



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.

Enrichment Time runs from 3 PM – 4 PM Monday thru Thursday (Optional, not recommended)

Tuition & Fees

- If you choose a one-time payment plan for kindergarten through high school, payment needs to be received by July 1st or you will be changed from a one-time payment plan to a monthly payment plan family.
- 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 5th of the month. There will be an additional \$25.00 late fee if the tuition has not been paid by the 20th of the month.
- Tuition differs between age groups. Please see the office for pricing.
- The yearly registration fee is due with the contract. This ensures your child's spot in the classroom. This is for new and renewing families. Non-refundable.
- The yearly book fees (which includes books, testing fees, subscriptions, STEM/STEAM programs, etc.) are due by July 1. Non-refundable.
- The yearly technology fee is due by July 1. Non-refundable.
- Yearly fees must be paid by the first day of school. Non-refundable.
- Yearly 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 check issued to World of Knowledge: A Montessori School that is returned by a bank.
- School shirts are required. Please see the office for pricing.

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 & 7th 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 family.**
- Report cards, IEP, 504 or any necessary paperwork are required for enrollment. We do our best to accommodate IEP and 504's.

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 be marked in attendance. All students that are absent for 15 days or more in a 90 day period, may be reported to the state for truancy. Missed school work is required to be completed within a reasonable time frame at the discretion of the administration and teacher. 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, may be denied driver's license issue.

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

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.

Tardy Policy

Kindergarten, Elementary, Middle School and High School

Being tardy to school presents 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.

- 1st Tardy – Warning issued
- 2nd Tardy – 1 day of lunch detention
- 3rd Tardy – 3 days of lunch detention
- 4th 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.
- 1st Tardy – Warning issued
2nd Tardy – 1 day of lunch detention
3rd Tardy – 3 days of lunch detention / tardies convert to an unexcused absence.
4th Tardy – After School Detention (Parent Contact)

Dismissal of a Child

- All children must be signed out in the office or aftercare 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. If you must pick up your child during normal school hours, please stop in the office for us to call into the classroom for dismissal.
- Should it be necessary to drop off during school hours, please stop in the office and our front desk staff member will accompany them to class. If you arrive 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 Enrichment Time. Pick up for Enrichment Time is 4 PM and is on Monday through Thursday ONLY. 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 enrichment 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, you 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 is 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 the 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 **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. (Usually 5-10 minutes maximum).
2. If the disruptive behavior continues and sitting out 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 is not effective, the child will be brought to the office. (Usually for 15 mins)
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 take place between teachers and the administration.
 - b) A list of classroom rules, goals and expectations encompassing courtesy, behavior, homework, class participation, and care / 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 or fellow student.
- b) Fighting
- c) Vandalism or littering, disruptive behavior.
- d) Unexcused absences / tardiness from school.
- e) Repeated lack of homework.
- f) Uniform infractions

Detention:

If problems persist, detention may not be enough and further actions may be taken.

1. Parent Conferences
2. Loss of recess, class field trips, extracurricular activities
3. ISS
4. Out of school suspension
5. Expulsion

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. No kicking of basketballs
8. No climbing on fences
9. No funny swinging or flips on swings
10. No body parts through fences
11. No fighting on playground (karate kicks, etc.)
12. No throwing sticks, stones or rocks
13. No climbing or jumping on picnic tables
14. No throwing sand / mulch
15. Improper use of the slides
16. No gun playing.

Section F:

Dress Code

Pre-School / VPK

- Please do not feel it is necessary to have your child dressed up for class. Casual, comfortable clothes are fine. Closed toe shoes are required. **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 or sunglasses. 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 (A phone call will be made to the parent/guardian to either bring a change of clothes or for pickup)
- No permanent or temporary tattoos.

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. No exceptions.
- Bottoms: Girls only – Shorts / skirts – must be longer than the child's middle finger when hands hung 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 hats, scarves or hoodies allowed in classrooms.
- No permanent or temporary tattoos.
- No wild hairstyles or colors.
- No black lipstick or heavy makeup
- Clothing with inappropriate sayings (i.e. vulgar or anti-education) are never acceptable on dress out days, school portraits or during P.E. (A phone call will be made to the parent/guardian to either bring a change of clothes or for pickup). No exceptions. (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 7th grade or above must have Hepatitis B vaccine series, tetanus/diphtheria and 2nd dose of measles vaccine (preferably MMR). All state required health forms must be provided and kept on file in the main office.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of students is a major concern of the school. We publish reasonable health and safety regulations as it deems necessary for the safe operations of its facility. All students/parents will be required to adhere to these safety rules. Failure to abide by the safety rules established by the school or health and safety standards established by a government agency, may be grounds for expulsion.

