

Welcome

To new and returning parents and students,
we extend our warm welcome to the new school year.
Over the course of this year our children will grow
in a Montessori environment to become self-assured,
vibrant students who love to learn.

As parents, you play an important role in your child's success.
The Montessori Method can benefit your child best when you
understand the roles played by parents, teachers, and children.

Please use this handbook to become familiar
with Woodland Hill Montessori School.
We look forward to another fun and productive year!

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I. MISSION STATEMENT

Woodland Hill Montessori School
– a diverse and engaging educational partnership
of parents, teachers, children, and community –
nurtures a child’s love of learning and sense of social responsibility,
using the child-centered Montessori philosophy and curriculum
to develop the intellectual, physical, spiritual, artistic,
and academic excellence inherent in each child.

II. EDUCATIONAL GOALS

The Montessori curriculum varies at the four levels of our school, but the goals are consistent throughout the programs:

- * To enter into a partnership with parents in the education of their children
- * To encourage the self-motivation and self-discipline that will lead to a lifelong pursuit of knowledge
- * To lead children to mastery of precisely identified intellectual, social, and physical skills
- * To help children develop a positive self-image as the key to the development of their full potential
- * To foster open minds, compassion, and respect for others
- * To balance self-reliance, independence, and responsible freedom with the skills of working cooperatively
- * To instill in each child a sense of duty and personal responsibility for the world in which we live
- * To spark in our children imagination, wonder, humor, and joy

III. SCHOOL OVERVIEW

A. SCHOOL HISTORY

The history of this school begins with a special person, Dr. Maria Montessori. In 1896, Maria Montessori became Italy's first female doctor. As a physician, Maria Montessori had an opportunity to work with many different children and to observe them under a variety of circumstances. Over time, she formalized her study of children and sought to design tools to help children learn. As a result of her studies Maria Montessori concluded:

- All learning is an individual and personal experience. To be effective, education must be personal and individual.
- Certain stages in a child's development make the child receptive to different types of learning. These stages must be identified and incorporated into an effective teaching system.
- Children are naturally both able and eager to learn when provided with the appropriate guidance, tools, and environment.
- The goal of early childhood education must be to develop in each child his natural talents and to stimulate his desire to learn.

In 1911, the Montessori learning philosophy was introduced in the United States. At that time the country was not generally open to such a progressive view of children and their learning processes. In the early 1960s many social changes occurred, including a demand for alternative education, and interest in the Montessori educational philosophy was rekindled. In 1965, a group of Albany parents in search of a higher standard of education came together. As a result of their dedication to high educational standards, the Montessori School of Albany ("MSA") was founded.

Initially, MSA provided a program for children aged 2 years 9 months to 6 years. In order to meet the growing needs of its student body and parents, a 6- to 9-year-old Elementary program was introduced in 1985 to extend the unique educational experience to older children. In 1993, the 9- to 12-year-old program was added to complete the Montessori elementary school experience. In 2001, a seventh grade was added, and in 2002, the middle school was completed with the addition of eighth graders.

In 1966, MSA received its charter from the New York State Education Department and became formally affiliated with the American Montessori Society. In 1999, MSA became fully accredited by the American Montessori Society. Fewer than 50 of the thousands of Montessori schools in North America have received this recognition. MSA is also fully accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

In the fall of 2002, the Montessori School of Albany changed its name to Woodland Hill Montessori School (WHMS), after the move to its beautiful new eleven-acre campus on a wooded hillside in North Greenbush.

Over the past forty-three years, WHMS has provided an educational program with a difference. We are committed to creating a learning environment that emphasizes respect for the child, freedom of self-expression, self-education, love of learning, and personal and social responsibility. We are pleased to have you join us in fulfilling our goals.

B. CAMPUS AND STUDENT BODY

WHMS is located at 100 Montessori Place, North Greenbush, New York. The building, designed specifically as a Montessori School, is surrounded by eleven acres of open fields and wooded hills. The building design follows the Montessori principles of order, simplicity, and beauty. The natural outdoor environment is incorporated into the school building itself. Each of the classrooms is spacious and inspiring, with its own door to outside work areas and large windows bringing in the bright outdoors. Both the Primary wing and the Elementary/Middle School wing comprise five classrooms each. Adjacent to the large foyer are the Gallery Room, used for arts and special projects, and the Great Room, a large multipurpose space for physical education and special events. The administrative wing is conveniently located at the entrance of the building. The playground is tucked safely behind the building, and the ample grounds are used for cross-country skiing, archery, ball games, and other activities. In 2005, WHMS added two more classrooms to accommodate its growing student population. In 2006, an athletic field was created to give our students a place to play.

In the 2008-2009 school year, WHMS will enroll approximately 230 students, from 3 years to 15 years of age.

C. CURRICULUM

The term Montessori embodies both a philosophy and a method of education. The programs at our school focus on the development of each child's full potential using teachers specially trained in the Montessori Method and philosophy. Our teachers use both concrete teaching materials and a well-defined innovative curriculum tailored to each three-year cycle.

The three-year age range in each class provides a multitude of benefits that are immediately apparent when observing a typical Montessori classroom. Younger children in each group have an opportunity to observe and imitate the older students as they work. Older students have an opportunity to reinforce their own knowledge by explaining what they are doing and assisting younger children. The third year in the cycle is truly empowering to the children, both socially and academically. Each child can learn and develop at his own pace within a classroom that accommodates many levels of ability and complexity.

The Montessori teacher is specially trained to observe each child and to design lessons based on that child's natural curiosity and love of learning. The teacher is responsible for preparing the educational environment within each classroom and for presenting lessons in that environment. During the course of a day, the teacher will demonstrate a wide array of concrete sensorial materials and sequential activities through individual instruction. The child soon learns to associate abstract concepts with hands-on experience. For a list of our Montessori teachers, please see Attachment A.

D. FAMILY COMMITMENT

Fundamental to the operation of this school is the expectation that all members participate and support the school whenever possible. Committees are organized to assist in special programs and to help the school meet long-term goals. Teachers value the assistance and participation of parents in the classroom and in adventures beyond the classroom. Both parents and students are enriched by parents' involvement in school activities. In addition, each family is expected to contribute to the fundraising efforts of the school.

E. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

WHMS is an independent non-profit educational corporation chartered by the New York State Board of Regents. All parents and legal guardians of current WHMS students are members of the corporation. Members elect representatives from the parent body to serve on the WHMS Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees is charged with the ultimate responsibility for financial, legal, and strategic planning and policy issues. The WHMS Board sets policy to be implemented by the administration and staff. Furthermore, the Board ensures the integrity of Montessori philosophy within the school. The WHMS Board consists of

seven elected WHMS members (parents with children in the school), the immediate past president, one teacher representative selected by the faculty, and six additional persons appointed by the elected trustees. At least three of the appointed trustees shall be chosen from the community at large (not parent members). The seven elected member trustees serve three-year terms; all other trustees serve one-year terms. Board terms are staggered and elections are held every year at the annual meeting in December.

The WHMS Board holds regular meetings six times per year. All regular meetings of the Board are open to members, with the exception of executive sessions for confidential matters. Parents are encouraged to attend and participate. Minutes are on file in the WHMS office for access by any member of the school.

IV. ADMISSIONS

WHMS admits students of any sex, race, color, creed, national, or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. WHMS does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or scholarship programs.

WHMS offers five Primary classes for ages 3 to 6, three 6- to 9-year-old classes (Lower Elementary), one 9- to 12-year-old class (Upper Elementary) and one 12- to 15-year-old class (Middle School).

Your child must be within the relevant age parameters to be enrolled in WHMS. You may be required to submit a copy of the child's birth certificate to the Head of School. WHMS requires children be toilet trained prior to entrance.

Enrollment preference will be given to families with a firm commitment to Montessori philosophy and who intend to keep their child in the classroom for the full three-year cycle and beyond. Preference is also given to children three to four years of age, to siblings of past or present students, and to students who transfer from other Montessori schools. Classes are multi-age, and the school will make every reasonable effort to balance each class with respect to age and gender.

THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

1. Observation

WHMS encourages parents to observe classrooms in session, tour the school, and speak with the Director of Admissions. Parents will be asked to complete an observation form. Following observation, the parents will meet with the Head of School.

2. Application

Interested families are encouraged to submit a completed application form accompanied by a \$50.00 non-refundable fee as promptly as possible after observation, no later than February 1 of the year you plan to enroll. Applicants five years of age or older must submit a teacher reference and/or progress reports from their current school. When these materials are received, an interview appointment will be made.

3. Parent and Student Interview

The interview session is an informal way for prospective parents and the school representative to become acquainted with each other and to share pertinent information.

Primary children will explore the Montessori classroom materials with the guidance of a certified teacher. Elementary children will visit a classroom for a half-day. The student will receive lessons and choose work from familiar materials.

All prospective students will be informally assessed by an appropriate teacher and prior school records will be evaluated.

