



# Parent - Child Handbook

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## Section A:

### Campus Hours

World of Knowledge: A Montessori School is open from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

### School Hours

School bell rings at 9 AM. School ends at 3 PM.

Study Hall runs from 3 PM – 4 PM Monday thru Thursday. (not required but recommended)

### Tuition & Fees

- If you choose a lump sum payment plan for kindergarten through high school, payment needs to be received by July 1<sup>st</sup> or you will be changed from a lump sum payment plan to a monthly payment plan customer.
- We offer a monthly payment plan, payments are due on the first of the month with no fees unless paid after the due date. Payments are broken up into 10 monthly payments as a courtesy to the parents, but tuition is billed annually. There will be a \$25.00 late fee if the monthly payments are not paid by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. There will be an additional \$25.00 late fee if the tuition has not been paid by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.
- The yearly registration fee is due with contract. This ensures your child's spot in the classroom. Non-refundable.
- The yearly book fee is due by July 1. Non-refundable.
- The yearly technology fee is due by July 1. Non-refundable.
- Fees are payable whether your child attends or not for any reason. This is to maintain your child's place in our school and to regulate the teacher-child ratio.
- There will be a \$30.00 charge for any tuition or any other check issued to World of Knowledge: A Montessori School that is returned by a bank.

## Section B:

### Registration and Admission to School

- Please be sure all addresses and phone numbers on your child's card are kept current and inform us immediately **in writing** of any changes. It is essential, in case of an emergency, that we have updated information.
- New enrolling students and children entering our pre-school program & 7<sup>th</sup> graders must have a current shot record and physical on file in the office.
- New enrolling students (all ages) must have a birth certificate on file in the office.
- New enrolling students (all ages) will receive an assessment upon entering a classroom.
- Students will be admitted on a trial basis until it is determined that your child is able to adapt safely to this environment. Fees / tuition already paid will not be refunded if a fit is not made between the school and student.
- Report cards, IEP, 504 or any necessary paperwork are required for enrollment.

### Attendance Policy

#### **Kindergarten, Elementary, Middle and High School**

We follow the Pasco County School Board guidelines for attendance. Students may miss up to ten (10) days per semester **with** a physician note for illness of 3 or more days. If we do not receive a note upon return to school, absences will be marked as unexcused. If a student is going to be absent, we require a phone call or email from the parent / guardian explaining why their child(ren) is not in school. A student must be present for more than half the day in order to not be marked absence. Missed school work is required to be completed within a reasonable time frame. Advance notice and work must be accomplished for excused vacation times. **It is the Montessori philosophy that all work will be caught up.**

Special Note: A student who is 14 years or older who is absent for 15 days or more in a 90 day period is subject, by state statute, to denial of driver's license issue.

All students that are absent for 15 days or more in a 90 day period, may be reported to the state for truancy.

#### **VPK**

VPK children must attend on a regular basis in order to keep their VPK funding. If their attendance drops below 80%, parents may be responsible for paying what VPK does not cover.

Perfect attendance is defined as being present every day of the school year for the entire day without being tardy to school or without being checked out early from school.

Parents please be aware and understand that attendance is critical to successful learning.

## Tardy Policy

### **Kindergarten, Elementary, Middle School and High School**

Tardies to school present a distraction in the classroom as well as hindering the child from receiving all of the necessary curriculum to complete classroom work. We ask for complete cooperation from the parents in bringing the students to school on time. This not only helps with the distraction in class but provides a positive reminder that being on time is being responsible and is a trait that will follow them throughout their life. A student becomes tardy when they are not in his/her assigned class once the bell rings at 9 am. A student must have a doctor's note in order to receive an excused tardy. Every three (3) unexcused tardies will be counted towards one (1) unexcused absence.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Tardy – Warning issued
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tardy – 1 day of lunch detention
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Tardy – 5 days of lunch detention
- 4<sup>th</sup> Tardy – After School Detention (Parent Contact)

### **VPK**

Due to the students only being on campus from 9 am – 12 pm, we discourage having them arrive to school after the bell rings at 9 am. A student must have a doctor's note in order to receive an excused tardy.

