

Welcome to Montessori Pathways School!

As parents, you make up an essential one-third of the educational triangle of teachers, students and families. This handbook and the information it contains should help you support your “side” of this important relationship. At Montessori Pathways School we believe that parents, and the environment they create at home, are the primary educational influences in the life of the child.

As a school, we want to be with you in your work as a parent and help you in discovering who your child is, and what his or her needs are as he or she begins the adventure of life. It is our goal to help your child become a creative, competent human being, who is fully aware of him or herself, of others, and of the world around him or her. Other goals include a love of learning, self-motivation, confidence, social responsibility, persistence and concentration, development of global citizenship, and habits of inner discipline, resilience and order.

To realize these goals, we have thoughtfully created an authentic Montessori school, reflecting Dr. Maria Montessori’s design of a place where children can be themselves in an atmosphere of freedom and responsibility. It is a place where children will come joyfully and become absorbed and interested in their learning and “becoming.” Parents are brought into this atmosphere as much as possible through a host of interesting activities. Often friendships made in this “family” will last a lifetime.

We extend an invitation for you to join us in this educational adventure. For your child to benefit most fully from the years he or she will spend at Montessori Pathways, we suggest you become familiar with the Montessori philosophy. Throughout the year we will present parent education programs aimed at increasing your understanding of Montessori philosophy, education, and parenting. We strongly recommend that both new and returning parents attend these programs.

Montessori Pathways publishes a monthly electronic newsletter with information concerning the academic and social events of the school. Please read each newsletter for information about all school functions. Additionally, the sets of pictures of our students’ daily activities will be distributed throughout the year. In addition, we have a collection of reading materials and videos concerning Montessori education and parenting available through our library located in the school office.

Please read this handbook carefully and keep it for future reference. We encourage you to voice any concerns or questions you may have. Your understanding of why we do what we do is an important part of your child’s education. We are looking forward to many happy and productive years!

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Montessori Pathways School

Montessori Pathways School was founded in 1993 by dedicated Montessori educators committed to providing quality educational experiences to young children and their parents based upon the educational philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori. The Montessori approach recognizes that the child's early years, from birth to six, are the most formative. The Montessori environment is a prepared environment, containing interactive material to expose the child to an unlimited source of discoveries designed to assist the child in acquiring knowledge of the natural world and the skills needed to become a responsible member of society.

Montessori Pathways School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Montessori Pathways School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of the school's educational policies, admissions policies and other school-administered programs.

Montessori Pathways School encourages diversity and strives for economic, ethnic, cultural and individual diversity. We embrace our non-discrimination policy and do not treat people differently based on race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability or marital status.

Montessori Pathways School prides itself on providing the most authentic and effective Montessori Early Childhood and Elementary Education in Crystal Lake, IL since 1993.

Montessori Pathways School is registered with and recognized by American Montessori Society and adheres to its Code of Ethics.

- All classroom teachers hold **Academic degree** and **Montessori credentials** for the level(s) they are teaching; **CPR** and **First Aid** certified. All staff members undergo a **background** and **health screening** process, as well as finger printing as required by DCFS.
- Classes with 3-year age spans facilitate mentorship among the students and encourage leadership development
- All classrooms are fully equipped with Montessori learning materials that provide a hands-on approach to learning
- Students are given agency to self-select work, leading to intrinsic motivation and sustained attention
- An extended period of "free choice" enables students to work at their own pace and without interruption

Montessori Pathways School is registered with the Illinois State Board of Education as a private Montessori School, serving children 3 to 12 years of age.

Montessori Pathways School is incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois and is governed by a Board of Directors. The board is responsible for the implementation of Montessori philosophy as it pertains to the growth and development of the children and its introduction to their parents.

Philosophy

Montessori Pathways School subscribes to a pedagogical philosophy created and developed by Dr. Maria Montessori. On January 6, 2007, the world celebrated the centennial anniversary of the first Montessori school in Rome, Italy. Today Montessori education continues as the product of long and careful hours of ongoing research. Given a carefully prepared learning environment, children would work toward perfecting their concentration and inner control. Montessori is a personalized educational approach designed to help each child reach his or her fullest potential.

The Montessori Method is education for life. Each classroom is completely outfitted with carefully prepared and sequenced materials. Children perfect their natural tools for learning by working with a variety of materials. The Montessori materials are designed to help cognitive development, as well as concentration, coordination, independence, and socialization. The children learn how to learn in a Montessori school through interaction with materials, peers, and adults. In other words, intelligence is built through work and experience.

The materials change as the children develop and all materials are carefully constructed to present specific concepts at each level. The child is the core of any Montessori school. Dr. Montessori believed that no human being is educated by another person. In reality, the child educates him or herself. The child has a natural desire to learn. The Montessori environment cultivates this natural desire and builds within the habits of lifelong learning.

All programs have a three-year age span. Mixing ages is an important component of the Montessori philosophy. It allows for more individualized work and for students to move through the curriculum at their own pace in a non-competitive environment. Older students have a chance to be role models, while younger students have the benefit of a more stimulating environment. A Montessori education allows each child to develop his or her natural talents to the fullest. Most importantly, each individual receives the fullest respect and regard. We are confident you will find in Montessori Pathways a place where children will effectively develop their potential with joy and satisfaction.

Mission Statement

The mission of Montessori Pathways School is to enable each child to grow in awareness of him or herself, of others, and of the world around them. Each material, activity, or experience is expressly designed to give the child new perspective, to develop an academic concept, or to encourage growth as a social being. Montessori Pathways is committed to fostering a sense of partnership between the children, the teachers, and the parents to work collaboratively toward the common goal of realizing each child's fullest potential.

Our Goals for Your Children

(Based on American Montessori Society Learner Outcomes)

Academic Preparation: Academic preparation entails providing students with skills that allow them to become independently functioning adults and lifelong learners. As students master one level of academic skills, they are able to go further and apply themselves to increasingly challenging materials across various academic disciplines. Students recognize that there is always room to grow in their abilities to read, write, speak, and think clearly and thoughtfully.

