

Student and Parent Handbook



MOUNT LEBANON
Montessori
SCHOOL AND ACADEMY

2021-2022

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Mission Statement

Mt. Lebanon Montessori School is dedicated to the development of the whole child as a unique individual. Through the prepared environment of Montessori, along with our teachers and learning materials, the child develops self-discipline, concentration, independence, a thirst for lifetime learning, and respect for self, others, and the Earth.

Welcome

Dear Mt. Lebanon Montessori (MLM) Families,

Back to school is always a time of great anticipation for students, teachers and parents. This year brings not only the excitement of a new year of learning, but a new facility and many new families to our school. This is combined with the dynamic public health environment. Returning to school will look and feel different for everyone this year. Our overarching goal is to provide as many in-classroom learning days for all students as we can provide safely.

Our community's health and safety is of the utmost importance. The MLM team is working together to provide a safe academic community for your entire family. We thank you in advance for your understanding and patience in the weeks and months ahead.

It is with this dynamic of excitement and change that we have made some changes and additions to the 2021-2022 Student Parent Handbook. This document updates policies and protocols that have been developed to support a safe, strong and successful school year for our community. Our policies may be adjusted to reflect the latest developments with respect to the pandemic, government directives, new recommendations from the CDC and other authorities as well as our experience administering new procedures of the past year and a half.

We may expand, revise and update this document to meet the changing conditions and new directives as well as to provide additional guidances as required. Now more than ever, your patience and partnership will be essential for a successful year.

Founded in 1976, MLM has built a proud tradition of excellence and innovation in education, continually evolving and growing to elevate our program and community. With your support, the dedication of our staff and the enthusiasm of our students we will have an amazing year.

Megan Steen

Director

School Overview

History and Philosophy

For over 45 years, Mt. Lebanon Montessori has served as a nonprofit, private education institution for children ages 24 months to 12 years. Our highly trained, credentialed teachers nurture and cultivate each child's curiosity while providing a strong foundation for continued academic success. Mt. Lebanon Montessori is a warm, vibrant educational home designed to foster a love of learning and help children reach their potential at their own unique pace. We strive to educate the whole child and to inspire children to be caring, socially responsible participants in their community and world. Our carefully prepared classrooms are staffed with highly qualified Montessori-certified Lead Guides (head teachers) and specially trained staff. Multi-age classrooms allow the children to learn from one another and contribute to the classroom community. Parents are welcome and encouraged to be active in their child's education. We use weekly newsletters, our Facebook page, and a regularly updated website to keep families informed. Parents are encouraged to join us on exploratory field trips, help organize school events, and connect with each other informally.

At Mt. Lebanon Montessori, we are invested in creating respectful relationships among teachers, administrative staff, parents, and children. We appreciate and celebrate diversity and recognize how we as a school benefit from the array of cultural backgrounds and traditions that families and staff members bring to our community. We work to provide an inclusive environment and do not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, creed, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation.

Our approach to education is based on the philosophy and methods of Maria Montessori, who founded the first Montessori school in Rome in 1907. Dr. Montessori believed that the goal of education should be to cultivate a child's natural desire to learn. Dr. Montessori observed that all children have the same basic needs:

- The need for order: to organize, classify and interpret reality
- The need for independence: to act personally upon and within reality
- The need for social relationships
- The need to experience reality through imagination

The Lead Guide (head teacher) carefully prepares the classroom environment and directs the activity of the classroom, but it is the child who learns. Dr. Montessori observed that children are motivated through the work itself and that children, like adults, learn best by *doing*, rather than being filled with facts. Concentration, determination, and purpose established in early childhood leads to confident, successful learning later in life. At Mt. Lebanon Montessori, children learn how to observe, think, evaluate, and experience the joy of learning. The Montessori approach is not a tweaking of traditional models of education, it is a completely different way of learning and teaching designed to prepare children for success in an increasingly complex world.

Adult Role

Children need our help. The cultural ideal is, too often, a few winners and many losers ... and always being in competition. Children learn to suppress their own inner drives very early. We parents and teachers are products of that same system. We have to learn not to lose patience, not to give in to anger, but rather to grow through our experiences with the children.

Balancing our love for our children with intelligence, resisting the urge to keep the child dependent, developing enough self-discipline and, when needed, detachment to allow growth are examples of the kind of intelligent, thinking love we want our children to experience. The teacher or parent who is in "need" of love or reaffirmation can undermine this process. Rigidity in our own attitudes can be a sign of unresolved inner conflict, which can be easily communicated to children. As they grow, children will force us to look inward as well as outward to find more knowledge.

All adults working with children are in need of support. We can only make a definite difference in the lives of our children if we combine efforts, seek the same goals, and continue to respect the dignity and innate capability of every child. If we truly believe in the unlimited potential of the child, we realize the importance of every period of childhood development and the significance of the adult role in the process, not just in the achievements of your child or mine, but in the progress of humanity.

Dr. Maria Montessori

As adults entrusted with the lives of children, it is our obligation to help them develop their minds, enable them to use individual judgment, and learn how to contribute to society. It is up to us to keep alive their innate desire to learn. The relationship between adult and child is fragile. We cannot think of ourselves solely as "teachers" or "parents" because we are often in an alternate role. We are guardians/custodians of the environment that prepares our children for the culture of today. This child/adult relationship is based on respect and knowledge of the child. Give and take is not always on the side of the child or the adult, but rather both are learners. Both are moving toward self-perfection. By avoiding certain inner restrictions or attitudes, we can feel more competent and joyful in our relationships with children. Some of these hampering attitudes are:

- Lack of trust or belief in a child's abilities
- Arrogance, especially related to knowledge
- Lack of patience/ Need for immediate results
- Need to be right or to always know the answer
- Inclination to see wrong in others
- Dishonesty
- Pride

Classroom and Teachers

The term 'Montessori' describes both an educational philosophy and a method of education based on the research of Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator. At its heart, the Montessori Method emphasizes independence, freedom within limits, and a respect for the child. Classroom spaces are purposefully designed and materials carefully curated in pursuit of an education. Multi-aged classrooms provide benefits that are readily apparent when visiting the classroom. Younger children in the classroom have an opportunity to observe and imitate the older students as they work. Older students have an opportunity to reinforce their own knowledge by explaining what they are doing and assisting and mentoring younger children. Children can learn and develop at their own pace within a classroom that accommodates many levels of ability and complexity.

The classroom teachers are also referred to as Lead Guides. The experience and training of a Montessori guide is integral to the Montessori Method. All Mt. Lebanon Montessori's Lead Guides

have completed extensive Montessori teacher training with either the American Montessori Society (AMS) or Association Montessori International (AMI). In addition, all Elementary Lead Guides have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and Teaching Certificate.

Our guides use concrete teaching materials and a well-defined innovative curriculum tailored to each child's specific needs. They facilitate the child's progress through the three-year cycles of the Primary program and both levels of the Elementary program. The Montessori guide is specially trained to observe each child and to design lessons based on that child's natural curiosity and love of learning. The guide is responsible for preparing the educational environment within each classroom and for presenting lessons in that environment. During the course of a day, the Lead Guide will demonstrate a wide array of concrete sensorial materials and sequential activities through individual instruction. The child soon learns to associate abstract concepts with hands-on experience.

At the elementary level, students also receive the following: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Art, Library, Spanish, Physical Education, and Orff Based Music. Detailed information can be supplied upon request.

Educational Beliefs

Mt. Lebanon Montessori School & Academy Beliefs

- We respect each other, our materials, our environment, our school.
- The staff is dedicated and committed to the Montessori philosophy.
- Each child is nurtured as an individual to reach his/her highest potential.
- Children at Mt. Lebanon Montessori School are motivated and enjoy learning.
- Children learn to be independent and to learn how to work in a cooperative atmosphere.
- Children are encouraged to be independent thinkers.
- Each child works at his/her own pace.
- The prepared environment allows children the opportunity to choose their own works.
- Children learn respect for their environment and respect for others.
- Discipline is a prerequisite for learning.
- A sensitive period is a period in which the child is psychologically attuned to learn or acquire skills more easily than at any other period.

Educational Goals

At Mt. Lebanon Montessori, we aim to provide a high-quality, comprehensive education that fosters your child's love of learning and addresses the whole child academically, emotionally, and socially. The Montessori curriculum varies by program. However, the goals for our school are consistent:

- To enter a partnership with parents in the education of their children
- To lead children toward mastery of individually identified intellectual, social, physical, and daily life skills
- To foster deep and persistent curiosity that will lead to lifelong pursuit of knowledge
- To help children develop self-confidence
- To cultivate the skill of concentration in every child
- To instill in each child a sense of personal responsibility for the world in which we live
- To spark wonder, imagination, and joy

Core Values

The pedagogical principles and practices developed by Dr. Maria Montessori correspond to the characteristics of each stage in a child's development and their needs at each stage. We seek to utilize Montessori's educational principles and methodologies in all the programs offered at Mt. Lebanon Montessori.

