

BRONXVILLE MONTESSORI PARENT HANDBOOK

WE ARE A NUT FREE SCHOOL

NUT FREE POLICY STATEMENT

I am asking all parents to cooperate in keeping our school a **nut free environment**.

More and more children have been diagnosed with serious food allergies. Most are allergic to peanuts and tree nuts. We require that all lunches, donated snacks, birthday treats, etc. have their ingredients carefully checked to ascertain that they do not contain nuts, nut oil, or almond extract. Packaged food should also be checked to ensure that it says that “this product is certified to have been produced in a nut free environment.” All treats must be brought in with the original packaging containing the production information and ingredients.

The cross contamination that occurs in food from bakeries and ice cream parlors is the number one cause of food related allergic reactions. Cross contamination is when a peanut or nut contaminated spatula, knife, hand, pan, pot, etc. is used in the preparation of a non-peanut dish. This type of contamination can happen at home as well as in bakeries and ice cream parlors. **Bakery items and ice cream parlor ice cream must be excluded from the school.** All necessary precautions should be taken from home cooked/baked items.

We realize this prohibition may prove inconvenient – but the consequences are potentially lethal and can be avoided. We need everyone’s help to keep our food allergic kids safe and healthy. The school will allow birthday celebrations but parents must clear any celebration foods with his/her child’s head teacher in advance of any party.

Goodie bags are not necessary – but if you wish to distribute them please confine the “goodies” to non-food items (i.e. yo-yos, bubbles, games, jewelry, cards, jump ropes, etc.)

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in maintaining the safety and health of all of our students.

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*Under New York State Law we are mandated reporters of any
suspected child abuse or neglect*

Dear Parent:

Welcome to the Bronxville Montessori School! Thank you for selecting us to be a part of your child's early education. As you probably know, Montessori is a philosophical/educational approach which is designed to encourage children's individual abilities, talents and love of learning. Children learn at their own pace, exploring the world and expanding their horizons. We design environments which break learning into small, easily digestible pieces so that each of our students can feel successful and grow in self-confidence. The Montessori system, which you have chosen, maximizes learning for each child. Our children tend to be curious, self-assured, and although courteous, they can be persistent when they want an answer.

I hope you find this booklet to be a useful introduction to our school. If you have any questions that remain after reading it, please call or drop in the school office for clarification.

*Jean Nelson
Founder/Headmistress*

I. MISSION STATEMENT: The Bronxville Montessori School was established to be a developmentally appropriate oasis of learning for young children. We provide a stimulating, well-designed, multicultural setting which helps each child mature into a well-balanced, independent student. We expect each child to move into 1st grade with self-control, a respect for all living things and the self-confidence to succeed. We will nurture each child's curiosity, and uniqueness and do everything we can to maximize each students' abilities and talents. Each student leaves us with the ability to make good choices and a strong sense of self-worth. Parents are our partners on this challenging but rewarding quest and are essential in achieving these goals.

II. BRONXVILLE MONTESSORI HISTORY

The Bronxville Montessori School has been in operation since September, 1976. It was founded and administered by Jean Nelson, who is still the directress. Ms. Nelson has been a Montessori teacher since 1968 and holds an advanced degree in special education.

The school is affiliated with the American Montessori Society and is a non-for-profit corporation chartered by the New York State Board of Regents. Additionally, the Bronxville Montessori School is licensed as a day care center under the New York State Office of Children and Families.

The school began as one class and grew to six. Since the beginning, we have been housed in the West Center Church. Several staff members have been with the school since its inception and have contributed to the school's consistency and excellence.

In September 1979, at the request of parents, a toddler program was begun which was designed to serve the needs of the children between the ages of 18 to 36 months. It continues to be one of our most popular programs.

III. MONTESSORI HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

Maria Montessori (1870-1952) was the first woman doctor in Italy. She graduated from the University of Rome medical school in 1898. While working with supposedly uneducable children, she developed teaching materials which she then adapted for normal 3 to 5 year olds. Dr. Montessori devised a method to break learning into small, easily digestible activities. She believed that children should be free to discover things for themselves through individually chosen activities. This system insures a child's interest and helps to maintain a child's natural curiosity. Early success fosters a positive self-image as well as a lifelong love of learning. Although the world has changed dramatically since 1906 when Dr. Montessori opened her first school, child development has not. Each of us must master walking, talking, cooperation, and the use of tools. We must also develop self-control and self-confidence before we can participate in and enjoy the complex world around us. Maria Montessori's materials and philosophy equip each child to do so.