Children learn by doing. They are encouraged to explore materials, integrate new concepts, analyze data, and think critically. Academic skills are essential to the process of learning and knowing.

Intrinsic Motivation: Intrinsic motivation is the innate desire that drives a child to engage in an activity for enjoyment and satisfaction. **Ability to Handle External Authority:** The student is able to accept the ground rules established by external authority as appropriate boundaries in interactions within the school community. These ground rules are internalized, enabling the student to function with or without the presence of the external authority.

Creativity and Originality of Thought: Students use the knowledge and skills they have acquired to express their own ideas and creativity with confidence. They recognize the value of their own ideas, respect the creative process of others, and are willing to share regardless of risk. Students find joy and satisfaction in self-expression.

Social Responsibility: Social responsibility requires awareness that one's actions have an impact on the welfare of the group and that one cannot attain complete independence and autonomy until one contributes constructively in a group process. Individuals are able to make a positive contribution to his or her community and groups within that community.

Autonomy: The autonomous child is self-directed, composed, and morally independent.

Confidence and Competence: The confident and competent child perceives himself or herself as being successful, has a realistic understanding of accomplishment, and has the ability to learn from his or her mistakes. Competence is the capability for success through risk-taking, reflection, and self-correction.

Spiritual Awareness: Spiritual awareness is embodied in the child who is compassionate, empathetic, and sensitive to the natural world and the human condition.

The Programs and Curriculum

- ◆ **Primary Class** (*Preschool / Kindergarten – 3-6 years old*)
- ◆ **Elementary I-II Class** (*6-12 years old*)

**Based on child's age as of September 1st.*

- ◆ **School Year Calendar** (*with winter and spring break*)
- ◆ **All Year Calendar** (*with winter break only*)
- ◆ **Summer Camp**

Our Schedule:

- **Morning Class** - 8:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. (*preschool only*)
- **School Day Program** - 8:45 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.
- **Extended School Day** - 6:45 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. *or* 7:45 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.
- **All Day Program** - 6:45 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Curriculum and Enrichment Programs:

- Practical Life Activities
- Sensorimotor Activities
- Language Art
- Math and Critical Thinking
- Geometry
- Science
- Geography/History
- Cultural Study
- Music and Movement
- Gym
- Creative Art
- Grace and Courtesy
- Lego
- Gardening
- Food Preparation
- Field Trips

“Montessori is a system of education that supports young people in their unique place in society in such a way that, in addition to getting an amazing academic education, they are encouraged to develop particular qualities, like being deep thinkers, human-hearted, curious, and hopeful”

Montessori Life Magazine, 2009

Tuition Policy

As an independent school, Montessori Pathways relies exclusively on tuition and private contributions. To accommodate annual increases in operating expenses, Montessori Pathways and its Board of Directors reserve the right to implement annual tuition rate increases. Historically, increases have averaged 3% - 5% each year.

Non-refundable Registration Fee and 10% of annual tuition are due with application.

Remaining tuition may be paid as follows:

Tuition Payment (Plan A) – save \$50.00 with this plan

Remaining balance is due **September 1st**. Payments may be dropped off in the school office or mailed to the school.

Tuition Payment (Plan B) – save \$30.00 with this plan

Remaining balance is due in two equal payments on **September 1st** and **January 1st**. Payments may be dropped off in the school office or mailed to the school.

Tuition Payments (Plan C)

The remaining balance is divided into nine equal payments fee, which is due on the **first day of each month (September through May)**. Payments may be dropped off in the school office or mailed to the school.

Late Tuition Payments

Prompt payment of tuition installments enables us to maintain a high-quality program and a beautiful environment for the children as well as to continue a respectful and responsible relationship with all companies and organizations that provide services to our school.

A **late fee of \$30.00** will be assessed **on the 6th day of the month** if tuition has not been received, unless other arrangements have been made with the school office. **If payment is not made during the first week of the month, the student will be automatically dismissed from the school.**

Returned Checks

A **fee of \$30.00** will be assessed for returned checks. Cash or cashier check will be required after the second returned check.

Tuition Payment

Please be sure all payments are clearly marked with your child's name and the reason for payment, such as tuition, field trips, etc. Payments may either be placed in a plain white envelope or handed to a staff member.

Electronic Tuition Payment

Your tuition payments can be made electronically through your bank. Electronic payments simplify your busy schedule. If you have any questions, ask the school registrar.

QuickPay

You may send a payment to montpathways@hotmail.com through the QuickPay with Zelle .

Students are admitted for the full academic year. The agreement to pay for the full academic year is not subject to adjustments for illness, absence, emergency school closing, withdrawal, or dismissal.

As a private school, we sign a contract with parents, according to which they are responsible for the annual tuition rather than the student's daily attendance. Despite the student's absence, the school continues to operate with a regular schedule and reserve a spot for this student.

General School Information

Correspondences and Notices

Montessori Pathways School will be using e-mails as the primary method of communication. Therefore, it is pertinent that the e-mail address on file is always up to date. Please make sure to check your e-mails daily, as all information regarding tuition, field trips, special events, as well as emergency closings and any other important information will be sent via e-mail.

Telephone and E-mail

We try to answer all incoming calls. If we are busy with the children, calls will be answered by our answering machine. You can always communicate by E-mail. We routinely check our phone messages and E-mails each morning and several times during the day.

Conferences and Communication

Each teacher schedules individual parent/teacher conferences during the course of the school year. If at any time you have any questions or concerns, please call the office at 815-459-6727 or send an e-mail to school and the school's administration or the teacher will return your call or will answer by e-mail.

The school's email address for communication with parents is montpathways@hotmail.com. If you would like to contact your classroom's teacher, please put in subject "Attn: Ms. (your classroom's teacher's name)"

Emergency School Closing Information

Montessori Pathways often follows the closure decisions of District 47. If you see notification for District 47 closure, please confirm with one of the additional notification sources below.

Emergency school closings will first **be posted on the home page** of our website (www.montessoripathways.com). You will also be **notified by e-mail** if the school is closed. School closures are determined by extreme road conditions that make driving unsafe, extremely low outside temperature or any other emergency situation.