## Disciplinary Procedures

- 15 or more unexcused absences could result in a report to DCF for truancy. (state requirement)
- Excessive absences and / or tardies could result in IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION (ISS) and / or result in losing field trips, extracurricular activities, etc.
- - 1<sup>st</sup> Tardy – Warning issued
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Tardy – 1 day of lunch detention
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Tardy – 5 days of lunch detention / tardies convert to an unexcused absence.
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Tardy – After School Detention (Parent Contact)

## Dismissal of a Child

- All children must be signed out in the office or multipurpose room each and every time they leave the school grounds.
- Your child's registration card provides a space for persons other than immediate family who are permitted to pick up your child. For your child's protection, please inform us in writing if someone not on the card is to pick him/her up. Please inform us, in writing, if the additional pick up people change.
- No removal of a child from the gate area of the playground is permitted without signing your child out.
- Please avoid picking up your child during school hours unless absolutely necessary.
- Should it be necessary to deliver or pick up your child during school hours and a member of the staff is not visible, please do the following: open the door quietly and permit the child to enter. The teacher will immediately notice the child's presence. The parent should not go into the class. This eliminates the disruption of the class.

## Dismissal time

**Half-Day Pre-School** and **VPK** is at 12:00 PM.

If your child is not picked up by 12:30 PM, you will be charged a full day rate. Please refer to the tuition page in the contract for rates.

**Full Day Pre-School** and **VPK** is at 4 PM. Please refer to the tuition page in the contract for rates.

**School Day students (Kindergarten thru High School)** are to be picked up at 3 PM unless they stay for Study Hall. Pick up for study hall is 4 PM. Study Hall is Monday thru Thursday. Students must be picked up on time to avoid a late fee pick up charge. Please refer to the tuition page in the contract for rates.

**After Care students** are to be picked up by 6 PM in order to avoid a late fee pick up charge. Please refer to the tuition page in the contract for rates. **Since the teacher's time is valuable, a \$25.00 late charge will be assessed after 6:00 pm so be punctual. An additional \$15.00 charge will be assessed for every 10 minutes thereafter. This is per incident.**

## Retention Policy

It is World of Knowledge: A Montessori School's policy to prepare students to meet the academic challenges as well as social challenges that face them at World of Knowledge or any academic institution. This means that all reasonable efforts will be extended to ensure their success. Including, but not limited to, altering the methodology of the academic approach, conferencing with family members and/or acquiring a support mentor for the struggling student as well as offering tutoring services during study hall times. Additional tutoring may be available with the students teacher's depending on schedules. Please see your child's teacher for more information.

If the above-mentioned methods do not bring satisfactory results the kindergarten, elementary, middle school or high school students can be retained in any grade at either parent's (or guardian's) request or at the discretion of the teacher after a conference with administration.

## Section C:

### Parent Involvement

#### Parent Booster Organization (PBO)

This organization is an important part of our program and we strongly urge all families to actively participate in all of its functions. We are always looking for board members, if you have any interest, please let the office know.

#### Philosophy:

The ability to continue and maintain quality private education in today's environment is directly related to the foresight and planning of today's school administrators, teachers and parents. The active involvement of each toward common goals and objectives only enhances the opportunity of the school to continue its function of educating young people.

#### Policy:

The administration recognizes the need to plan for the school's current and future needs and growth. The efforts of all are needed to keep tuition manageable for our families. It is for this reason that we request the participation of all our parents in fundraising efforts and volunteer work. These efforts serve a twofold purpose: that of building community through working together and also raising money to help the operation of the school budget and updating/expanding the materials and facility. Studies show students learn better when their parents are involved.

