A logo for a school

Description automatically generated

Student and Parent Handbook

2023-2024

Mariposa Montessori School

3338 Paisano Trail

Austin, Texas 78745

512-428-4280

Head of School: Leslie Harrington

leslie@mariposamontessori.com

www.mariposamontessori.com

Contents

[Welcome Letter 5](#_Toc149585853)

[Purpose of this Handbook 6](#_Toc149585854)

[What is Montessori? 6](#_Toc149585855)

[Mission Statement 7](#_Toc149585856)

[Vision Statement 7](#_Toc149585857)

[About Us 8](#_Toc149585858)

[Non-Discrimination Policy 8](#_Toc149585859)

[Code of Conduct for Parents and Students 8](#_Toc149585860)

[School Management Structure 9](#_Toc149585861)

[Objective and Goals 10](#_Toc149585862)

[Montessori Teachers 11](#_Toc149585863)

[Lead Guides 11](#_Toc149585864)

[Support Guides 12](#_Toc149585865)

[Academic Programs 12](#_Toc149585866)

[Birth to Three Programs 12](#_Toc149585867)

[Children’s House Program 14](#_Toc149585868)

[Elementary Program 15](#_Toc149585869)

[Secondary Program 16](#_Toc149585870)

[Admissions 18](#_Toc149585871)

[Re-enrollment 18](#_Toc149585872)

[Services for Students with Disabilities 19](#_Toc149585873)

[Tuition 19](#_Toc149585874)

[Withdrawal Policy 20](#_Toc149585875)

[Family request 20](#_Toc149585876)

[School request 20](#_Toc149585877)

[Grievances 20](#_Toc149585878)

[Student Records 21](#_Toc149585879)

[Child Custody Concerns 21](#_Toc149585880)

[School Communication 22](#_Toc149585881)

[Hours, Days, and Months of Operation 23](#_Toc149585882)

[Basic Daily Schedule 23](#_Toc149585883)

[Class Placements 23](#_Toc149585884)

[School Calendar 24](#_Toc149585885)

[Attendance 24](#_Toc149585886)

[Attendance Policy 24](#_Toc149585887)

[Arrival 25](#_Toc149585888)

[Late Arrival/Tardy 25](#_Toc149585889)

[Before and After School Care 26](#_Toc149585890)

[Late Pick-Up 26](#_Toc149585891)

[Circle Drive Procedures 27](#_Toc149585892)

[Sign In/Sign Out 27](#_Toc149585893)

[Release of Children 28](#_Toc149585894)

[Lunch Procedures and Snack 28](#_Toc149585895)

[Immunization and Health 28](#_Toc149585896)

[Dress Code 29](#_Toc149585897)

[Discipline Policy 29](#_Toc149585898)

[Cooperative Discipline 30](#_Toc149585899)

[Developmentally Appropriate Practice 31](#_Toc149585900)

[The Role of the Parent in the School 31](#_Toc149585901)

[Parent/Teacher Conferences 31](#_Toc149585902)

[Volunteering Opportunities and Participation 32](#_Toc149585903)

[How Parents Can Help 33](#_Toc149585904)

[Parties and Birthdays 33](#_Toc149585905)

[Babysitting 34](#_Toc149585906)

[Grounds Etiquette 34](#_Toc149585907)

[Library 35](#_Toc149585908)

[Illness 35](#_Toc149585909)

[Medication 36](#_Toc149585910)

[Medical Emergencies 37](#_Toc149585911)

[Safety 37](#_Toc149585912)

[Classroom Safety 38](#_Toc149585913)

[Outdoor Safety 38](#_Toc149585914)

[Sunscreen and Insect Repellent 38](#_Toc149585915)

[Emergency Procedures 38](#_Toc149585916)

[Fire: 38](#_Toc149585917)

[Human Intruder: 39](#_Toc149585918)

[Tornado or Severe Weather 39](#_Toc149585919)

[Classroom Animals 39](#_Toc149585920)

[Transportation 40](#_Toc149585921)

[Water Activities 40](#_Toc149585922)

[Lost and Found 40](#_Toc149585923)

[Licensing and Accreditation 41](#_Toc149585924)

[Reporting Abuse and Neglect 41](#_Toc149585925)

# Welcome Letter

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the Mariposa community! We are looking forward to a school year full of growth and exploration. We are truly blessed to partner with incredible families, fabulous students, and exceptional educators. The combination of these factors creates an environment that is supportive and helps our students to thrive.

At the heart of the Montessori approach to learning is the concept of peace education. Maria Montessori began developing her pedagogical philosophy at the turn of the 20th century. During this time, she lived through two world wars. The impact of these events cannot be forgotten when looking at the development of Montessori philosophy.

It was Dr. Montessori’s belief that education was the key to achieving effective change and peace in the world. It is in this spirit of peace that we invite you into our community. We cannot express the gratitude we feel to be trusted with the care and education of our students.

Here’s to a productive and fun school year!

Warmly,

Leslie Harrington

Head of School

Mariposa Montessori School

“Only a sane spiritual rebuilding of the human race can bring about peace. To set about this task, we must go back to the child” – Maria Montessori

# Purpose of this Handbook

This Handbook was developed to answer many if the commonly asked questions that parents/guardians and students may have during the school year. Please take the time to become familiar with the following information and keep this Handbook available for your use. A link can be found on the school website at mariposamontessori.com.

The school reserves the right to interpret the content of this Handbook, including the rules and regulations governing the academic and non-academic conduct of students. This Handbook is not a contract, nor is it intended to be so construed. Our school reserves the right to modify and/or amend the content of this Handbook at any time during the year. If any written modification or amendment is made to this Handbook, a copy of such modification or amendment will be distributed to the community.

If you have any questions about the Handbook or any of its policies, please contact the Head of School.

# What is Montessori?

Montessori is an international pedagogy that focuses on educating the whole child, meaning the philosophy is designed with a child development approach. Each grade level is designed to meet the interests and abilities of the students at each stage of life. Children in Montessori classrooms are given the freedom to learn through exploration and support from a certified Montessori Guide. This approach aids children in cultivating concentration, motivation, personal empowerment, independence, and a love of learning.

Montessori education is a course experience; it builds on the continuing self-construction of the child—daily, weekly, yearly—for the duration of the program. Montessori schools are divided into multi-age classrooms— infant (ages 3 mos. to 18 mos.), toddler (18 mos. to 3 yrs.) preschool and kindergarten (ages 3 to 6), elementary (6-12), and adolescent (12-15) – this approach creates a continuum of learning as well as time to grow in a community.

The Montessori classroom is often referred to as a “prepared environment.” In the calm, ordered space of the Montessori prepared environment, children work on activities of their own choice at their own pace. They live through a blend of freedom and self-discipline in a place particularly designed to meet their developmental needs. In our Children’s House classroom, for example, a three-year-old may be washing clothes by hand while a four-year-old close by is creating words and phrases with letters known as the movable alphabet, and a five-year-old is performing multiplication using a particular designed set of beads.

For more information about the Montessori approach to learning visit these websites:

* American Montessori Society (AMS): amshq.org
* Association Montessori International (AMI): montessori-ami.org
* International Montessori Council (IMC): Montessori.org

# Mission Statement

We are a peaceful community dedicated to authentic Montessori education. We are a nurturing school that inspires independence, creative thinking, and success in life!