4. Enrollment

WHMS makes admission decisions in mid to late March, or later if space is available. Placement decisions are entirely within the discretion of the Head of School. Once a child is accepted, it will be necessary to complete the enrollment contract and submit any health information required by state law.

Acceptance of placement in the program is confirmed by the submission of a signed enrollment contract, payment of a nonrefundable \$500.00 tuition deposit, and a \$500.00 matriculation fee (for new families only). No student is considered enrolled in the school until the funds are received.

INFORMATION REGARDING PROGRAMS AND TUITION

Please refer to the enrollment contract and Appendix C for information regarding programs and tuition.

SCHOLARSHIPS

WHMS offers a limited number of partial scholarships. Awards are based on financial need, space availability, and family commitment to Montessori education. The number of scholarships is dependent upon available funds. Application forms are available in the business office. You will be asked for financial information. All requests and information are strictly confidential. If you would like to donate to the Scholarship Fund, please call the business office or the chair of the Scholarship Committee.

V. SCHOOL POLICIES

A. PRIMARY PHASE-IN

Phase-in is the term used in Montessori schools for the initial orientation phase of the new school year. Briefly, we know that a positive Phase-in experience is one of the most important influences in a process that will guide each child to a happy and successful learning year.

In this carefully planned phase-in period, a peaceful and welcoming learning environment is created. The new children get an overview of how things work in the

classroom, and the returning children receive reinforcement of the previous year's ground rules. Phase-in is a stabilizing period, in which the children and teachers get to know one another well. During this transition, we foster security and comfort in a smaller group before the whole class meets.

The new children are eager and excited about the year ahead and they can learn new skills quickly. Their environment throughout the year will be stimulating and exciting, where independence, freedom, and choice of materials are the rule. The children must learn how to handle this choice and freedom while respecting the materials and each other. They will learn how to care for their classrooms!

During the phase-in period, new children become acclimated by attending short periods that become increasingly longer as the week progresses. You will be given a schedule of the exact hours of phase-in

We begin the year with a few core materials on the shelves that focus on specific skills and on the completion of a work cycle (taking a task from its beginning to completion). These materials introduce the child to the classrooms and allow older children to re-establish good work habits.

Montessori schools all over the world have Phase-in. Important reasons include:

- (a) Children need short increments of time to establish and re-establish procedures and ground rules. They familiarize themselves with classroom materials and physical space (e.g., bathroom location, cubbies, etc).
- (b) In smaller groups, the teacher can establish or re-establish a relationship with each child individually, by moving slowly, creating an atmosphere of security and emotional comfort.
- (c) The gradual Phase-in allows the child to absorb and digest new concepts and ideas without becoming confused from too much information.
- (d) Phase-in sets the tone of the classroom of respect and caring for each other and the environment. It sets the stage for making choices and independent learning.

B. SCHOOL HOURS

Early Bird Schoolcare	7:30 - 8:20
Primary (5 full days)	8:20 - 2:50
Elementary	8:20 - 2:50
After Schoolcare	2:50 - 5:30

The school office is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. **The emergency cell phone number can be reached after school hours at 496-4136**

C. ARRIVAL

WHMS has arranged arrival and dismissal procedures to help facilitate smooth transitions for children and convenience for parents. The following procedures should be followed for the comfort and safety of all.

1. Automobiles

When arriving at our school, parents should pull up in front of the school. Parents should remain in the car. The staff will escort children from the first four vehicles in line. After the children leave the vehicles, the first four cars will pull out and then all cars in line will move up to reposition themselves for drop-off. **Please do not pull in front of any vehicle in line, do not make U-turns, and do not double-park, unless directed to do so by a staff member.**

- Arrival time for elementary and middle school is between 8:10 and 8:20 and for primary between 8:20-8:30 a.m.
- If you are early, please wait.
- Children under kindergarten age should never be dropped off to enter the building alone.
- If you are late, please park your car, escort your child to the office, and sign in.

(a) Buses

Buses take precedence over all other vehicles.

Never pass a bus with flashing red lights or a school van that is unloading children.

Children who arrive prior to 8:20 a.m. should report to the Early Care program.

(b) Early Care Program

This morning care program from 7:30 to 8:20 is provided for all bus children and those parents contract for this program. Occasional pre-arranged drop-in care is permissible and will be billed as used. Please do not use morning care without prior arrangement.

4. Late Arrival: After 8:30

Please arrive to school by 8:30 a.m. A child who arrives past 8:30 must be escorted to the main office by an adult if they are primary age, unless teachers are still outside. Primary children (ages 3-6) should not be dropped off to enter the school alone. If you are late, you or your child must sign in at the main office. **Late arrivals, past 8:40 a.m.**, will receive a notice. If you are late more than five times, you may be asked to meet with the Head of School. Please call 283-5400 if you are going to be late.

5. Enrichment Days Arrival

Children participating in the Enrichment program (see Enrichment, Section VIII, C) should be escorted to the Enrichment classroom by the parent or caregiver. The number of the classroom being used will be visible on the front door. All children participating in Enrichment must be signed IN and OUT. **The cell phone number of the school is 496-4136.**

D. DISMISSAL

Dismissal time for children being picked up by parents is 2:50-3:00 p.m. Please do not come early because our buses pick up between 2:40 and 2:50.

- The procedure for picking up full-day students is the same as for drop off. Parents should remain in the car. Your child will be brought to you.
- Buses will pick up children in front of the school. All children will be

escorted to the correct bus.

For your child's protection, WHMS will not release a child to someone other than a custodial parent unless written authorization is provided to the school. If written permission has not been received by the school, WHMS will call parents to confirm alternate release arrangements and to obtain oral authorization of those arrangements before the child is released.

Children who have not been picked up by 3:00 p.m. will be placed in the School Care program and parents will be billed for this time. The classroom teacher will report the placement to the Office Manager, and the Office Manager will contact the parents by telephone. (Doesn't the teacher call the parents?)

School Care Pick-Up and Enrichment Pick-Up

School Care and Enrichment pick-up may occur any time between 3:00 and 5:30 p.m. Parents should park in the school lot. Check the signs for the current location of the children.

Please remember to sign your children IN and OUT of these programs.

E. SNOW DAYS & WEATHER EMERGENCIES

In the event of a snowstorm, ice storm, or other extreme weather conditions, please tune in to television channels 6, 10, or 13 or radio stations WROW or FLY92. As a general rule, if the East Greenbush or Rensselaer City schools are closed, WHMS will also close even if we are not listed immediately. If you live a great distance from the school, you may call the Head of School at 6:15 a.m. (Head of School, Susan Kambrich, 439-7110). After 7:00 a.m. you may phone in and listen to the school's voice mail; the message will be changed to announce a closing.

F. ATTENDANCE

Parents should notify the school by 9:00 a.m. if a child is unable to attend school.

1. Absence for Primary Children

Daily attendance is vital for your child's development. If a student must be away for any length of time for reasons other than illness, parents should contact the school in advance to discuss the situation. A note explaining absence must be sent to school with each child upon his or her return.

2. Absence for Elementary Children

New York State includes in its definition of legal absences student illness,

sickness, or death in the family, impassable roads, religious observances or attendance at health care facilities. Other absences are considered illegal or as truancy. Parents should be aware that taking their children out of school for vacation could be detrimental to their education. If a vacation is scheduled, parents should discuss with the teacher the educational experiences and activities that will be pursued.

A note explaining absence must be sent to school with each child upon his or her return.

G. CLOTHING

Dress should allow children freedom to engage in a wide range of activities. Please help your child select clothing and shoes that allow freedom of movement. All WHMS children have outdoor playtime and/or physical education every day and should dress accordingly. Children should wear clothing that is free of violent or vulgar images. Clothing must cover midriffs, chests, and undergarments. Students arriving to school in skimpy or inappropriate outfits will be asked to return home to change.

Younger children should wear clothing that enables them to dress themselves easily. Rubber-soled sneakers, preferably Velcro, are recommended for use as indoor and gym shoes and are to be left at the school. Open-toed sandals, jelly shoes, high-heeled or platform shoes, long skirts, and long dresses are not permitted for safety reasons. Outerwear should be appropriate to the weather. When there is snow or mud, boots are required. When it is very cold, snow pants, mittens, and hats are required. In general, children not well enough to go outside should stay home.

To avoid confusion and prevent the loss of clothing, all garments should be marked with the child's name. WHMS cannot be responsible for unmarked items. Check the "Lost & Found" in the main office or the Elementary hallway for missing items.

H. LUNCH

All children should bring a lunch every day. Please make sure your child has a nutritious lunch — fresh fruits and vegetables are healthy alternatives to candies and cookies. During warm weather, please include a refreezable ice pack or a frozen juice box in your child's lunch box.