School Closure due to Pandemic

We all understand that the school operation will not be the same at least for a while. Depending on our community's level of respect, responsibility, and ability to follow the state's requirements, the level of the pandemic can be lower or higher.

We ask all of our school community members to remember about their own health and safety, and the health and safety of the people around them. Please follow all school's rules and requirements regarding health and safety to avoid frequent school closures.

If school closure will be required during Summer Camp, the program will be cancelled for the required period and parents will be released from payments for the closure period.

If school closure will be required during the School Year, distance learning will be provided by the school's faculty.

Tuition during emergency school closure:

During distance learning, all parents will be responsible for School Day tuition or for Morning program tuition if your child was initially enrolled in the Morning program.

Before and After School Care tuition will be waived for the closure period.

If parents will refuse to pay tuition for distance learning program during emergency school closure, their children will be automatically un-enrolled from the school until the end of the school year and their spot will be offered to families on the wait list.

We ask parents to remember that our private school relies on tuition. It does not rely on government funding, so when parents don't pay their tuition because their kids are home schooling due to the pandemic, it causes a shortfall.

Switching to distance learning does not mean the school reduces its expenses such as teachers and other support specialists' (like school's accountant or attorney) salary, rent, property taxes, insurance, maintenance, landscaping, utility bills, official inspection fees, membership fees, etc. Conversely, distance learning requires additional expenses in online and technical support.

As your family chose Montessori Pathways School for your child's education, we are counting on your family's understanding, cooperation, and support in saving our school for your child's education and for the future.

Emergency Procedures

Staff members promptly treat minor accidents. In a severe emergency, we will call 911 and a staff member will accompany your child to the hospital, while other staff attempts to locate you.

Please notify us of any changes in your home address, home, cell or work phone numbers, or your email address immediately.

All families must have an emergency information card on file in the office with updated information. In case of an emergency, your signature will ensure that your child receives the proper care needed.

Student Records

Student records and files are confidential. It is our policy to write a descriptive report at the end of the kindergarten or elementary year. We send a duplicate copy of this report and your child's health records to your child's new school after receiving a request of the records from your child's new school with parents' written authorization to do so.

All financial obligations must be met before records will be issued.

Volunteering

We welcome parents to volunteer. During the school year, there are a variety of opportunities available for parent participation.

Family Events and Parent Meetings

We offer educational and social activities for parents and families. This establishes and supports our school community. We hope that your family will join us for these events and meetings.

Student Address List

Montessori Pathways distributes a class list with names, addresses, and phone numbers of the students per parents' request via email. This class list may be used for arranging carpools, arranging play dates, or sending birthday invitations.

The sharing or use of families' information for solicitation is strictly PROHIBITED.

No school's employees or parents are permitted to distribute a copy or copies of the directory to outside interests, including business or charitable organizations. The Directory and information contained therein is not allowed to be used for solicitation or for commercial use for any purpose.

We will not publish your information in the class address list without your permission. If you choose not to be on the class address list, you will not receive a copy.

Supplies

All families should have received a Supply List through the e-mail. This helps the child to get oriented to thinking about the beginning of the school year. Traditionally, children love to get ready for school by shopping for their supplies. Each level is asked for different items and all items go into the general school supply area to be shared by the school's community. Items do not need to be marked with individual names.

No supplies will be returned in case of child's dismissal or withdrawal from the school after more than 2 weeks of school attendance.

Toys / Jewelry / Electronic Devices

Toys, jewelry, or electronic devices **should be kept at home**. They distract from the many activities we make available to the children and can cause conflicts in social behavior. They also could easily be broken or lost at school or on a playground.

Children who take a nap may bring **one small soft** stuffed animal toy **with no sounds or lights** from home to be kept on his/her cot in the nap room.

Snack

During the school year we may ask your family to bring snack from time to time. It becomes a learning experience for your child in several ways: shopping for the item together, comparing prices, and simply the experience of bringing in something to share with the group.

Flowers

From time to time, we will send a note home asking for fresh flowers, which add to the atmosphere of the class. Additionally, children learn to arrange and care for flowers, and learn the names of many of the varieties.

Birthdays

We enjoy celebrating a child's birthday, acknowledging the child's special day. Traditionally we do this with a short story, highlighting special events in the child's life and with a song. Parents are invited to join us for the celebration. You will receive a "Celebration of Life" note from your teacher prior to your child's birthday.

You are welcome to send special birthday gift bags to be shared with classmates. Due to various dietary and allergy restrictions in our class, we ask that you do not send any food items. Many parents send in gift bags with simple fun things to do, for example playdough, tattoos, or simple crafts. It doesn't need to be anything expensive or fancy!

Birthday Invitations

If you plan a party outside of school, **please mail invitations**. Uninvited children feel neglected and left out. Additionally, you are assured that the invitations are not lost between school and home. **We do not distribute invitations at school.**

A Special Gift

Your family may want to give a gift to the classroom or school. It is a lovely gesture. Please check with the classroom for specific needs and wishes. The family wraps the gift and, at the time of the birthday celebration, the birthday child may open the classroom gift in the presence of his classmates.

Backpacks

Every child will receive a blue Montessori Pathways drawstring bag. It is to be brought home every day with any projects, work, school's information or soiled clothes. Please check the bag each day when you take it home to see if the clothing is soiled and needs to be replaced for the next day. Train your child to be responsible and remember about bringing this bag to school daily. It is your child's responsibility to carry the school's bag to the school and back to the car.

Clothing / Dress Code

Clothing that is comfortable, durable, and easily laundered is best. We recommend no expensive or fancy clothes at school. We would like our students to be able to explore their world without being worried about making their clothes wet or dirty. Choose clothing that permits your child to dress and toilet independently. All students must have the set of spare clothing in their school bin in case of being wet or dirty.

Elementary students' clothing should be simple, comfortable, and non-offensive while reflecting good judgment.

