

ARBORCREEK MONTESSORI ACADEMY

Parent Handbook of School Policies

Revised October 2025 13310 Bee Street Farmers Branch, TX 75234 www.acmontessoriacademy.org

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Welcome

We extend a warm welcome for the new school year to new and returning parents and students!

Over the course of this year our children will grow in a Montessori environment to become self-assured, vibrant students who love to learn. Our staff is committed to providing an outstanding academic program that includes the development of the whole person, including socio-emotional and cognitive development. Through high-quality, excellent instruction and a passion for working with children, our school fosters an atmosphere that creates a joy for learning so that children can imagine, excel, and flourish. 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, guides (teachers), and students. Please use this handbook to become familiar with ArborCreek Montessori Academy. The handbook is reviewed annually and updated if necessary. Our priority is the same as yours: your child. We look forward to a wonderful and productive year together!

ArborCreek Montessori Academy is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. The officers, directors, committee members, employees, and persons served by ArborCreek Montessori Academy shall be selected entirely on a nondiscriminatory basis with respect to age, sex, race, religion, national origin, and sexual orientation. It is the policy of ArborCreek Montessori Academy not to discriminate on the basis of race, creed, ancestry, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, veteran's status, political service or affiliation, color, religion, or national origin.

Why Montessori?

We are excited that you have chosen a Montessori education for your child and honored that ACMA will be providing that educational experience. The Montessori method reinforces the child's natural tendency toward discovery and readily allows each child to capitalize on inherent strengths as well as to apply herself or himself in areas needing attention for growth. Montessori education has been proven an effective method to reduce the achievement gap in educational systems, and it provides a strong foundation to assist children in developing independence, critical thinking skills, and creativity. Through paying close attention to each student, we can prepare them to create a path for themselves and to realize their greatest potential.

Philosophy

Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952) observed that children learn with enthusiasm through discovery. In her work as a physician, she developed materials that foster independence, concentration, coordination, and order. These tools led to what would become the Montessori Method, wherein Guides work with parents and students to encourage the growth of the whole person. Montessori Guides excite and challenge students in a safe and nurturing environment. We value children as individuals, treat them with respect, and teach respect for the ideas and property of others as well as an appreciation of the environment. The Montessori philosophy allows each child to study at an individual pace, and the students experience both individual and group work, including the preparation and execution of long-term projects and presentations. Through these methods, materials, and practices, students develop a lifelong love of learning.

Mission

Our mission is to utilize the Montessori philosophy to foster a diverse learning environment where children of all backgrounds excel and flourish.

School Policies on...

Accidents and Injuries

In case of a minor injury, ACMA staff will prepare an incident report form and notify the parent. In case of major injury/ emergency, your child will be transported to the nearest hospital and parents will be notified immediately. Please keep us current on telephone and address changes as well as notification preferences to help with ensure you are informed in the event of emergency. ACMA does not assume responsibility in case an accident occurs, and is not financially responsible for emergency care or transportation.

Arrivals, Dismissals, and Attendance

The school day starts promptly at 8:00 am. Your child's academic and social progress depends upon punctuality and regular attendance.

Parents are invited to drop off students between 7:45 - 8:00 am. Attendance is marked at 8:00.

Arrival after 8:00 will be marked as a "missed time". Five (5) "missed time" marks translates into one (1) absence.

Please communicate with us in advance whenever possible to alert us of an absence.

In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as illness, please be sure to notify the Office so that we are aware of the reason your child is absent.

If your child is absent for a medical appointment (doctor,

dentist, etc.), please send a doctor's note to have absences recorded. Outside appointments are better handled after school whenever possible.

State standards lay out that students must attend school 90% of the days the class is offered in order to receive credit.

ALL student absences, excused or unexcused, count towards the 90% Compulsory Attendance Law. Students who fall below 90% in attendance are required by the State of Texas to make up hours/minutes with a Principal's Plan or risk losing credit for class(es).

ArborCreek's calendar includes 180 instructional days; if a student misses more than 18 days, she/he falls below the 90% attendance requirement.

As a private school, we are able to work with you to remedy this issue in cases where such attendance issues can be addressed. However, habitual absences may impair a student's progress to the point where it is necessary to unenroll a student.

Dismissal is at 3:25pm, and pickup is scheduled from 3:25-3:35pm.

Early pick-ups will be recorded as 'missed time'.

If pickup occurs after 3:35, this is considered "late pickup" and subject to the late pickup fee (\$1 per minute). This fee will be calculated after the end of the month and invoiced separately.

Communication Policy at pickup/dropoff:

Before classes, Guides are busy preparing the classrooms & lessons. These tasks require their full attention in order to ensure a smooth work day for students. Similarly, afternoon hours are used for staff meetings & future lesson preparation.

If you wish to meet with a guide for any concerns, please schedule a time in advance rather than attempting to speak to them about a student in an impromptu manner at pick-up or drop-off.

See Communications in this manual for additional information on staff communications.

Cancellation of Classes and School Closures

It may be necessary to close, to start late, or otherwise deviate from the school schedule due to inclement weather or for other reasons. Check televised announcements (look for Carrollton Farmers Branch I.S.D. closings), email, and/or our Facebook page. In general, ACMA will be closed for most Federal Holidays and CFBISD breaks, as well as designated Staff Development days.

See School Calendar (available online at www.acmontessoriacademy.org).

Celebrations at School (Birthdays and Holidays)Birthdays:

Children at this age celebrate their birthdays differently than the children in the Lower School. We offer a wonderful opportunity for them to collaborate as a community in planning a group birthday celebration. This approach appeals to their developmental needs. They will plan a group party where everyone can celebrate together. This activity is held as a special field trip towards the end of the school year, that way all children, despite the timing of their birthdays (which often fall during school holidays or the summer break) get an equal opportunity to celebrate together. This elementary tradition is something special that all children look forward to, and they understand that the celebration does not usually fall on their actual birthdate.

Invitations for parties held outside of school may be brought to class to distribute if there are enough for the entire class. If not, please handle invitations outside of the classroom setting.