# Vision Statement

The community of Mariposa Montessori is founded on the belief that every individual should be treated with respect. We have set the following goals and characteristics for our community:

* Our students benefit from a personalized education with their developmental needs in mind. There is an emphasis on cultivating social skills and teaching peaceful conflict resolution. At Mariposa, we nurture the whole child.
* A commitment to community, both inside our school, the greater Austin community, and the global community.
* A community characterized by compassion and integrity.
* Adults and students committed to the betterment of the natural world through education and action.
* The student’s joy and curiosity is supported through inviting, beautiful, and thoughtfully arranged environments.
* A learning community that is supportive of diversity and inclusion. This is demonstrated through respect for thought, ideology, and culture.

# **About** Us

In 2007, Whitney Falcon channeled her passion for authentic Montessori education into creating Mariposa Montessori School. The school began with six children in a Young Children’s Community and six in a Children’s House. Today, Mariposa is thriving in our beautiful Paisano campus, supporting children from 8 weeks to 15 years old in its Nido, Young Children's Communities, Children’s Houses, Lower and Upper Elementary, and Secondary programs.

# Non-Discrimination Policy

Mariposa Montessori School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, or ethnic origin with regard to hiring, admissions, or in the administration of any of its programs.

# Code of Conduct for Parents and Students

At the heart of Mariposa Montessori School is a culture defined by respect, balance, integrity, curiosity, leadership, as well as our commitment to the safety and health of students. All members of the community, including parents/guardians, upper-level students, visitors, and staff, have an obligation to know and uphold the school’s values and strive to embody them in word and deed. A code of conduct allows for clarity of these expectations.

* Respect other people and their privacy and property, both within and beyond the school.
* Parents/guardians, students, visitors, and staff must work together in a cooperative and friendly manner for the benefit of our children.
* All school and classroom rules will be followed to ensure consistency and help the children understand them.
* Parents/Guardians, staff, and visitors will convey to the students a supportive attitude toward education and the school.
* Treat all human beings with dignity, refraining from behavior that intimidates, insults, threatens, bullies, coerces, abuses, exploits, harasses, humiliates, or demeans. Abusive language, behavior, or attitudes towards any parent/guardian, student, visitor, or staff member is not acceptable at Mariposa. Acting with tolerance, courtesy, and thoughtful regard is expected of every member of our community.

In order to achieve our goal of creating a peaceful and supportive learning environment, we cannot tolerate the following behaviors from parents/guardians, upper-level students, visitors, or staff:

* Disruptive behavior and or harassment of any kind which damages or interferes with the operations of any area of the school or damages school property.
* Using loud, threatening, or offensive language, cursing or displaying temper.
* Any abusive, harassing, or threatening email, text, voicemail, phone message or other written communication.
* Any communication addressed to the whole school community, including email, must be approved by the Head of School.
* Do not use a picture of another child, parent, or staff without their permission in social media or any other kind of media.
* Any emotional abuse, physical aggression, intimidation, or threatening behaviors of any kind towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment or emotional abuse against your own child while on school premises.
* Approaching someone else’s child or another parent in order to discuss with them or chastise them because or the actions of one child towards another child.

# School Management Structure

**School Founder and Owner – Whitney Falcon** Mariposa Montessori School is a private for-profit school. It was founded in 2007.

**Head of School – Leslie Harrington** The Head of School oversees and organizes all operations of the school in conjunction with the Assistant Head of School, Director of Education, Director of Communications, and Director of Finance and Operations.

**Assistant Head of School – Jessica Casares**  The Assistant Head of School works with the Head of School in overseeing operations of the school. The Assistant Head of School oversees admissions and classroom placement.

**Director of Education – Anaid Lopez** The Director of Education works closely with the Head of School to ensure quality and consistency of educational programing. The DoE works with the Head of School, Assistant Head of school, and Director of Communications in management of the faculty, students, and families.

**Director of Communications – Margaret Hayes** The Director of Communications works with the Head of School and Assistant Head of School to keep the school community informed of school news and events. The Director of Communications works with the Head of School, Assistant Head of School, and Director of Education in scheduling and human resources.

**Director of Finance and Operations – John Falcon** The Director of Finance and Operations works closely with the Owner and Head of School to plan, direct, and implement overall strategies for finance. The Director of Finance and Operations works with the Facilities Manager to ensure all school facilities are in working order.

**Facilities Manager – Jeremy Smith**  The Facilities Manager is responsible for ensuring the campus and buildings are safe and incompliance with state regulations and licensing.

**Outdoor and Gardening Educator – Stacy Marcus** The Outdoor and Gardening Educator is responsible for designing and maintaining campus gardens. The Outdoor and Gardening Educator works with the Facilities Manager in caring for the animals at Mariposa. They plan and implement gardening and outdoor classes for students across levels.

**Office Manager – Ashley Lopez** The Office manager is available to answer phones and campus greet visitors. The Office Manager maintains student and faculty files. They work with the Director of Education and the Head of School to maintain state regulations and licensing.

**Department Heads** – Each academic level has a Department Head that works with the Director of Education and Head of School to ensure quality and consistency of curriculum and programing.

**Faculty –** Mariposa employs highly trained Lead Guides and Support Guides to care for and educate all of the students at the school.

# Objective and Goals

The main objective of Mariposa Montessori School is to provide a carefully planned stimulating environment which will assist children to develop within themselves a foundation that consists of the habits, attitudes, skills, and concepts essential for a lifetime of creative thinking characterized by the deep love of learning.

The specific goals for the child who attends the school are:

* To develop a positive attitude toward learning
* To encourage a strong sense of self within a growing sense of community
* To develop an increasing capacity for concentration
* To foster continual curiosity and wonder
* To develop initiative, independence, and persistence
* To foster inner discipline and a strong sense of order
* To develop the sensory-motor skills needed to discriminate and judge the objective world
* To develop social skills within the framework of community
* To acquire the basic skills necessary for a productive life
* To foster each child’s innate, ultimate potential through self-mastery

# Montessori Teachers

## Lead Guides

Montessori teachers are called “Guides” to highlight their unique role in relation to the child. As Guides, they seek to direct the interests and tendencies of the child, serving as facilitators to the child’s own development.

Each Guide is responsible for directing their class in accordance with the Montessori philosophy, the guidelines of the American Montessori Society (AMS), and the general policies of Mariposa Montessori School. Guides establish daily plans and long-term goals for each child and the class as a whole. They continually strive to develop on-going communication with the parents of their students.

Mariposa Guides hold a Montessori Teacher Certificate from either the American Montessori Society (AMS), Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), or Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE).

## Support Guides

Support Guides, who are trained by and work with the Lead Guides, help to develop and maintain the classroom environments. Through their interactions with the children, they mirror the Montessori principles by respecting each child and nurturing independence.

Support Guides receive ongoing training in Montessori philosophy and child development, which ensures that the Montessori philosophy is consistent through our after-school programs.

# Academic Programs

Please note that more information about our programs can be found in the orientation packets. We encourage you to attend our annual orientation nights and workshops.