Although Dr. Montessori died in 1952, her materials and methods live on. In each of our Montessori classrooms today, a teacher has designed a room to insure the maximum comfort and stimulation for each child. Each student is given the individual nurturing needed to produce independence, self-discipline and self-confidence.

IV. GENERAL INFORMATION

There are variations from program to program but several procedures apply to every student in our school. This section deals with areas of commonality.

A) Health New York State law requires a physician signed health form which includes a history of immunizations and allergies. **No child can be admitted to the school without this medical form.** Please keep your child at home if there is any sign of the following conditions: cough, rash, fever, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting, and discharge of heavy, discolored, or profuse amounts of mucus from the nose or eyes. Your child should remain at home for at least 24 hours beyond these symptoms to insure their total recovery.

The school will call you or your emergency contact if these symptoms appear after admission into school. The staff will refuse admittance to any child whom they determine is ill upon arrival.

If and when your child stays out more than two days, it is to the best interest of the child to see his/her pediatrician. Please ask the doctor for a note stating your child is able to return to school and on what day. Generally speaking, our request is in line with most schools.

If your child is absent due to sickness or any other seen or unforeseen situations, make up days are not allowed.

B) Medication We are authorized to use epi-pens for our students whose doctors prescribe them for severe allergic reactions. We will not dispense any other medications.

C) Curbside Arrival & Dismissal Since we do not have a parking lot we have designed a staggered arrival and dismissal system for the safety and convenience of our students and their caretakers.

From 8AM until 4PM there is no parking or standing in front of the school. If you wish to enter the building or wait for someone who went into the building, **please park elsewhere legally or pull up the hill (above the church driveway where there is a 15 minute parking limit.)**

When a car parks or stands “for just a minute” it disrupts the safe flow of traffic.

Curbside Safety Rules

- 1. Arrive at your child’s designated 10 minute time period.**
- 2. Stay in line.**
- 3. Stay in your car.**
- 4. Wait for a teacher to help your child out of/into your car.**
- 5. The driver must buckle the student’s seat belt.**

Please **never** call to your child, leave your car, cut the line or double park.

D) Parent/Teacher Partnership Two conferences a year are scheduled for each child. Please do not bring your child to the conferences, so that teachers and parents can speak freely. Of course, if a parent wants to speak to a teacher at any time s/he can call the school office for an appointment. Teachers will not hold impromptu conferences at arrival or dismissal. They are dangerous to the children, lack the proper confidentiality and are dissatisfying to all concerned. Please inform the school, by phone or note, as soon as possible if any change occurs at home that might affect your child's behavior, i.e., a new pet, moving, parents away from the home, accidents, any death, divorce or disease, etc.) We will provide extra tender, loving care to help your child through these stressful situations.

E) Early Morning Drop-Off This is available from 7:00AM each school morning. A teacher is available to welcome and supervise your child. Payment is on an "as you use it" basis. Please make sure you hand your child directly to the teacher in charge, if you use this service, so we know s/he is on site.

F) Aftercare This is available until 6PM each school day. You will be billed on a weekly basis for this service. A fee of \$5 a minute is applied after 6PM.

G) Parent Participation We encourage parents to observe and participate in the life of the school (after your child has settled in and bonded with the teachers.) This generally takes six to eight weeks. After this "normalization" occurs you are welcome to visit so that your child can share his class with you.

H) Intake/Orientation Interview Every student must have an intake interview before beginning in our school. During this interview the child meets his teachers, is shown around the class and orients to the school in general (location of the bathrooms, gymnasium, etc.) Mom, dad or guardian talks to the teacher about the child's interests, likes, allergies and also discusses how to separate with the minimum of upset. All required forms are filled out at this time.

Please note: If any changes occur during the school year (address, phone numbers, designated people to pick-up) it is imperative that you promptly change your child's records.

I) Phase-in Our 3-5 classes have a phase-in procedure designed to smooth transitions into our school. **See pages 18-19.**

J) Calendar We follow a school, not a corporate, calendar. Each of you will receive our annual calendar which includes the dates of parent nights, school holidays, conference dates, etc. Please post it and refer to it regularly. We also e-mail monthly calendars and information about specific events.

K) Classroom Set-up Each classroom is divided into learning centers and has an arrangement of child size tables and chairs as well as a carpeted floor space that serve as work areas for the children. Each room has a language area (as well as a book corner) which encourages pre-reading and pre-writing skills. Our math area helps develop basic concepts (larger, smaller, heavier, lighter, longer, shorter, more, less, etc.) as well as an introduction to numerals and their operations. Our sensorial areas help to define and refine our children's senses. Since this is how we learn and retain information the better the sensorial

training the better a child's retention of information. Our practical life area helps children to learn to focus and concentrate as well assisting them in learning to care for themselves (buttoning, handwashing, pouring, etc.) and the world around them (sweeping, mopping, watering plants, etc.) Our art area, science area and geography areas expand your child's creativity and help maintain her/his curiosity of the natural world in which s/he lives.