Holidays:

Holidays are a special time for families and are often deeply rooted in tradition. We enjoy the opportunity to learn about the history behind holiday traditions, and this is part of what makes our multicultural school so special. If you would like to share a tradition with the class, we welcome you to do so! Please make arrangements with the teacher for a date and time, and you and/or your student can make a special presentation to the class about your family's tradition. As a school, we will also celebrate and study many cultural celebrations from around the world, including many of our own national holidays.

Code Of Conduct

Students will be given a Student Contract at the start of each school year and are expected to review it with their parents and sign accordingly. A copy of this contract is attached at the end of this handbook. Student Contracts are regularly used as a tool to guide students in their behavior. Because our program is based on developing partnerships with students and their families, it is only on rare occasions that a parent's or guardian's requests or actions may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for the child and family. Some examples of such instances include:

- A parent/guardian demands special services which are not provided to other children and which cannot reasonably be delivered by the program (including requests that are outside the Montessori philosophy of the program).
- A parent/guardian is physically or verbally abusive to staff, faculty or students.

• A parent/guardian fails to abide by the school's policies or those requirements imposed by appropriate licensing agencies.

In the spirit of maintaining a safe and nurturing environment, promoting a peaceful atmosphere, and sustaining professional working relationships with our families, we ask that all grievances be addressed directly with the appropriate staff member through a meeting or email communication.

If you are unable to resolve your grievance with the staff member directly, please contact the office to request a conference with the Head of School.

If it is appropriate, another leader from the school or outside resource (e.g., the Executive Director, Board of Directors or conflict specialist) may become involved as well. Your concerns are very important to us; early and clear communication is key to working together to ensure the best for your child.

Communications:

Notes, Emails, Messages, Phone Calls, Updates

Effective and open communication benefits your child! As we work in partnership together, we will communicate regularly via conferences, newsletters, and emails.

Please be sure we have a valid email address and phone number on file for you, and please let us know of any changes in address, phone or other contact information in a timely fashion.

In order for us to best serve your student's needs, please keep us apprised of changes or situations that you feel may affect your student's progress or behavior at school, including changes experienced directly by your student or to your family's home life (i.e., visitors at home, pregnancy, family difficulties, moving, illness, financial stress, loss of a pet, etc.).

Methods of communication:

We encourage you to please use email as the primary mode of communication with information about your child. Text messages regarding last minute issues are permitted, but a follow up email is highly encouraged, as it facilitates our ability to keep timely and accurate records regarding important communications about your child.

Mobile phone and tablet usage and communication:

In order to maintain the concentration of the work cycle and in respect of the work of other students, ACMA maintains a policy of no mobile phones or personal tablets (or similar technology) in the classroom or otherwise during the school day.

If there is a medical or other reason your child must utilize such a device during the school day, please make arrangements with the office. Thank you for your understanding of this important policy.

In addition, we ask that parents refrain from mobile phone usage during drop off and pickup in order to facilitate safety in our parking lot and courtesy during this busy time.

We certainly understand that parents lead busy lives and the use of mobile phones and devices is often necessary, but we also ask that you exercise minimal device use while on campus, and please limit this use to the front lobby. Model grace and courtesy with students by giving them your undivided attention at arrival and dismissal.

Methods of communication with Guides:

Guides have your child's best interest at heart and want to give you their uninterrupted attention. The best time to communicate with guides is after school hours or in specific meeting times.

To communicate information about your child during class hours, please leave a message in the office, and your child's guide will get back with you as soon as possible (within 1 day).

Please refrain from texting regarding substantive issues; email is the best method for us to keep accurate and timely records about the needs of your student. You may also email the office and/or the guide at any time for any reason. You will receive a response within 24 hours.

If it is an urgent matter, please notify the office via phone or email. We will respond as soon as possible and, if warranted, will make arrangements for a conference with appropriate parties.

See Parent/Teacher Conferences and Parent Involvement.

Please be sure we have updated contact information for you and any other caretakers by sending any updates in writing via email.

Curriculum

The Montessori Method succeeds because it draws its principles from the natural development of the child. Its inherent flexibility allows the method to adapt to the needs of the individual regardless of the level of ability or social maturity, with the result that each child becomes a lifelong learner with the capacity to fulfill an individual potential, whatever it may be. This curriculum includes exercises in Practical Life, Language, Math, History, Geography, Geometry, Botany, Zoology, and Science. Art, Music, Physical

Education, Cooking, Chess, Foreign Language, and Gardening are also incorporated.

The Montessori curriculum is conceived in cycles in accordance with the child's development:

Pre-Primary (birth to 3 years Primary (3 to 6 years) Elementary (6 to 9 and 9 to 12 years) Adolescence; 12 to 15 (7th-8th)

Each child proceeds through these cycles in a manner according to his or her stage of development, completing the work within each phase before moving on to the next, attaining greater competence at every step along the way.

Elementary Goals:

The goal of the Elementary curriculum is to instill in the student joy in discovery, confidence in experimentation and experiential learning, a desire for independence and responsibility, strong cooperative learning and conflict resolution, and appreciation for others and our environment. These traits are central to the student building a foundation for life-long success.

Middle School Goals:

The goal of the Middle School program is for the student to build upon the independence gained in the Elementary years and enter into adolescence with the self-confidence necessary to gain strong self-knowledge, to build their own community, to learn to adapt to and contribute to the world around them, to seek personal and academic challenges, and to create a vision for their future.

A copy of the Curriculum is available upon request or on our website: www.acmontessoriacademy.org.

Work Completion in the Curriculum:

Independent Work Time in School: A hallmark of Montessori education is independence. This is developed through the independent work cycle. At each level, students will have time set aside during the day to allow for long periods of concentration on the content of the curriculum. Students are given ample time to complete their school work during the day, and as they move through the program, they will receive decreasing reminders and redirection, allowing them to gain greater independence in decision making and time management.

Tracking Work:

Students are directed in choosing work that best meets their needs. Students in each level are provided a work diary where they may track their daily work as well as the various skills mastery badges they are currently working on.

They are expected to practice each skills mastery badge that they have been assigned or request a new lesson to continue making progress. Skills mastery badges are a tool used to guide the children in follow-up work choices related to their Montessori lessons.