- We believe that all children deserve to develop in an environment that is nurturing, safe and intellectually stimulating.
- We believe that parents are the principle influence in the child's life. The school provides a secondary supportive role to the home. Children are best served when their parents and school are working in tandem.
- We believe that the model of our own behavior serves as the most effective teacher to the child.
- We believe that every member of our community has a fundamental right to be treated with respect, regardless of age, gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, race, or disability.
- We believe that intelligence is not rare, but a state of the healthy mind. As such, it can and should be nurtured and encouraged.
- We believe that wisdom can be nurtured and cultivated in a positive, affirming, and intellectually stimulating learning environment.
- We believe that the development of whole, healthy individuals requires that our many dimensions be nurtured, including the intellectual, physical, social and emotional.
- We base the programs and curriculum of Mt. Lebanon Montessori on the natural progression of human development.
- We describe the learning environment of Mt. Lebanon Montessori as *active* as opposed to *passive*. The environment is dynamic, with children functioning as agents in the learning process by making choices and learning to be responsible for those choices.
- We believe that Mt. Lebanon Montessori has a responsibility to prepare its students for life, balancing academic excellence with the development of personal and practical life skills.
- We believe that the first six years of life are critical to human development.
- We offer a flexible learning environment that responds to individual needs, has an adaptable curriculum, and honors diverse learning styles.
- We strive to create a true balance among freedom, order and responsibility in each classroom.
- We believe that children can learn constructive modes of problem-solving and conflict resolution, thereby creating a more peaceful learning and living environment.
- We believe that we are intimately interdependent with other life forms on this planet. As educators, it is our responsibility to foster knowledge of, interest in and responsibility for the natural world we inhabit.
- We believe in the fullness of life and the value of a diverse community, which promotes an understanding for and acceptance of all peoples.
- We believe that all forms of expression and communication should be nurtured. Art, music, literature, drama, and other forms of expression are fundamental to the human spirit.

- We believe that the technology of the Information Age must be made available to children as is appropriate for their developmental level. Access to, and instruction in the use of computers is an important component of the Elementary program.
- We believe that we are an active member of our community. We nurture and promote outreach activities that involve the children in community improvement projects.
- We nurture an extended family community within the school whose participants are supported at all levels by the whole community.

Classroom Space

Each of the classrooms is thoughtfully arranged and offers an inviting space for activity that is focused and calm. Learning materials are displayed on shelves that are accessible to the children to foster independence as the students go about their daily work. There are spaces in the classroom that allow for group activity as well as areas where the student can work alone. Parts of each classroom are open and spacious to allow younger children to lay out strands of beads for counting or elementary students to explore the Timeline of Life. There are well defined spaces for each part of the curriculum, such as Language Arts, Math, and Cosmic. Each of these areas features shelves or display tables with a variety of inviting materials from which students can choose.

Food

Lunches The Elementary lunch period is from 11:45a.m. – 12:15 p.m. followed by recess 12:15 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. Nutritious food is essential for young, growing bodies. We encourage parents to establish sound eating habits at an early age. At Mt. Lebanon Montessori, parents are responsible for their child's lunches. Students must bring a **nut free** lunch from home. **If nuts are found in a lunch, parents will be notified and expected to bring a new nut free lunch. There will be no nut table moving forward.** All children staying for lunch need to bring a lunchbox each day. Please provide meals that include the important basic food groups. Please be sure to send lunches your child will eat and enjoy. Please do not send candy, pop or sugary foods. We discourage prepackaged foods (i.e. Lunchables, Hot Pockets, Chef Boyardee, etc.). We will send your child's leftovers home so you can gauge what and how much your child is eating. Refrigeration is not available, but food can be reheated.

Pizza Days

Pizza is available to all Elementary and Kindergarten students who elect to participate. The cost for participating in pizza days will be distributed to those families twice each school year.

Snack

In the Toddler and Children's classroom, parents provide items for snack on a rotating basis. A calendar indicating the days you are responsible for snack and what you should bring will be sent home monthly.

Academy students each bring their own snack. Snacks eaten in the classroom must be from the Approved Snack List. No nuts or nut products are permitted in the classrooms.

Snack includes items like fresh fruit, and vegetables and some grains. Some classrooms ask for supplies or ingredients that are used by the children in the classroom to prepare (cook or make)

the snack. Your Lead Guide will provide details through School Messenger. Please ask your child's Lead Guide directly if you have any questions.



Approved Snack List 2021-2022

1. Apple (fresh or dried)
2. Banana (fresh or dried)
3. Carrots
4. Celery
5. Mango (fresh or dried)
6. Pear
7. Grapes
8. Strawberries (fresh or dried)
9. Blueberries (fresh or dried)
10. Raspberries
11. Oranges
12. Peaches
13. Plums
14. Kiwi
15. Grapefruit
16. Avocado
17. Pineapple
18. Papaya (fresh or dried)
19. Star Fruit
20. Raisins
21. Apricot (fresh or dried)
22. Cranberry (fresh or dried)
23. Figs
24. Honeydew Melon
25. Cantaloupe
26. Watermelon
27. Sugar Snap Peas
28. Tomato (fresh or canned)
29. Green Beans
30. Sweet Potato
31. Potato
32. Cannellini Beans
33. Chickpeas
34. Black Bean
35. Corn
36. Onion
37. Garlic
38. Squash
39. Eggplant
40. Lemon (Juice)
41. Lime (Juice)
42. Bell Peppers
43. Cucumber Slices
44. Frozen Peas
45. Cauliflower
46. Broccoli
47. Applesauce
48. Rice Cakes (label must say nut free facility)
49. Rice Checks
50. Corn Checks
51. Rice Crackers (label must say nut free facility)
52. Corn Chips (Tostitos Only)
53. Oil (Vegetable, Corn, Olive)
54. Salt or Pepper
55. Sun-butter (sunflower butter)
56. Vinegar
57. Herbs (basil, mint, cilantro...)

Family Commitment

Parents are a fundamental part of the well-being of our school and of a successful educational experience for their children. We hope that all members of the school community will participate and support the school whenever possible.

It is the hope and expectation of Mt. Lebanon Montessori that parents understand and embrace the mission of the school. To that end, we aim to help parents learn about the Montessori approach by providing information and opportunities for parent education.

Additionally, we expect parents to familiarize themselves with the philosophy, policies, and procedures contained in the Parent Handbook and other school publications, including our regular email communications.

There are committees to assist in special programming and to help the school meet long-term goals. Lead Guides value the assistance and participation of parents in the classroom and in adventures beyond the classroom. Both parents and students are enriched by parents' involvement in school activities. We are a nonprofit and rely on our parents and alumni families to help ensure the successful future of our school.

Toddler and Primary Classrooms

Principles of the Classroom

The most important time for learning is the period between birth and six years of age. Children are eager to learn from new people and experiences. They absorb all the environment has to offer and it is our responsibility to ensure the world they experience is rich, safe, nurturing, and intellectually stimulating. The foundation of self-esteem and all future learning is constructed during these early years and the Primary and Kindergarten Programs are designed to take advantage of this powerful, formative period.

The Primary program is a preschool program for ages 3 to 6.

This is the core, fundamental Montessori experience that offers your child a step toward independence in an environment specially created for the developing learner. This happy and intellectually stimulating setting offers your child an opportunity to develop strong social skills as well as explore language, music, practical life skills, art, math, geography, science, culture, and large motor skills.

In the Primary classroom, your child will be introduced to many different concepts and will learn through observation and direct interaction with our beautifully-crafted materials.

The program runs Monday through Friday. We have found children adjust to and access the Montessori environment more successfully when they attend five days a week. Preschool-aged children need consistency. They bond more readily with the other children when they meet every weekday. They also tend to progress through the full spectrum of materials in the five-day format.

The morning session is 8:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. and the afternoon session is 12:45 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. Parents/guardians may choose which session their children attend, but morning sessions can fill up fast.

The Three Year Cycle

The Mt. Lebanon Montessori Primary Program's 3-year cycle begins when the child is 3. Developmentally, it is beneficial for children to experience the full three year cycle. Each year in the cycle covers different material. In order to experience the entire curriculum, children remain with the same teacher in the same classroom for the entire cycle. Some skills are practiced and acquired based on the child's age. Other themes and areas of study are planned for different times during the 3-year period.

Children move into the Kindergarten program at age five or six depending on their needs.