SAFETY RULES

- 1.) No student shall be left unattended for any reason.
- 2.) Safety on the playground is very important. Please refer to playground rules for guidance.
- 3.) Smoking is not permitted on campus or during field trips.
- 4.) Hallways or exits will not be blocked by students or student's belonging.
- 5.) Any accidental spillage of dangerous or slippery materials will be immediately cleaned up or brought to the attention of the administration.
- 6.) No containers for potentially dangerous materials will be stored in the classroom. If we do have materials in classrooms, they **MUST** be locked in the provided locked cabinets.
- 7.) The staff is trained in CPR and First Aid. We have a small first aid kit available for our field trips. This is given to our teachers along with a student list with emergency numbers binder.

FIRE DRILL PROCEDURES

Each classroom will have a fire exit map posted.

If the fire alarm sounds, the students / staff will exit per fire exit plan map. The students / staff must walk, NOT RUN, and proceed in an orderly manner. Each classroom will take their roll sheet outside with them and take roll upon lining up along designated area. One person per building will be assigned to check bathrooms, multi-purpose rooms, art room and library.

Once all children have been counted for and buildings all checked, students and staff will be able to return to class. No one will re-enter the buildings until the all clear has been given.

There will be at least one fire drill given per month. (This is per our Fire Marshall).

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 with a fever, diarrhea or vomiting, must stay home until they have been without symptoms for 24 hours without taking medication. If a child has missed more than 3 consecutive days, a doctor's note must be given in order for the student to return to school and those absences be counted as excused. If no note is given, the absences will be marked unexcused.

- 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 child. All efforts must be made by parent or guardian to pick up your child in a timely manner.
- 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.

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 student'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.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

A. Prohibition Against Discrimination

World of Knowledge: A Montessori School is committed to maintaining an environment that is free of any type of discrimination and where students, staff and everyone associated with the school is treated with dignity and respect.

The school's strict prohibition against discrimination includes, but is not limited to discrimination based upon a person's race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, age, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, affectional or sexual preference or orientation, genetic information, atypical heredity, cellular or blood trait of any individual, family status, or because of the liability for service in the Armed forces or because of the refusal to submit to a genetic test or make available the results of a genetic test to an employer or based upon any other characteristic or status protected by State or Federal Law.

This anti-discrimination policy applies to, but is not limited to all educational opportunities, classroom practices, employment practices, compensation, training, hiring, advancement, promotion, discipline, discharge and the selection vendors, contractors and consultants who do business with the school.

B. Reporting Discrimination

1. If anyone believes that the he or she is the victim of discrimination or has reason to believe that somebody else is the victim of discrimination, he/she should immediately report it to the Director and / or Owner.
2. That person or his/her designee will conduct an immediate and thorough investigation.
3. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible, however, it is important to recognize that those with pertinent information will be interviewed as part of the investigation, including the accused.
4. The results of the investigation will be reported to the Director and / or Owner, who will take swift and appropriate action against any person who is found to have violated this policy, up to and including dismissal or removal from the school.
5. The school strictly prohibits retaliation against anyone who, in good faith, brings forth a complaint or otherwise cooperates in the investigation as a witness.
6. When the investigation ends, a determination will be made, and the results will be communicated to the complainant, the alleged perpetrator, and, as appropriate, to all others directly concerned.

Section H:

Lunch

The school does not make lunch for the students. It is the responsibility of a parent/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 in the office 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 and may cause a disruption in class. There is also the possibility that a treasured object can be damaged or lost. If a toy is brought to school, it will be taken to the office and be allowed to be picked up by the parent/guardian at the end of the school day.

Cell Phone Policies

Students are not allowed to have their cell phones on nor on their person or in their backpacks during school hours. Students are allowed to contact their parent/guardians in the front office if an emergency arises. If the student/family feels the need to have them with their cell phones during school hours, the phones **MUST** be turned in upon arrival and will be picked up upon departure. **NO** exceptions! If a cell phone is found on the students' person or in their backpack, disciplinary actions will take place.

- 1st offense – Verbal warning, communication with parent/guardian
- 2nd offense – Written warning, communication with parent/guardian
- 3rd offense – Detention, communication with parent/guardian
- 4th offense – ISS, communication with parent/guardian

Further offenses may lead to expulsion from the school due to the inability to acclimate to our policies.

Conferences

Time and duties preclude the teacher's ability to chat during school hours. **Please DO NOT discuss issues with teachers or staff or the status of your child's status while on the playground, pick up, 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 confidentiality.

Please adhere to this policy! If conversations are being noticed during the above listed time, we will ask for a conference to be made and end the conversation.

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.

Under no circumstances is there any deviation to / from the field trip location. This eliminates any unnecessary panic from the teacher waiting at the venue to the parents waiting for their child to return to school. There are **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

Parents that are chaperoning a field trip are responsible for the children in their car at all times. If you notice a child acting out or not with the group and they are not in your car, please let a staff member know immediately.

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