## Birth to Three Programs

*“The development of the child during the first three years after birth is unequaled in intensity and importance by any period that precedes or follows in the whole life of the child.”*

Maria Montessori

The infant and toddler programs are communities where children are given the opportunity to grow and develop in loving, respectful environments. The goal of these prepared environments is to aid the child in meeting their needs physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively. Each environment has trained Guides that assist the child in meeting their fullest potential in areas of development and gaining independence. These Guides simply assist the child, never imposing their own will or idea onto the child. Following the child and aiding them in meeting their needs with careful observation and understanding is an important aspect of the infant environment. The environment allows for opportunities of exploration, which aids the child in meeting their needs developmentally. The birth-3 environment is centered around support- supporting the child's growth and independence as well as supporting the parents in *their* journey in aiding their ever-changing child. The main goal of the birth-3 environment is assisting the child while they build independence, self-confidence, and concentration.

**Infant Community - Environment**

The infant environment is centered around meeting the needs of the child in a respectful, peaceful, calm manner. The adults in this environment move slowly and careful to not invade the tender space of the child. At this stage, children are developing concentration. Therefore, it is important to avoid interrupting them when they are engaged in an activity. When a child needs assistance with eating, diapering, dressing, and sleeping, the adults are always careful to aid them respectfully- always letting the child know what is happening within their space and to their body.

This environment consists of floor beds so that the infants may move in and out of it unassisted. There are weaning tables instead of highchairs. Again, this is meant to aid the child in developing independence. There are low hanging mobiles that catch the eye of the infant at any given time, giving them the beginning perspective on space and movement. The low shelves allow the child to creep, crawl, or walk up to and explore the materials. These materials are carefully chosen by the Guide, who is thinking about the particular development of the children in this environment. The floors of the environment are kept very clean, this is the infant’s environment and they move about freely within it.

**Young Children's Community – Environment**

Once the infant shows signs of readiness, around 16-18 months of age, they move into the Young Children's Community. This environment focuses on gaining independence from adults and aiding the child in meeting their own needs. Children at this stage of development have an internal drive for gaining practical life skills- dressing, cleaning, toileting, eating with silverware, etc. During this time of gaining independence from adults, the Guide will show the young child respect, compassion, trust, and most importantly, love. The environment must be orderly and consistent with set routines and procedures: the young child needs consistency in order to trust the environment enough to build the skills of independence. The most important part of this consistent environment is the trained adult. This adult will support, aid, and guide the child in gaining the skills they desire. The trained adult carefully arranges the environment, and its materials, to best support the ever-changing development of each and every child. The child is able to move freely around the environment, exploring whatever they are drawn to at the time.

**Curriculum**

The curriculum for birth-3 is centered around the *Sensitive Periods*, based on the careful and thorough observations of Maria Montessori. The main Sensitive Periods affecting the birth-3 environments are Language, Movement, and Order. The birth-3 program aims at supporting all areas of development at any given time. Nothing is ever rushed. The curriculum of Birth to Three is often referred to as “The curriculum of daily life.” The emphasis is on care of oneself and the environment. Our youngest students are learning how to be in a classroom. This introduction provides them with the skills they will need for their academic career. In using the Sensitive Periods and aiding in development the birth-3 program promotes independence and self-confidence in a loving, respectful, supportive environment.

## Children’s House Program

The Children’s House Program of Mariposa Montessori School is designed to provide opportunities for children to grow and progress in physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development according to each child’s unique pace. It provides the child with developmentally appropriate periods of work and play, indoors and outdoors, combined with relaxing and calming activities.

The Children’s House program provides a Montessori environment throughout the day, implementing Montessori philosophy and practices for all activities including lunch, playtime, and nap.

**The Environment**

The Children’s House classroom environment is prepared to meet specific developmental needs of the young child, applying and practicing key Montessori concepts.

The classroom environment is organized in learning areas with concrete activities and materials designed to facilitate the child’s independence and success.

The environment is physically and psychologically safe for the child to learn. Everything has a permanent place. Lessons are displayed in category/grouping (learning areas). Within each category, diverse sets of materials are displayed in sub-groups, arranged on the child’s eye level, from left to right, top to bottom, and from simple to complex tasks.

Individual tasks are divided into a sequence of steps with an isolated difficulty or concept in a single piece of material. Concepts are reinforced with diverse sets of materials that provide variations and extensions, develop further thinking, and build problem-solving skills. New lessons are introduced when the previous level of difficulty has been mastered.

Credentialed Montessori Guides are the facilitators of the environment. They make continual observations of the child’s development and they are the link connecting the child to the classroom environment.

Multi-aged environments provide positive social interactions and develop cooperative learning and peer teaching.

**The Curriculum**

Activities Focus in All Areas of Development in a prepared environment with specific goals to stimulate learning in a non-competitive atmosphere that provides the child with opportunities to explore and expand their potential at their own speed.

The Curriculum Meets the Needs of the Individual Child. It is responsive to the individual child. It facilitates, supports, and enhances each child’s emerging abilities whatever the developmental stage. It fosters learning in all areas of development; physical, social, emotional, and intellectual.

All Concrete (real) Activities and Experiences – Aimed to Individual or Small Group

The curriculum emphasizes learning as an active process. The child uses concrete experiences and is expected to be physically and mentally active.

Stimulates Learning

Activities are designed to enhance the child’s self-esteem and provide a positive feeling toward learning.

The Curriculum Learning Areas

The child chooses activities from among a variety of learning areas: Practical Life; Sensorial; Language; Math; Cultural Subjects: Life Science, Physical Science, Earth Science, Geography and History; and Art/Music.

## Elementary Program

The Elementary Program is designed to meet the needs of elementary-aged children, their social, emotional, physical, motor, and cognitive development. The program supports children in the growth of greater independence, respect for self and others, and a love of learning. Students have the experience of working independently and cooperatively in an environment geared to engage the whole child in the process of learning, imagination, and exploration.

**The Environment**

The elementary classroom is an aesthetically pleasing, multi-aged environment, offering a diverse set of Montessori materials, activities, and experiences. Our schedule includes large blocks of uninterrupted learning time and an atmosphere that supports the social development of elementary-aged children. We follow ground rules and expectations that support personal responsibility and we spend a great deal of time in the outdoors, engaged in play and observation.

**The Curriculum**

The elementary experience at Mariposa is progressive and personalized. We emphasize reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies in a nurturing environment that encourages intellectual and social development. The curriculum supports the continued growth of self-motivation, concentration, persistence, and a sense of fairness.

Specifically, our curriculum includes reading fluency, grammar, composition, creative writing, spelling, handwriting (cursive), research skills, math and geometry, life science, physical science, geology, geography, astronomy, history, public speaking, and art, handwork, and music history.

Students also participate in physical education and wellness learning, Spanish, drama, music, library, gardening and other outdoor activities, rock climbing, computer skills, drama and the visual arts.

We regularly incorporate field trips and special class visitors into our curriculum.

**The Adults**

[Our classrooms are supported by Montessori guides, certified at the elementary level. Our guide to student ratio is 14:1 or less. Students are supported via observation, personal and group instruction, workshops and check-ins, periodic diagnostic testing, and a commitment to form a partnership with parents.](#TOC)

## Secondary Program

The Secondary or Adolescent program is a unique example of what can be achieved when the developmental needs of students are considered and put into practice. Dr. Montessori described her vision for the education of the adolescent as “Erdkinder” or “children of the earth.” Her vision was for students to engage in real-world, project-based learning in communities that nurture the academic and socio-emotional growth of the members. These collaborative communities support students in developing skills they will need as lifelong learners. At Mariposa, we strive to uphold the vision of “Erdkinder” through the guidance, curriculum, and opportunities we provide.