Practical Life Dr. Montessori structured exercises for the classroom to help children satisfy their need for meaningful activity. We refer to these as "exercises of practical life." They include those daily activities which adults perform to maintain the environment and promote cohesive human relations. The Montessori practical life area is designed to allow the child to practice skills that will lead to greater independence and self-control. This area provides the child with the opportunity to engage in tasks associated with the real world of home, garden, and self-care. This work allows the child to develop concentration and attention to detail. Fine motor skills are honed, and the child gains a sense of satisfaction that comes from completing a task. They develop a deep joy for caring for themselves, others, and their environment. There are four distinct groups of practical life exercises:

- *Care of the Person* Children learn hand washing, fastening buttons, zipping, tying, combing, and other personal hygiene skills. First, children should take care of themselves, and then reach out to the environment. We guide the children to gradually develop independence from their parents.
- *Care of the Environment* With these exercises, children take responsibility for the space they use and enjoy. The Montessori classroom is kept clean and tidy and the children are, in large part, responsible for its maintenance. They delight in washing windows, tables and chairs, sweeping floors, dusting shelves, polishing, and gardening. In addition, each child is responsible for returning materials to the shelf upon completion of the work.
- *Grace and Courtesy* Through classroom activities and modeling by teachers, children develop the necessary skills for conversation, conflict resolution, greeting, and thanking. By participating in *Grace and Courtesy* exercises, children learn to positively interact and to solve social problems.
- *Concentration and Coordination* These exercises include spooning, pouring, using tools, opening and closing bottles, folding, and matching. These lessons help the child develop gross and fine motor skills as well as concentration. In addition, there are groups of exercises that involve the analysis and control of movement to facilitate coordination. Exercises that are designed for this purpose include walking on the line and the 'Silence Game'.

Sensorial Exercises Maria Montessori believed that nothing exists in the intellect that was not first experienced in the senses. The materials in the sensorial area are designed to help children sharpen their senses by isolating qualities such as size, shape, composition, color, flavor, smell, pitch, texture, and weight. Each of the materials in this area is autodidactic, allowing the child to work at their own pace with minimal interruption from the teacher. Children enjoy working with these materials repeatedly and often develop their own variations on the standard lesson.

Language Learning language is an integral part of the entire Montessori preschool curriculum. Stories, songs, and poems, along with conversations with adults and peers, help children increase their vocabulary and develop oral language skills. Written language is taught through a specific progression of lessons that engage the senses and through immersion in a linguistically rich classroom environment. Children learn letters and sounds through seeing, hearing, and

touching them. They first learn the phonetic sound of each letter. Using inviting, hands-on materials, the children classify objects based on their sounds and then begin putting these sounds together to create words. Once they have learned to create their own words, reading follows quickly. The children work with increasingly more challenging materials. As they progress with their reading, the focus turns to comprehension and grammar. With the development of language, children develop a greater ability to organize their thoughts and express themselves.

Mathematics The materials in the math area are designed to foster a concrete understanding of abstract mathematical concepts. The hands-on materials help the child progress from basic comparisons of different quantities and their numeric symbols, through addition and subtraction and on to the combination of numbers, including multiplication, division and fractions.

Science The objective of science in the Montessori classroom is to develop each child's natural sense of wonder and invite them to find answers to some of their 'whys'. Each classroom contains many materials with which to explore various aspects of science. At Mt. Lebanon Montessori, this can even include class pets which the children observe throughout the year, as well as tactile materials and visuals relating to everything from animal life cycles to weather patterns.

Geography and Cultural Studies Maria Montessori believed it was important to study what humans have in common to instill in the child a greater sense of belonging to the universe. By examining the similarities and differences of humans around the globe, we build a sense of connection to all human beings. Children in the Montessori classroom begin by looking at the world as a whole. They are first introduced to the ideas of air, land, water, and continents. They then begin the study of local regions, cultures, and geography of the United States and all the continents. Colorful puzzles provide extensive hands-on exploration of world geography. Boxes containing a variety of items from each continent give the children a concrete link to peoples in other lands. Students at Mt. Lebanon Montessori come from a variety of rich cultural backgrounds. This allows us a unique way to introduce students to other cultures and customs and to study countries in a variety of different ways.

Special Offerings Students also have experience with art, music, languages, and physical movement as part of the Primary Program. Regular singing, movement, and use of musical instruments are offered to all Primary children in both large and small groups.

Work Cycle

There are many features which characterize a secure, yet stimulating environment appropriate to the needs of a young child. Safety in the physical sense is a given. Ideally there is also an intangible quality or *feeling* that permeates the entire school, emanating from the staff and present in each classroom, nurtured by the teacher. Montessorians seek to provide positive support, believing that the good within each child will flourish and develop. Dr. Montessori said, "*Never speak ill of a child in his presence or in his absence.*" She intuitively understood that even a slightly derogatory remark regarding an absent child sets a tone, no matter how unintentional, that could be damaging to the child. A positive emotional climate is the responsibility and mandate of the adult. To maintain that climate, the children gradually accept simple ground rules. We are not free to harm others or to disturb the work of others. Lessons involving grace and courtesy are implemented in daily life.

Dr. Montessori created an environment where certain characteristics of childhood were revealed that had not been previously observed. One phenomenon was the ability to work for long periods of time in concentrated activity. For this to occur, an unbroken cycle of three hours must be provided. The cycle most often looks like this:

- 1) Many children will enter the class, choose something relatively simple, and stay with it a short time, almost as though they are re-establishing feelings of competence.

- 2) Their next activity is generally more difficult and they stay with it longer.
- 3) This is followed by *false fatigue*, a time when many children have put their work away and have not yet selected another activity.
- 4) If the teacher allows the children to take the time they need to experience the restlessness of false fatigue, they will soon settle into their most difficult work choice of the cycle and stay with it for a longer period of time. During this period, their concentration is the deepest and they make the greatest strides in the development of skills and the acquisition of knowledge. Montessori called this the *great work period*.
- 5) As the cycle nears its completion, the children put away their work and they appear to be refreshed and relaxed as they talk with one another.

When the time available is less than three hours, the great work period does not occur and the work cycle does not complete itself. To protect themselves from the frustration of having their great work period interrupted, children either do not choose any work after the false fatigue or they choose something that involves only superficial involvement. Considering the intensity of the great work period and the value derived from the child's development of concentration, it is easy to understand the importance of regular attendance, adequate rest, and the opportunity for physical exercise before and after school. Your child should feel rested and physically strong when arriving each morning. Careful consideration should be given to nutrition, bed times and opportunities for physical activity after school.

Repetition

Understanding an idea and accepting a concept are just the beginning; they are the precursors to meaningful repetition for a child. Occasionally curiosity and creativity can be confused with idle manipulation of an object or an idea. A period of involvement and deep integration begins when children of their own volition choose, focus on, and repeat an activity. A sense of satisfaction and calm may be observed. Dr. Montessori said upon observing such a child, "He shows no progress in speed or skill. It is a kind of perpetual motion. The achievement of repetition, no matter how trivial it is to the adult, gives strength of power and independence to the child." True inquisitiveness and curiosity are expanded here. An inner need of the child's has been satisfied. In the classroom and at home we need to protect children from interruptions during such a period.

Most adults have an external aim for which they are actively working. For children, the aim is internal. They work to grow. This is an unconscious process, indefinable in terms of the future. The work of the child, Dr. Montessori has said, is to create the adult he/she will become. When children reach the state of repeating an exercise, we know that they are on their way. The process has been set in motion. Externally, we observe self-disciplined children. They are working to perfect themselves by engaging with the environment, which is a reminder that the environment should be painstakingly prepared to support the children, to sustain their need for activity, and to protect their right to develop at their own pace.

Parents with young children are very aware that a 3-year-old cannot be hurried! For us, each activity is a means to an end. For the child the activity is the end in itself. The whole person is involved.

We love what we know best. We repeat activities that we enjoy and that interest us. Through repetition, children create a faculty within themselves and then create something external. The 3-year-old tracing sandpaper letters would achieve little with only one introduction or one tracing experience. The tracing goes on indefinitely with no obvious reward or result. We know that this indirect preparation is for the development of the hand. The children do not know this,

nor would they care. Eventually, they will pick up a pencil and spontaneously begin to write words. The preparatory work frees them to experience a new kind of joy. This is creativity.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten provides even more opportunities for children to grow cognitively, physically, socially, and emotionally. Every content area in kindergarten begins with specific goals and objectives geared to the different developmental levels of the children.

The Kindergarten Program is available only to children who are at least five years old on September 1 of the current school year and are developmentally ready for a longer academic day. This is not a 'drop-in' child care option. Admission to the Kindergarten program is based on the child's developmental level, not only chronological age. Teachers, parents, and the administration work together to evaluate the child's ability to work successfully in a more challenging environment. New entrants to kindergarten must be enrolled prior to the end of the first two weeks of school, unless they are transfer students. Parents are encouraged to notify the school of their child's eligibility for the Kindergarten Program.