#### Guidelines:

- It is required that each family contribute twenty (20) hours of service each year.
- If parents are not able to commit to the twenty (20) hours may make a monetary donation of \$400.00 in lieu of their time (\$20.00 / hour). Please make your check payable to: World of Knowledge: A Montessori School. In the memo line please include "Parent Involvement Donation"
- Volunteer hours can be accumulated in numerous ways. See parent involvement opportunities below.
- No person will be left unsupervised on campus with students unless that person has a background check on file with World of Knowledge.
- Each family is required to sign a Parent Involvement Contract. See enrollment contract.
- All families are encouraged to keep a record of their completed hours in case discrepancies arise between hours actually worked and hours reported.

#### Parent Involvement Opportunities

1. Field trips. A Note to Chaperone Form filled out and returned with a copy of your Driver's License. Required to drive.
2. School Events (Open House, Thanksgiving Dinner, Book Fair, Holiday Bazaar, Spring Fling, Movie Night, etc)
3. Serve on the PBO Board (Research / organize updated curriculum, fundraisers, field trips, etc.)
4. Office Work / Errands / Answering Phones
5. Yard clean-up / Gardening
6. Yearbook
7. Organizing Fundraisers
8. Advertising / Communications
9. Playground / lunch monitoring
10. Handyman / Construction Work



## Section D:

### Disciplinary Policies

The child is the center and reason for our school. We want each child to develop to his/her potential. The Montessori Method lets the child develop to be the best that he/she can be.

In the Montessori classroom, the child has a great deal of freedom to learn and grow. This freedom does come with some limitations, in that this freedom is freedom with responsibility. The children must also **respect** the other children in the classroom, their teachers and the classroom equipment. The child must also respect general classroom rules, playground rules and after school rules.

### Pre-school / VPK Discipline Policy:

When the staff of this school must step in and act as a disciplinarian, this is the process that will take place.

1. The child will be asked to sit out in the class for a short period of time. Either the child or the teacher will set the time (usually 5-10 minutes maximum).
2. If the disruptive behavior continues and sitting out in the classroom (or playground) isn't effective, the child will be asked to sit out for approximately 5-10 minutes in an isolated area away from other children (an adult will be present).
3. If #2 isn't effective, the child will be isolated in the office for a specific time (usually 15 minutes).
4. If disruptive behavior continues, the parent will be called in for a conference.

The parent must be available for this conference (planned at a convenient time for both parent and teacher.) If, after all of these measures have been met and no solution can be reached, the child may ultimately be asked to leave the school.

### Elementary/Middle School/High School Discipline Policy:

Teachers and Directresses must administer discipline in accordance with regulations of the State Board of Education. Pupils should be treated kindly, considerately and humanely following the "Golden Rule". *"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."*

1. Communication with parents is an important element in maintaining good discipline. If a particular child is having difficulty either academically or behaviorally, frequent communication with parents is necessary in order to ensure a change.
  - a) Teacher conferences with the parents should be arranged as necessary. Administration will be notified of meeting. Meetings are to be made in order for a discussion to take place. Our staff are informed that status updates on the child may not take place on the playground or in the classroom.
  - b) Administration should be informed and participate in the conference if the behavior continues.
  - c) A record shall be kept of all conferences.

2. The teacher's approach should be one of preventing the situation that would necessitate stringent measures, rather than enforcing a remedy after the case gets out of hand. Good discipline frequently grows out of good organization. Students who know what to expect and who are productively involved in the education process are less likely to be disciplinary problems.

- a) Regular classroom observations will be arranged between teachers and the administration.
- b) A list of classroom rules, goals and expectations encompassing courtesy, behavior, homework, class participation, and care and maintenance of the classroom can be helpful tools in maintaining good discipline. It is suggested that such a list be available in each classroom.