Your child's name should appear on the outside of the lunch box. A napkin and a placemat should be included in your child's lunch box each day. Microwaving is available to warm up lunch items, but please limit warm-ups (no more than 2 minutes) to once per week. Please include any necessary utensils. **Do not include gum, candy, soda, or glass containers in the lunch. To encourage trash-free lunches, WHMS encourages the use of recyclable items to pack lunches. Students will be bringing home trash and non-reusable recyclables in the**

lunch boxes.

Hot Lunch

As a treat for children and parents, WHMS offers a pizza lunch, usually once a week. The pizza lunch menu will be sent home at the beginning of the year for you to review. The proceeds of the pizza lunch program are used to benefit WHMS.

I. NAP

Our three-year-olds rest in a specially designated area for at least one-half hour per day. Parents are requested to complete a form at the beginning of the year so that each child is allowed a nap adequate for their needs. Please provide a nap blanket and small pillow. The children sleep on mats. The blankets are sent home every other week to be washed.

Four- and five-year-olds are generally allocated twenty minutes of quiet time in the afternoon at which time they may listen to classical music or books.

J. PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

Books or other educational materials that might be of interest to other children are welcome in the classroom. **Be sure that your child's name is clearly marked on these items.** Children are also encouraged to bring in items from nature to share with the class. Sharing these items with other children in the class will become a part of the classroom learning experience.

Please do NOT allow your child to bring toys and playthings into the classroom. If a child brings non-educational playthings into the classroom, these items will be stored in your child's bag until dismissal.

K. HEALTH POLICY

1. Immunizations

The New York State Board of Health requires that students attending preschool and elementary school have the following inoculations or tests:

- a. Before 1 year: diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough (DPT), poliomyelitis, and hepB
- b. Before 30 months: hemophilus influenza type B
- c. Before 2 years: measles, mumps, and rubella (German measles) (MMR)
- d. Before entering Kindergarten or first grade: second MMR

- e. Before entering sixth grade: second MMR if not yet received
- f. A test for lead levels may be required.

State law also requires that each student file with WHMS a current immunization record. Please return completed immunization forms to the school before the beginning of the year.

No record of immunization is required if the school is provided with one of the following three documents:

- Certificate of Religious Exemption, stating that adherence to the state law requirements conflicts with the student's religious tenets or practices
- Documentary medical evidence that the immunizations may be detrimental to the student's health
- Medical evidence of the student's existing immunity as substantiated by serological testing methods

2. Illness

WHMS must protect all children attending classes. Any ill child should be kept at home. Children should be kept at home for 24 hours after being sent home with a fever, diarrhea, or vomiting.

Children should be segregated from the other children and staff members for the following reasons:

- 1. Contagious or communicable disease
- 2. Fever
- 3. Cold or flu symptoms, e.g., sore throat, persistent cough, or sneezing
- 4. Rash or discharge from the nose or eyes
- 5. Child "not well enough to go outside"
- 6. Head lice

3. Medication Administration

New York State guidelines and WHMS policy agree that the administration of medication is the ultimate responsibility of the parent and not the staff. A parent may come to school to administer medication at any time. Children are not permitted to administer their own medications.

WHMS will cooperate with the family and the physician in administering medication during school hours if the following requirements are met:

- a. WHMS is provided with a written statement indicating the name of the medication, the times and the amount of each dose, the side effects, and the time period within which the medication is to be given in school.

- b. WHMS receives a written request from the parents to administer the medication as prescribed.
- c. The medication must be properly labeled and delivered to WHMS by an adult.

When WHMS has assumed the responsibility of administering oral medication, it will be administered by the Office Manager or another designated staff member. A record of the medication, time given, and dosage will be recorded by the person administering the medication. In the event any side effects are noted, parents will be notified.

WHMS will not administer any injectable medication except Epipen. Parents may come to the school to administer injectable medication at any time. If your child might require the use of Epipen, please contact the office for the WHMS policy on administration.

4. Allergies and Asthma

Parents are directed to fill out the emergency information card presented with other enrollment documents at the start of each new school year. This form must be returned to school prior to the first day of class.

* Due to peanut and nut allergies, do not bring any food to share that contains nuts or peanuts (e.g., birthday treats, holiday parties, etc.).

Peanut Allergy

This policy focuses attention on peanuts because they present a special problem: They are the most common culprits in severe food allergies, and they are an oily substance. Peanut oil residue is easily spread from hand to hand, and around school surfaces, lunch tables, and educational materials.

This policy is designed to minimize the risk of severe allergic reactions, to prepare faculty and staff to deal with allergy emergencies, and to minimize anxiety on the part of all students, faculty, and staff around the issue of food allergies. Specific measures include:

- a) No peanut butter or peanut products are knowingly served by the school.
- b) Foods containing peanut products must be labeled on the outside as having peanut products and the classroom teacher must be notified in writing. Areas of the school will be designated as “peanut-free.”
- c) Children are instructed not to share food.
- d) Hand washing before and after meals and snacks is part of the daily routine
- e) Tables will be washed after snacks and meals. This is the teachers' responsibility in classrooms or any other schoolroom where food is eaten.

f) Parents of children with life-threatening allergies must provide the school with a written medical treatment protocol for their child, as well as any medication prescribed by the doctor. Parents of children with severe allergies are made aware of policies and protocols.

The school nurse will educate and train faculty and staff at the beginning of each semester about the recognition and emergency treatment of severe food allergies, including specific information about how to administer the EpiPen. The school nurse is part of a core team that coordinates the overall allergy prevention and treatment program.

This food allergy policy does not guarantee that a student will never experience an allergy-related event at school. We believe, however, that these measures significantly decrease the risk to allergic children, and that they reflect the strong value that our school places on respect for individual differences.

L. BUILDING SAFETY PROCEDURES

A Fire Safety inspection is done on a yearly basis. WHMS conducts fire drills regularly throughout the year. WHMS follows safety and emergency plans that are reviewed on an annual or as needed basis. During the day, the front door may be locked (door can be opened from the inside) if no one is in the front office area. There is a doorbell on the right side of the building for entrance during these times.

M. GENERAL EMERGENCIES

In the event that circumstances arise which would render the school building unusable, WHMS will escort children to the Branson Manor Senior Facility. WHMS will then notify parents of the situation. A cell phone and emergency cards will be kept at all times. Please be assured that faculty will remain with the children.

N. VISITORS

We welcome and encourage visits to the school from parents, outside teachers, prospective families, and the larger community. Please arrange the visit with the Head of School. When you visit the school, please sign in at the office. For safety reasons, we ask that you wear a visitor name-tag to indicate that you are a visitor at the school.

VI. PRIMARY PROGRAM

A. CURRICULUM

Profound respect for each child characterizes the 3- to 6-year-old Primary program. This program fosters growth in independence and problem solving; the development of order, concentration, and coordination; the nurturing of oral communication skills; and the stimulation of the child's joy in discovery, in learning.

Practical Life is the area of development in which the child creates, controls, changes, or cares for his physical environment and his physical well-being. Practical life is the most basic and essential area of Montessori development. There are three goals of practical life that make it a foundation of the child's future life as a whole:

1. Through these activities the child grows to respect and love the physical work around him, both natural and manmade.
2. The child develops techniques and skills that are basic to other areas of development.
3. The child unites his growing body, developing intelligence, and will.

The resulting condition of human integrity is what we call freedom.

The success of our work depends upon this foundation. The child chooses what he will do. The child acts upon his decision with intelligence. The child's use of his body within the environment is an act of work. The work process, freely chosen, done with self-discipline, using physical skills in an intelligent way, is the child's daily product. The result is a free child, creating through his work a free adult.

Sensorial exercises are done with an extensive set of materials, each of which isolates one sensorial property and expands upon it: e.g., shape, weight, texture, or pitch is matched, graded, or contrasted. The sensorial work allows the child to develop his sensory awareness and organize his perceptions to form concepts and abstractions. The purpose of this work is threefold:

1. The satisfaction of the work with the materials
2. The ability to perceive one's environment with sensitivity and intelligence
3. The appreciation of the natural order that intelligent awareness cultivates in one's life

Cognitive work in math and language develops from concrete sensorial materials that the child manipulates, forming the foundation for the use of symbols. The child will first have the experience before he or she uses the symbols that represent it. With the symbols, the child begins to communicate what he or she knows and does. Thus, a child's school life is not divorced from reality and does not become something apart from life, but rather is a natural development of his personal being.

Arithmetic, geography, reading and writing, grammar and syntax, music, art, science, algebra, and geometry are developed in gradual stages from the concrete sensorial to

the abstract conceptual through sequential materials and exercises and repetition of these exercises. Each child works from his own choice at his own pace, successfully completing self-correcting materials.

B. CLOTHING AND SUPPLIES

Please send your child to school in comfortable play clothes. Sweatshirts and pants are very practical. T-shirts and sweatshirts with the WHMS logo are available in the school store. The purchase of clothes displaying the school logo is entirely optional.