Shirts and blouses should be modest, appropriate for a school setting and all straps must be at least three inches in width. Blouses/shirts must be long enough to be tucked in and stay in waistbands. Excessively revealing clothing is not acceptable. The following are examples of clothing that are unacceptable: tank tops, strapless, spaghetti straps, off-the-shoulder, cut-out designs, low-cut shirts, bare-back, sheer or mesh clothing that does not have an appropriate blouse or shirt underneath, etc.

Gym shoes are required for physical education for all students, along with appropriate clothing for outdoor activities.

Students should not wear hats and boots inside while classes are in session. Jewelry, purses, makeup, and toys do not belong in school, nor do hand-held electronic games, and cellular phones.

School dress code is a way to teach students the importance of a respectable appearance which is a lesson that can positively impact their self-respect and self-esteem.

Students should wear their Montessori Pathways t-shirts for all field trips and school-related outings. Additional t-shirts are available for purchase in the office from toddler to adult sizes.

Outdoor Activity Time

Montessori Pathways has a lovely outdoor environment, and we take advantage of it by going out every day. **Please dress your child weather appropriately to play outside.**

Boots are necessary in the fall, winter, and early spring. During the cold winter weather your child will need: heavy insulated waterproof boots, snow pants, winter jacket, waterproof mittens that are attached together with elastic, and a warm hat and short scarf. PLEASE be sure to LABEL ALL ITEMS.

Items to be Kept at School

Every child should have the following items kept in his/her personal bin at school in a plastic bag.

Please make sure these items are clearly **labeled** with your child's name.

- ◆ **1 set of spare clothes** (shirt, sweater, pants, shorts, socks, etc) in a plastic bag to change into in case of an accident (the clothes should be changed according to season)
- ◆ **2 pairs of underwear** (in a zip-lock bag)
- ◆ **1 pair of school inside shoes**

Please note:

- Children need to keep a pair of indoor shoes at school.
 - Clean, comfortable and safe shoes help maintain a clean and safe environment for the children.
 - Simple tennis shoes or sandals are most practical.
 - Boots are not allowed in the classroom.
- ◆ Indoor and outdoor shoes need to be safe and comfortable.
 - ◆ **Please, NO crocs, shoes with no backs and flip flops** - they are unsafe and uncomfortable in the classroom and on the playground.
 - ◆ **1 comb for boys/1 brush and hair set for girls** (in a zip-lock bag)
 - ◆ If the child is NOT potty trained, **Pull-ups (no diapers, please) and wet wipes** need to be provided on a regular basis.

**Please, check the child's school blue bag daily.
A dry set of clothes must be sent back the next day in exchange
for wet / soiled clothes.**

Discipline Policy

The development of inner discipline in a child is always the goal at our Montessori school. Self-discipline is fostered in many ways. Opportunities are provided for the child to express and define his or her feelings and point of view. Children are engaged in finding a solution with the adult acting as the facilitator.

Teachers work with all children to establish ground rules and to solve conflicts peacefully. We ask the support of parents in monitoring and limiting their child's viewing of violent programs, movies, and video games. As always, any approach to discipline is successful only if everyone involved works together.

Patterns of behavior that are deemed harmful to self and/or others may be resolved by asking the student to leave school for the remainder of the day. This is a drastic but effective method of solving some behavioral difficulties. If limits are repeatedly tested, parents are again requested to

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take the child home. To return to school, the student, parents, teacher, and Head of School must agree on a plan of action. If discipline problems persist, Montessori Pathways may ask the student to leave our community

Minor Misbehavior

Definition: Behavior or general classroom disruption that interferes with the orderly educational process in the classroom or other area of the school.

Example: Minor hitting, taking others' work, provocative behavior, excessive interruptions or silliness.

Variety of Procedures:

1. Staff person engages the child's interest in positive activity.
2. Verbal redirection.
3. Restrict the choices offered to the child.
4. Use of staff presence to help the child stay on task and engaged in appropriate behavior.
5. Remove the child from the escalating situation.
6. Assigning a temporary space in the classroom, this effectively isolates the child from inappropriate interactions.

If the above procedures are ineffective or if the above behaviors are excessive, parents will be contacted.

Serious Misbehavior

Definition: Behavior that results in provoking or hurting others, willful defiance, or deliberate disruption of the classroom.

Example: Hitting, kicking, spitting, biting, throwing objects, damaging property, inappropriate or hurtful language.

Procedures:

1. Immediate intervention by a staff member. Behavior is stopped and addressed.
If it is warranted, the parents will be notified.
2. Plan with the child so the behavior is not repeated.
3. Recurring behavior will be addressed with the parents.

Consequences:

1. The student may need to be assigned a place within the classroom.
2. The parents may be called to pick up the child for the day.
3. Repeated serious behavior may result in the student being asked to withdraw from the school.

Child Safety Policy

- I. **Parent Notifications:** Parents or their authorized emergency contacts will be notified immediately of any accidents, injuries, or illnesses. Behavioral incidents will be communicated on a case by case basis, depending on the seriousness of the incident (determined by Lead Staff). You will be contacted either immediately by phone for urgent matters, or at the end of the school day for less serious matters.
- II. **Child Abuse & Neglect:** All schools, childcare centers, physicians and others who work with children are required by law to inform Child Protective Services at the Department of Human Services of any suspected abuse or neglect of children. By law, a suspicion of child abuse generally means that the reporter has "reasonable cause to believe" or "reasonable cause to

know or suspect” that a child is being maltreated physically, emotionally or mentally. Employees are trained in identifying abuse and neglect.