**The Environment**

The Secondary classroom is designed to meet the rapidly changing needs of the students. Adolescence is a time of tremendous neurological growth. The classroom supports these growing needs through creative projects, community service, student-led community meetings and inquiry-based problem solving that supports diversity of thought and learning styles. Our Secondary program is like our other programs in that there is a multi-age grouping and uninterrupted work periods.

**The Curriculum**

Our Secondary curriculum includes a daily work period in core subjects, including math, language, history, sciences, and creative arts. A unique characteristic of the Montessori approach for this age group is called “Spiral Curriculum.” This approach reinforces learning through repetition and illustrating the interrelated nature of core subjects.

One of the elements of the “Erdkinder” approach is incorporating farm work into the curriculum. The idea behind this approach is that working with plants and animals teaches integrity and responsibility. For a farm to thrive, the students must be present and consistent. At Mariposa, we believe in this concept and incorporate farm work both on our campus and through community outreach.

Another aspect of Secondary curriculum is the micro-economy. Students in our program are responsible for creating and operating a small business. Students are responsible for creating a product, managing finances, and marketing. This work prepares and empowers students to one day enter the workforce. Most importantly, our students are encouraged to work collaboratively towards a common goal.

A goal of our program is to foster a sense of community service and a drive to be a life-long learner. We partner with local charitable organizations to provide volunteer opportunities for our students. We participate in frequent field trips to provide our students with experiences and opportunities beyond the classroom.

# Admissions

The admissions process begins when a potential family either submits an application for admission or schedules a tour of the school. A tour is not required to submit an application. Once an application for admission is submitted, the child will be added to the wait list. **Joining the waitlist is not a guarantee of enrollment. Please note, the application fee is non-refundable.** When a space is available, the Administration will call the family to discuss enrollment for a projected start time at Mariposa.

If the family indicates interest in proceeding with enrollment, an official enrollment offer will be sent to the parents along with the enrollment paperwork packet. An Enrollment Contract will be sent through our billing system, TADS.

The family will then have 1 week to complete and return the Enrollment Contract along with the Enrollment Fee. When the Enrollment Contract and fee are submitted within the week required, the child’s space will be secured for when the space was offered. If the family chooses to defer starting their child when the enrollment offer was made, they will have the option to return to the waitlist.

When enrolling in the Nido or Young Children’s Community, the Guide will schedule a home visit with the family to meet the child and go over the daily schedule of the classroom. A phase-in schedule will then be made.

When enrolling in the Children’s House, Elementary, and Secondary programs the Guide will schedule a classroom visit and then meet with the parents to go over the daily schedule of the classroom. A phase-in schedule will then be made.

The school will schedule a meet and greet at the beginning of the year, before school begins. All of our programs offer an orientation night in August before the school year begins. At that time our Guides will meet with the parents to go over the daily schedule of the classroom and review all the logistics of being part of the community.  For Children’s House, a phase-in schedule will be established by the lead guide and communicated to new families at least a week before their start date.

We want every child, especially those new to the classroom, to feel happy and comfortable about beginning their year with us. At Mariposa, the children and their adaptation to the environment are our foremost priority, which is why we opt for a staggered delay in phase-ins at the beginning of the year.

## Re-enrollment

Each year in February, re-enrollment begins. For school-aged children the school will review any concerns regarding a student’s future success at Mariposa. Issues such as poor work habits, poor conduct, excessive absenteeism, or tardiness, or the family’s failure to meet financial obligations can jeopardize a student’s continued enrollment. Entrance into the next grade will be based on classroom performance of the student, observation of the teacher, and appropriate testing and/or assessment.

Current families will have 1 weeks to complete their re-enrollment contract for the following school year. Public enrollment will be accepted after the initial one-week period.

## Services for Students with Disabilities

We understand that there may be circumstances in which a parent may request that the school provide an adjustment or accommodation for a student’s medical needs or physical, mental, or learning disability. In general, it is our school’s policy to provide accommodations or adjustments for a student’s needs in circumstances in which the administration determines, in its sole discretion, that doing so is within the reasonable ability of the school and/or its staff and will not result in a significant disruption to the teacher’s ability to instruct other students, to classroom or school order and discipline, will not require a threat of harm to the safety of other students or employees, will not require a fundamental change to our educational environment or mission, and will not impose responsibilities on school employees for which they are not trained. We also ask parents to realize that, given the size of our school and our available resources, we may not be able to provide all requested accommodations. To the extent we agree to provide accommodations, we may require a sharing of responsibility for the accommodation.

# Tuition

Mariposa Montessori School collects tuition in a few different ways:

Tuition can be paid by the year (A), in 2 semi-annual semester installments (B), or 10 monthly installments (C).

1. Payment is due on June 1st for the following school year, defined as August – May.
2. Payments are due on August 1st and January 1st.
3. Payments are due on 1st day of each month, August – May.

Recurring payment options are available for option C.

# Withdrawal Policy

Family request - It is our intention at Mariposa Montessori School to work together to provide an environment for each child that meets their needs. We feel that a minimum of eight weeks is necessary for the child, parents, and Guide to get to know one another and establish a consistent routine from which information can be gathered to assess the child’s progress. We would like to see all new enrollees stay with us for a minimum of eight weeks, unless there is an agreement between teachers, parents, and the Administrators that a multi-age, open-ended classroom is not the most suitable environment for the child.

If a child is withdrawn, it will be the parents’ or guardians’ responsibility to pay the monthly tuition until another child fills the opening. The school will make every effort to fill the spot as quickly as possible. If the tuition has been paid in full, a prorated refund will be issued for the remainder of the school year from the time the child’s spot has been filled. Extenuating circumstances will be considered by the Administration on a case-by-case basis. If the School should require a child to be withdrawn, a pro-rated refund will be issued.

School request – Mariposa Montessori School may, and at its discretion, discontinue a student’s enrollment at any time if it is determined that:

* Student or parent/guardian violates the Mariposa Code of Conduct
* Student’s academic needs are not being met
* Student’s behavior consistently has a negative impact on classmates or the learning environment.
* Student or parent/guardian repeatedly fails to follow rules and polices.

# Grievances

Our Guides and support staff are committed to partnering with you in your child’s education and to always maintaining clear and open lines of communication. If you ever have questions concerning any aspect of your child and family’s experience with the school, do not hesitate to contact your child’s Lead Guide directly. Rest assured that it is the school policy for every grievance to be reported to the Administration by the staff member receiving the grievance. A note will be made and placed in your child’s file. If the Guide cannot resolve the issue, then a meeting with the parents, Guide, and Director of Education will be scheduled. Lastly, is further intervention is needed a meeting will be scheduled with all parties and the Head of School.

# Student Records

Student records may consist of, but are not limited to: attendance records, health and emergency information, assessments, developmental and academic progress reports, accident reports, and parental authorization for various school activities.

Records of the child's work are kept in an individual portfolio, file, and Transparent Classroom. The contents provide the child, teachers and parents concrete and essential information about the child's progress and activities; it also provides information planning and goal setting.

Mariposa Montessori School stresses the importance of protecting the rights and privacy of children, their families, and our Guides. The practice of maintaining the confidentiality of verbal information and written records is a basic policy of our school. This practice is in accord with one of the primary ethical principles of professional behavior in early childhood settings.

Parents and legal guardians have the right to inspect and review records, files and data directly related to their children. Parents/guardians who desire to review these records are requested to call the Administration to schedule an appointment to do so. A MMS staff member must be present whenever records are reviewed.