Each Primary child is asked to bring “indoor shoes” to class on the first day of Phase-in. Velcro sneakers are a good choice and will be used for gym class as well as for everyday indoor shoes. These shoes will remain in your child’s cubby.

Each Primary child must bring in two changes of underwear and socks labeled with the child’s name. These clothes will be used if a change of clothes is needed. Please send them to school in a labeled zip-top plastic bag. If this clothing is used, please send back replacements the next day.

Each child, lower elementary and younger, is required to carry an open top satchel or bag at least nine inches by twelve inches in dimension. The open top bags facilitate the delivery of written communications and your child’s work. Bags with the school logo are available for purchase at the school.

C. SNACK AND FLOWERS

During the course of the day your children get hungry, frequently before lunchtime. Accordingly we ask each family to supply snack for an entire week for your child’s class. As your week approaches, we will send home a basket with a note that specifies exactly which foods will be needed. These foods are often prepared and consumed as Practical Life lessons.

We also ask each family to supply fresh cut flowers to add to the beauty of each environment and to permit the children to enjoy the process of flower arranging. It is not necessary to purchase flowers if you have flowers in your yard available to you. Each family will be requested to provide flowers and snack no more than three times per year.

D. “SPECIALS” CLASSES

The Role of Specials in a Montessori Classroom

Each experience the child has with art, music, languages, and physical movement helps to develop the whole child. Early exposure to the arts will give children the tools necessary to enjoy art, music, and movement as a part of their daily lives. A

latent talent for the arts exists inside of us all. It is the Specialists' job to spark children's interest, bring out their talent, and help them reach their artistic potential. The study of another language encourages children to be part of a global community, while at the same time giving them a valuable resource.

The following special classes will be offered to Primary children:

1. Physical Education: WHMS recognizes the importance of physical education for our children. We offer our Primary children opportunities for gross movement both outside and inside the classroom. In addition, the children have developmentally appropriate physical education classes twice a week. Please ensure that your child has sneakers in school on these days.
2. Spanish: The Spanish program follows a Montessori curriculum and is staffed by a language specialist. The program focuses on oral comprehension, vocabulary, and basic pronunciation skills. Children are very receptive to learning language at an early age.
3. Art: Process over product, the cultivation of art appreciation, and the knowledge of art history are the elements found in our daily art program. Four- and five-year-olds are offered more specific instruction once each week with an art specialist.
4. Music & Movement: This program of singing and movement is offered to the primary children. The emphasis is on the personal enjoyment one can feel while singing and performing, as well as the appreciation of music for its own value. Spanish language is also included in the music and movement program.

VII. ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

A. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

The basic Montessori philosophy continues with an increase in the growth of independence and problem solving. It encourages a mature sense of justice and fairness; reinforces oral communication and written communication; provides for repetitive experiences in all academic skills; fosters development of imagination and creativity; and provides the impetus for meeting the requirements of New York State as well as those of the Montessori curriculum. The basic components of a Montessori Elementary program are:

1. Individualized Instruction

Learning starts with the child. The Montessori teacher observes the child's interests and abilities and creates an environment in which these can flourish. An integral part of the Montessori curriculum is that the teacher must respect and follow the child. The teacher's ability to be effective in this role is enhanced by the extended three-year relationship.

2. The Prepared Environment

In a Montessori classroom, the children are surrounded by concrete materials that enhance and explain what they are studying. In effect, the curriculum is always on display and the children are free to explore their interests in depth. The teachers' carefully prepared lessons facilitate the child's use of the materials.

3. Multi-Age Groupings

Every child works at his or her own level. Younger children learn through the observation of older children. Older children reinforce their own learning by helping younger children. Older children also have opportunities to develop leadership skills while serving as role models for the younger children. Cooperation and social responsibility are encouraged and a strong community develops.

4. Integrated Curriculum

The Montessori Elementary curriculum expands the sense of order that was nourished in the Primary environment to study the order of the Universe. Life is everywhere interrelated. Timelines are used to make connections between disciplines. The Montessori interdisciplinary approach to elementary education permits children to view the world around them with a continued sense of wonder.

TESTING: Beginning in the Lower Elementary, the students are given the Iowa test, a standardized test, or the New York State tests. The Iowa tests are given over the course of a week during the month of May. The New York State tests are given throughout the year. These tests provide information to parents and

teachers about student learning. On years when students take state tests, Iowa tests will not be given, As appropriate, Middle School students will take regents exams.

B. “SPECIALS” CLASSES

The Role of Specials in a Montessori Classroom

Each experience the child has with art, music, languages, and physical movement helps to develop the whole child. Early exposure to the arts will give children the tools necessary to enjoy art, music, and movement as a part of their daily lives. A latent talent for the arts exists inside of us all. It is the Specialists’ job to spark children’s interest, bring out their talent, and help them reach their artistic potential. The study of another language encourages children to be part of a global community, while at the same time giving them a valuable resource.

The following special classes will be offered to Elementary students:

1. Music: The Elementary children are taught by a music specialist; they participate in many aspects of music appreciation from learning to read music to playing songs on the recorder. The children also take part in performance sessions to reinforce a natural love of rhythm.
2. Art: Process over product, the cultivation of art appreciation, and knowledge of art history are the elements of our art program.
3. Physical Education: The children participate in a variety of games and activities to help develop a variety of physical skills. Examples of the rotating physical education classes include: yoga, dancing, gymnastics, aerobics, soccer, basketball, volleyball, and field hockey.
5. Spanish: The program follows a Montessori curriculum and is staffed by a language specialist. The twice-weekly program focuses on oral comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and cultural appreciation.

C. TRANSITION

The Elementary environment has much that is familiar to children who have attended the Montessori Primary program. The child who has mastered the primary environment now begins again as the youngest, meeting new peers, and becoming familiar with new routines and expectations. While first-year students are excited about these challenges, there may also be an adjustment period. Feel free to discuss specific issues with your teacher. It is normal for your child to feel tired in the afternoon at first, but he or she should adjust quickly.

In the Upper Elementary class students are faced with new freedom and with a

corresponding increase in responsibility. The 9- to 12-year-old needs challenges as he or she develops new mental, emotional, and social skills. The mistakes and frustrations that come with new experiences are apt to be significant for some students, but they should be regarded as positive signs that growth is taking place. It is part of the “hidden curriculum” of the Montessori school that this growth occurs with the assistance of enlightened understanding adults and with the support of peers who have experienced it recently.

D. CLOTHING AND SUPPLIES

Your child should bring “indoor shoes” to class on the first day of Phase-in. Velcro sneakers are recommended, since they are needed for gym as well. These shoes remain at school in your child’s cubby. Open-toed sandals, jelly shoes, high-heeled or platform shoes, long skirts and long dresses are not permitted for safety reasons.

Please allow your child to choose comfortable play clothes for school. Sweatshirts and pants are very practical. T-shirts and sweatshirts with the WHMS logo are available in the school store. The purchase of clothes containing the school logo is entirely optional.

Each child in the Lower Elementary is required to carry an open top satchel or bag at least nine inches by twelve inches in dimension. **PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR LOWER ELEMENTARY CHILD TO SCHOOL WITH A BACKPACK.** The open top bags facilitate the delivery of written communications and your child’s work. The “Montessori bags” are available for purchase at the school. Students in the Upper Elementary and Middle School may bring backpacks.

Children may not bring distracting materials like huge loose-leaf binders, pens with multiple colors, or fashion pencils and erasers. Paper and pencils are supplied for all purposes.

E. GREAT BOOKS

The Junior Great Books program presents children’s literature from around the world assembled by the Great Books Foundation. The selections are read twice by the students in preparation for a discussion with peers led by an adult facilitator who asks interpretive questions. The students have the opportunity to respond, backing their opinions with evidence found in the story. This program strengthens literature appreciation and promotes critical thinking.

F. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The students are introduced to the skills of active listening and conflict resolution, as an important part of Montessori grace and courtesy lessons. Basic skills are demonstrated and examples practiced that give students appropriate choices in social situations that require: taking turns; reacting to problem situations; understanding another’s point of view; communicating that understanding clearly; stating one’s

feelings and needs; creating win-win solutions to conflicting needs; and acting as a third party mediator for others with conflicting needs.

G. UPPER ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASS TRIP

Although all the Elementary students attend many functions and events outside the school, the Upper Elementary and Middle School students plan and organize an extended field trip. Previous trips have included travel to New York City and Boston. Students and teachers choose the location, arrange the logistics, and with the help of parents engage in specific fundraising to offset the costs.

H. COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Elementary and Middle School plans community service projects throughout the year, which may include, for example, working with the elderly at the Eddy Adult Day Care Center, cleaning up litter around the school, and helping to organize clothing at ConcernsU. The Upper Elementary and Middle School children will also provide a service of their choice to the Primary children.

VIII. MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

A. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

Dr. Maria Montessori observed students of all ages and envisioned the ideal environments for each of the Four Planes of Human Development. Her vision of educational reform was to have educators objectively observe the natural needs of students and create an environment ideal for their development.