- III. **Employee Screening:** All employees are subject to criminal screening through the State Police and fingerprinted as mandated by the State of Illinois. Potential employees are required to interview and provide references. All volunteers are screened for abuse and child neglect.
- IV. **Building Security and Emergency Preparation:** Fire Safety inspection is done on a yearly basis. The Montessori Pathways School conducts Fire Drills, Tornado Drills, Lockdown Drills regularly throughout the year. We follow safety and emergency plans that are reviewed on an annual or as needed basis. During the day, all entrances to the building are locked (door can be opened from the inside), playground is fenced, and the gates are locked during the day. There are doorbells on the entrance and magnetic security system that allows keep front door always locked.
- V. **Visitors:** We welcome and encourage visits to the school from parents, outside teachers, prospective families, and the larger community. An appointment for visit is required. When you visit the school, please sign in at the office.
- VI. **Harassment:** All children must be free from harassment and bullying in our school. Children may not be cruel and/or abusive to each other in any way in our environment. If you believe an incident of harassment has occurred with your child, please report it immediately to your child’s teacher. The school will investigate and take appropriate action.
- VII. **Weapons:** The Montessori School is a private property. No weapons of any sort are allowed on our campus. Any individual who is found to have brought a weapon on campus (regardless of a license to carry), will be prohibited from being on The Montessori School property in the future.

Bullying Policy

I. Introduction

At Montessori Pathways School, we are committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. School is a place where students learn the norms and mores of social interactions. As part of the socialization process, all students experiment with a range of behaviors as they learn about social power. However, students sometimes push the limits of this range and engage in behaviors we would consider bullying, as defined in accordance with Illinois State Law below.

Bullying and other forms of peer mistreatment are detrimental to the school environment, as well as student learning, achievement, and well-being. Peer mistreatment interferes with the mission of the school to educate students and disrupts the operations of school. Bullying and other forms of peer mistreatment affect not only students who are targets, but also those who participate in and witness such behavior. These behaviors must be addressed to ensure student safety and an inclusive learning environment.

It is not our intent to prohibit students from expressing their ideas or from engaging in civil debate. However, the school does not condone and will take action in response to conduct that interferes with students’ opportunity to learn, our educational mission, and the operation of the school.

Bullying and Cyberbullying are contrary to Montessori Pathway’s Mission Statement and core values as expressed through ROARS (Respect, Ownership, Appreciation, Responsibility, Safety) and to Illinois state law.

II. Prohibited Behavior

The following behaviors are prohibited:

1. Bullying;
2. Cyberbullying;
3. Harassment;
4. Retaliation against those reporting such defined behaviors; and
5. Making knowingly false accusations of bullying behavior.

Any person who engages in any of these prohibited behaviors that constitutes bullying shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary actions.

III. Bullying and Cyberbullying Defined

A. "Bullying," including "cyberbullying," is any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. *Placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to their person or property*
2. *Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health*
3. *Substantially interfering with the student's academic performance*
4. *Substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by the school*

B. "Cyberbullying" is defined as bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including, but not limited to, a transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted by the use of any electronic device, including, but not limited to, a computer, telephone, cellular telephone, or text messaging device.

Examples of Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying may take various forms, including, but not limited to, one or more of the following:

1. Repeated or pervasive taunting, name-calling, belittling, mocking, put-downs, or demeaning humor
2. Behavior that is likely to harm someone by damaging or manipulating his or her relationships with others, including, but not limited to, gossip, spreading rumors, and social exclusion
3. Non-verbal threats and/or intimidations
4. Hate speech, such as the use of words or images to harass individuals or groups based on gender, gender expression, race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other aspect of identity

Cyberbullying may take various forms, including, but not limited to, the following actions on any electronic medium:

1. Posting slurs or rumors or displaying any defamatory, inaccurate, disparaging, violent, abusive, profane, or sexually oriented material about a student on a website, an app, in social media, or any other electronic platform;
2. Posting misleading or fake photographs or digital video footage of a student on websites or creating fake websites or social networking profiles in the guise of posing as the targeted student;
3. Impersonating or representing another student through the use of that other student's electronic device or account to send e-mail, text messages, instant messages (IM), phone calls, or other messages on a social media website;

4. Sending e-mail, text messages, IM, or leaving voice mail messages that are mean or threatening, or so numerous as to bombard the target's e-mail account, IM account, or cell phone; and
5. Using a camera phone or digital video camera to take and/or send embarrassing photos or "sexting" photographs of other students.

Obviously, the school cannot control the bullying behavior of students through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school related location, activity, function, or program, or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the school. If the out-of-school bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of school, parents of all parties will be contacted, and the school will determine the appropriate natural consequences. This applies if a school administrator or teacher receives a report that bullying through this means has occurred.

C. "Retaliation" means an act or gesture against a student for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. "Retaliation" also includes knowingly falsely reporting an act of bullying.

D. "Alternative discipline" means disciplinary action other than suspension or expulsion from school that is designed to correct and address the root causes of a student's specific misbehavior while retaining the student in class or school, or restorative school practices to repair the harm done to relationships and persons from the student's misbehavior.

IV. Reporting

Bullying or suspected bullying should be reported in person or in writing (including anonymously) to the Director of Montessori Pathways School, Ms. Alena Baradzina, montpathways@hotmail.com

A. School staff, coaches, and teachers of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities are required to report alleged incidents of bullying to the Director of Montessori Pathways School. Any other adult working or volunteering in the school will be encouraged to promptly report observed or suspected alleged incidents of bullying to the Director of Montessori Pathways School

B. Students who are believed to have been bullied or are aware of incidents of bullying are strongly encouraged to report this behavior to a staff member or school administrator.

C. Parents and other adults who believe that an incident of bullying has occurred are encouraged to report this behavior to a staff member or school administrator.

D. Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an alleged incident of bullying are prohibited. Any student who is determined to have knowingly falsely accused another of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary consequences.

V. Responding

The Director of Montessori Pathways School will:

A. Promptly (usually within ten days) investigate and respond to allegations of bullying behavior;

B. Keep written documentation of all allegations of bullying behavior and outcomes of the investigations.

C. Inform parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student(s) who was alleged to have bullied AND of the student(s) who was believed to have been bullied that a report of an alleged incident of bullying has been made;

D. Communicate to the parent(s) or guardian(s) of a student(s) who was believed to have been bullied the measures being taken to ensure the safety of the student(s) who was believed to have been bullied and to prevent further acts of bullying;

E. Inform parent(s) or guardian(s) of the students involved the findings of the investigation and actions to be taken;

F. Communicate with local or state law enforcement agencies, if, in the judgment of the school, it is believed that the pursuit of criminal charges or a civil action under Illinois law may be appropriate.