Records of a child who has been previously enrolled at MMS will be kept on file for 3 months after they have left the school. Upon receipt of a written request for these records that is signed by the child’s parent/guardian, copies of these records may be released to the Administrator of the school at which the child is (or will be) enrolled.

# Child Custody Concerns

Mariposa is dedicated to providing our students with the support they need. When a family separates, this support can become especially important. The school will be supportive, open, and welcoming to both parents.

* Mariposa will remain neutral in conflicts between parents.
* School records, conferences, meeting information, educational materials, and similar items are available to both parents.
* When able it is helpful to have parents/guardians schedule joint conferences with the Lead Guide, but accommodation can be made for separate conferences if needed.
* Parents, regardless of the custody arrangement, are entitled to information about the dental and school records, care provider’s records, and notification of meetings regarding the child’s education.
* Billing information is made available to any person who has signed the financial contract.
* The school will not limit a parent’s access to their child unless there is a court order on file in the child’s records at the school limiting or specifying particular conditions for a parent’s access to the child.

# School Communication

School e-mails and notes are given to the parents or guardians whenever possible. Parents will be notified of any changes in the calendar schedule by email and school website. It is important that all e-mails and handouts sent home are read by parents. For school age children Guides send home folders; parents should examine the contents of these folders closely. They contain work that the children want to share with their families in addition to communication from the classroom.

Communication with the faculty should only occur through official school channels (main school phone, @mariposamontessori.com email accounts, child journals, and letters to the office). Guides can be contacted through their school issued email address or by calling the office and leaving a message. *Guides should never be contacted via text message or through their personal cell phone, or via their personal social media accounts.*

The school uses a mass texting system called *text-em-all* for emergencies or inclement weather.

Support Guides should only be contacted by their personal phone in the event of babysitting requests/details. These communications should occur only outside of the Support Guide’s work hours. See the Babysitting Guidelines section of this handbook for more information.

Please keep in mind - all staff are required to refer school-related matters/questions to the child’s Lead Guide or the Administration. This is especially true when conversations occur off campus or in the context of a babysitting arrangement.

All communications sent to the Mariposa community must be approved by the administration prior to being sent.

# Hours, Days, and Months of Operation

Mariposa Montessori School is open to students Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., excluding holidays. Staff schedules generally range from 7:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

Administration will be in the office from 8:30 am to 5:30 p.m. everyday. Messages may be left on voicemail after hours.

*Full day Class hours for each level:*

* Nido – varies anytime from 7:30am to 3:00pm.
* Young Children’s Community – 8:45am to 2:45pm.
* Children’s House – 8:30am to 3:00pm.
* Elementary – 8:00am to 3:15pm.

*Before School care is available for:*

* Young Children’s Community: 7:30am to 8:30am
* Children’s House: 7:30am to 8:15am.
* Elementary: 7:30am to 8:00am

*After School care is available for:*

* Nido: 3:00pm to 5:30pm
* Young Children’s Community: 3:00pm to 5:30pm
* Children’s House: 3:15pm to 5:30pm
* Elementary: 3:15pm to 5:30pm.

## Basic Daily Schedule

Each level has slightly different daily schedules. Your child’s Lead Guide will provide schedule information at the beginning of the school year in the classroom orientation packet, or on an as requested basis.

## Class Placements

Schedule and/or classroom changes will be initiated by the school when operational needs require or when the administration believes the change will be in the best interests of the student. The school will not accept requests for placement based on a parent/guardian’s preference for a particular Guide or to accommodate friendships. Siblings will be assigned to different classrooms, as space permits, in order to honor each child’s need for independence and personal growth. Please understand that the school places students in particular classes to ensure that student experiences an optimal learning environment.

## School Calendar

Our school calendar can be found on our website: mariposamontessori.com. Please note that the calendar is subject to change. In the event of a change to the calendar, an e-mail notification will be sent to the school community.

# Attendance

Consistent attendance is one of the most important components of success in school, including arriving at school on time. Regular, punctual attendance is necessary for your child to receive the full benefit of a Montessori program. Additionally, it is imperative that the school keeps accurate and timely records for safety.

## Attendance Policy

Families should notify the Lead Guide is your child is unable to attend school. Please inform the Guide is your child contracts a contagious illness. For more information please refer to the “Illness” section of this Handbook.

Texas state law defines truancy as 10 or more unexcused absences for school aged children. While private schools are not included in these policies, we consider this standard as a guideline for attendance. Please consider the implications of excessive absences on your child’s success in our programs. Frequent time away can lead to feelings of unease and periods of readjustment when the student returns. For school-aged students this can lead to undue levels of stress and impact their academic success. We understand that some life events are unavoidable, but whenever possible, try to plan family trips around the school calendar.

# Arrival

Morning drop off (excluding before care) is as follows:

* Nido – varies
* YCC – 8:30-8:45am
* Children’s House – 8:15-8:30am
* Elementary – 8:00 – 8:15am
* Secondary – 8:00 – 8:15am

If you are the parent/guardian of children in multiple age levels you may go by the arrival time of your oldest child.

Your child’s Guide or Assistant will be waiting at the door of the classroom to greet the children and invite them into the room. Please **say goodbye outside of the room** so your child may enter independently. For our youngest students especially, it is important to keep your goodbyes short and sweet. If your child senses hesitation on your part, they will hesitate also.

Families are requested to be punctual when dropping off and picking up their children. Children may feel uncomfortable coming into the classroom after class has begun, and they may also experience great anxiety being picked up late. If you anticipate you may be late in picking up your child, please inform the school as early as possible so the staff can prepare your child.

When you are dropping off and picking up your child, please refrain from speaking on your cell phone so that all of your attention may be focused on your child during these very important moments of their day.

## Late Arrival/Tardy

A late arrival/tardy is arriving more than 5 minutes after scheduled arrival. **Any student arriving after 9am must be brought to the office by the adult that is dropping them off and must be signed in.**

# Before and After School Care

Before 8:30 am and after 3:00 pm, we have hired special Guides to care for the children who are enrolled in full day programs. At these times, the Lead Guides are busy preparing the classroom and the activities for the week. If you leave your child early or late, we do have to charge you. Please remember that what is only ¼ or ½ an hour for you multiplied by 20-30 students is a staffing situation for us.

Before and After-School care scheduling requests are sent to families prior to the start of each fall and spring semester. At that time we ask families to submit their Before/After-school scheduling needs for the following semester (a forecast of scheduling needs for the next 5 months). We realize that life happens and the need to amend a schedule might come up. We allow for 1 additional scheduling change per semester but ask that any more changes are made at the next semester break. The previous practice of allowing families to make month to month Before/After-school scheduling requests is no longer allowed.

## Late Pick-Up

If you are late picking up your child from the full day program, a fee of $1.00 per minute per child will apply, starting at 3:15 p.m. We would appreciate a call if you are running late, so we can inform your child that you will be arriving shortly.

If your child attends a half-day program and you pick them up after 12:00 p.m., a fee of $1.00 per minute per child will apply. In the case of the Children’s House programs, your child will remain in their community for their parent/guardian to pick them up.

If you pick up your child after 5:30 p.m., an immediate $10.00 charge is applied and a fee of $1.00 per minute per child will be added.

In each instance of a late pick up above, an email will be sent to the parents the following day informing them of the previous late pick up and any associated charges. The charges will be added to your child’s tuition account and must be paid by or with the next tuition installment payment.