Skills mastery badges are tracked in a badge book and typically take four to six weeks to complete and are based on approximately six different lessons. The Guide specifically tracks which lessons and concepts each student needs to master, and provides lessons within a specified badge so the student knows how to direct their work time.

Students new to the program may need the assistance of the Guide in choosing work and will receive gentle reminders until they better understand how to make independent work choices.

The Monetae System

We have implemented a classroom currency system called monetae—the Latin word for "money." While Montessori education emphasizes student-led learning, Dr. Montessori described it as "freedom within limits." With that principle in mind, the monetae system helps students remain purposeful in their work, set learning goals, and receive regular feedback.

During the daily three-hour work cycle, students earn monetae by completing various lessons and tasks. Each activity has a set value based on the time it typically takes and whether it introduces new concepts or reviews prior learning. Students record their choices in personal work diaries, keep samples of their completed work, and meet weekly with the Lead Classroom Guide to review progress, reflect on time management, and set goals for the coming week.

This system complements our existing badge program while providing students with greater flexibility and ownership over how they spend their work time. It ensures they continue to develop essential grade-level skills while pursuing personal interests. Along the way, students gain practical financial skills—such as counting change, budgeting, and planning expenditures—and learn to balance preferred activities with the consistent practice needed for growth.

The monetae system also connects to our field trips. Students "purchase" their trip tickets with earned monetae, receiving a physical ticket they must keep and present on the day of the trip. This change has increased student investment in these experiences, motivating them to work toward goals and make thoughtful choices about which opportunities matter most. Because different trips require varying amounts of monetae, students practice planning and prioritizing their efforts.

In addition to academic work, students may also apply for classroom jobs—such as gardener, librarian, or zookeeper—which provide a weekly salary. These roles teach responsibility, allow students to contribute meaningfully to the classroom community, and may also be chosen during the work cycle.

Incomplete Work:

During both the morning and afternoon work cycles, students are expected to work towards their learning goals. Some days they will be more productive than others. Generally speaking, we evaluate a child's eligibility to attend field trips or other special activities based on patterns of behavior and individual effort. If a student demonstrates true effort in their work habits they will remain eligible to participate in all classroom events. However, if a student refuses to work and avoids choosing or completing assignments then it is at the discretion of the guide to ask a child to stay back and complete their work.

Overall, we are looking for hard work rather than "checking a box". On rare occasions we might send homework for a student to complete, but most work should be finished during standard work times.

Homework:

Students do NOT receive regular homework.

The Montessori method is very effective and as long as students follow the guidelines for choosing appropriate work, they will continue to make academic progress.

If a child is shown to be struggling in foundational areas, such as reading, the guide may coordinate a plan for parents to support their child at home or suggest testing to rule out any learning differences.

Classroom Management:

Behavioral Expectations and Conflict Resolution
The goal of a Montessori education is to support children
in developing self-regulation. Therefore, we use a positive
approach to discipline in line with the Montessori philosophy.

Guides model respect for materials and the classroom environment, and students are responsible to carry out similarly respectful behavior throughout their day:

> in the classroom, during outside time, while working on special projects, during field trips, during meal times, etc.

Each Guide has an individual approach to classroom management, which is always centered on respect for each student.

The classroom is structured to avoid frustration and the behavioral problems that can arise as a result. Working with classroom materials and companions is a privilege.

When a student exhibits difficulty in maintaining appropriate behavior, the student is provided an opportunity to redirect or recenter. The student may be invited to take time in another classroom, to work independently, or to refrain from a certain activity.

If another student is involved, appropriate conflict resolution steps are followed.

Conflict Resolution:

Conflict resolution is a key part of the Montessori method.

The Guide will assist students in communicating peacefully when peer conflict arises. Students who use inappropriate language or engage in inappropriate conduct are asked first to utilize the peace table (or other safe and appropriate space) as neutral ground to resolve the conflict. If a resolution does not result, the students may ask the Guide or an older student to weigh in on the matter and provide objective feedback.

It is critical to model and guide students toward productive responses to these situations, as peer conflict is a part of everyone's life experience and social interactions.

In the event that the issue persists, a meeting for the students with the Office and/or Head of School may be warranted.

This process of conflict resolution will be followed any time a dispute arises among students.

In cases where inappropriate behavior occurs repeatedly, natural consequences will be given. Natural consequences do not involve shame or humiliation, but may include time away from a classroom activity if a student issue is interfering with the ability of others to work. This may include time in another classroom or another appropriate setting where the student can find time to regulate while allowing other students to continue their work.

Repetitive occurrences that do not warrant immediate parental notification and the progress made by students through the conflict resolution process will be noted and discussed at the regularly scheduled Conference time.

A request for a family conference may be sent home when behavior rises to the level wherein parent involvement is warranted.

If the Guide identifies that more immediate action is necessary, the Guide will get in touch with parents in writing and will advise the Office and Head of School.

ACMA and its staff will work with any child/children whose parents are willing to work with ACMA in order to maintain consistency in both home and school environments.

Bullying policy:

Bullying is characterized by a willful, conscious desire to hurt, frighten, manipulate, or threaten another.

Bullying usually includes a series of repeated and intentionally cruel or hurtful incidents. It involves an imbalance of power (real or perceived), and it may take on physical or verbal forms.

ACMA takes such behavior seriously, and any bullying behavior will involve additional attention outside of the above processes.

We always strive to work with families to ensure proper intervention and supporting practices are in place. All instances of peer conflict are assessed by our professionally trained, experienced staff, and we take into account the individual personality of each student.

In cases where parents are not willing to spend the necessary time in collaboration with ACMA staff to facilitate a resolution to bullying or similar behavior by students, or by any member of our community, it may become necessary for ACMA to advise parents to find a different educational environment better suited to the student and to the family's expectations.

In addition, extreme cases of such behavior may also warrant the removal of a student from the ACMA program.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

In the event of an emergency, students will either shelter in place or may need to be evacuated, depending on circumstances.

- Nearby Evacuation Site: Parking lot at the corner of Bee Street and Havenhurst (just north of ACMA).
- Distance Evacuation Site: Stars Community Ice Rink 12700 N.
 Stemmons Fwy., Farmers Branch 75234
- If we are unable to walk to our site, we will use alternate transportation and notify parents at all times.