VI. Remediation

The Director of Montessori Pathways will:

A. Identify the specific nature(s) of the incident.

B. Apply disciplinary actions, which may include, but are not limited to, imposing a series of graduated consequences that follow our Misbehavior and Natural Consequences guidelines and/or include alternative discipline.

In determining the appropriate response to students who engage in bullying behavior, school administrators will consider the type of behaviors, the frequency and/or pattern of behaviors, and other relevant circumstances. Alternative discipline includes, but is not limited to:

1. Meeting with the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s);
2. Reflective activities, such as requiring the student to write an essay about the student's misbehavior;
3. Mediation, but only when there is mutual conflict between peers, rather than one-way negative behavior, and both parties voluntarily choose this option;
4. Counseling;
5. Anger management;
6. Health counseling or intervention;
7. Mental health counseling;
8. Participation in skills building and resolution activities, such as social-emotional cognitive skills building, resolution circles, and restorative conferencing;
9. Community service; and
10. In-school detention or suspension, which may take place during lunchtime or after school.

C. Remediate any substantiated incident of bullying to counter the negative impact of the bullying and reduce the risk of future bullying incidents, which may include referring the victim, perpetrator, or other involved persons to counseling or other appropriate services.

VII. Assignment of Responsibility

A. The Director of School is responsible for:

1. Annually providing written versions of this policy and related procedures to students, parent(s) and guardian(s), volunteers, administrators, teachers, and school staff;
2. Posting this policy and related procedures on the school website;
3. Including in the Community Handbook a section that addresses in detail this policy and related procedures;
4. Oversight, implementation, and enforcement of this policy and its procedures;

5. Designating School staff, the instructors of Extra-Curricular Programs, or other school personnel to administer the policy;
6. Ensuring that the prohibition on bullying and retaliation and the attendant consequences apply to any student, school employee, contractor, visitor, or volunteer who engages in conduct that constitutes bullying or retaliation;
7. Providing professional development and staff training in the best practices in prevention of bullying and harassment and implementation of this policy; and
8. Filing this policy that addresses bullying and cyberbullying with the Illinois State Board of Education.

Illness

The safety and health of our students and staff is always the highest priority at our school. To keep our environment safe, we strictly follow all recommendations and requirements from state and local health departments. Depending on these requirements, we are reviewing and updating health-related plans and procedures.

Per MCDH, while public health officials provide guidance on best practice prevention and management strategies to reduce the risk of transmission of any communicable disease, school officials hold the ultimate authority and discretion to develop policies to keep their schools safe.

We require parents to learn the Health Guidance for Parents (will be provided in the beginning of the school year) **attentively and strictly follow it to help us in keeping our community safe and healthy and running our school successfully.**

A child who shows any signs of illness or unusual fatigue should not attend school. This ensures the well-being of the individual child, his or her classmates and our staff.

If your child has a fever, diarrhea, vomiting, green nasal discharge, severe cough, encrusted eyelashes upon awakening or any other contagious condition, he or she must be kept at home and evaluated by doctor.

Your child should be free of all of the above-mentioned symptoms for at least 24 hours without the use of medications before returning to school. All other symptoms must be treated and improved.

The “Returning to School” requirements may change during Pandemic. Please follow School’s Reopening Protocol that will be provided to parents at Pandemic.

During school hours, if a staff member observes symptoms, the child will be isolated from others and you will be contacted to take the child home promptly. Please ensure that there is always a way to reach you as this concerns the health of your child. Every minute matters.

In the case of communicable diseases, such as strep, chicken pox, pink eye, influenza, etc., we will need to know your doctor’s recommendation.

Please report the disease immediately upon confirmation so that other parents can be notified.

NO prescribed or over-the-counter medication (including any natural or organic pills or syrup), ointment or cream can be provided or applied to the child by Montessori Pathways staff without permission with detailed information about the time and dosage **signed by parents and child’s pediatrician.**

Any permission should be updated for every new school year.

Absences

The parents/guardians are required to notify school if child will be absent because we wait for each child and are concerned if they do not arrive with no notification.

If your child is ill, please call or E-mail us. Let us know the illness and approximate duration of absence. We check our messages regularly.

In the case of a vacation or other planned absence, please notify us of the dates in advance that we could cancel your child's lunch order to avoid waste of food. A written note or E-mail would be appreciated.

The school cannot make tuition adjustments for absences due to illness, vacations, or emergency school closing.

Health Information

If your child exhibits any of these symptoms, please notify the school immediately and follow the guidelines below.

COVID-19 - [Symptoms of COVID-19](#) include fever (100.4°F or higher), new onset of moderate to severe headache, runny nose, congestion, shortness of breath, new cough, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, new loss of sense of taste or smell, fatigue from unknown cause, muscle or body aches from unknown cause...

Do not bring your child to school if you observe any of these symptoms and consult your doctor. Please make sure your child has been **vomit / diarrhea free for at least 48 hours, fever free without the use of fever reduce medications (such as Advil or Tylenol) for at least 24 hours, and other symptoms are improved before bringing him or her to school.**

INFLUENZA - commonly called "the flu," is a contagious infection of the respiratory tract caused by the influenza virus. Compared with most viral respiratory infections, such as the common cold, influenza infection often causes a more severe illness.

Symptoms: fever (usually high), headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Most people who get the flu recover completely in 1 to 2 weeks, but some people develop serious and potentially life-threatening medical complications, such as pneumonia.

Do not bring your child to school if you observe any of these symptoms and consult your doctor. Please make sure your child has been **fever free without the use of fever reduce medications (such as Advil or Tylenol) for at least 24 hours and other symptoms are improved** before bringing him or her to school.

HAND-FOOT-MOUTH disease — a mild, contagious viral infection common in young children — is characterized by sores in the mouth and a rash on the hands and feet. Hand-foot-and-mouth disease is most commonly caused by a coxsackievirus.