**Rationale:**

Self-discipline is a characteristic of the Montessori environment. As the school builds community, it develops in the students' awareness that sensible rules serve to safeguard the individual's freedom. Rules of behavior are, of course, necessary. They must be for the circumstances of the school, well known and administered fairly. Demonstrated respect for each individual, whether student or faculty member, fosters a spirit of mutual respect in which orderly behavior flourishes. Well-prepared and conducted classes reduce disciplinary problems, especially when positive motivation for conduct and achievement is apparent.

Academic sanctions (i.e. course failure or low marks) should not be used as a disciplinary measure. Marks should reflect the level of mastery of a particular subject matter and not behavior; although poor behavior might cause a student to do poorly academically.

Decisions regarding disciplinary sanctions should always be made in light of what is in the best interest of the individual child keeping in mind that this cannot place unreasonable burdens on teachers or other children.

The following behaviors on the part of the student, will result in some disciplinary sanctions:

- a) Speaking or acting in any way or manner that is disrespectful to any adult. Fellow students should be treated with respect also.
- b) Fighting
- c) Vandalism or littering, disruptive behavior.
- d) Unexcused absences / tardiness from school.
- e) Repeated lack of homework.
- f) Repeated gum chewing.
- g) Uniform infractions

## Detention:

Proctored detention periods will be held. Consistent and repeated problems need parent involvement.

1. Parent Conferences
2. Loss of recess
3. Loss of class field trips
4. Non-participation in extracurricular activities
5. ISS
6. Out of school suspension
7. Expulsion

## **Sanctions 4 through 6 will be joint decisions between administration and teachers.**

Administration and teachers are responsible for maintaining good discipline at all times throughout the building with all students. The discipline policy created at the school needs to be supported by the parents in order to ensure a positive result and progression of positive behavior.

## **Section E:**

### Playground Rules (for all classrooms)

Please share these rules with your child(ren). Our goal is for all students to remain safe on the playground. These rules are not to keep them from having fun, but to help ensure that they will be safe.

1. No jumping from any playground equipment
2. No flips, hanging upside down or sitting on top of the beehive.
3. No jumping of any kind from swings
4. No climbing on trees
5. Preschoolers are not allowed jump ropes unless supervised by an adult
6. No climbing on basketball hoops
7. One child per tire
8. No kicking of basketballs
9. No climbing on fences
10. No funny swinging or flips on swings
11. No body parts through fences
12. No fighting on playground (karate kicks)
13. No throwing sticks, stones or rocks
14. No climbing or jumping on picnic tables
15. No throwing sand
16. Improper use of the slides
17. No swinging or gun playing.

## Section F:

### Dress Code

#### Pre-School / VPK

- Please do not feel it is necessary to have your child dressed up for class. Comfortable clothes are fine. Closed toe shoes. **No sandals or flip flops.**
- Please be sure your child's clothing is of the variety that can be easily removed by him/her for bathroom purposes. (i.e. no zippers on back of clothing, no difficulty to undo belts, etc.) Please, no overalls for those in pre-school.
- To facilitate safe, unhampered movement within the classroom and on the playground, please do not permit your child to wear jewelry to school. No purses please. Please be sure to mark all of your child's personal belongings with their name (i.e. coats, sweaters, jackets, lunch boxes, etc.) World of Knowledge: A Montessori School will not be responsible for lost items.
- Clothing with vulgar or inappropriate sayings are not allowed (the child will be sent home).

#### Elementary/Middle School/High School Dress Code

- Uniform school logo shirts are to be worn every day, unless otherwise authorized as a dress down day.
- Bottoms: Girls only – Shorts / skirts – must be longer than the child's middle finger when hands hang down at sides. Boys – Shorts / Pants. Solid colors only – tan, blue, black, khaki green, khaki beige, grey or jean shorts. No bright colors or designs.
- Clothing must fit reasonably well so that undergarments are not easily visible. Shorts, slacks and jeans must be belted and worn at the waist. No baggy pants. No holes or rips in clothing, no fake holes or rips.
- Comfortable shoes or athletic shoes. No heels. No sandals. No heelies.
- No caps or scarves allowed at all. No hoodies inside the classroom.
- No permanent or temporary tattoos.
- No wild hairstyles or colors.
- Only ears may be pierced
- No black lipstick
- T-shirts with inappropriate sayings (i.e. vulgar or anti-education) are never acceptable on dress out days or during P.E.
- Students not properly attired will be supplied with other clothing or sent home to change.