Kindergarten students attend their regular Primary classes five days each week, and a Kindergarten extension three days a week. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Kindergarten students attend both the morning and afternoon classes, arriving at 8:45, and leaving at 3:30.

This is a natural extension of the student's primary session. It allows children to continue the exploration begun in the Primary Program. The children work at their individual pace and progress toward more advanced materials. A longer work day allows the children to build upon the activities of the primary class and undertake projects and extensions that are typically too challenging for the youngest Primary students.

Kindergarten students work with children from the Primary classes and take on the leadership role in the Primary classroom community. This is developmentally appropriate and beneficial to the child's sense of security and well-being. This opportunity for focused attention provides the perfect bridge to the Elementary program.

Kindergarten, like all Montessori programs, emphasizes *active* rather than passive learning. Children learn by actively participating in their environment, mastering many skills, and experiencing explosive learning during this time. Like other Primary students, Kindergarten students participate in music, language and cultural study, outdoor time, and other enrichment activities. However, the Kindergarten program facilitates a more intensive experience, with a more comprehensive approach to the Thursday 'Specials'. Cooking, Art History, and Introduction to Music Arts will be given in six-week sessions, during which the students will have time to explore those topics in greater depth.

Enrichment at Home

"Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed."

Dr. Maria Montessori

We want to help children perform useful acts. We do not want to simply do for them. It puts obstacles in the way of the life that is unfolding; it leads to helplessness and lack of strength. We want to empower children to do for themselves.

How can a parent follow through at home? Hopefully, parents understand that their children are trying to become independent. They need encouragement. The environment must be prepared for exploration by the child, who has a need for self-control and coordinated movement. Low beds, shelving at the right height, a select group of toys: these relate to the child's need for

independence. Wise parents let their children feed themselves, even if it's messy; dress themselves, even if they are slow; and discourage regression when their children are exploring limits, i.e., a return to pacifiers or diapers. Instead, they accentuate the strides their children are making into society: their ability to set the table, the lunchboxes they help pack, the hair grooming tools they can manage, etc.

Beyond the concept of freedom in the environment is dignity. Children can only begin to achieve this sense of dignity through self-sufficiency. When they can care for their own clothing, pour their own drinks, clean up their own spills, and correct their own mistakes, their sense of self begins to emerge. They are no longer helpless and dependent, but on the road to becoming free. Montessori's practical life activities for young children are carefully prepared to give them opportunities for successes: dressing frames that contain buttons, laces, bows and pins; pitchers on trays for pouring; table setting exercises; shoe polishing kits; and food preparation are among the many choices.

These are activities that many children long to do at home but are frequently handled by adults because they are too difficult, dangerous or awkward to organize. What we really mean when we give these excuses is that we won't take the time to tailor the tasks to their size and developing abilities.

In the play school, we observe children sitting at tables being served, arms and legs being stuffed into clothing, buttons being fastened. Even in making Valentine cards, we may see a child being instructed to place the already cut-out heart or rabbit in a certain space, rather than creating something of his/her own.

These early practical life skills help children focus on their own capabilities, making competition with others not only irrelevant but non-existent. Today, when we as adults find the competitive atmosphere in our own environments difficult, it is reassuring to know our small children can be shielded from unnecessary pressure, at least until the tendency emerges on its own during the second plane of development (6-12 years old). By that time, they have experienced many successes and can more easily cope with their occasional failures and inadequacies.

Montessori Work In a Montessori school, all of the students' activities are called *work*. By using the word this way, it does not denote something unpleasant and opposite from fun. To young children, their work is its own satisfaction. There is neither praise nor punishment. The urge to give too much praise is difficult even for an experienced teacher to suppress. But we try to remember this: whether you criticize or praise a child's work, you are evaluating the product without knowing how much effort was expended or even whether the child has developed his/her own opinion about it. The inequality between the child and adult is reflected in your response.

A more helpful approach is to comment on an actual attribute of the work. For instance, "I like the way you used this design to border your booklet." Or, "I've noticed your addition work is becoming very accurate!" These kinds of statements encourage students to consider their own progress and begin to evaluate their own work with a critical eye. This allows them to move away from dependence on adult approval.

In our learning environment, regular discussions about correct behavior, courtesy and respect for others take place in the classroom as a part of instruction, not just as a response to a given negative behavior. Often, in traditional schools and at home, these lessons are given after the fact, when emotions are high, someone is injured and someone "must be punished." Our approach does not eliminate all negative behavior, but it does give the teacher the opportunity to refer to the lesson. "Remember when we talked about walking carefully around someone's work?" Or, "I'll bet you remember the lesson about pushing in your chair without a sound."

In our modern hyper-stimulated society, the Montessori teacher's job is challenging. The children must come to love their own efforts without immediate rewards and praise. The materials beckon to the children, but their satisfaction must come from within. This intrinsic reward is the most meaningful and long-lasting.

A 4-year-old lays out a felt mat and chooses a box of fabrics from the shelf. She arranges them carefully and begins to sort and make pairs: wool with wool, silk with silk. After adequate exploration, she puts on a blindfold and begins the process anew. Observing carefully, one can see the smile of satisfaction when like pairs are discovered and matched. What is most impressive is the calm, orderly manner of her work. Across the room, a 3-year-old pours water from dainty pitchers slowly and carefully, watching the last drop as it clings to the spout. With the same sense of independence and determination he begins the task again, checking his tray for a spilled drop.

This atmosphere of calm and joyful order is usually the first impression a visitor experiences in a Montessori school.

When you visit a play group or day care center with children grouped according to age, you may be overwhelmed by the boisterous activity, running and loud voices. Or you will see the children all involved in an activity that demands silence and immobility. These choices are managed by the supervising adult.

In a Montessori classroom, you will experience a clear sense of freedom, but you will also realize that freedom is attainable for the children only because the environment is carefully prepared and controlled in a different way. There are a few rules, but they are consistent and equitable. These young students learn not to disturb each other or to misuse the materials. They are shown how to select an exercise carefully, complete the procedure, repeat it as many times as desired, and replace it on the shelf as they found it. They learn that preparation and clean-up are part of the activity, not an adjunct. Within these limitations, they have the opportunity to choose from every activity the teacher has presented to them.

Free play sounds like a similar concept, but in reality it can be limiting for children, especially those who have not developed concentration skills. Play-Doh, building blocks, Legos, paints, puzzles, Big Wheels and puppets may look exciting, but an observer will see children roaming from one activity to another, leaving toys strewn haphazardly, and eventually declaring that they have nothing to do. They may begin to interfere with other children simply because they have not developed enough self-control to handle their freedom. In a play school setting, you will seldom see the children being allowed unlimited time and sufficiently challenging work to engage their concentration and intellectual energies.

Montessori students have the security of knowing that they each have exclusive use of the materials they have chosen for as long as they need them. Thus, one of the major conflicts in play between children is immediately eliminated. The child is satisfied because the work has value, challenge, and purpose.

Often in Montessori we speak of "the child who is not yet here." We know the child is on his/her way and that we, the adults in this child's life, can make the journey more successful, joyful and rewarding. Our belief in the emergence of this child is the activating force behind each day in the classroom.

First Plane of Development Dr. Montessori talked about the absorbent quality of young children's minds: their ability to take in knowledge through the senses; their amazing capability for learning language and the overall importance of those first formative years. Piaget wrote of the importance of the years from birth to six. Freud proposed that what happens to us before the age of five decides how we will live as adults in the world. Wordsworth framed it most poetically in "My Heart Leaps Up When I Behold a Rainbow in the Sky" when he said, "The child is father of the man."

In many families, there are financial considerations when we make the decision to offer our children a Montessori education. We must discuss and evaluate early education realistically, looking at the many years ahead. We may need to consider private education and college as mutually exclusive, or at least difficult, choices. Among those who have made that choice in years past, we have yet to hear a Montessori parent express discontent or regret over the

commitment to a Montessori education. The benefits are far-reaching and instrumental in the total development of not only one child's future, but also to the generations of young people who will eventually take their places as leaders in our world.

On a smaller plane, it becomes clear that the adults in your child's environment at home and at school are the most important "teachers" your child will ever have. They create the possibilities for your child to explore. It will be his/her teacher who offers language. It will be this adult who encourages and helps sustain that soaring imagination. It will be this teacher who chooses the right moment to introduce a story, a concept, and an idea that will give the child the incentive to seek more information. Dr. Montessori said, "The essential thing is for the task to arouse such an interest that it engages the child's whole personality."

Once that energy has been engaged and that immense capacity for learning has been stimulated, there are no intellectual boundaries, no social or moral issues too complex, and no aspirations too grand for this small, powerful person. All we can do is remove obstacles, clear the way of debris, and through careful observation decide the right moment for that "special lesson."