There's no specific treatment for hand-foot-and-mouth disease. You can reduce your risk of infection from hand-foot-and-mouth disease by practicing good hygiene, such as washing your hands often and thoroughly

CHICKENPOX - Onset is 2 to 3 weeks after exposure.

Symptoms: Slight fever, irritability for 1 day and fine blisters on the trunk and face. Your child is contagious for up to 5 days. **Do not bring your child to school for 5 days after the rash appears or until all scabs dry, whichever is first.** Consult your physician.

STREP THROAT – Onset is 2 to 5 days after exposure.

Symptoms: Sore throat that comes on rapidly without runny nose or congestion, fever (sometimes greater than 102 degrees), throat is raw and red, white pus on tonsils, painful swallowing, headache, loss of appetite, fatigue, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. **Do not bring your child to school until 24 hours after first dose of medicine has been administered.**

Consult your physician.

CONJUNCTIVITIES (PINK EYE) – Onset is 24 to 62 hours after exposure.

Symptoms: Irritated, tearing, swollen eyelids and yellow mucous discharge that makes the eye sticky. It is very contagious. **Do not bring your child to school until 24 hours after first dose of medicine has been administered.**

Consult your physician.

HEAD LICE – For 2 weeks after exposure, observe your child's hair and scalp at their neckline and around her ears for eggs or nits (tiny, pearly white, egg-shaped objects) that stick to hair shafts. Your child may complain of an itchy head. **Do not bring your child to school until 24 hours after treatment begins.** Carefully check other members of the family for eggs or nits.

Consult your physician or pharmacist for treatment.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

For the safety and wellbeing of the children, we have developed the following arrival and dismissal procedures. Please refrain from using your cell phone during arrivals and dismissals. Your child and our staff deserve your undivided attention. In the best interest of the students, please attend to these requirements of safe action.

- Please remember to always put pedestrians and the safety of others first.
- PLEASE drive SLOWLY in and out of the driveways. The street speed limit is 25 mph.
- Please do not block any driveways and be courteous to our neighbors!
- When leaving your car, please turn off the engine and lock your car. Do not leave any children unattended in the car.
- To maintain the flow of traffic, please move ahead promptly when waiting in line to drop off or pick up your child and pull up as far forward as possible. Remember that the drop-off/pick-up area is NOT the time to have a conversation with your child's teacher.
Should you have questions or need to talk with a teacher, please call to make an appointment. Our primary concern at arrival and dismissal is every child's safety.
- No parking is allowed in front of the building.
- Always hold your child's hand when walking through the parking lot or crossing the street.
- Make sure the teacher has greeted your child before you leave at arrival time.
- Do not leave the school with your child without informing the staff about it at dismissal time.
- Only parents or authorized persons will be allowed to pick up a child. A written note is needed from the parents or legal guardian and given to the staff or emailed if someone else is picking up a child. Identification will be requested.
- Only Montessori Pathways' staff can open school's door for visitors. No parents, children, or other visitors are allowed to open the front door for other parents or visitors.

Morning and School Day Programs Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival Time - 8:30 a.m.-8:45 a.m. - Please be prompt.

We ask that you get into the carpool line in front of the school.

Do not block the commuter parking lot exit, the neighbor's driveway, or the school driveway.

A staff member will open the car door for your child, greet your child and family and escort your child safely into the school or to a small group of children waiting on the benches. A good-bye at the car is easier than in the classroom or even the school building. It gives the child confidence and assurance to enter “their world” independently.

Dismissal Time

- **Morning Class: 11:45am -11:50am**
- **School Day: 3:15pm - 3:20pm**

To facilitate an orderly dismissal of the children, we will give each family a carpool number. Every time you pick up your child, please display the number in the front windshield; hold it up, clip it to your rearview mirror bracket or your visor as soon as you turn the corner onto Illinois Street. Many cars look alike and because of the reflection of light on the windshield, it is impossible for us to identify the driver.

Since we have a list corresponding to the carpool assignments, we can get your child ready for prompt pickup. The teacher will lead your child to your car, but it is the parents’ responsibility to place the child in the car seat and buckle him or her.

Morning/School Day Late Fee Policy

In consideration of our staff, their personal commitments, their responsibilities and the importance of proper supervision of the children, we must insist that every child be picked up by their dismissal time depending on the schedule.

If there is an emergency and you are going to arrive late, please call to let us know so that we can reassure your child. Children become anxious when they are left waiting after others have gone.

We understand the occasional emergency, but the late fee still applies.

Parents picking up late will be charged a late fee of **\$5.00 for each 5-minute increment.** Late fees begin to accrue at 11:55am for Morning Program and 3:25pm for School Day Program

Extended School Day and All-Day Programs Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival Time

- **Extended School Day– any time between 7:45 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.**
- **All Day– any time between 6:45 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.**

Parents bringing their children before 8:30 A.M. should park in the parking lot of the school. Unattended cars can be ticketed for parking in front of the school since there is “No Parking” area. Walk to the front door and ring the doorbell. A staff member will greet your child and escort your child to his or her classroom. A calm entrance sets the tone for your child’s entire day. Please move slowly and speak softly. All children need to be at school by 8:45 a.m.

If you arrive after 8:45 a.m., please join the carpool line. A staff member will open the car door for your child, greet your child and family and see your child safely into the school. If you need to come in, please park across the street or in the school lot and come to the front door.

Dismissal Time

- **Extended School Day - 4:15pm -4:20pm**
- **All Day - any time between 3:30 p.m.-6:00 p.m. at your convenience**

Please park your car in the school parking lot. Walk to the front door and ring the doorbell.

Afternoon Late Fee Policy

Our school closes at 6:00 PM. In consideration of our staff, their personal commitments, their responsibilities and the importance of proper supervision of the children, we must insist that every child be picked up by their dismissal time depending on the schedule.

If there is an emergency and you are going to arrive late, please call to let us know so that we can reassure your child. Children become anxious when they are left waiting after others have gone.

We understand the occasional emergency, but the late fee still applies.