L) Typical Day A copy of each classroom's typical daily routine is handed out to any parent at the time of their tour or any time thereafter.

M) Ground Rules of a Montessori Classroom Although each classroom is unique in design, we all share the same basic rules or "ground rules." (These rules are taught to each student from day one.)

1. We walk in the school
2. We use soft voices
3. Only good touching (with words too)
4. You may choose one thing to work with; put it back when you are finished
5. You may work alone or with a friend; but only if the friend agrees

N) Birthday Celebrations Children will be recognized on their birthday. If you wish to celebrate with an "in-school" party please speak to your child's teacher to schedule it. Since we are a nut free school we ask parents to clear in advance any celebration foods with your child's head teacher.

O) Late Birthdate Children Late birthdate children are those with September until December birthdays. These students are most at risk for school difficulties and failure. Many parents elect to retain these students in our toddler program (rather than move them to our 3-6 group) or hold them for an “extra” year of kindergarten. Teachers and parents examine closely each student’s developmental level and arrive at an individual decision with the best interest of the child uppermost.

P) Payment Program There are several options for paying your child’s tuition. You can elect either a four payment or extended payment schedule (which has a service fee.) You will be issued a contract with your selected payment plan.

Q) Emergency School Closings Although we have a school calendar which specifies our days of operation; sometimes weather or emergency (i.e. broken boiler, etc.) necessitates closing the school. You will be notified by our IRIS Alert System by phone and/or email if we have such a closing. In case of an emergency, our evacuation plan is as follows:

SITE 1: West Center Church

SITE 2: DiChiara School on Chatfield Road (914-376-8565)

Coordinator will take:

***Emergency Red Cross Kit**

***Emergency Form Book**

***Emergency Card File**

Teachers will take:

***Emergency Bag**

***Attendance Sheets**

-All parents will be contacted via the IRIS Alert System,

-The Coordinator will change the message on the school answering machine with instructions for the parents.

R) Transportation Transportation is the responsibility of the parents. If you are interested in car pools, the school office will do its best to put you in touch with other parents who live nearby.

S) Arrival Parents are responsible for transporting their child to (and from) school. We will accept your child from anyone who brings him. Please hand your child **directly** to a teacher either at curbside, early morning drop-off or at the classroom door (for latecomers.) No child should ever be permitted to enter the building alone!

T) Dismissal For your child's protection we only release him to you – or to those for whom we have your written authorization. **If you are ever to be late for pick-up please call the school office so that we can alert and prepare your child.** Often young children become very frightened and upset if they think they are forgotten. It is easier to prevent panic than to end it once it begins – so let us know. If repeated lateness for pick-up occurs parents will be charged a fine.

U) Clothes Please dress your child in comfortable, easy to handle, washable (for your sake) clothing. Paints, glue and magic markers are available to your child and do sometimes stain, so please no family heirlooms! Sneakers or safe rubber-soled shoes are a must since a portion of each day is spent in our outside play area or gymnasium. **Please label all outer garments** with your child's name.

V) Lunch Please remember we are a nut free school. Those children who eat lunch in school bring their own lunches from home. Please pack a healthy

lunch in a lunch box with your child's name on it. We are required by law to refrigerate all lunches. We will heat up foods in a microwave if you request it. We return any significant amount of uneaten food to you so that you can monitor your child's daily intake. **We will not fight about or force children to eat in any special order so please pack with this in mind.** Each child will have at least half an hour to consume his/her meal.

W) Napping and Sleeping Arrangements Our all-day students are given a rest time directly after lunch each day beginning at 12:30PM. We ask parents to provide a labeled blanket from home, for comfort, which will remain at the school. All napping toddlers will have the opportunity to nap on mats in their classroom and will be supervised by their teacher. Preschoolers can nap on a cot in the gym supervised by the assigned assistant teachers. Children unable to rest must be offered a supervised space for quiet play preferably in their respective classroom(s).

X) Foreign Objects If you should find an unfamiliar object in your child's pocket, please return it to school. It could very well be an expensive part of school equipment, although it may look insignificant. Please bring back any such UFO's (unidentified foreign objects) to us.