**Drop-In Care** (unscheduled and unexpected Before/After school needs) is highly discouraged and only reserved for true emergencies. Please refer to the tuition rate sheet for the current drop-in rate. Any drop in care charges will be added to your child’s tuition account and must be paid with the next tuition installment payment.

# Circle Drive Procedures

If you choose to use the circle drive for car line drop off or pick up:

Arrive during your child’s car line window.

**Circle drive drop off times:**

* 8:00am- 8:15am        Elementary and Secondary
* 8:15am -8:30am         Children’s House

**Circle drive pick-up times:**

* 3:00pm -3:15pm        Children’s House
* 3:15pm -3:30pm        Elementary and Secondary
* Wait in your car, the only exception being to buckle your child in at pick up time.
* If you are waiting in line and a space opens up, please pull forward and fill the space.
* If you want to wait at the gate/ benches, or want to walk to your child’s class, please park in the parking lot.
* Do not park in the circle drive during the drop off (8:00a-8:30p) or pick up times (3:00-3:30p) times
* If you need to speak to your child’s Guide or take time to visit, please park in the parking lot.
* For siblings you may drop off and pick up in the older sibling’s circle drive window.

# Sign In/Sign Out

Each child is signed in every morning when they are dropped off and signed out each afternoon when they are picked up by the staff via Transparent Classroom. It is the responsibility of the adult dropping off and picking up a child to communicate to staff that the child is in their care.

# Release of Children

Children will only be released to individuals stated in the enrollment application form and emergency card. Written permission to the school must be submitted to the office for the school to release your child to any individual that is not on the list. Individuals must check in at the front office before going to the classroom. A photo identification or driver’s license will be required; a copy will be made for your child’s file.

# Lunch Procedures and Snack

MMS policy on lunches is that they be healthy. Artificial flavorings, colors, and refined sugars are strongly discouraged. Prepackaged meals such as Lunchables are not permitted, nor are desserts or candies. Water is available to drink during lunch and throughout the day. If you would like to send your child a drink for lunch, milk or a smoothie, in a thermos is appropriate.

Meals will not be prepared and served at the school. Morning snacks in YCC and Children’s House are provided by the children of each class on a rotating basis. You will receive a snack calendar from your child’s Guide at the beginning of the year, as well as a list of ideas and restrictions of what to provide for snack. For the Nido environment, parents provide food and drink for their children only. On occasion, there may be a request for a community snack item. Afternoon snack (during after care hours) will be provided by MMS. We strive to provide healthy, organic snacks each day.

***While we are not an allergen-free campus, we may designate a classroom to be an allergen-free classroom if necessary for the safety of any student.***

Mariposa provides a comfortable place in our Nido classroom, the office, the library, and the lobby that enables a mother to breastfeed her child. We fully support breastfeeding mothers and those who choose to provide breast milk for their child while in our care.

# Immunization and Health

In order for your child to start school, we must have a copy of their updated immunization record or notified exemption on file.

The Health Form given to you in the Enrollment Application Package must be completed, signed, and dated by your child’s physician.

The state of Texas requires that students 4 years and older have an annual vision and hearing screening. This screening is available through your child’s pediatrician and results must be provided for the school’s records.

# Dress Code

All children should wear comfortable, washable clothing, easily managed by the child. ***We ask that you not send your child to school wearing clothing bearing any sort of trademark icons or characters***. We have found clothing of this nature to be distracting not only to the child wearing them, but also to the other children in the classroom.

For the playground, the children will be the most comfortable in sneakers. For the safety of the children, no cowboy boots or flip-flops should be worn to school. Please label all items of clothing.

# Discipline Policy

The word *discipline* is used at Mariposa Montessori to refer to the spontaneous self-discipline of the child. Mariposa Montessori nurtures self-discipline, which develops over a period of time. The basis of discipline is respect -- respect for oneself, for others, and for the environment. The guides and students at Mariposa Montessori set limits for behavior based on the groups’ need for a safe and mutually respectful community. If a student has difficulty following the rules of the community, the response will be age appropriate. Personal attention, distraction, substitution and/or removal from the situation are typical approaches. Many issues resolve with time, within the bounds of safety and common sense as children experience and accept the changes in the environment. If the student disregards the rules of the classroom community, the teacher in consultation with the Director or Head of School will contact the parent for their support and cooperation, together a plan will be formulated to best serve the needs of the child. Behavioral anomalies and trends will be recorded by classroom guides in an objective manner and used as a basis of discussion. If it is the case that the behavior of a child continually disrupts the well-being of the class after plans have been formulated and tried, professional outside opinions may be called on. If additional in-class assistance is deemed necessary, it is the financial responsibility of the family to provide this for their child.

While we strive to serve most students, we recognize that there are certain academic and emotional challenges that we are unable to accommodate. We avoid suspensions or expulsions, however, there may be certain cases where we are not the best fit for a family or student. We see this as a last resort when all other options have been exhausted.

## Cooperative Discipline

Positive guidance techniques facilitate the development of interpersonal skills, respect for oneself and others. Children learn from each other and benefit from peer stimulation. They learn to participate through group activities and develop an awareness of others. They are encouraged to solve disagreements using learning appropriate communication techniques. Being members of our community, parents are requested to comply with Montessori values and methodology as it pertains to cooperative disciple. We strongly encourage parents to attend our parent information events to learn more about Montessori philosophy.

**Positive Guidance Techniques are presented to the child by:**

* Modeling
* Encouraging expected behavior
* Redirecting
* Setting clear limits
* Offering alternatives
* Logical consequences
* Natural consequences
* “I” messages:

“*I feel...(feeling) ~ when…(behavior) ~ because…(effect) ~ I want…(desired behavior).”*

(example: “I feel angry when you cut in line because I was next. I want you to go to the end of the line.”)

Guides use only positive methods of re-direction and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self- control, and self-direction. We follow the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services Minimum Standards for Licensed Child Care Centers for guidance on discipline issues.

## Developmentally Appropriate Practice

At Mariposa we serve a large range of ages and development. We adjust our practices based on the developmental capabilities of the students. Children under the age of six for example, struggle with impulse control. This is especially true in the infant and toddler environments. Therefore, aggressive behaviors such as hitting, biting, pushing are dealt with differently than in the Elementary or Secondary programs. For more information on disciplinary practices by level please refer to the orientation packets.

# The Role of the Parent in the School

Parent, Guide, child, and school relationships are very important in a student's life. An alliance based on mutual respect and support will enhance all individuals' understanding, knowledge, and insight and offer a cohesive, prepared learning environment.

Involved parents support their Montessori school by contributing their time and talents. Mariposa offers different programs and projects for parents to volunteer their time, energy, and resources.

Informed parents communicate with their school by attending planned conferences and other parent activities, reading newsletters and e-mails, and asking questions. Ask the school's Administrator or your child's Guide for the best time and method to communicate informally — to share insights, questions, and observations.

# Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parents should plan on attending scheduled conferences. These conferences are to illuminate the child’s progress in their respective environment and to inform the family where the child is at in their intellectual and social development and growth at the time of the conference. They are a very important part of building a bridge between home and school that best supports the whole child.

# Volunteering Opportunities and Participation

**1. Back to School Orientation** - This event gives parents an opportunity to meet your child’s Guide and the Administrative team. Parents are informed about school years events, and are familiarized with the school policies.