Although Montessori schools are well known for the early acquisition of reading skills, the beautiful concrete materials of math, and highly-trained classroom teachers, our goals reach far beyond the memorization of math tables or sounding out phonetic words. We hope to instill in every child a lifelong love for learning; a joyful expectation for the new and unknown; and a continuous desire to find out, to seek, and to explore life's possibilities.

Our curricula for the Primary classes are grounded in reality, in concrete facts. Only through knowledge and experience can children begin to separate truth from fiction, reality from fantasy, and begin to feel safe enough to explore new ideas and accept the possibility of the unknown in the second plane of development.

In addition, in the first plane of development we try to instill an inner discipline, that we are polite, thoughtful and ethical because it is the right thing to do. We hope to develop awareness in each child of his/her role in, and relationships with, the community of the classroom, family, school and town.

Elementary Classroom

The Elementary program is a natural continuation of the philosophy, materials and methods found in the Primary room. If you are new to the Montessori approach to education, it is worthwhile to review the Primary sections of this handbook to familiarize yourself with terms and concepts. Like classrooms for younger children, Elementary classrooms are multi-aged. They include children aged 6 to 12 years old. Children ages 6-9 are in Lower Elementary, which corresponds to grades 1-3 and children aged 9-12 are in Upper Elementary, which corresponds to grades 4-6.

Curriculum

In the Elementary program, also known as 'the Academy', students begin to move away from concrete materials and develop an ability to think abstractly as each individual develops. Learning tools in the Elementary classroom take on multiple and more sophisticated uses. The integrated curriculum includes reading, language arts, geography, music, art, mathematics, spelling, history, botany, zoology, physical science, physical education, social studies, field trips and an overnight trip.

The Elementary program is guided by individualized, yet collaborative learning. The program recognizes that each child is a unique person with particular aptitudes and interests. The role of the Montessori guide is to provoke questions and teach children the skills to answer those questions. The teacher serves as a guide to each child in his or her own learning, exploring a diverse curriculum, and creating rich learning experiences as the child moves from concrete to abstract thinking. Our teachers match their instruction with each child's learning style and natural talents, ensuring every child is engaged and invested in learning, and capable of achieving success.

The children in our Elementary classrooms learn to research information, write reports, and make presentations to the group. They design and carry out their own community service activities, write plays, build models of the solar system, and study foreign language. The range of topics is limitless and the curriculum is vast. Montessori has a proud history of offering excellent hands-on, concrete materials to teach abstract concepts in both science and math. Through in-class and out-of-class activities, students develop strong STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) skills. The children also explore art, music, poetry, and theater.

Together, children and guides create an inclusive environment that supports social and emotional development. Children help one another and come to feel that helping is part of living. The feeling in the room is more like that of an extended family, and the focus on respectful social interaction and problem solving cultivates a social maturity atypical of children of this age. The strength of these relationships allows the children to take risks, voice opinions, and creatively express themselves.

Keeping Track of Work

Children in an elementary classroom begin to keep a record of their work. This can take the form of a journal, a work plan, or chart. Teachers collaborate with children to develop work plans where they agree to do certain work during a day week or month. They still have the freedom to choose their own work, to work with another child, or work in a group. Keeping track of their work helps them make good work choices, and lets the teacher see which presentations have been done and which are still needed.

Field Trips and Going Out Excursions

Field trips are an important part of the educational program. They are arranged by Lead Guides to provide a firsthand educational experience designed to enrich classroom teaching. Prior to the scheduled trip, parental consent forms are sent home with students, along with an explanation of the specific details. Some trips require a nominal fee, which is the responsibility of each student. The permission form and any fees will need to be returned to school before the trip occurs. If any field trip fee presents a family with an undue financial hardship, a confidential request for assistance may be directed to the director.

We try to give ample notice for field trips. Notification of a field trip is given to the parents at least one week prior to an off-campus event.

The safety and protection of our students is a critical concern to Mt. Lebanon Montessori. Off-campus trips create potential hazards that require us to take special precautions. Mt. Lebanon Montessori reserves the right to refuse to be responsible for children off campus when past behavior patterns indicate an inability to follow directions and basic rules. If we are concerned about the safety of a child based on observed behavior, development and/or maturity, we may require the parent of the child to take sole responsibility for their well-being during the trip. Lead Guides and supervisory staff can exclude a child from an outing if this parental supervision is not available.

Parent volunteers or privately contracted busing services are utilized for student transportation for field trips. All children under 4' 9" must be secured in a child safety seat or child booster seat. All parent volunteers who accompany children on field trips must have current clearances, safe driving record and proof of insurance.

For elementary students, Going Out Excursions offer enrichment opportunities beyond the classroom setting. Some field trips include all elementary students; others include only one class or age group. These Going Out trips allow children to see, hear, and experience what we cannot offer within the classroom walls. The trips usually relate to the topics being studied, but also may be scheduled to observe steps in a process or places and events that foster community awareness. We also attend musical events and visit museums in the area.

Homework

Homework is extra practice/review which develops responsibility and good work habits and increases parent involvement. Assignments should provide one or more of the following:

- a review of class activities
- systematic practice
- opportunities for original work
- exploration of special interest through appropriate research

Teachers will provide detailed information about homework at the beginning of the year parent meeting.

To request homework for a student who is absent due to illness, call the office before 11:00 a.m. and plan to pick up the homework in the office no later than 3:00 p.m. When students have received assignments for pre-approved absences, they are expected to complete them before returning to school (unless there are extenuating circumstances approved by the teacher).

Upper Elementary Trip

One of the culminating activities of the Elementary Curriculum is the planning and funding of a class trip. There may be various small fund raising projects related to this event throughout the school year.

Books and Equipment

Each student is responsible for the proper care and return of all books and equipment received from the school. Payment must be made for lost or damaged books and equipment. Textbooks may be borrowed through the office during vacation periods. Students may borrow a wide variety of books from the school's library for use in the school. Lead Guides will post recommended supply lists on individual class webpages.

Library Books and Fees

Academy Students are encouraged to read and explore new books. As part of this commitment, students will travel to the Mt. Lebanon Public Library when possible. Each student is responsible for the proper care and return of all library books. Payment must be made for lost or damaged books.

Testing

Standardized testing means different things to different people and some educators find data from standardized tests useful in guiding instruction for individual students. Others recognize that this provides an incentive for teachers to "teach to the test" therefore limiting meaningful learning. Montessori educators approach internal assessment differently. Assessment occurs through the process of keen observation, regular work and conferencing with the student, and through self-correction that is built into the Montessori materials. The teacher is able to observe readiness for new concepts.

At Mt. Lebanon Montessori, we acknowledge that checking for understanding is necessary in the learning process, and the ability to effectively negotiate a standardized test is an important skill. Each spring the elementary children participate in the practice of standardized testing. This helps us to gather data about the program, and identify areas in which students may need more practice. In some sections of the standardized test, there will be similarities between the test items and the work the children have been doing in the classroom. In other sections, there will be differences. Students are provided with instruction on test-taking strategies and are given some time to practice the strategies. Parents are provided with the results of the standardized achievement test that is administered.

Admissions and Enrollment

Admission Guidelines

To be considered for enrollment at Mt. Lebanon Montessori, children must be at least 24 months of age. Enrollment preference will be given to families with a firm commitment to Montessori philosophy. Elementary and Primary classes are multi-age, and the school will make every reasonable effort to balance each class with respect to age and gender. Mt. Lebanon Montessori is open to all children regardless of race, gender, religion or creed, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.

Academic Readiness

Academic readiness is not an issue at Mt. Lebanon Montessori. In the Primary program your child will not be evaluated as one of the criteria for enrollment. Whether your child knows colors or numbers is irrelevant. Of greater importance, the Lead Guide is concerned about the whole child: the ability to communicate and to cooperate, and eagerness to accept and seek out new experiences. Do not attempt to push your child into 'readiness'. Make new experiences available, but do not attempt to force them. This kind of pressure can produce anxiety and cause fear.

A special orientation session that we hold for new students allows the Lead Guide an opportunity to get to know your child. It also provides the perfect climate for your child's introduction to Mt. Lebanon Montessori.

Admission Process

While Mt. Lebanon Montessori is open for students, there are no visitors allowed at this time. The admissions team is still available to accept enrollments and answer questions about MLM via email, Zoom or phone.

1. Schedule a Tour

All families must attend a tour before enrollment. We are currently only offering **virtual tours** for families. During the tour, you will have the opportunity to meet some of our Administrative Team, learn about the values of the school, receive detailed information about the programs and ask questions. We request both parents attend the meeting.

2. Class Visit

After you have attended a tour, we ask that all students entering the elementary participate in a class visit. This gives us an opportunity to make sure the Montessori environment is a match for your child. This will be scheduled directly with a member of our Admissions Team.