Y) Visitors All visitors are required to sign in at the office. This includes all SEIT, O.T., P.T and speech therapists, as well as deliverymen, workmen and classroom observers.

Z) Discipline Policy All children are to be treated with kindness and respect at all times even when they lose self-control. At all times we remember that we are role models for appropriate behaviors and courtesy.

When it is necessary to discipline a child, corporal punishment is never to be used nor any behavior which demeans or humiliates any student. Individual reminders are to be used when a child breaks a rule (i.e. “we walk in the classroom,” “we use soft voices,” etc.) If a child hurts someone s/he is to undo the hurt as much as possible. (i.e. Apply a cold compress as well as say “I’m sorry.”) The injured child is to decide when the other child can rejoin the group. If a child needs to be removed from a class because s/he is too disruptive s/he must be accompanied and supported by an adult.

A1) Student Directory Each year you will receive a list of names, addresses, phone numbers and emails of all the students in our school. We do this so you can arrange play dates, car pools, etc.

V. PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

We have both half day and full day educational programs available for our students. Our toddler program is for children 18-36 months old. Our older classes are designed to meet the needs of our 3, 4, and 5 year old students (some of whom turn 6 during the school year.)

Our school program begins in Mid-September and ends in early June. After a week's closure (used to re-design classrooms and interview new children) we begin our Summer program. Specific details and prices are available on our website www.BronxvilleMontessori.com or through the school office.

There is an early morning drop-off program (as early as 7AM) and an after-care program (which ends promptly at 6PM). We ask all parents to arrive no later than 6PM.

After Care – Our after-care program is available from 4PM– 6PM to any child (Monday to Friday). Children will be supervised in room 214 by our qualified staff and provided a variety of activities with opportunities for learning and self-expression in small and large groups. Our organized activities vary daily. These include arts and crafts, science and nature, cooking, board games and various STEM related manipulatives. Snack is offered from 5PM–5:15PM and indoor/outdoor play from 5:15PM until dismissal. (**Note: Dismissal time is staggered based on individual pick up but is never later than 6PM. Parents whose child is not picked up by 6PM will accrue a fee of \$5 per minute.**)

Enrichment Programs – Additionally, daily enrichment programs (**specials**) are available from 4PM–4:45PM for students whose desire is to further enhance their gross motor development/skills in chosen areas of interest and/or become familiar with another language. Each program is supervised by skilled and qualified instructors. Program enrollment forms with applicable fees per session are available with a brief summary of each instructor’s qualifications. Programs offered and day of week are: Preschool Soccer (Monday), Tumblers (Tuesday), Spanish and Toddler Soccer (Wednesday), Karate (Thursday) and Sports and Games (Friday). All activities will be conducted in the gym except Spanish which will be instructed in the AM/PM classroom, room 211.

VI. TODDLER PROGRAM

By now you have selected a program for your child and have completed your intake/orientation interview and you have discussed with the toddler staff your preferred method of separation.

This section is to reiterate our toddler curriculum goals and focus. Please note that the toddler classes are officially in session from mid- September until early June. The three areas of focus which have evolved over the years are language development, social skill acquisition and large muscle mastery. These are the developmental needs of toddlers.

Toddlers generally delight in communicating. We use every available tool (songs, books, finger plays, games, records, etc.) to move them from body language to spoken language. Exposure to other children acts as a catalyst in this process. Social skills such as separating, parallel play skills, cooperative play skills are promoted. Teachers act as role models and “guardian angels” who divert inappropriate behaviors, and encourage awareness of others as well as foster cooperative behavior. Large muscle mastery is encouraged in our classrooms as well as in our daily use of the gymnasium or outdoor playground (weather permitting.) Our students are encouraged to run, jump, climb, slide, etc. in an effort to improve their motor skills. Our toddler program is specifically designed to attract your child’s attention and maximize his/her potential. Art media is provided for the children and they are free to explore with glue, magic markers, paint and Play-doh which are often difficult to manage at home. Special sensorial activities are available to help refine and define your child’s sense of touch, smell, sound, sight and taste. These activities also strengthen your child’s concentration, eye hand coordination and sense of accomplishment. As you know, your child is now trying to do everything “by myself” so our practical life area is designed to help him perfect his daily living activities (for example, putting on mittens, using a spoon, sorting, sweeping, pouring, etc.) We teach the age appropriate skills necessary for him to take care of himself and the world around him.

Two year olds are especially “absorbent;” they learn rapidly and retain well. We strive to maximize their learning and help each child feel successful. A feeling of success, which leads to a positive self-image, is the best tool you can give your child for a successful school career.

