessori School, LLC
Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

I have read the 2026 -2027 Parent Handbook, and I agree to abide by the school policies set forth in it.

Parent Signature:_____Date:_____

Parent Signature:_____Date:_____