The Third Plane, from ages 12 to 18, was revealed as the age that children explore and discover their place in the adult world. It is an emotionally sensitive age, an age of uncertainty and a time to discover one's strengths and weaknesses. Dr. Montessori saw adolescence as typified by being in a "state of expectation" and having specific characteristics:

- Need to strengthen self-confidence
 - Sensitivity to rudeness and humiliation
 - Self-Consciousness
 - Self-Awareness
- Exploration of new roles and abilities as an adult
 - Desire to perform useful, productive, and creative work
 - Desire for adult activities
 - Desire for increased self-sufficiency
- Need for large muscle activity
- Self-exploration in conjunction with exploring society
- Exploration of personal ethics, of physical and mental ability, and usefulness to society

- Need for justice and personal dignity

B. MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The following curriculum areas will be a part of the WHMS middle school:

Social sciences, science, and geography: The child integrates history utilizing themes from earlier studies in natural and cultural history, including interdependency, evolution, life cycles, matter and energy, behavior and cultural mental health, physical health, agriculture, government, manufacturing, communication, world systems, earth preservation, and so on, in the context of social responsibility and governance. Primary readings from each historical period are emphasized. Special attention is given to American History during Middle School.

Language arts: The child develops confidence in self-expression utilizing the seminar, oral presentation, debates, drama, video, photography, essays, playwriting, poetry, and short stories; explores related accounts of historical and philosophical material through literature utilizing components of style, genre, characterization, and interpretation. Group discussions are important as a means for encouraging students to compare and contrast the thoughts expressed by others and to more critically examine their own thoughts.

Spanish language and grammar: A heavy emphasis is placed on conversational Spanish, grammar, and verb conjugation. Students learn about the cultures of Spanish-speaking countries. Examples of activities include the practical life experiences of cooking as well as listening to music and language tapes, and geography study.

Mathematics: The child uses higher-order thinking skills to solve problems in relation to a variety of challenges, from practical money transactions to algebraic relationships; explores in-depth numbers, properties, simple equations, higher measurement, computer calculation and graphics, geometric proofs, and algebraic equations.

Fine arts: The child utilizes a discipline-based arts education plan which presents individual artistic areas of painting, acting, singing, composing, photography, dance, and sculpture, and includes a general education for aesthetic literacy which integrates the arts with other academic endeavors.

Service Programs and Practical Life: Working in a soup kitchen, farming as a community venture, and apprenticeships or mentorship in the workplace are part of an advancing “going out” that gives the adolescent a combined vocational and liberal arts curriculum with a particular emphasis on economic enterprise. Students can also be involved with fundraising, organizing a trip, building shelves or materials for the school, or any number of activities to enrich the students’ educational journey.

C. UNIQUE ASPECTS OF MONTESSORI MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Multi-aged groupings: Students work together, role modeling, teaching, and learning from each other. Children can learn at their own pace, not necessarily according to age, but also to aptitude and motivation.
- Individual attention: Teacher-to-child ratio is conducive to individual attention.
- Education and enjoyment of the global community, peace education, and embracing diversity.
- Community service: Students have several projects in community service throughout the year, which may include food service to soup kitchens, reading to the vision-impaired, visiting and interacting with the elderly, and community beautification projects.
- Peer mediation: Students are trained to be mediators, to help others solve problems or conflicts in a peaceful and productive way.
- Real life experience: These may include gardening, cooking, and woodshop. Children are also taught financial skills such as running a store, balancing a checkbook, and balancing and tracking financial records.
- Integrated curriculum with large blocks of time for learning interdisciplinary topics.
- Extensive going-out experiences: Students will take part in the planning the trips and outside experiences. WHMS offers at least one extended trip per year. Past trips have included New York City, Boston, and the Adirondacks.

D. ASSESSMENT

Assessment is based on the three primary goals of all Montessori classroom work:

1. To help children learn to work independently and in a manner that contributes to the classroom community;
2. To help the students form a conceptual framework that will enable them to organize and analyze all their learning experiences; and
3. To stimulate the ability of students to think abstractly and critically about the world.

Assessment in the Montessori classroom is performance-based and takes many forms:

- Self-assessment: Children are continuously required to assess their own goals and their progress through individual conferencing between teacher and child. The self-correcting nature of most of the Montessori materials aids students in the process of self-assessment.
- Portfolios: Children collect selected work into portfolios and record lessons in journals. These are periodically reviewed by teacher, child and parents.
- Peer teaching: Children who have mastered a unit of study are continually encouraged to demonstrate that mastery as they teach what they have learned to other students or check the work of younger classmates.
- Peer review: At the end of units of study, children create many kinds of projects.

These are shared with the class and reviewed by peers.

- Teacher Assessment: The teacher observes student's progress and keeps daily anecdotal records. Records are kept of lessons given, practiced, and mastered. The teacher also records homework assignments and tests students on some material. Students are given a percentile score on their performance about every six weeks as per the calendar.
- Tests: WHMS students are given benchmark assessments in Reading/Language Arts and Math. Students also participate in all State Tests.
- Parent Conferences: Conferencing among teacher, child, and parents is an integral part of the assessment process.

Some of the WHMS curriculum and supporting philosophy documents were prepared using materials from the School of the Woods Middle School, Chiaravalle Montessori Middle School, and the Washington Montessori Middle School.

IX. AUXILIARY PROGRAMS

A. SCHOOLCARE

The purpose of the Schoolcare program is to provide safe and nurturing care for WHMS students before and after school while school is in session. In the Schoolcare program your child may participate in planned activities or use the unstructured time to play in a relaxed environment. Please provide extra fruit or another healthy snack. The WHMS Schoolcare program incorporates the Montessori philosophy into your child's after-school activities.

Admission

The Schoolcare program is open to all children enrolled in WHMS on a space available basis. The Schoolcare contract is now part of the general enrollment contract. Choices for number of days per week are listed, along with the current rates. If you sign up for Schoolcare, indicate the number of days your child will attend, with a minimum of three days per week. These days cannot be transferred or changed to other days of the week without permission from the Schoolcare Director. The schedule is filled on a first-come first-serve basis. If a particular day is full, you will be contacted to specify another day.

For safety reasons, emergency drop-in care is offered only when space is available. This emergency drop-in care is intended to provide help for parents who find themselves unexpectedly unable to pick up their children. Please call the school as soon as the need arises.

Children who have not been picked up by 3:00 p.m. will be placed in the Schoolcare program. The classroom teacher will report the child's placement in Schoolcare to the office. Drop-in care will be billed to you by the business office.

Schoolcare Pick-Up

Parents should use the main entrance to pick up their children. Parents are advised to read the notice on that door to determine the location of the children at the time of pick-up. (For details, see Dismissal, Section V.) All children in the Schoolcare program must be signed OUT by a parent or designated caregiver. Parents who pick up their children after 5:30 p.m. will be billed by the school at a rate of \$5.00 per quarter hour after 5:30.

B. EXTRA-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

Extra-curricular programs are offered on a space available basis to our student body. The classes are divided into Primary and Elementary/MS groups. These classes assist parents by providing for the pursuit of special interests by the children while eliminating the additional chauffeuring.

The special lessons vary depending upon interest and availability but may include:

art, dance, drama, gymnastics, tennis, science club, ski club, Spanish club, and music. A registration form will be sent home each semester for sign-up the following semester.

C. ENRICHMENT

The purpose of the Enrichment program is to provide quality child care for WHMS students on those days when classes are not in session. Each day's program is planned around a specific theme. Enrichment provides full child care on most school holidays if a minimum of four students register to participate. Payment must be made at the time of registration. Hours are from 8:00 to 5:30. Please refer to "School Policies" (Section V) for Arrival and Dismissal procedures. All students in the Enrichment program must be signed IN and OUT by a parent or designated caregiver.

X. SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

A. FIELD TRIPS AND SPECIAL GUESTS

Part of the educational focus at WHMS is to plan educationally sound, interesting field trips and to invite lecturers and performers to our school.

Special Guests

During the course of the year, WHMS teachers will schedule guest visits to help the children to learn more about themselves and their community. If you can participate or know of anyone who would be a good special guest (artist, computer expert, dentist, doctor, foreign visitor, horticulturist, musician, police officer, ornithologist, or anyone with an interesting profession or hobby to share), please let us know so that we can schedule a visit.

Field Trips

Field trips offer enrichment opportunities beyond the classroom setting. Some field trips include the entire school; others include only one class or age group. Field trips allow children to see, hear, and kinesthetically experience new learning. The trips usually relate to the topics being studied, but also may be scheduled to observe steps in a process (such as trips to a printing company or a recycling plant) or places and events that foster community awareness (such as a service organization or a hospital). We also attend musical events and visit museums of art, science, and history in the area.