**2. Montessori Journey** – The Journey experience is an event in which families participate first hand in our Montessori programs, enabling families to understand their child’s day at school.

**3. Parent Meetings / Workshops / Material Making Meetings** – During these informal work sessions, parents will develop a deeper understanding of their child’s use of Montessori materials and lessons. This will be hands on activity, which will permit parents to make materials for their homes to extend the Montessori learning.

**4. Open House** – In this program children are the host of the show. Children invite their parents and give them a tour of the classroom and demonstrating their work.

**5. Parent Workdays** – There is a workday in the fall and a workday in the spring where parents help with improvement projects around campus. Parents are expected to attend at least one of these workdays for a minimum of two hours

**6. Mariposa Parents Community** – Meetings are held monthly; the MPC works to support community among Mariposa families. The MPC holds an annual fundraiser for Mariposa and we expect every family to support the fundraising effort, either by participating in the planning, soliciting/donating auction items, and/or purchasing tickets and attending the event.

**7. Gardening** – We always-welcome volunteers in the garden, from watering to weeding, planting to harvesting, and sharing the space with the children.

**8. General Presence** – Parents are very welcome to come to Mariposa at any time. In the

Children’s Houses and Elementary classrooms, parents may schedule a time to eat lunch with their child. If parents wish to do so in the Young Children’s Community, we ask that they be prepared to take their child home afterwards as it may be distressing for the younger children for their parent to leave without them. Parents may volunteer to do a special project with a class, or to come and listen to our older children read, or to read to a class. The possibilities are endless!

# How Parents Can Help

Help your child come to school unhurried and dressed in clothing, they can manage themselves.

Be on time, both at the beginning and at the conclusion of the day. Your child will feel more secure, and the Guide’s will appreciate the effort.

Label all items brought to school.

Do not send your child if they are ill or have had fever or been ill within the past 24 hours.

Be informed: Read the Parent’s Handbook, newsletters, snack calendars, and all articles of interest sent home.

Keep us informed: Always let us know of changes in information such as addresses, phone numbers, and changes of routines at home such as trips, guests/visitors, sleepless nights, etc. These can all affect your child’s day at school.

Attend parent education opportunities organized by the school. This gives you a great deal of knowledge about what your child experiences at school each day.

Become a volunteer. We have many opportunities for parents to volunteer. Check in the office or with your child’s Guide for ideas of how you can become more involved.

Attend parent workdays, family socials, parent encounters, conferences, discussion groups and other school events. Become a member of our MPC.

# Parties and Birthdays

Birthday celebrations are very important to young children. As your child’s birthday approaches, please make arrangements with his or her guide for their *Celebration of Life*. A birthday book or poster or photo album made for your child’s celebration is very special for their day. Once made, your child will start to see their own timeline and the progress of their growth over the years. The Celebration of Life is unlike a birthday party in order not to over-excite the children or otherwise disrupt the school program. Celebration of Life information will be provided by your Guide.

# Babysitting

We understand that there are benefits for both families and staff when it comes to babysitting. However, many schools do not allow babysitting because of the potential conflicts of interest that can arise.

At Mariposa, we have decided to allow babysitting with certain restrictions. We know that for families, it provides peace of mind knowing that our staff are trained and familiar people. We are relying on our community to respect our position and abide by our policy:

* Guides are not permitted to babysit for students in their own classrooms. If a Guide were to babysit a child from their class, it can cause a blurring of boundaries and confusion for the child. This is true at all levels.
* Please remember that Guides work all week with children and maybe parents themselves. Be mindful of the frequency of requests. If a Guide states that they are not interested in babysitting, they are not to be pressured or asked again.
* Guides are Mariposa employees first. Any concerns or questions you may have about the school may not be addressed while babysitting. The proper lines of communication with the school are to be followed at all times. If it comes to the school’s attention that this arrangement has been violated, we reserve the right to deny babysitting as an option in the future.

# Grounds Etiquette

* The security code keypad, the button to open the gate, and the entrance to the lobby of the main building are *for adults only to operate/open*.
* Please remember we are a cell phone free zone. Please be off of your phone once you enter school grounds and answer your phone after you leave.
* Gates are only for opening and closing, not for riding.
* Please be aware of your children and other children at pick-up time, especially in the after-school program, by the gate. We do not want any children to unexpectedly walk out.
* Once you are here at the school, responsibility of childcare is passed from the teachers to the parents.
* Please save conversations with other parents and teachers for other times besides pick-up/drop-off.
* If you are picking up your child and you need something from inside, please ask a Guide first if they are able to go inside and get the item.
* Please refrain from allowing older siblings who do not attend Mariposa Montessori from climbing on the playground equipment during pick up and drop off times. It is fine for them to play during special events. (ie family picnics, campouts, etc.)
* The classrooms are off limits when events are held at the school during non-school hours.
* Please be respectful of our community spaces- picking up litter that you see, tidying the restroom after your children if necessary- in general following the “leave no trace” policy with regards to our school grounds. This includes rocks, flowers, and items from nature. We teach children to be good stewards of the earth.

# Library

The library is designated as a quiet zone used for studying, reading, and research.

Main library – The majority of the library is for school use only. The reason is we have many shared resources across academic levels. Some books are required to stay at school so that students have access to them while doing research.

Lending library – We do have a section of the library that is designated for students and parents/guardians to check out books. Our lending library is located next to the door leading to the lower elementary porch. The shelf is labeled and there is a sheet to document which book is checked out.

# Illness

For the comfort of your child and the protection of the other children, your child must be kept home if they show any of the following symptoms:

∙ Temperature above 100.4 degrees

∙ Strep Throat

∙ Persistent or undiagnosed rash

∙ Runny nose with green or yellow mucus

∙ Diarrhea (more than two loose/watery bowel movements) or vomiting

∙ Red eyes with discharge or crust on the eyelids

∙ Persistent cough

Children need to feel well in order to function. If they are not feeling well, they need to rest at home. The child’s comfort level and needs are our first priority.

After any illness, a child must remain home for at least 24 hours after their temperature has returned to normal (without medication), or the symptoms are gone (Texas state law). A child may return to school:

* 24 hours after the temperature has returned to normal without the use of medication
* 24 hours after antibiotics have been started (including topical ointments).
* When the child has been free of diarrhea and/or vomiting for at least 24 hours. Child should have passed a regular stool within the 24-hour window after the last episode of diarrhea.
* When indicated by a note from a physician (this is only if the child was diagnosed with a communicable disease).

Any child brought to school with these symptoms will not be admitted and any child showing these symptoms during the school day will be sent home. Children have to be fever, diarrhea and vomiting free for 24 hours before returning to school.

If your child becomes ill at school, you will be notified immediately and requested to pick up the child within an hour. In some cases, a specific pick-up time may be required. Any ill child will be separated from their class and kept comfortable while waiting to be picked up. An illness report form will be filled out, signed by a staff member and the parents and a copy provided to the parents if requested.

Please notify the Administration immediately if your child has a communicable disease, has been exposed to one, has any allergies, or has developed an allergic reaction to any substance since you have completed your child’s enrollment form. All parents will be notified of any communicable disease that any person on campus may have contracted.

Regarding communicable diseases, a doctor’s letter of release is required to return to school.

Any allergies related to food or drink should be stated on your child’s emergency card.