Our Sign-In and Sign-Out sheet and classroom attendance sheets will be used to check attendance at the designated evacuation site. Our Emergency packet is in our Office. We also keep on file a full Emergency Preparedness Plan, parent and emergency contact telephone numbers for each child, and Authorization for emergency care for each child in care. We will use cell phones, the School's cordless phone and/or a two way radio if necessary to communicate with local authorities.

Enrollment and Acceptance

ArborCreek Montessori Academy currently welcomes children from ages 6 to 12 years (1st to 6th Grade). The Admissions Office is open M through F | 8:00a to 3:45p

ArborCreek Montessori Academy accepts students without regard to race, color, creed, or national origin and so administers its educational, admissions, and financial policies.

A completed enrollment packet and all fees must be submitted to the Admissions Office in a timely manner (no later than 48 hours before a child starts attendance with our school), and appropriate meetings and visits will be conducted before the enrollment commences.

Minimum enrollment of one full academic year is required to maintain the stability of the classroom environments; we do not offer part-time attendance programs due to the nature of the Montessori curriculum.

Financial Policies (Tuition/Fees/Payments/Discounts)

Enrollment with ACMA is a commitment to the full academic year. Deposits paid at the beginning of the school year as part of the installment payment option are non-refundable and will be applied to the final installment payment of a full school year (e.g., applied in May) or be carried over to the subsequent enrollment period.

The Tuition Schedule lists the annual amount due for the Academic School Year, which is due on August 1st. You may elect to make semester or monthly tuition payments due on the 1st of each month and delinquent after the 3rd day of the month. This includes days on which the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd falls on a weekend, holiday, or non-school day. A late fee will be assessed for payment received after the 3rd (see fee schedule on page 13). If enrolling after the first day of instruction, tuition is prorated using a daily rate according to the number of instructional days on school calendar.

Payments delinquent after 30 days may be turned over to an attorney for collection and enrollment may be suspended.

A fee is charged for each returned check and will be redeposited only once.

After two returned checks, subsequent payments must be made by cash or money order.

Note that any outstanding fees such as late pickup or other fees will be deducted from the deposit if unpaid.

If you terminate your student's enrollment prior to the end of the school year for any reason other than the student's medical need, the deposit fee will not be refunded due to the financial commitments that have already been made based on the enrollment agreement.

When ACMA accepts a student, significant financial commitments have already been made, staff levels have been determined and employment contracts awarded. In order to ensure quality learning environments, investments are made in teaching, training, materials and the school grounds. With this in mind, we ask that families make every effort to pay the tuition schedule and any other due fees on time.

Early Withdrawal

The Enrollment Agreement must be fulfilled unless due to a medical illness verified in writing by a Licensed Physician.

If a student is withdrawn prior to the first day of school, any tuition paid is non-refundable.

If the parent chooses to withdraw the student from school during the school year, tuition and deposits paid to that point are non-refundable; in the case of families paying monthly, the deposit will not be credited to the final payment. If a student is withdrawn at the request of the school, deposit(s) may be refunded at the discretion of the Head of School.

Unpaid balances must be paid in full prior to the release of any school records or transcripts, including teacher reports and referrals.

The purpose of these policies is to ensure the ongoing fiscal integrity of ArborCreek Montessori Academy.

Illness

Please remember that our illness policy is for your child's benefit, and must be strictly enforced for safety and wellness of the school community; a sick child can cause other children and Guides to become sick. When our Staff runs the risk of becoming sick, it is difficult to provide the quality education your child deserves.

Students should be kept at home if they exhibit any sign of illness (temperature of more than 99.5 degrees, sore throat, cough, colored nasal discharge, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.), until the symptoms have stopped, until the child has been fever-free for 24 hours without a fever-reducing medication, or unless authorized in writing by a licensed physician.

If a child requires medication more than once per day, she is considered too ill to participate in school and should remain at home.

ACMA follows the communicable disease exclusions required for schools as defined by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) in 25 TAC §97.7 (relating to Diseases Requiring Exclusion from Schools).

Immunization Requirements for Children

ACMA normally requires that each child enrolled in our programs meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services in 25 TAC 97, (relating to Immunization Requirements for K-12).

If our regional Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) or local health authority requires tuberculosis testing for children in our school (or other testing as deemed necessary for safety), you must have documentation to indicate that your child is free of active tuberculosis.

We conduct annual file review to ensure families are up to date on immunizations and immunization paperwork. We will notify you if a student is not meeting the published TDSHS standards.

Please contact with any questions about the immunization policy.

Meals and Nutrition

All food and drinks and serviceware are of safe quality and are stored, prepared, distributed, and served under sanitary and safe conditions, including but not limited to the following: food service equipment, dishes, and utensils are sanitized after each use (washed in dishwasher); single-service napkins, dishes, and utensils are discarded after use; staff with open wounds and/or any injury that inhibits hand washing, such as casts, bandages, or braces do not prepare food; food is covered when stored in the refrigerator; food preparation area is separated from bathroom areas; and we do not store poisonous or toxic materials and cleaning supplies with food.

All staff are advised on food allergies and take precautions to ensure children are protected.

Food restrictions

Please be sure to notify the Office in writing of any changes to dietary restrictions or food allergies or sensitivities. On special occasions prepared food is brought into the school to be shared among children the food may be either commercially prepared or homemade.

Nutrition

How your child functions in the classroom is influenced by what she eats. We discourage prepackaged foods (e.g., Lay's, Lunchables, Hot Pockets, etc., as these are not nutrient-dense and may contain unhealthy preservatives). Candy, cakes, cupcakes, donuts, high sugar "gogurts," juice beverages, flavored milks, and carbonated beverages are not allowed for nutrition and safety reasons. Filtered water is served with every snack and is available throughout the day. Students are also welcome to store extra snacks and beverages, as space allows, to ensure they have plenty to eat throughout the day. Students requiring additional nutritional support must have written approval from a physician or a registered or licensed dietician detailing the therapeutic or special diet including nutrient concentrates and supplements.