See Elem Rules for specifics

## Section G:

### Health

Health Forms – State Law (232.032,F.S) requires that all children entering a Florida school for the first time must be immunized. These requirements can be waived only if a properly signed health or religious exemption is filed with the school. School health forms must be submitted no later than the first week of school. It is a county regulation that student health examination forms be reviewed every two years and that booster shots be administered according to county health department regulations.

**Children entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade or above must have Hepatitis B vaccine series, tetanus/diphtheria and 2<sup>nd</sup> dose of measles vaccine (preferably MMR). All state required health forms must be provided and kept on file in the main office.**

### Sickness

We strongly urge parents to keep children home when they are ill. Children with severe colds or symptoms of any illness should not come to school.

- Children returning to school after having a communicable disease must have a physician's written statement of release.
- In the event of illness or accident (unless emergency circumstances prevail which require our immediate attention), parents will be notified to pick up said child.
- In the event of an emergency, the school will call an ambulance service to transport your child to an emergency center.
- It is also a requirement that we have some other person be responsible in case of an emergency if the school is unable to contact either parent or guardian.
- Child must be fever-free for 24 hours without medication before returning to school.

### Medicine

School personnel are not authorized to administer medication to students except under the following conditions:

1. Faculty members may administer prescribed medication if supplied in the original bottle. The label on the bottle **MUST** contain the name and telephone number of the pharmacy, the pupil's identification, name of the physician, name and dosage of the drug and the prescription number as placed there by the pharmacy.
2. When your child needs to receive medication at school, parents are required to fill out a form for administration of medication in the school office.

### Allergies

Please keep us up to date on any allergies your child may have acquired. This especially applies to food allergies.

## Section H:

### Lunch

The school does not make lunch for the students. It is the responsibility of a parent or guardian to provide a nutritious lunch for their child.

There are two options for lunch:

1. You may send your child to school with a complete lunch. Please be sure that your child's lunch box is marked with his/her name on the exterior edge adjacent to the lunch box handle.
2. You may buy a hot lunch at the school (please see the office for further details on our hot lunch program). Please note: If you pre-pay for hot lunch and your child is absent that day, it is your responsibility to let the office know that he/she is not in attendance. Any monies that have been paid will be forfeited if you do not let the office know.

### Celebrations

We would be happy to help you celebrate your child's birthday. If you wish to provide a treat for your child's class, please check with your child's teacher and the teacher will indicate number needed and any known allergies.

We request that you do not issue invitations for children to attend a private party during class hours. Such can be a cause of unhappiness for those children who are not invited. (Invitations may be left on the counter and given out after class.)

If you would like to provide something for a holiday, please check with the teacher in advance.

### Toys

Children may bring books to school, which will be used at the teacher's discretion (please see that the child's name is on all of these items). Please do not have the child bring toys as they result in friction between children. There is also the possibility that a treasured object can be damaged or lost.

### Conferences

Time and duties preclude the teacher's ability to chat during school hours. **Please DO NOT discuss issues with teachers or staff while on the playground, drop off, dismissal or during class time.** We understand the importance of the status of your child and ask that a conference be scheduled, please do so by contacting the office. Discussing the status on the playground or during class time distracts the teacher from watching all of the students and does not allow confidentially. Please adhere to this policy!

### Field Trips

Field trips are a very important part of the Montessori curriculum. Field trips are scheduled for each class and are age/grade appropriate, as well as class autonomy. Field trips are **ONLY** extended to families that are in the class participating in the field trip. This allows for the students to bond with the students in their class.

**\* Yellow shirts must be worn on field trips and can be purchased in the front office.**