3. Enrollment

Once the tour and class visit have been completed, the Admissions Team will determine if enrollment will be offered. In viewing prospective students, we always strive to ensure that the family's and school's core values, goals, and expectations of the child are the same. Siblings of currently enrolled students are given priority, followed by students who have previously been in a Montessori environment.

4. Application

Once enrollment is offered, families will have 2 weeks to submit the application. In order to secure placement, the school must receive a completed application and a non-refundable enrollment fee must be paid.

5. Acceptance

Once the application is received at MLM you will receive a letter of acceptance confirming your placement in the program.

Mt. Lebanon Montessori will continue to accept enrollments throughout the year if spaces are available.

Trial Period

The Montessori environment is unique. It cultivates an inner discipline that is the foundation for further learning and social development. Occasionally the learning style of an individual child is not compatible with the climate of the Montessori classroom.

Each child is accepted into the program based on a one month trial period. This period is used to observe the child's adjustment to the program and to address concerns. The first two weeks of the trial period allow time for a child to acclimate to the new classroom environment. If concerns present themselves after the initial two weeks, a teacher-initiated dialogue will begin with parents. Parental concerns must be communicated to the child's teacher. If the child successfully integrates into the program during the trial period, placement will become official. If there are problems which cannot be resolved, placement will be terminated. If placement is terminated immediately following the introductory period, the deposit will be refunded.

We want every child to experience the satisfaction and joy of a successful education. Generally, children adapt to the Montessori classroom within 90 days. If your child is not functioning successfully in the classroom at any time, we will make educational recommendations to your family. If we believe that Montessori will not meet your child's needs, we will recommend alternate environments to you and remove him/her from the class.

Waiting Pool

If there is not an immediate opening for a new student or if a young child is not quite ready to start school then his/her name is added to our wait pool. Our classrooms are balanced by gender and age. Student selections include many factors. Priority is given to siblings of children already enrolled, children of alumni, and then to transferring children with prior Montessori experience from a recognized school.

Sibling priority is given when the applying family is in good standing with Mt. Lebanon Montessori School; tuition payments are up-to-date; and spots are available. Sibling candidates are evaluated according to the same criteria as all other applicants and must follow the steps in the admissions process.

Withdrawal

If you find that Mt. Lebanon Montessori does not meet your family's needs, written notification of intent to withdraw a child must be made at least seven days prior to withdrawal. Regardless of

the reason for withdrawal, a refund of tuition is not guaranteed and will be subject to approval by the Board of Mt. Lebanon Montessori.

Mt. Lebanon Montessori is dedicated to maintaining a safe, harmonious classroom environment for the optimum development of all our students. Parents of children with excessively disruptive or hurtful behavior will be asked to seek professional assistance or withdraw.

Enrollment Termination Process

- The Lead Guide will consult with the Director at the earliest opportunity to identify an at-risk student.
- The Director will observe the student in the classroom and/or on the playground. She will provide the Lead Guide with information and recommendations to address the child's needs.
- Staff will document specific incidents of behavior that are worrisome or problematic.
- If needs or problems are significant, the Director and Lead Guide will meet with parents. Using observations about patterns of behavior, a plan will be created to address the needs of the child. The need for specific professional consultation may be identified. If the need for professional support is requested, parents are expected to respond in a timely manner to acquire those services.
- A written statement of goals, and strategies for achieving goals, will be created with parents, Mt. Lebanon Montessori Staff and consulting professionals. A date for a progress review will be set.
- If support from the family is not forthcoming and/or the problems are of such severity that the climate of the classroom and safety of the other children is in jeopardy, parents will be given a date by which the student will be removed from the classroom and parents will need to obtain alternate care for their child.

Other Reasons for Withdrawal

- The school operates on the tuition and fees paid for services. If a family's account is 60 days or more past due, the child will be withdrawn from the program until tuition has been paid.
- Children who are not potty trained by 4 years of age will be withdrawn from the school.

Tuition and Fees

Annual Tuition

The tuition charged each year is for the academic year. A deposit is paid upon admission and annually to secure your child's placement. This deposit is held on account until the tuition is paid in full. Please refer to your enrollment contract for additional information.

Mt. Lebanon Montessori desires to provide the best possible Montessori education to as many families as possible at a reasonable cost. Because of annual contractual commitments to our staff, as well as other year-round expenses, parents are asked to satisfy their tuition bill on the appropriate dates.

Missed days, sick days, or vacations are not deductions from payments or tuition. A payment is not the cost of education for the month, but simply a division of the total tuition cost.

Please note: There is a returned check charge of \$30.00 for each returned check. After two (2) returned checks, payments must be in cash or by money order.

Fees and Deposits

The Family Deposit must be received in the office on or before the stated due date. Deposits received after the due date will be assessed a \$100.00 late fee.

If you are late to pick up your child, a \$15.00 fee is charged for every 15 minutes after dismissal time.

Payment

Invoices for tuition payments are issued and mailed around the 5th of the month and payments are due in the office by the last business day of that month. Please make checks payable to Mt. Lebanon Montessori. You may use postal mail or drop your payment in person to the school office.

Payment Plans

- We accept Full payments.
- The Toddler plan is 2-payments.
- The Primary (3-6) plan is 3 payments.
- The Academy plan is 3 payments.
- Families with 2 or more children enrolled in any combination of programs may choose a 3 or 6 payment plan. There is a yearly \$25.00 service charge for the 6-payment plan.

Overdue Accounts

If you ever have a problem in paying your bill, please contact the school office immediately so a solution can be achieved.

For each late payment, you will be charged a \$25 late fee. After 60 days past due, you will be required to withdraw your child. Enrollment in other programs (summer programs and enrichment classes) and enrollment in the next academic year will not be accepted unless your balance is paid. If your account is past due, any money you pay will be posted to the outstanding balance. As soon as you have paid any late tuition, you may enroll in extra programs or re-enroll for the next year. Accounts that remain unpaid after 60 days will be referred to collections. Open balances may delay release of child's records.

Financial Assistance

We understand that many families would like to provide a Montessori education to their children, but are limited financially. We offer partial scholarship awards to families depending on their level of need and the funds we have available. Scholarship applications are reviewed annually for the following school year. In order for your application to be considered, a completed enrollment application must be on file with the school. If you have any questions about how to complete the application, please contact our office for assistance.

Financial Liability Upon Withdrawal

Careful consideration must be given when you finance your child's tuition. Withdrawing your child from school does not end nor limit your liability. Enrollment of your child in school obligates you to pay the full tuition for the year. Refunds will be made only as stated in this notice.

ANY STUDENT WHO WITHDRAWS OR IS REQUESTED TO WITHDRAW DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR SHALL NOT AUTOMATICALLY RECEIVE A REFUND OF TUITION PAID. PARENTS MUST REQUEST BOARD APPROVAL FOR ANY REFUNDS. REFUNDS WILL BE GIVEN INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION BY THE BOARD AND MAY BE GRANTED UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES. IF GRANTED BY THE BOARD THE SCHOOL SHALL RETAIN AT LEAST 1 MONTH'S TUITION BEYOND THE MONTH OF WITHDRAWAL.

Communication with Parents

Research has shown that students whose parents are involved in their education are more successful at school. Listed below are a variety of ways for parents to access school and student information.

Most of the communication coming from the school will be disseminated electronically. It is essential that we have your email address and that you keep us informed if that address changes. Please make certain to read the weekly electronic classroom newsletter as it contains important information about your child's classroom as well as school-wide information.

Conferences

Student progress is reported formally twice each year during the Parent-Teacher Conferences. Parents/guardians can choose a time that is best for them in the office. Parents and teachers are encouraged to schedule additional conferences as needs arise throughout the year.

School Calendar

A comprehensive School Activities Calendar is mailed to each family and is also available on School Messenger and at www.MtLebanonMontessori.org. **New website will be released soon.**

School Messenger

School Messenger is the primary source for school communication. Please contact the office for questions related to School Messenger.

Email

In our ongoing efforts to be more conscientious in the use of resources, most communication between the school and home will be made electronically. All regular correspondence from the school will be sent via email. If you are not receiving our weekly School Messenger (electronic newsletter) or other emails, please inform the office or email your correct email address to info@mtlebanonmontessori.org.

Email communication is intended as an efficient way for parents to contact teachers regarding specific class/student information.

School Mail/Newsletters

Each Classroom publishes and distributes an electronic school newsletter.

This important communication provides information on all school-wide activities, events, updates, volunteer activities, etc., as well as information on the specific activities of your child's classroom. Please be sure to notify the office if you are not receiving School Messenger communication.

Website

Mt. Lebanon Montessori has its own website. General information, the calendar of events, important forms, and other useful Montessori links can be found at:

www.MtLebanonMontessori.org. **New website will be released soon.**

Social Media

Social media can serve as a bridge between the school and the broader Mt. Lebanon Montessori community. Mt. Lebanon Montessori provides information about school events as well as other items of interest to the community via an active Facebook page. We encourage you to 'Like' us on Facebook and to share our information with your community of family and friends.