We ask that your student be provided with a healthy lunch from home in an insulated lunch box with an ice pack. A microwave is available to warm up lunch items, but please limit warm-ups to no more than two minutes.

Your child's name should appear on the outside of the lunch box.

To encourage trash-free lunches, ACMA encourages the use of recyclable/reusable items to pack lunches rather than plastic bags. Please send food in reusable containers whenever possible. Students are encouraged to bring home any uneaten food in their lunch boxes. Our goal is a waste-free and nutritious lunch!

Here are some diverse ideas for healthy foods to prepare and pack in your student's lunch:

Grains Bread sticks
Bagel Crackers
Baquette English muffin

Focaccia Goat cheese
Lavash bread Brie cheese
Pita bread Shrimp salad
Pizza bread Smoked Salmon

Rice cakes Tofu

Rolls Tuna salad

Sandwich bread

Pasta Fruits
Rice Apricots
Couscous Blueberries

Oatmeal Banana (mashed)

Bulgar Cherries

Tortillas Cranberries (dried)

Dates

Spreads & Condiments Figs

Almond butter Mango
Apple butter Cream cheese Papaya

(lowfat) Pears
Honey Prunes
Cashew butter Raisins

Hummus Grapefruit

Jam (spreadable fruit) Kiwi Ketchup Melon Mayonnaise Nectarines

Mustard Peaches
Peanut butter Pineapple

Pesto Plums

Tomato sauce Raspberries

Pumpkin butter

Vegetables

Fillings Carrots (shredded)

Cheese (lite/low-fat) Asparagus

Chicken Avocado (whole, mashed,

Chicken salad sliced)
Egg salad Beets

Hard boiled egg Bell Peppers
Nitrite-free hot dogs Bok Choy

Brussels sprouts Sprouts
Cabbage Snap peas
Cauliflower Spinach

Lettuce Soy beans (edamame)

Eggplant Squash

Green beans Sweet potatoes

Mushrooms Yams
Cucumber Zucchini
Seaweed (nori, wakame, hijiki) Tomatoes

Shelling peas

Food Allergies

What Is a Food Allergy?

A simplified explanation is that food allergies occur when the immune system is not functioning properly.

Normally, your immune system protects you from germs and disease. It does this by making antibodies that help you fight off bacteria, viruses, and other tiny organisms that can make you sick. But if you have a food allergy, your immune system mistakenly treats something in a certain food as a dangerous threat and the body reacts in sometimes dangerous ways (anaphylactic shock, hives, swelling or similar symptoms).

Many children may have food allergies - about 3 million in the United States alone. These foods cause the most food allergies:

peanuts and treenuts seafood milk (particularly cow's) milk eggs soy wheat

If your doctor has determined your child has a food allergy, please send a food allergy emergency plan signed by you and your student's doctor to ACMA.

Medication

In order to give students any medication (oral, nasal, topical or otherwise), we must have a signed and dated Medication Form, which must include the name of the student, the name of the medication, dosage, and related information.

Medications administration will be arranged with the Office; please note that there are restrictions on our ability to administer medication, and we will work with you to best accommodate the student's need.

Provide the Form, the labeled medication in its original container, and any necessary administration tools to the Office.

For safety reasons, please do not send medication in your child's backpack, lunchbox, or pocket; this is a potential danger to other students.

See Illness policy for information about keeping students home due to illness.

Parent Involvement is Encouraged

We need you to be a part of our growing school, and your student benefits greatly from your participation.

Our nonprofit school depends in no small part on our wonderful volunteers in order to maintain our sense of community as well as to minimize financial costs to our families. Consistent communication and collaboration are essential to the success of your student in the ACMA Montessori program. A positive and constructive working relationship between ACMA and the families we serve is essential to the fulfillment of our educational purpose.

We encourage parents to join our PTO group, which organizes volunteer opportunities and helps to plan/assist the school

with its mission and special functions as determined at the meetings.

Parents are also invited to coordinate with the Guide if they have a special talent or other skill they wish to share with the class. It is also a wonderful way to see your child in the school environment.

Communication

Newsletters and email communications are the primary method through which we will communicate notifications to parents and opportunities for involvement; please be sure we have a valid email address on file.

Text communications are discouraged other than for emergent situations and notifications.

Parent/Teacher and Family Conferences

Conferences are scheduled at least three times per year in relation to the three term reports:

- Fall,
- Mid-year
- Spring

The purpose of the conference will include

- goal setting
- assessing progress
- · reflecting on achievements and challenges
- · celebrating the accomplishments of each student

We enjoy working collaboratively with our families to assess the student's current and future learning goals and potentials, to map out the plan for development throughout the year, and to discuss activities and engagement in learning that will take place at home.

Conferences

Our ability to foster independence in our students relies on having the students become aware of and participate in goal setting and reflection upon their work and individual work styles. Your student's Guide will advise whether it is appropriate for your student to attend the conference with you, and this is increasingly common as they move up in the program.

In addition to these scheduled conferences regarding school work and personal development, conferences may be scheduled as needed either with your student or in private with the Guide or other staff. Please contact the Office for your child's Guide for such a request.

Personal Items

Please label every item your child brings to school with first and last name. We understand that this is time consuming; however, we may be unable to identify the owner of items without such information.

Toys, gum, candy, money, dangerous items, or large jewelry items are not allowed at school with the exception of certain activities as communicated by the Guides.

We strongly encourage children to avoid bringing valuables to school. ACMA will not be responsible for lost or missing items.

Questions and Concerns

When you have a question or concern, please bring it to our attention as soon as possible so that we may better meet your family's needs. Parent-Teacher conferences, parent education books, magazines, tapes, videos, classes, and observations are all designed to help you understand your child's method of education using the Montessori Philosophy.

Questions regarding your child should be directed first to the Lead Teacher and then to the Head of School.

Questions about the school or its policies (illness, financial, etc.) should be directed first to the Office, who will relay them to the Business Manager or to the Administrative Director as appropriate.

Referrals

We are always appreciative to those that refer us to new students, families, educators, and educational study programs.

ACMA's program focuses on the child.

We seek to provide programs designed to support children's growth and to challenge them to learn as individuals with unique learning styles and ways of responding to the world. Given the diversity of families and communities we serve, we recognize and appreciate the characteristics and behaviors that each student brings to our school. Our desire is to provide a program that truly celebrates and values the individuality of each child.