# Medication

Medication needs to be brought in its original packaging, labeled with your child’s name, inside a sealable plastic bag also labeled with your child’s name. Please enclose the appropriate device for dispensing the medication. Bring the medication to be kept in the office, with the exception of allergy medication, and fill out the medication authorization form. All over the counter medication should have the age appropriate dosage information on the bottle. If it does not, we will require a doctor’s note stating the dosage amount and time to be given. Never send medication in a lunch box or tote bag. Children should not have access to medications at any time.

Before we can administer medication to a child, a Medication Authorization form must be completely filled out by a parent. These forms are located in the office.

# Medical Emergencies

In case of a medical emergency, the child will be tended to by a staff member until stabilized and/or emergency personnel arrive. Parents will be called, and the child’s physician will be contacted. The child will be transported to the hospital indicated on their admission information form or the nearest hospital, South Austin Hospital, if a specific hospital is not indicated on the form. An incident report will be filled out, signed by the parents and a staff member and a copy provided to the parents if requested.

**For minor injuries**, such as scrapes or cuts, a staff member will tend to the child and an incident report will be filled out for the parent/guardian to sign at pick-up.

# Safety

All of the policies, rules, and regulations presented in this handbook are designed to make the time your child spends at our school safe and rewarding. We have taken a number of steps to promote the safety and protection of your child while in our care. They are as follows:

* Any parents/guardians, students, and/or visitors coming on to campus between 9am and 2:45pm must come to the front office and sign-in. You will be given a visitors sticker to verify that you have checked-in with the office.
* The campus is secured by fencing on the outer perimeter as well as fencing around the main campus.
* All the buildings on campus are equipped with an alarm system.
* All common areas of the school are monitored via the closed-circuit internet camera system which is password protected.
* Frequent observations of the classrooms are performed by the administration.

## Classroom Safety

Our School provides equipment and furnishings that are child-sized, sturdy, safe, and in good repair. Individual Guides are responsible for the set-up of their classroom. It is part of their daily routine to wash and sanitize work and furniture. Guides are provided with guidelines as to what equipment should exist in each classroom.

## Outdoor Safety

Age-appropriate outdoor environment is provided for our students. Outdoor play is a requirement for our enrolled students and may only be skipped with a doctor’s note. Students will be outside for a minimum of 60 minutes during the school day. They are also invited to garden and perform practical life activities outside of their classrooms. As weather dictates, indoor activities may take the place of outdoor time.

## Sunscreen and Insect Repellent

We ask that parents/guardians or students apply sunscreen and/or insect repellent in the morning for all students over the age of 6 months before coming to school. Parents/guardians who wish that the Guide apply sunscreen and/or insect repellent to their child for afternoon outdoor time, must complete a Sunscreen and Insect repellent form and submit to the office. Children under 6 months old are kept in the shade; however, parents are invited to bring a hat or other protective sun wear. Our campus is also treated with natural insect repellents through Mosquito Joe’s.

# Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency that requires us to evacuate campus, we will take the children to Zion Rest Baptist Church at 3336 Paisano Trail. In the event of any of the following emergencies all parents will be notified by text, email, and phone calls.

## Fire:

Administration alerts every classroom guide.

Each teacher collects his or her attendance sheets, transition logs and rope line.

Classes exit:

Children’s House 1 exits through side door

Children’s House 2 exits through side door

Children’s House 3 exits through side door

Children’s House 4 exits through side door

Nido exits through play yard gate

Young Children’s Community exits through door facing play yard and breezeway.

Lower Elementary exits through the doors on the porch

Upper Elementary and Secondary exits through the doors on the porch

Each class meets at the front gate by the circle drive. Each Guide does a head count. Administration does a building check, looking in bathrooms for children. Children remain at the gate until “all clear.” In the event that we have to leave the yard we will reconvene in the parking lot. Children exit with their class teachers holding onto a rope line. Each Lead Guide and Support Guide will do a head count.

## Human Intruder:

We are on an Austin Police Department Alert System and receive email alerts. In the event that the police department knows about a potential threat, they will inform us.

As a procedural precaution, Administration meets all unknown visitors at the gate.

**In the event that an intruder enters the school grounds**:

Whoever notices an obvious threat calls 911 immediately. Administration or the closest staff member locks the main entrance of building. All classrooms are notified via walkie-talkie, classroom intercom, and the slack app. All classrooms ensure that all windows and exterior doors are locked.

Nido brings infants into diaper area and closes the door.

YCC has children sit on the floor in the bathroom area.

Children’s House has children sit in the bathroom area of their classroom.

Elementary gathers in their bathrooms.

## Tornado or Severe Weather

[Each classroom will be alerted in the case of severe weather. Every class congregates in their designated safe area. Children and staff will sit on the floor in the designated areas. The Elementary will relocate downstairs in the Main Building.](#TOC)

# Classroom Animals

Our Communities each have a classroom pet (sand crabs, hamster, rat, snake, tarantula, birds, rabbit) We ensure that caregivers and children practice good hygiene and hand washing after handling or coming in to contact with pets (only pets that are permitted to be handled, per Texas State Licensing) and items used by pets, such as water bowls, food bowls, and cages. Please inform your child’s guide of any animal allergies.

# Transportation

Mariposa Montessori School will only be providing transportation to and from school or to and from any location away from school grounds for the Elementary and Secondary classes only.

The Elementary and Secondary classes will go on field trips during this school year to scheduled locations/events. Parents of Elementary and Secondary children will be provided Permission Forms before the first field trip. The Permission Forms must be signed and returned before the first scheduled field trip.

Mariposa does not intend to provide transportation for field trips for levels below the Elementary classes. If this should change, you will be notified in writing about our intentions.

# Water Activities

We use wading pools on school grounds during summer camp (June and July) for Children’s House and Elementary students. We follow all state licensing requirements for splashing/wading activities including adult/child ratios. State requirements can be found under Division 7, Ratios for water activities section 746.2101.

# Lost and Found

Items found in and around the building will be taken to the office and kept for a limited period of time. Nido, YCC, CH, Elementary, and Secondary have their own lost and found areas - please check with your child’s Guide if something is missing. Please label all of your child’s clothing and belongings (even socks and water bottles) for ease of return.

# Licensing and Accreditation

Our school is accredited by the American Montessori Society (AMS).

We are licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Our local TDFPS office can be reached at 834-3195 or <http://dfps.state.tx.us>.

You may review the TDPFS minimum standards for childcare and view the latest licensing report upon request at Mariposa Montessori School (MMS), or online at [www.txchildcaresearch.org](http://www.txchildcaresearch.org).

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

Each caregiver must obtain at least 24 clock hours of training each year relevant to the age of the children for whom the caregiver provides care. At least one clock hour of annual training must focus on prevention, recognition, and reporting of child abuse and neglect, including:

(1) Factors indicating a child is at risk for abuse or neglect;

(2) Warning signs indicating a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect;

(3) Internal procedures for reporting child abuse or neglect; and

(4) Community organizations that have training programs available to child-center staff members, children, and parents.

At this time Mariposa Montessori School does not require employees to be vaccinated.

## Reporting Abuse and Neglect

Texas law requires caregivers to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or law enforcement. Call **1-800-252-5400** to make confidential reports. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is a crime. Employers are prohibited from retaliating against caregivers who make reports in good faith.

[To learn how to recognize the signs of child abuse and/or neglect, please visit the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services website: <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/About_Child_Protective_Services/recognize_abuse.asp>](#TOC)