Parent Notification and Emergency Information for Sudden Illness or Injury

The office maintains an Emergency Release Information Sheet for each student. This information facilitates the care of the ill or injured student. Only those persons indicated on the sheet will be contacted and can give permission for the student to leave the building. It is essential that parents keep this information current. If a parent's routine is permanently or temporarily changed, be sure that the child and school office has accurate information as to where the parent can be contacted. Facilities are available for temporary care only. Parents should develop a plan that would allow their child to be picked up from school within a half hour of notification of an illness or an injury. This sheet must be reviewed and updated annually and anytime there is a change in information.

In the event a child should suffer serious injury or illness, these are the procedures the Mt. Lebanon Montessori will follow.

1. If an Emergency Medical Form is on file:
 - A. Call an ambulance.
 - B. Call the parents.
 - C. If the parents cannot be reached, call the physician listed. Request that he/she notify St. Clair Hospital and the doctor of his/her choice that the child is coming to the hospital.
 - D. A member of staff will accompany the child in the ambulance to the hospital.
 - E. Agree to medical treatment that is immediately necessary for the health and comfort of the child.
2. If a medical form is not on file.
 - A. We will call an ambulance.
 - B. We will continue to call the parents.
 - C. We will accompany the child in the ambulance if permitted. (Without a medical form, staff may not be permitted in the ambulance.)

Parent Notifications and Behavior

Behavioral incidents will be communicated on a case by case basis depending on the seriousness of the incident. See Behavior and Discipline for more detailed information.

Voicemail

Before or after hours the school has voicemail. Parents may leave voicemails for teachers and administration at 412-563-2858.

Changes of Address or Emergency Contact Information

Whenever you change your address, home phone, work phone or emergency notification information, be sure to notify both the classroom Lead Guide and the office directly. Please do not rely on your child's Lead Guide to update the office. It is only by alerting both the Lead Guide and the office to any changes that you can be sure we will change all documentation throughout the school. This includes our Child Information Sheet, billing list, mailing lists and classroom files. Both the office and the teacher emergency records need to be up-to-date. This is a Department of Consumer and Industry Services requirement and, of course, it is beneficial for your child's safety and protection.

Problem Resolution

We believe that open communication and supportive relationships between home and school are imperative for the full development of the child. However, we know that we are all human and things don't always go perfectly. Occasionally there might be issues, misunderstandings, conflicts, or confusion between parents and the school. According to Policy, parents and students with a complaint or concern should seek resolution as close as possible to the origin of the concern. Such complaints can be resolved most expeditiously if they are taken first to the staff member (i.e. teacher or Lead Guide) immediately in charge of the area in which the problem arises. If necessary, complaints should then be raised, reviewed through successive administrative levels to the Director, and subsequently to the Mt. Lebanon Montessori Board when appropriate.

School Policies

School Hours

2 Day Toddler	9:00 a.m. – Noon
3 Day Toddler	9:00 a.m. – Noon
Primary Program	8:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. or 12:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.
Kindergarten	Primary Program hours on Monday and Friday Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:45 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.
Elementary	8:15 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.

Attendance

Absences from School Regular, punctual attendance is necessary for your child to receive the full benefit of the Montessori program. It is the parents' responsibility for all students to attend school regularly. Parents should notify the school by 9:00 a.m. if a child is unable to attend. Children with contagious diseases must be kept home for the health and safety of the other children. Please inform the office if your child contracts a contagious disease.

Primary students: Daily attendance is vital for your child's development. If a student must be away for any length of time for reasons other than illness, parents should contact the school in advance to discuss the situation.

Elementary students: Legally, all elementary-age children (K-6th) must attend school daily. Parents should be aware that taking their children out of school for vacation could be detrimental to their education. If a vacation is scheduled, parents should work with the Lead Guide to make an educational plan for the period of missed school.

Students must meet attendance requirements to be able to fully benefit from instruction, achieve expected progress, and matriculate to the next instructional level. All attendance records are to be maintained and updated using the student information system or such other system as Mt. Lebanon Montessori may adopt and report on the Progress Report and permanent record cards. It is essential that teachers maintain accurate records of each student's school attendance.

Types of Absences

All school attendance falls into one of the four (4) categories:

- Excused absence
- School-sanctioned activity (e.g., field trip, co-curricular activity)
- Unexcused absence (truancy)
- Unexcused absence due to suspension

Excused Absences

The reasons for which absence, tardiness, and early dismissal may be excused are:

- Personal illness/ Quarantine

- Tutorial programs not offered by Mt. Lebanon Montessori
- Death in the immediate family
- Traditionally recognized religious holidays
- Approved educational travel
- Court appearances
- Other urgent reasons as approved by the MLM

There may be other reasons for a student's absence which supersede the importance of a day in school. However, the school administration is obligated to classify the absence according to school regulations.

Pre-Approved Absences Including Educational Travel Parents requesting permission for such travel must complete a Pre-Approved Absence Request Form at least five days in advance of the proposed trip. All trips must have some educational or family value for the students as predetermined by the building principal (Director) to be counted as an excused absence. Students absent ten or more times per semester will be refused permission. Students who, in the opinion of the professional staff, are performing at a less than satisfactory level, will not be given permission to leave on a pre-approved absence. Any absence denied for such reasons will be treated as an unexcused/unlawful absence. The Director's judgment to approve or disapprove this absence for such reasons stated above is final. Forms are available in the Office.

Pre-approved absences are strongly discouraged during standardized testing and should be arranged according to our school calendar. Only ten days of absence will be pre-approved per student per year.

Return to School If a student has been absent for 5 days in a row or more, the student must report directly to the office. The office will obtain information pertinent to the student's Pennsylvania Health Record and will submit the completed readmission form to the attendance personnel and teacher. A parent's written statement for a school absence related to illness is generally all that is required. However, in special circumstances a physician's written statement may be requested. Parents are encouraged to notify the office of any illness or injury which results in a long absence from school.

In every case of absence, a student must bring a written excuse (email excuses accepted) to the teacher within ten (10) school days. This should show the date or dates of absence, the reason for absence, and the parent's signature. Excuses should be submitted in advance when an absence is anticipated. If the excuse is not given to the homeroom teacher by the tenth day after return, the absence will be considered unexcused. The excuse must include the following information:

- Full name of student
- Date of absence
- Reason for absence
- Signature of parent/guardian (and/or licensed health care provider, where applicable)

Unexcused Absences

The following constitutes unexcused absences:

- Lack of a valid written excuse from the parent/guardian and/or licensed health care provider deemed appropriate by the administration

- Absence because of parental neglect
- Unapproved travel
- Oversleeping
- Working at home
- Other reasons not sanctioned under excused absences

Unlawful Absences

Any unexcused absence for students of compulsory school age is also unlawful. Except as may be provided otherwise by applicable law, compulsory school age is the time from when the student enters school (but no later than age 8) to age 17 or graduation from high school, whichever occurs first. There are exceptions: in unusual circumstances, a student may not be able to attend school for severe psychological or medical reasons. In such cases, parents must notify the Director, provide supporting documentation from a licensed health care provider, and work with school officials to develop a plan to ensure that the child receives an appropriate education and that the parent does not violate state attendance laws. Temporary excuses based on medical, psychological or other urgent reasons may not exceed three (3) months. Excusals anticipated to be over three (3) months shall be reviewed in consultation with the Pennsylvania Department of Education guidelines.

When absent, it is the student's responsibility to complete those assignments deemed necessary by the teacher. Arrangements to have daily work picked up or sent home with another student should be made by calling or emailing the office before 11:00 a.m. on the day of the absence.

Penalties for Unlawful Absence for Students of Compulsory School Age

First Offense: When a student has accumulated 10 days (or their equivalent) of unlawful absence as verified by the Director or his/her designee, the parent is notified by certified mail by the Director with the First Offense Notice. The First Offense Notice shall advise the parent of the dates of unexcused absences, that if another unlawful absence occurs more than three days after the date of the First Notice, Mt. Lebanon Montessori will refer the matter to the district justice who may find a parent, guardian, etc. or student, guilty of a summary offense for failure to comply with compulsory attendance laws.

Subsequent Offenses: Any additional unlawful student absence occurring more than 10 days after the date of the First Notice becomes a Subsequent Offense. Mt. Lebanon Montessori will file the case with the district justice pursuant to applicable law without further notice.

Early Dismissals

The allowed reasons for early dismissal are the same as for absences. To arrange an early dismissal, the student or parent should bring a written parental request (email requests accepted) which includes the reason for the early dismissal to the school office before school on the day of the dismissal. In emergency situations, the parent may call the school office to arrange the early dismissal. Students will only be released to parents in the school office. Students who come back to class should report to the school office before going to the classroom.