Ample notice is given before field trips. Please fill out a permission slip for each trip. The blanket permission slip that each family returns with the enrollment package is used only after phone contact with a parent when the permission slip for the current trip has not been returned.

Parents on Field Trips

Although WHMS uses school buses for most field trips, parents sometimes are asked to drive some of the students and to act as chaperones during field trips. The following are some guidelines for parents' use in driving children on WHMS field trips:

1. **Qualifications:** All drivers must be a parent, grandparent, or designated caregiver of a child presently enrolled at WHMS. Drivers must hold a current valid driver's license with no moving violation points. Each vehicle must have an up-to-date inspection sticker that verifies that the state-mandated requirements for safety have been met.
2. **Pre-travel:** WHMS requires that all parents make a safety inspection of their vehicles prior to driving on any WHMS field trip. Each driver should have a first aid kit and reflectors in the car.
3. **Rules for Children:** Children must wear properly adjusted seatbelts. Children younger than four years of age and/or under 40 pounds must travel in a car seat. Children must remain in an assigned seat with a seatbelt on until the driver tells them they can remove the seatbelt. Children must maintain quiet voices when riding in the car. Car doors may only be opened and closed by the driver. Children 12 and under must ride in the back seat.
4. **Operation:** Drivers must obey all traffic regulations. Each driver will receive written directions to every field trip destination and a list of children being transported and/or chaperoned.
5. **Accident.** First check the children. If a child is injured, comfort the child but use discretion if injury to the back or neck is suspected or if bones could be broken. Stay with the injured child until the Head of School arrives, even if the parents arrive first. After police (and ambulance, if necessary) are called, please notify WHMS of the event and particulars, including the identification of any hospital destination. WHMS will notify the parents.

Parent who are accompanying students on field trips are chaperoning, or helping to supervise children on the trip. Parents are to serve as role models by keeping silent during performances and presentations, and by helping to monitor student behavior.

B. PARENTS AS GUESTS

WHMS welcomes parents with special skills and interests to share in the classroom. Parents and grandparents have visited the school to share cultural experiences, professional skills and information, objects of art, musical

abilities, etc. We appreciate this participation not only for its educational value, but also for the joy it brings the children when they see their parents actively involved in their educational process. Please discuss and schedule these events with your child's teacher.

C. BIRTHDAYS

1. The Birthday Walk

In the Primary, each child is honored in a special celebration called "The Birthday Walk," an international Montessori tradition. Parents share in this important occasion by helping their child select photographs from each year of her life and by helping her prepare a written history of milestones reached and fun times had during each year. Parents recite these milestones as they accompany their child on their walk around the "sun," once for each year celebrated. Following the birthday song, classmates are invited to give a special message to the birthday child. Parents should make every effort to participate in this beautiful ceremony with their child. In the Elementary, a slightly different birthday walk celebration is observed.

Parents may also bring in a special treat of food to share with the children and teachers in the class. Your child's teacher will discuss this with you before the event. Children with summer birthdays may select a date during the school year to celebrate their birthday.

2. Invitations and Presents

If you are planning a birthday party for your child, please do not send invitations to school unless all the children in the class are invited. If your child is attending a party after school, please do not send gifts to school with your child. We have found that these situations can be upsetting for those who are not invited.

3. Birthday Book

To enhance our libraries, we ask each family to give a library book to the school on their child's birthday. A book is truly a gift that keeps on giving. Your child feels a sense of pride to see her name inscribed in a book. Children are also interested in the books given by their friends. When considering a "birthday book," you can ask the teacher for a suggestion, or you can allow your child to choose a favorite book. The presentation of a birthday book can be an integral part of your child's birthday celebration.

D. PARENT-CHILD EVENTS

The Social Committee plans a number of events that permit you to share with your child aspects of their education—or just plain fun. Please check the calendar for upcoming events. The following are some examples from recent years:

1. Fall Family Day: This is a fun party that includes food and activities and a great way to meet new families at WHMS.
2. Grandparents and Special Friends Day: Your child is the teacher as she explains the work she does and teaches how to use those mysterious Montessori materials. Grandparents, special friends, and children also enjoy brunch together.
3. WHMS Talent Show and Science, Cultural or History Fairs: Each year there is a different Fair with a display demonstrating much hard work and learning. The WHMS Talent show is a chance for children to share their varied talents.
4. Holiday Celebrations, Music Concerts, and Moving Up Ceremonies: Your children entertain you at these special events.

E. SCHOOL SPIRIT FRIDAYS

Also known as Montessori Pride Days, Fridays are the days when all children are asked to wear school colors to show their school spirit. Montessori T-shirts and sweatshirts, available in the school store, are preferred.

F. PARENT EDUCATION MEETINGS

WHMS believes that parent education is an important component of a child's education. Accordingly, there will be several parent education breakfasts or evening meetings throughout the year conducted by WHMS teachers or other education professionals. The topics will be announced before each meeting, and the teachers will consider requests or suggestions from parents for specific topics. Generally, the teachers will speak about child development, Montessori materials and methodology, and the philosophy of their classrooms. These meetings include suggestions, discussion, and a hands-on introduction to the curriculum and materials. The more you understand your child's work, the more you can appreciate and enjoy her education and discoveries.

Twice per year, the school hosts The Voyage, a half day parent education event when the whole program is highlighted in a hands-on program with the teachers and other parents. See the school calendar for details.

G. CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

WHMS has an open-door policy. All parents are welcome to observe our classrooms at any time.

If you would like to observe a class, we ask that you simply sign in at the office and pick up a visitor's badge. In the Primary classrooms, our viewing windows facilitate the observation of your child in a natural manner. If you would like a formal in-class observation, we ask that you schedule an appointment in advance to minimize the disruption to the classroom and to make sure that the class will be in the room when you visit.

During a formal in-class observation, we request that you adhere to the following guidelines: sit quietly in the observation chairs indicated; try not to make your presence felt; do not initiate conversation; and do not handle the materials. We recommend these guidelines to minimize interference in the children's peaceful environment. Feel free to make notes of items you would like to discuss during your conference with the classroom teacher.

We encourage you to observe. Seeing the children at work is to experience the Montessori philosophy in action. To make your observation more meaningful: take a look around the room and notice the amount and diversity of activity; the range of ages; the types of materials; the individual and group activity; and the interaction of the children. Focus your attention on the teacher and notice the composure, the teacher as observer, and the respect the teacher shows each child. Focus your attention on your child and notice the succession of activities; the concentration on work; enthusiasm and self-satisfaction in each activity; and the child's respect for other children, the materials, and the teachers.

H. CLASS PHOTOS

Photographs of each student and class are taken in the fall of each year. Please consult the school calendar for the date. We suggest that your children dress for this occasion. All parents are asked to sign a release form that gives WHMS permission to publish photographs of their child in articles, ads, or the web page. The child's name will not be used.

I. YEARBOOKS

Yearbooks provide a record of your child's year at WHMS and will be cherished as a source of memories forever. Children love nothing more than to be reminded of what they did, who their friends were, and how they looked "when they were little." The yearbook is sold as a fundraiser. The proceeds from the yearbook are used to benefit WHMS.

XI. ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

A. COMMUNICATIONS

WHMS considers open communications with parents to be an essential part of our mission. Only through open communication and coordination of our efforts can we work together as partners in your child's education and development.

1. Messages and Phone Calls to WHMS

The best time to call the school is between 8:15 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. If you call the school at other times, please leave a message and someone will return your call. In the event of an emergency, keep calling until one of the staff answers. If you need special help after school hours, you may call the Head of School at home. (Head of School, Susan Kambrich: 439-7110 or email skambrich@woodlandhill.org)

All notes to administration or faculty are to be attached by safety pin or clothespin to the Montessori bag. Please label any envelopes with name and contents. Your child's teacher will remove all messages and send them to their proper destination. E-mailing can often be the most effective means of communicating with your child's teacher. Teacher e-mail addresses are the first letter and last name@woodlandhill.org.

2. Messages from WHMS

All school notices will be sent to you in your child's Montessori bag. PLEASE CHECK THIS BAG DAILY. Messages will also be sent through the main office via e-mail. If you change e-mail address, kindly let the office know.

3. Newsletters

The Montessori Messenger is our primary means of formal communication with you. It is usually published twice per month during the school year. Please read it for news, important information, reminders, and calendar changes or additions. You may also contribute to the Messenger; please send articles to the office by Wednesday of each week.

A class newsletter is sent home every other week with the students. It is written by your child's teacher to keep you apprised of classroom work and activities, field trips, and special notices.

The WHMS Times is our student newsletter that also is a great way to learn more about school events.

4. WHMS Web Site

The school's web site is www.woodlandhill.org. The site is full of comprehensive information about the school, our philosophy, and curriculum. It also holds current information and announcements. You may also email us from the site or at skambrich@woodlandhill.org. On the website is a school calendar that you can access for the latest information.

5. Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences will be held twice each year in the fall and spring. The conference dates are set forth on the school calendar. Please schedule an appointment by calling or stopping by the office, preferably two weeks prior to conferences.

Conferences help teachers and parents to understand better the progress of each child and the class as a whole. You will have an opportunity to review your child's progress report and to discuss any questions with the teacher. WHMS believes that conferences provide vital information and feedback.

If desired, your teacher will meet with you at any mutually agreed upon time.

For an immediate concern, you may ask to meet after school, after all the children in the class have been released. Also, teachers are willing to hold telephone conferences as the need arises. For less urgent concerns, please ask the teacher in advance for an appointment.

5. Changes in the Home

Changes in the home can have a profound impact on your child's attitude, behavior, and performance at school. Please inform your child's teacher of major changes that might affect your child. Any unusual event or change in behavior at school will be reported to you by the teacher.

6. Suggestion Box

Parents are encouraged to communicate joys or concerns by placing messages in this box. Parents may also ask staff members who supervise arrival and dismissal to place their notes in this basket. You are also encouraged to e-mail, visit or call Susan Kambrich with any suggestions.

B. CHILD RECORDS POLICY

All persons having access to children's records may not discuss or disclose personal information regarding the children or their families. In the presence of school officials, children's records are available to parents and to persons authorized by parents in writing. Your child's entire school record is available to you for review and comment. Please make your request in writing to the Head of School. You may use the Head of School's office or the main office to examine your child's file. These files must remain in the school.

C. FINANCIAL MATTERS

For account information, contact our WHMS Business Manager. If you have any questions or problems regarding the payment of tuition, please inform us promptly.

WHMS is dependent on tuition income for its operating capital. Timely tuition payments ensure the school's ability to meet expenses. The enrollment deposit is nonrefundable, and should be received by the date specified in the enrollment contract.

The full year's tuition is due on June 1, but for your convenience, this amount can be divided evenly into 10 monthly payments or two semi-annual payments. SMART tuition handles all installment tuition payments and there is a \$38 fee.

The first payment is due on June 1st; the last payment is due on December 1st.

- Monthly tuition payments are due on the first day of the month.
- A late fee will be assessed if payment is not received by the 10th day of the month.

You will receive reminders by mail and phone if your payment is late. If a payment is not received within 60 days you may be asked to withdraw your child from the school until all outstanding payments are made. WHMS reserves the right to refuse admittance to class, and to withhold release of transcripts for any student whose financial account is not paid by the dates specified. Delinquent accounts may also be turned over to a collections agency.

No refund or cancellation of tuition will be made by WHMS for any absence (including medical), withdrawal, or dismissal, and you are obligated to pay the full remaining yearly tuition, as specified in the enrollment contract. For this reason, we recommend your voluntary participation in the Tuition Refund Plan. Contact the business office for details.

D. WITHDRAWAL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. When a child's enrollment is terminated by the family after June 1st, the full remaining tuition is due as specified in the enrollment contract. Tuition insurance is available. Call the business office for details.
2. WHMS reserves the right to dismiss any student if the student is not suited to the program of the school or for lack of payment of specified charges.

E. DISCIPLINE

WHMS Ground Rules

We treat ourselves, each other, and the environment
with care and respect.

We maintain a quiet, calm atmosphere at our school.

We resolve our problems through talking, listening, and understanding.

1. Positive Approaches to Behavior Management in the Primary

The development of inner discipline in a child is always the goal at WHMS. Self-discipline is fostered in many ways. The classroom environment is organized in an orderly and logical manner. Children choose work that they are capable of doing and are free to use it as long as they wish without interference from others. This approach alleviates many problems of discipline that might arise in another kind of environment. In addition, the mixed-age group gives the younger children an opportunity to emulate the more mature behavior of the older children.

Children are encouraged to handle their disagreements by talking to each other first and by attempting to resolve conflicts independently before seeking help from an adult. Skills needed for conflict resolution and problem solving are learned as an important part of the Montessori lessons presented and practiced in the classroom.

A child who has misbehaved is requested to work for a time near the teacher. Teachers gently redirect the child toward work that will engage his interest. The child might be assigned temporarily to a seat or specific area. When necessary, careful physical restraint (bear hug) is permitted when child appears out of control.

Parents are contacted in the case of a repeated misbehavior or a single serious incident.

2. Freedom and Responsibility: Approaches to Discipline in Elementary and Middle School

Disciplinary measures taken in the Elementary classroom are in accordance with the general principle of limiting the freedom of a child whose behavior shows that he is not yet ready to cope with that freedom.

Day-to-day rules are needed in any community to set identifiable standards and to provide consistency so that the community's members are treated fairly. Our aim in personal discipline, as in academic discipline, is to help our

students understand that their choices in behavior have consequences for which they will be held responsible. Therefore, school discipline issues are generally handled by the child, his peers, and the classroom teacher.

Each student at WHMS is expected to act honestly and courteously, to show respect for the rights, feelings, and opinions of others, and to conduct himself in an appropriate manner. Our students are expected to display the good judgment, behavior, and attitude that is the cornerstone of constructive relationships.

All students are expected to behave in age-appropriate ways. All students must be sensitive to the presence and needs of different age groups. If appropriate behaviors cannot be settled within the classroom, then parents will be called for a conference.

The following behaviors are considered to be serious and not within the usual parameters of classroom behavior: abusing, harassing, deliberately intimidating or physically harming another person or displaying any form of racial, ethnic, sexual, or religious prejudice; lying; disrespectful behavior towards others; stealing; or vandalizing.

Students committing the above behaviors will be addressed by the child's teacher, parents, and Head of School at a parent conference. Several courses of action will be discussed, which may include: counseling, recording the incident in the student's file, student probation, suspension, or expulsion for serious offenses.

XI. WHMS COMMITTEES

Woodland Hill relies on the volunteer efforts of our community for a variety of duties, including fundraising, community building and fulfillment of our mission.

A. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President Michael Endler mendler@woodlandhill.org
Vice President Robert Kivort
Treasurer Kathy Higle
Secretary Fred Galt
Immediate Past President Bernie Hillengas
Sarah Crowell
Sherrie Clune
Cristin Palacios
Michele Richens
Kenneth Ringler, Jr.
Robert Stulmaker
Jeffrey Wetherbee
Marie Stark
S. David Devaprasad
Kim Kronau

1. Charge or Mission Statement

The Board of Trustees is charged with the ultimate responsibility for financial, legal and strategic planning and policy issues. The WHMS Board sets policy to be implemented by the administration and staff. Furthermore, the Board ensures the integrity of Montessori philosophy within the school.

2. Membership

The WHMS Board consists of seven elected WHMS members (parents with children in the school), the immediate past president, one teacher representative selected by the faculty, and six additional persons appointed by the elected trustees. At least three of the appointed trustees shall be chosen from the community at large (not parent members). The seven elected member trustees serve three-year terms; all other trustees serve one-year terms. Board terms are staggered and elections are held every year at the annual meeting in December.

The Board of Trustees is always seeking new membership. Board trustees are expected to attend and participate in all meetings, attend school

functions, serve on committees, and to participate in the fundraising efforts of the school. Please contact Bernie Hillengas, Chair of the Committee on Trustees, at bernie@woodlandhill.org if you are interested in serving.

3. Regular Meeting Times

The WHMS Board six meetings per year, usually on the third Monday of the month at 7 pm All regular meetings of the Board are open to members, with the exception of executive sessions for confidential matters. Please consult the calendar on the www.woodlandhill.org site for exact times and dates.

4. Agenda/Meeting Summary/Meeting Minutes

Collected Minutes are on file in the WHMS office for access by any member of the school.

B. FRIENDS OF WHMS

President Jennifer Krygowski jkrygowski@woodlandhill.org
439-1959

1. Charge or Mission Statement

Friends of WHMS is a separately incorporated parent association of WHMS. Friends members focus on fundraising, social, and community-building activities.

The purposes of the Friends are as follows:

- To raise money for the support and benefit of WHMS
- To nurture the spirit of community among the parents, faculty, staff, and alumni of WHMS and to promote social interaction among WHMS, its families, its neighbors, and the community at large
- To sponsor events and activities that complement the program at WHMS.

Through the Friends of WHMS, parents are given the opportunity to help the WHMS community through planning special events and fundraising for the school. .

2. Parent Liaisons

Every Montessori class has two parents who help facilitate communication among the members of their child's class and with the school as a whole. The parent liaisons also attend the monthly meeting of the Friends of WHMS, our

parents' organization. Friends help plan events and enlist support for fundraising and social activities.

3. Parent Mentors

Every new Montessori parent gets a returning parent as a “buddy.” This more experienced Montessori mom or dad is available to answer all your questions. Parent mentors make you feel welcome at our school. Give them a call. Parent mentors will answer your questions and help you feel welcome as a member of our WHMS community.

* Please let your child's teacher know if you would like to be a parent liaison or a parent mentor next year.