Release of Children

Only persons listed on the Child Release Authorization will be allowed to pick up your child from school.

If you have someone other than those listed on the CRA picking up your child, the Office must have prior written notification from a parent or legal guardian.

A Release Authorization Form (RAF) is available in the Office, or you may include on a separate sheet of paper/written documentation method, the following information:

your child's name

- person authorized to pick up your child
- said person's telephone number(s)
- said person's driver's license number
- your signature as the child's parent/guardian

Authorization via email is allowed with authorized signature and the above information.

No child will be released by telephone authorization.

Student Portfolios

Students maintain their best work at school in a portfolio, which will be theirs to take home when they move on to a new school.

Technology

Technology is an integral part of our world. Classroom laptops and tables are used for research purposes, access to foreign language software, and to assist the Guide with lessons as is appropriate and necessary.

Uniforms and Clothing

Uniforms are required; please reference the addendum at the end of this handbook for uniform guidelines. Remember that your student's clothing may very likely get soiled at school.

Goals for the students include independence, concentration, coordination, and order. As such, you can understand the importance of appropriate attire.

All students need to bring a second set of athletic shoes to leave at school for outdoor time.

Hats, loose-fitting boots, and sandals or open-toed shoes are discouraged for safety reasons.

Field Trips

Students will have opportunities to participate in a variety of field trips.

Student participation on field trips is conditional on parents completing the appropriate permission forms and based on student performance in the classroom.

Not all students will be invited to all field trips, as they may be planned for a specific age or group of students.

The purpose of these field trips is to offer an extension to their classroom learning, foster independence, and connect them to real-world experiences.

Some trips will be organized by the school while others will be student-led.

Frequent field trips are an important part of our program as we view the surrounding metro area as an extension of our campus.

Guides reserve the right to decide if a student needs to stay back at the school to complete their school work or if their behavior breaks the Student Contract.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1.

Required Notifications

You are entitled to the following information:

- Emergency Preparedness Plan
- The most recent DFPS Inspection/Investigation Report www.dfps.state.tx.us
- Local Licensing Office:

DFPS, Child Care Licensing,

8700 N. Stemmons Frwy, Ste. 104, Dallas TX 75247

214.951.7902

214.583.4253

1.800.582.6036.

Transportation

Transportation is provided for field trips. We comply with each of the following requirements when conducting such trips:

Secure signed permission from the parent to take a child on a field trip, including permission to transport the child, if applicable;

- One (1) or more chaperones must carry emergency medical consent forms and emergency contact information for each child on the field trip.
- Chaperones must have a written list of all children on the field trip and keeps account for the presence of all children.
- Chaperones will carry a basic first-aid kit.
- Each child must wear a shirt, name tag, or other identification listing the name of the school.
- Each chaperone must be easily identifiable by all

- children on the field trip by wearing a hat, school t-shirt, brightly-colored clothes, or other easily spotted identification.
- Each chaperone on a field trip must have transportation available or a communication device such as a mobile phone, message pager, or two-way radio available or an alternate plan for transportation at the field trip location in case of emergency.

We will notify the parent(s) of each child who will be on the field trip indicating when and where the child will be going and when the child is expected to return to school. The notice will be provided via email in advance. The exception to this notification is if an activity is a weekly event. In which case, parents will be notified once and informed of the repeated nature of the activity, including when and how often it will take place.

In every classroom we have a variety of pets which may include birds, fish, hermit crabs, etc. Parents will be notified in writing within 24 hours of any changes to our policies regarding animals/class pets at school.

Tuition Schedule: 2025-2026 Academic School Year

Program 177 School Days (Mon-Fri; Aug-May) \$16,720

Fees

- Application Fee (one time per family; nonrefundable)
 \$100.00 per child (one-time fee)
- Registration/Enrollment Fee (annual; applies upon enrollment) \$200.00 per child (annual)

- Deposit (see enrollment agreement) \$500.00 for 1;
 \$700.00 for two
- Testing Fee \$150 per chid (annual)
- Activity Fee \$1,300.00 (annual)

Additions
School Lunch Program \$150/month

Discounts
Second (or More) Child Enrolled 10%
Teacher/Student/Active Military 5%

Uniform Guidelines 2025-2026

The Everyday School Uniform

The standard school uniform is a school polo shirt with khaki pants or shorts.

Girls may choose to wear a khaki jumper or khaki skirt. Alternatively, approved white button up dress shirts with the embroidered ACMA tree logo may be worn in place of a polo shirt for both boys and girls. Please see further details on approved styles and colors.

Polo Shirts + Long or short-sleeved polo shirts must be purchased directly through the the online uniform store or from ACMA. The approved colors are royal blue, forest green, and white.

ALL polo shirts MUST include the approved Academy tree logo on the left breast pocket area of the shirt. These will be embroidered (if going through the online uniform store), otherwise they will be screen printed by Ms. Stori.

Shirts incorrectly branded will NOT be accepted as part of the

school uniform.

Khaki Pants and Shorts

All khaki pants and shorts must be purchased either directly from the school or through the online uniform store. No other type of shorts or pants will be accepted.

Khaki Skirts and Jumpers

Girls may choose to wear either a khaki jumper or khaki skirt. These must be purchased through the online uniform store or directly from ACMA.

To maintain modesty, girls must wear shorts under jumpers and skirts (if a lining is not already built into the clothing). Solid black, white, or navy blue leggings may be worn underneath jumpers.

NO PRINTS or PICTURES will be allowed.

A school uniform polo or school uniform dress shirt should be worn under the khaki jumper.

Outerwear

Students must wear approved outerwear as part of their school uniform.

There are three options for outerwear:

Cobalt or Evergreen Lands End fleece jacket with white ACMA logo Blue hoodie with screen printed ACMA text logo Green sweater vest with embroidered ACMA tree logo

Students may not wear any other type of sweatshirt, jacket, or sweater which will cover up the school uniform due to the frequency of field trips and need to safely identify students while off-campus.