Parents arriving late will incur a late fee of \$5.00 for each five (5) minute increment to be paid to the adult who is present.

All Day Routines

Breakfast

Many children find it too difficult to get up, get dressed, brush their teeth and eat before leaving their house in the morning. As such, the children are welcome to bring their breakfast and eat it at school if they arrive to school before 7:45am.

Please remember **WE ARE A NUTS/PEANUTS FREE SCHOOL.**

Snack

A morning and afternoon snack are always available.

Lunch

Lunch is an opportunity to develop good eating habits. In keeping with balanced nutritional practices, the children will be served **an organic healthy hot lunch** provided by a professional caterer. In addition, fresh fruits and vegetables are provided with every hot lunch. A variety of foods will be presented, giving the children many opportunities to taste different foods and broaden their appetite to include many healthy and nutritional selections

Vegetarian and Gluten Free/Dairy Free options are available.

The menu is posted on our web site: <http://www.montessoripathways.com/Site/pdf/menu.pdf>

Please advise the office if your child has any food allergies.

Lunchtime is also a social time when we practice grace and courtesy. There is a special routine to lunch. Each child has a set place with a plate, silverware, and glass. We use cloth tablecloths and napkins for a more pleasant atmosphere. Often fresh flowers decorate our tables. We wait to begin eating until each child at the table is ready. We then recite our group poem or sing our community song. The colorful tablecloths, music and fresh flowers create a calm atmosphere for the social experience of eating together and enjoying each other's company and conversation.

If your child has dietary or religious restrictions, or simply prefers lunch from home, you can send home healthy lunch with your child daily. No sweets, juice or Gatorade, or junk food please.

We are NUT/PEANUT FREE school, so no food that contains nuts or peanuts please.

Nap Time

Naptime is from 1:30 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. for the preschool children (3 – 4.5 y.o.). We provide a clean sheet and cots for the children who nap. Most children like to sleep with a stuffed animal, and we encourage them to keep ONE (but no more than one) in the nap room. The nap toy will be kept at school to avoid child's drama for the next day if toy is forgotten.

In addition, your child will need ONE small, travel size pillow and ONE small, cot size blanket. Having their own personal items provides familiarity, comfort, and security for the children at naptime. However, please be sure to only bring one of each, as having too many items distracts the children from sleeping. Please be sure to label all items clearly with your child's name.

Carpool Etiquette

We require all parents acting in accordance with the following carpool etiquette:

1. **Calm down and be patient.** Just remember that you are all in this together and you all have one common goal in mind – to drop off or pick up your kid(s) and go to work on time or get back home safely. While it's entirely too easy to get frustrated when it seems that other parents are just slowing down the process, avoid the temptation to honk or cut the line. Please remember that you are driving around the childcare facility and there are many children around.

The safety of our children and our community is our priority. Our children are also watching, and they will model our behavior, so let's all do our part in providing the kids with a good example to replicate.

Plan your morning and afternoon accordingly to avoid any frustration and harsh driving.

2. **Slow down speed racer!** While driving like a racer might be acceptable on the freeway, this is a school zone. As such, there are little people everywhere and most aren't paying attention to what they are doing because they assume that the moms and dads driving in the area aren't going to hit them. If you're running so late that you feel the need to race through the parking lot, perhaps you should set your alarm clock a little earlier.

3. **Do not keep the car line.** Be alerted and keep moving your car as soon as the car line is moving. As soon as your child is dropped off or picked up, drive forward immediately and let the next car move up in the line.

4. **Don't socialize** – at least not during drop-off and pick-up hours. If you need to have a conversation with another parent for any reason, park the car or schedule some time to chat later in the day.

5. **Please drive in the correct direction** – not the opposite direction of everyone else. There are lines for drop-off and pick-up, which often means that you do not come out the same way you came in. Know which is which and get in line. Just follow all the other cars, and all the parents waiting patiently ahead of you will gladly thank you for adhering to the traffic pattern. On a similar note, if someone else is picking up your child, educate them on how the process works so they don't cause a jam.

Waiting in the carpool line doesn't have to be a drag. With a lot of patience and the right attitude, you and your child are going to have a great school year and experience.

Summer Camp

Give Your Child the Gift of Discovery

Thinking about summer? We are! Summer is a time for fun and friends.

Montessori Pathways School is proud to present summer enhancement programs for children ages 3-12. Each week is full of engaging ideas and projects. There are many opportunities for learning and creative self-expression. Designed to give families maximum flexibility, children can sign up for the entire camp or for selected weeks, depending on family plans or just to beat the "nothing to do" blues. Each week's program is independent and self-contained.

Montessori Pathways School mini-camps will focus on particular topics each week. Our teachers are all early childhood specialists who have many years of classroom experience and have designed these programs to stimulate your child's interest in learning while keeping it fun.

Our goal is to provide the campers with an opportunity to retain and develop their skills in a relaxed, summer atmosphere. We will combine exciting adventures with creative opportunities for learning. While forming new friendships, children will have ample time for play, personal growth and free exploration. A portion of the day will be allotted for the exploration of Montessori materials.

These campers will experience a new theme every week! Each week will include cooking, crafts, music and gym related to the theme of the week. Children will have a lot of fun in our backyard playing games, bathing in the sun and water. Aside from the field trips, we plan to bring many interesting activities to the school as well. The activities include: a petting zoo, Aloha dancers, firefighters with a fire truck, magic show, and many more.

Montessori Pathways School summer hours are 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., weekly. Parents have a choice of four daily schedules:

- 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. - All Day Program (7:00-8:00am is available per parents' request for an extra charge)
- 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. – Extended School Day Program
- 8:45 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. - School Day Program
- 8:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. – Morning Program

Rates are based on 5-day enrollment. There is an option of 4 or 3 days per week. All schedules include ample time for enrichment experiences with outdoor playtime/water time added.

Since the spots at our Summer Camp are limited, we first accommodate the needs of the families whose children are registered for the following school year. If your child is not registered at or withdrawn from our school, a spot at our Summer Camp is not guaranteed for your family.