4. Activities

Activities include: Fall Family Fun Day, Parent Education breakfast, Car wash fundraiser, the Holiday Celebration, and many more.

5. Membership

All parents and guardians of children at WHMS, and all WHMS faculty and staff are members of Friends. All are welcome to attend!

6. Regular Meeting Times

Friends of WHMS meets once a month prior to the regular meeting of the WHMS Board of Trustees, usually the 3rd Monday of the month. Parent liaisons, chosen from each class, are expected to attend the monthly meetings. Friends Meetings are open to all parents and guardians. Please come to a meeting to see how you can get involved!

7. Agenda/Meeting Summary/Meeting Minutes

The agenda is presented at the meeting and minutes will be posted on the community bulletin board in the school's foyer. Summaries of meetings and periodic Friends notices will also be published in the Messenger.

C. BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE

Chair Cristin Palacios

Cristin_palacios@yahoo.com

755-9061

1. Charge or Mission Statement

The Committee is charged with the stewardship of, and planning for, all aspects of the buildings and grounds of the Woodland Hill Montessori School. The Committee is also responsible for organizing volunteer efforts for general school and maintenance (inside and out).

2. Recent Activities and Planned Activities

Recent activities include: brainstorming areas to be addressed by a Master Plan, coordinating the Spring Work Day in May.

Planned activities include: coordinating the Fall Work Day, coordinating the development of individual classroom gardens, and pursuing a facilitator for developing a comprehensive Master Plan.

3. Membership

Committee membership is open to all interested parties, including individuals with specific skills in architecture/space design, landscape/gardening, construction/carpentry, and navigating local zoning/planning boards.

4. Regular Meeting Times

Meetings are generally held on the last Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm at the school. Meetings are posted on the school calendar.

5. Agenda/Meeting Summary/Meeting Minutes

The agenda is developed prior to the meeting and circulated via e-mail. Following each meeting, a summary of the proceedings is written up and circulated via e-mail and posted on the bulletin board in the main lobby. Copies of both are also available at each meeting.

D. DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Chair Sarah Crowell scrowell@gmail.com

1. Duties and Responsibilities

The Development Committee works on various aspects of fundraising at WHMS to benefit the overall financial health and longevity of the school, and to promote the mission of WHMS.

2. Membership

Committee membership is open to interested individuals who can further the mission of the committee. Skills needed include: fundraising, community

development, computer skills, organizational skills, financial planning. Special events and ad hoc subcommittees are also formed as needed and volunteers are encouraged to get involved.

3. Regular Meeting Times

Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at 9:00 am. The meetings are posted on the school calendar.

F. DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Chair Cristin Palacios

1. Purpose

The Woodland Hill Montessori School Diversity Committee is an inclusive working group of parents, teachers, staff, and students, who are committed to increasing the awareness of diversity issues within the school community. Through an active admissions recruitment and administrative hiring process we are growing a diverse school community that recognizes and respects differences across race, ethnicity, religions, socio-economic class, physical ability, sex, sexual orientation, and gender expression. In concordance with the philosophies of Maria Montessori, who believed education should assist children in being socially responsible citizens of the world, the Diversity Committee values a multicultural and anti-bias focused curriculum. We seek to provide a safe, open environment where children are exposed to non-sexist, multicultural learning experiences and are able to explore bias issues in an age-appropriate way as part of their daily routine. The Diversity Committee's purpose is to increase awareness and appreciation of benefits of diversity for all of our children and the entire school community.

3. Membership

Membership is open. All are encouraged to attend!

4. Meeting Times

Meetings are monthly, and posted on the school calendar.

5. Agenda and Minutes

Agenda and Minutes will be posted by co-chairs on the Community bulletin board.

G. FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chair

Kathy Higle

1. Purpose

The Finance Committee, made up of the Head of School, Board Treasurer and Business Manager, as well as other members of the school, approves and plans for the yearly budget, monitor and modify as necessary. It also recommends to the Board changes in tuition fees and personnel policies with financial implications. The Finance Committee reports to the Board.

2. Membership

The membership of the finance committee includes administration, Board and community members. Membership is limited, but please contact Sue Evans, Susan Kambrich, or Kathy Higle if you are interested in joining the committee.

3. Meeting Times

Meetings are usually held on the second Thursday of the month. Meetings are posted on the school calendar.

4. Agenda and Minutes

Agenda and Minutes will be posted by co-chairs on the Community bulletin board.

APPENDIX A

FACULTY

Primary Teachers

(Head Teachers & Assistant Teachers)

Emmy Cole & Diane Lanci
Liz Cahrenger & Kristen McDermott
Nancy Hillengas & Marion Newton
Cassandra Hall & Lourdes Ortega
Julia Hughes & TBA

Elementary & Middle School Teachers

Julie Adams & Astra Rodrigo
Sandy Blakeman & Olga Febus
Andrew McClain
Sherrie Clune
Cindy Bishop & Michele Praileau
Maryann Montgomery & Valerie Ang
Cora Hamm & Leah Blind

Specials Teachers

Nieves Gonzalez - *Spanish*
Dan Sedia - *Music*
Christina Pickreign- *Elementary Music*
Wanda Drazan - *Physical Education*
Janis Rink - *Art*
Maggie Schmonsky- *Reading*

ADMINISTRATION

Susan Kambrich
Head of School

Kris Gernert-Dott
Director of Admissions and Community Outreach

Susan Evans
Business Manager

Moira Rienzo
Director of Development and Communications

6/2/2009

Catherine Sager
Office Coordinator

Sue LaVigne
Business Assistant

Meg Parascandola
Director of After School Programs

James Christensen
Network Administrator

All staff e-mail is the first letter of the first name plus last name @woodlandhill.org

Please see the WHMS website for bios and
pictures of our faculty and staff
www.woodlandhill.org

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APPENDIX B

WHMS Board of Trustees

Michael Endler *President*
Robert Kivort, *Vice President*
Susan Evans, *Treasurer*
Fred Galt, *Secretary*
Bernie Hillengas *Immediate Past President*
Michele Richens
Sherrie Clune
Cristin Palacios
Sarah Crowell
Kathleen Higle
Kenneth Ringler, Jr.
Jeffrey Wetherbee
Robert Stulmaker
Marie Stark
Kim Kronau
S. David Devaprasad

Friends of WHMS

Jennifer Krygowski, *President*
Linda Fennell, *Vice President*
Mary Houghton, *Treasurer*
Natasha Bang, *Secretary*
Diane Lanci, *Pizza Lunch Coordinator*

Committees

Development Committee

Chair: Michael Endler mendler@woodlandhill.org

Diversity Committee

Chair: Cristin Palacios Cristin_palacios@yahoo.com

Finance Committee

Chair: Kathy Higle Viking@capital.net

Building and Grounds

Chair: robert@kivortsteel.com

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APPENDIX C

PROGRAM AND ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

Programs

1. Primary: ages 3 through 6
2. Lower Elementary: ages 6 through 9
3. Upper Elementary: ages 9 through 12
4. Middle School: ages 12 through 15

Schoolcare: (a) 7:30 - 8:20 am and 2:50 - 5:30 pm, or
(b) Early Care, 7:30 - 8:20 am only

Matriculation Fee: For the first school year in which a family has a child enrolled at WHMS, a one-time, non-refundable \$500.00 matriculation fee is due when the Enrollment Contract is signed and returned to WHMS.

Enrollment Deposit: A non-refundable \$500.00 per child enrollment deposit is due when the Enrollment Agreement is signed. This deposit will be credited towards the 2007-2008 annual tuition.

<u>Tuition:</u>	Primary:	\$ 8900
	Elementary:	\$ 9250 Upper El trip fee \$300
	Middle School	\$ 9250 M.S. trip fee \$500
	Schoolcare: 5 days per week:	\$ 2350
	4 days per week:	\$ 2200
	3 days per week:	\$ 1950
	Early Care only:	\$ 1600

Families with more than one child enrolled at WHMS will receive a ten percent (10%) reduction in tuition for the second child, a twenty percent (20%) reduction for the third child and a 30% reduction for any additional children enrolled at WHMS. This reduction will apply to the lowest annual tuition amounts and applies to primary and elementary tuition only, not School-care fees or any other fees or charges.

Payment Options

To allow flexibility in the payment of tuition, WHMS offers the following payment options:

Annual Payment: Due on June 1.

Semi-annual Payment: First half due June 1, second half due December 1.

Monthly Payments: Ten equal payments, due on the first of every month, beginning in June, and

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continuing until March. WHMS uses a tuition service called SMART, which charges a yearly \$35 fee. Payments received after the tenth day of each month will be subject to a late fee of \$25.

Tuition Refund Plan: A tuition refund plan is available. The cost is 3% of tuition per student per year payable with the June 1 tuition payment. **WHMS strongly recommends this plan: no refunds will be granted after June 1 for any reason, and any outstanding tuition will be due in full.**