The exception to this rule is for heavy coats. Students are

allowed to wear any style of heavy coat for winter weather, as long as the coats are not covered with cartoon characters or have distracting writing. Heavy coats may not be worn inside the classroom, and students will need to change into school approved outerwear once inside, as needed.

Shoes, Socks, and Leggings

Preferably, shoes will be a solid black or white, but most styles of closed-toed, well-fitting shoes will be acceptable. Additionally, all students need to either wear or bring a set of athletic shoes to school everyday for PE (shoes may be stored in a classroom locker).

Students should wear either white or black socks in any style, as long as they have minimal writing or pictures.

Girls may choose to wear solid colored leggings under their skirts or jumpers. Please NO PATTERNS or PICTURES. Leggings can only be either white, black, or navy blue in color.

PE Clothing

All students should have at least one set of PE clothing, which may be kept in student lockers and changed into when we have PE or other approved athletic activities. Students may not wear the athletic clothing as part of their daily school uniform.

Past "Fun Run" or any other ACMA t-shirt does not count as a PF t-shirt.

Athletic shorts should be either solid royal or navy blue and an approved style.

Uniform Ordering Information

Access the ACMA uniform online store is available at ACMontessoriAcademy.org under the "Uniform Info" tab.

There you will find the approved shirts, pants, skirts, sweater vests, and jumpers.

Only use the ACMA portal within this website. Purchasing items outside of the ACMA area may cause you to order items not approved for the school uniform.

Please check the visual guide in the following pages to confirm our approved styles or speak with Ms. Stori if you have any questions about what items to order.

To order a fleece jacket from Lands End, please use the appropriate link remembering that Cobalt and Evergreen are the only two approved colors. You must also select the option for the ACMA school logo embroidery.

To order ACMA PE t-shirts or the ACMA blue hoodie, contact the front office. We will sell these items directly to you. Please give us 2-weeks notice, as we sometimes need to order new supplies to complete the order.

Special Days

On occasion, students will be allowed to wear their athletic school t-shirts along with a pair of khaki pants or shorts instead of their daily school uniform. These days will be announced ahead of time throughout the year.

Additional Information

Any style of hat may be worn during outdoor field trips, just not inside the classroom. Denim jeans MAY NOT be worn to school unless an exception is announced ahead of time. Please label every article of clothing.

Students are not required to own the school athletic t-shirts, athletic shorts, and fleece jackets, but will greatly benefit

from having them. If students do not have the school athletic clothing, students will need to wear their standard school uniform for any athletic activity.

Please contact Ms. Sima if these new uniform guidelines create a financial burden on your family. We want to help support everyone as we change over to these new uniforms and have ways to offset some of the costs, if needed.

Just let us know! We will be discreet.

Ms. Sima can be contacted via email at Sima@ACMontessoriAcademy.org or directly through the school's phone: (972) 406-8522.

Appendix 2.

Code of Ethics of the American Montessori Society (Adopted by the AMS Board of Directors October 1969, Expanded June 1975)

Our Head of School, Sima Cheregosha, is a lifetime American Montessori Society member. Under her leadership, we pledge to conduct ourselves professionally and personally in ways that will reflect our respect for each other and for the children we serve. We will do whatever is within our talents and capacity to protect the rights of each child to have the freedom and opportunity to develop to his/her full potential.

PRINCIPLE I - Commitment to the Student.

In fulfillment of the obligation to the children, the educator:

- Shall encourage independent action in the pursuit of learning.
- Shall protect the opportunity to provide for participation in educational programs without regard to race, sex, color, creed or national origin.
- Shall protect the health and safety of students.
- Shall honor professional commitments, maintain obligations and contracts while never soliciting nor involving students or their parents in schemes for commercial gain.
- Shall keep in confidence information that has been secured in the course of professional purposes or is required by law.

PRINCIPLE II - Commitment to the Public.

The Montessori educator shares in the responsibility for the development of policy relating to the extension of educational opportunity for all and for interpreting educational programs and policies to the public. In fulfilling these goals, the educator:

- Shall support his professional society and not misrepresent its policies in public discussion.
 Whenever speaking or writing about policies, the Montessori educator should take the precaution to distinguish his private views from the official position of the Society.
- Shall not interfere with nor exploit the rights and responsibilities of colleagues within the teaching profession.

PRINCIPLE III - Commitment to the Profession.

The Montessori educator makes efforts to raise professional standards and conditions to attract persons worthy of trust to careers in Montessori education. In fulfilling these goals the educator:

- Shall extend just and equitable treatment of all members of the Montessori education profession.
- Shall represent his own professional qualification with clarity and true intent.
- Shall apply for, accept, offer, recommend, and assign professional positions and responsibilities on the basis of professional preparation and legal qualifications.
- Shall use honest and effective methods of administering his duties, use of time and

conducting business.

All AMS Montessori teachers, members, and AMS Schools Affiliates are expected to uphold and abide by the CODE OF ETHICS.

Appendix 3.

Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

State law requires anyone who suspects child abuse or neglect to report those suspicions to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) or to local law enforcement.

The number for reporting abuse and neglect is 1-800-252-5400.

Any person who suspects abuse, but fails to report it, can be charged with a misdemeanor or state jail felony.

Mandatory reporters (teachers and educational staff) are required to report signs of abuse within 48 hours.

Regarding Bill 2086, please be informed that certain gangrelated criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of this program is a violation of this law and therefore subject to increased penalty.

ACMA staff receive annual training in prevention techniques for and the recognition of symptoms of abuse and neglect as well as the responsibility and procedure for reporting suspected abuse and neglect.

Online training and supplemental information and resources are available through DFPS:

https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Training/Reporting/

Factors indicating a child is at risk of abuse or neglect:

- Children younger than 4 years of age
- Special needs that may increase caregiver burden (e.g., disabilities, mental retardation, mental health issues, and chronic physical illnesses)
- Parents' lack of understanding of children's needs, child development and parenting skills

- Parents' history of child maltreatment in family of origin
- Substance abuse and/or mental health issues including depression in the family
- Parental characteristics such as young age, low education, single parenthood, large number of dependent children, and low income
- Nonbiological, transient caregivers in the home (e.g., mother's male partner)
- Parental thoughts and emotions that tend to support or justify maltreatment behaviors Family Risk Factors
- Social isolation
- Family disorganization, dissolution, and violence, including intimate partner violence
- Parenting stress, poor parent-child relationships, and negative interactions Community Risk Factors
- Community violence
- Concentrated neighborhood disadvantage (e.g., high poverty and residential instability, high unemployment rates, and high density of alcohol outlets), and poor social connections.