A teacher from your child’s class will only be available at your designated 10 minute arrival and departure time to greet or dismiss your child.

Full Day Curbside Times

Class	Arrival Time	Dismissal Time
8AM – 4PM	8 – 8:10AM	3:50 – 4PM

Half Day Curbside Times

Class	Arrival Time	Dismissal Time
9 – 11:20AM	9 – 9:10AM	11:15 – 11:25AM

Please read section C carefully and make everyone who uses our curbside services aware of our rules. We need everyone’s cooperation to keep our students safe.

Please note: Children are often comforted by a “transitional object,” that is something they bring in from home (a soft stuffed toy, a favorite blanket or pillow, any favorite toy, etc.) This object helps to remind them that “home” exists and that they will be returning there. A photo of the family, which we hang in the classroom to reassure them, can also help comfort our students.

Miscellaneous: *No bottles or pacifiers are allowed in the classroom for obvious hygienic reasons.* Parents are asked to supply diapers. We will not initiate toilet training but if you are beginning the process (good luck), please let us know and we will follow your routine for consistency’s sake.

VII. HALF-DAY PROGRAMS FOR 3-6 YEAR OLDS

By now you have selected a program for your child and have completed your interview/orientation with your child’s head teacher. Hopefully you have also had time for a few visits to ease your child into our school.

All of the children in this program must be toilet trained. The first week of school in mid-September is our phase-in week. Not every child begins on the first day. Generally, new students who may need more guidance and reassurance begin first. The classroom shelves will appear “stripped down” so that our students can make choices more easily, and remember where to return work when finished using it. This system allows teachers to devote the maximum time to each child during this critical phase- in week. You will be notified by mail of your child’s exact starting date, during August.

Curbside Arrival and Dismissal Times

Class	Arrival Time	Dismissal Time
8:45AM – 11:30AM	8:40AM-8:50AM	11:25AM-11:35AM
12:30PM – 3:15PM	12:25PM-12:35PM	3:10PM-3:20PM

Please read Section C carefully and make everyone who uses our curbside services aware of our rules. We need everyone’s cooperation to keep our students safe.

Please note: Children are often comforted by a “transitional object,” that is something they bring in from home (a soft stuffed toy, a favorite blanket or pillow, any favorite toy, etc.) This object helps to remind them that “home” exists and that they will be returning there. A photo of the family, which we hang in the classroom to reassure them, can also help comfort our students.

VIII. ALL-DAY PROGRAM FOR 3-6 YEAR OLDS

By now you have selected a program for your child and have completed your interview/orientation with your child's teacher. Hopefully you have also had time for a few visits to ease your child into our school.

All of the children in this program must be toilet trained. The first week of school in mid-September is our phase-in week. Not every child begins on the first day. Generally, new students who may need more guidance and reassurance begin first. The classroom shelves will appear "stripped down" so that our students can make choices more easily, and remember where to return work when finished with it. This system allows teachers to devote the maximum time to each child during this critical phase- in week. **You will be notified by mail of your child's exact starting date, during August.**

Curbside Arrival and Dismissal Times

CLASS	Arrival Time	Dismissal Time
8AM – 3:15PM	8 – 8:10AM	3:10 – 3:20PM
8AM – 4:00PM	8 – 8:10AM	3:50 – 4PM
8:45AM – 3:15PM	8:40 – 8:50AM	3:10 – 3:20PM
8:45AM - 4PM	8:40 – 8:50AM	3:50 – 4PM

Please read section R carefully and make everyone who uses our curbside services aware of our rules. We need everyone's cooperation to keep our students safe.

Please note: Children are often comforted by a “transitional object,” that is something they bring in from home (a soft stuffed toy, a favorite blanket or pillow, any favorite toy, etc.) This object helps to remind them that “home” exists and that they will be returning there. A photo of the family, which we hang in the classroom to reassure them, can also help comfort our students.

If your child is to stay for aftercare, please notify the teachers so s/he will not be brought to the curb for dismissal.

Dismissal/Disenrollment Policy

Dismissal/Disenrollment from the program will be the result of :

- 1) Any child’s extremely challenging behavior
- 2) When a child’s behavior harms or is likely to result in harm to other children, or
- 3) His/her behavior causes serious disruption to the classroom environment.

The Bronxville Montessori School is a New York State Licensed Day Care Center following the principles and methodology of Maria Montessori. We are regulated by:

The Office of Children and Family Services
(Regional Office)

117 East Stevens Avenue, Suite 300

Valhalla, NY 10595

Phone: 845-708-2498

Fax: 845-708-2445