How to Recognize Child Abuse:

There are four major types of child maltreatment:

- physical abuse
- neglect
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse

Physical Abuse is physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child. The physical injury (ranging

from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) can result from punching, beating, shaking, kicking, biting, throwing, stabbing, hitting, burning, choking, or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child.

Suspect Physical Abuse When You See:

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations
- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
- Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body
- Lack of reaction to pain
- · Aggressive, disruptive, and destructive behavior
- · Passive, withdrawn, and emotionless behavior
- Fear of going home or seeing parents
- Injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days
- Unreasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or legs

Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.

Suspect Neglect When You See:

- · Obvious malnourishment
- Lack of personal cleanliness
- Torn or dirty clothing
- Stealing or begging for food

- Child unattended for long periods of time
- Need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
- Frequent tardiness or absence from school
- Sexual Abuse includes fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or producing pornographic materials.
- Suspect Sexual Abuse When You See:
- Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases
- Evidence of injury to the genital area
- · Pregnancy in a young girl
- Difficulty in sitting or walking
- Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex
- Sexual comments, behaviors or play
- Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child's age
- Sexual victimization of other children

Emotional Abuse is mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in a child's growth, development, or psychological functioning. It includes extreme forms of punishment such as confining a child in a dark closet, habitual scapegoating, belittling, and rejecting treatment for a child.

Suspect Emotional Abuse When You See:

- Over compliance
- Low self-esteem
- Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression
- Difficulty making friends or doing things with other children

- Lagging in physical, emotional, and intellectual development
- Caregiver who belittles the child, withholds love, and seems unconcerned about the child's problems

Child Neglect Prevention and Intervention

Programs that promote a positive and responsive parentchild relationship are desirable as prevention and intervention strategies. Optimally, parents can be assisted when their children are very young and the families are not yet presenting serious child behavior problems. Chances for better parentinfant relationships are improved, and the likelihood of child neglect is diminished. The intensity of interventions required for children to catch up is expensive and unlikely to be available. For children of families living in poverty, the support needed for proper development often exceeds what their parents can provide. These children may benefit from quality child care or preschool settings, such as Head Start, a component not typically considered in most interventions for neglected children. These center-based programs can offer the parent respite from child care and teach the child communication and problem-solving skills that may buffer the child from some effects of neglect.

Principles for Effective Prevention and Intervention

Efforts targeting single risk factors may be as effective in preventing neglect and its recurrence as programs that are individualized and offer multiple services. Either way, services must be based on principles that empower families, build upon strengths, and respect cultural diversity. The following are some basic principles for practitioners who intervene with families when children's basic needs are unmet:

Have an ecological-developmental framework.

Neglect may be viewed within a system of risk and protective factors interacting at multiple levels, including the individual, the family system, and the larger social system. Examples include affordable child care, education and employment opportunities, low-income housing, and large-scale drug prevention and treatment initiatives.

- Understand the importance of outreach and community. Because families experiencing neglect tend to be poor, socially isolated, and lacking access to resources, interventions must include aggressive outreach and be designed to mobilize concrete formal and informal helping resources. It must be a collaborative process between the family and community in which people plan and carry out goals together for strengthening their neighborhood.
- A comprehensive assessment can be made using standardized clinical measures of risk and protective factors, as well as by assessing parenting attitudes, knowledge, and skills.
- Establish a helping alliance and partnership with the family. Utilize an empowerment-based practice.
 Emphasize family strengths. Develop cultural competence. Risk and protective factors for child neglect may differ according to race and ethnicity.
 Ensure developmental appropriateness. Practitioners must consider the developmental needs of the children, the caregivers, and the family as a system in their assessments and intervention strategies.

Strategies for Coordination

between school and community organizations: Any and all staff members who suspect abuse and/or neglect will notify the Director immediately by verbal communication as well as in writing within 24 hours.

The Director will then contact the following organizations:

Dallas Children's Advocacy

214.818.2600 or 1.800.244.5373

to obtain assistance and intervention.

The parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect should contact the Director as well as the local Child Abuse Prevention Center and/or the local licensing office (www.dfps.state. tx.us) for assistance and intervention information regarding community-based organizations that offer resources.

Student Contract 2025-2026

I recognize that ArborCreek Montessori Academy is a peaceful and inclusive school. My teachers and peers depend on me everyday to choose to make this school a special place for learning. As an important member of the school community, I promise...

♦ to be respectful in my language & actions.

This means I will not use rude, inappropriate, or threatening language. I will not grab or push others. I will not yell or scream in anger towards another person.
I will not tease others, even if I was joking. I will stop a behavior the first time someone asks me to stop.

to work hard everyday towards my learning goals.

If I need help or feel frustrated, I will not quit, but instead ask a teacher or another student for help.

I will remember to have a growth mindset and work through my challenges.

I will also not distract others in their efforts to learn.

I will work during the work cycle.

If I don't know what to work on, I will ask a teacher for ideas.

♦ to listen to the teachers & follow all directions the first time they are given.

I will help support the teachers in keeping our community safe, especially following any directions given while on a field trip.

♦ to take care of the classroom, materials, and school bus.

I will appreciate the many resources I have to learn.

I understand that I must keep these things clean and organized.

I will not intentionally damage any classroom material or area of the bus.

I understand that if I break this contract, there will be appropriate and natural consequences, such as, staying inside during recess, being asked to step away from a conflict, not attending a field trip, or missing out on other classroom activities.

If I hurt another person, I will also offer an appropriate apology.

If my behavior continues, my parents will be called to the school, and I may be suspended either temporarily or permanently.

Student Name / Date

Parent Name / Date

Office: 469-233-9250 Contact@ACMontessoriAcademy.org

13310 Bee Street Farmers Branch, TX 75234 www.ACMontessoriAcademy.org