Release Time for Religious Instruction

Students may be released from school for a total of not more than 36 hours per year to attend classes for religious instruction. In advance of the student's release, the parent or person acting in a parental role must identify and describe the instruction and the dates and hours for which the release time is requested. The parent must, following each such absence, furnish in writing to the Director a statement attesting that the student did in fact attend the instruction and the dates and hours for which such attendance took place. Release time for religious instruction is considered an excused absence. The student is responsible for making up the work, quizzes, and/or tests missed during the released time.

Arrival and Dismissal

All Elementary students will be admitted to the building at 8:15 a.m. for classes. Students are considered tardy starting at 8:25 a.m. End of the day dismissal is 3:45 p.m. for all Elementary students.

Morning Primary students will be admitted to the building at 8:45 a.m. for morning classes. End of day dismissal for morning Primary classes is 11:45 a.m. Parents arriving after 11:55 a.m. are considered late.

Afternoon Primary students will be admitted to the building at 12:45 p.m. Students are considered tardy starting at 12:55. End of day dismissal for afternoon Primary classes is 3:45. Parents arriving after 3:55 are considered late.

For children who are not picked up on time, will be charge a late fee of \$15 for each 15 minutes, or portion thereof, beyond our usual closing time.

For your child's protection, we will not release a child to someone other than a custodial parent or individual designated in advance, unless written authorization is provided to the school. We will ask for photo identification of the person picking up your child. Authorization can be granted on the emergency information form, but make sure to include a note anytime changes in regular dismissal are made.

Late Arrivals

It is important that children arrive on time, as the beginning of the school day sets a tone for the classroom. Children who are rushed and arrive late may not be in the right frame of mind to begin their activities. We ask for your cooperation in ensuring that your child has the opportunity to begin his/her work at the start of class. Parents should not enter classrooms or disturb teachers once the day has begun. Primary children should arrive promptly at 8:45 a.m. Elementary children should arrive no later than 8:25 a.m. If you are late more than five times, you may be asked to meet with the Director.

Tardiness is considered excused or unexcused for the same reasons as excused or unexcused absences. Students who are tardy without an excuse are subject to academic and/or disciplinary consequences such as loss of recess time, school detention, etc.

Weather Delays and Closing

When emergencies such as weather conditions or power failures require the delay or closing of school, notice is given as early as possible. In case of a delay, Morning Primary students and Elementary students will report at 10:00 a.m. Information sources for a delay or closing are:

School Messenger - Phone and Email (**make sure you update all contact information with the office**)

School Facebook

School Website – www.MtLebanonMontessori.org **New website will be released soon.**

KDKA TV, www.kdka.com, WPXI TV, www.wpxi.com WTAE TV, www.wtae.com

In the event of a school delay or closing, parents will receive a phone call from the School's Emergency Phone Alert System to the primary phone number listed with the school. Calls are made no later than 10:00 p.m. and no earlier than 6:00 a.m. Please keep your contact information up to date in the School Messenger or with the office.

Dress Code and Uniform

Primary students should be dressed in an appropriate and acceptable manner in terms of modesty, safety, and personal hygiene for instructional activities. A student's dress should not interfere with the learning process, distract from learning or create danger to the student's safety. Please help your child select clothing and shoes that allow freedom of movement, appropriate for a wide range of activities. All children have outdoor playtime and/or physical education every day. It is important for students to be appropriately dressed for the weather. Younger children should wear clothing that enables them to dress themselves easily. Students in Primary classes should be sure to have a full set of extra clothing, including socks and underwear. Please put all items in a shoebox labeled with the child's name and replenish every time clothing is sent home.

The Elementary uniform sets the tone for learning by allowing children to focus on school rather than clothing. All Elementary students must comply with the uniform policy outlined below.

- Boys and girls must wear navy knee length walking shorts or navy dress slacks.
- Students are not permitted to wear cargo pants, sweat pants, jeans, capri pants, or yoga pants. **Leggings and bike shorts are not permitted unless they are worn along with a skirt or jumper.**
- **Knee length** skirts and jumpers must be solid navy or the Academy plaid (Land's End Only hunter/classic navy plaid).
- The Academy colors are forest green, pastel yellow, light blue, navy blue, white and red.
- Shirts must be a solid color. Dress shirt, polo shirts, sweaters, or turtle necks in school colors are all acceptable. No "hoodies" allowed.
- Accessories such as socks or tights must be solid colors and in appropriate Academy colors.
- Black or navy dress shoes must be worn for school. Sneakers may be worn for daily recess.
- Solid sweat shirt, solid sweat pant, and solid athletic shorts in classic navy may be worn on Friday with Montessori T-Shirt, solid white, or navy T-shirts for specials.
- Each month there is a themed dress down day where the student may express his or her creativity. Children not participating in the theme must wear uniforms. Shorts and skirts worn on dress down days are still required to be knee length.
- Uniform clothing may be purchased from Schoolbelles or Lands' End. The schools' preferred # is 9000-2664-2 for Land's End. Schoolbelles Store in the area malls is another option.

Indoor Shoes

All children wear uniform shoes, indoor shoes or slippers while in the classroom. The Montessori Method recognizes the child's need for quiet and order in the classroom to allow him or her greatest opportunity for concentrated work. The opportunity to take off and put on shoes increases their level of independence and dressing skills. Slippers also eliminate a higher noise level in the classroom. The children use mats for a great deal of floor work and slippers help to maintain the cleanliness of the environment, alleviating mud and dirt being tracked into the classroom with street shoes. We ask you to provide slippers to be kept at school. Ballet-type slippers or Crocs are preferred as they are easier to wear and store. Slippers with large character heads are discouraged because children are often uncomfortable if they are trying to sit with their feet directly under their bottoms. Clogs or backless slippers tend to fall off frequently and are a distraction.

Labeling

To avoid confusion and prevent loss, please label everything you send to school with your child's name. This includes both slippers, shoes, clothing, and outerwear. Children often do not recognize their own clothing. Labeling helps your child and us to sort out the myriad of items that come into Mt. Lebanon Montessori each day. Use names, not initials, and mark in an easily-read place. Any clothing or shoes that are left behind will be donated to charity at the end of the school year in May.

Outside Wear

All students go outside most days. Outerwear should be appropriate for the weather. Appropriate shoes for school are sneakers or other casual shoes that may get dirty. The best sneakers for outdoor activities have laces that must be tied. Clogs, party shoes, or open-toed sandals are not appropriate for safe outside play. When there is snow or mud, boots are required. When it is very cold, snow pants, mittens, and hats are required.

Outdoor Play

Recess is an opportunity for students to interact with their peers. Recess may occur indoors or outdoors. Students need to dress appropriately for recess. Snow attire is encouraged in winter. Primary recess is typically 10 - 20 minutes daily. Elementary students 1 - 6 typically have 45 minutes of recess.

An outdoor play area is provided for recess, weather permitting. The playground is supervised during recess.

Our program is designed to include outdoor play in all seasons. Students who attend school need fresh air, exercise and free time on the playground. For our preschool students, we maintain a ratio of one adult for every 10 students. Therefore, we are not able to have a staff member stay inside with one or two children who are sent to school with a cold, lingering ear infection, etc. Your child should be well enough to participate fully at school if he/she is in attendance.

In the winter our preschoolers play outside as long as the wind chill factor is above 15 degrees; if it is below that temperature, they will stay inside. Elementary students may go outside in colder weather at the discretion of the teacher. Please be sure your child has appropriate clothing for outdoor play: sturdy, warm and easy to put on. Don't forget that outdoor clothing also needs to be labeled.

The playground area is not supervised for students who have been dismissed to their parents. After dismissal, students should report directly home. If parents/guardians permit students to play in the outdoor area after school hours, they are responsible for their children. Please respect the rules the children are learning to care for the environment. The children are welcome to play in the grass. Please do not allow children to climb the trees, for their safety and to help reinforce the playground rules.

Locker Policy

Students in the Elementary program will be supplied with a locker. Only clothing, backpacks and lunches may be stored in the locker. Lockers must be closed at all times. Articles placed in lockers must fit into the lockers so that the locker doors close completely. The locker size is 28" H x 14"W x 10"D. Keep these measurements in mind when purchasing backpacks and lunch boxes. Mirrors, magnets, key chains, locks, etc. may not be placed on or in the lockers. No graffiti is allowed on the locker, inside or outside, using any media. Lockers must be cleaned monthly. Locker inspections will be conducted monthly and at the discretion of the administration. After two warnings for noncompliance of the locker policy, locker privileges will be terminated for the remainder of the school year. Alternative storage will be provided. The location and size of alternative storage may vary.

Internet Policy

Elementary school students may have supervised access to the internet for educational purposes.

- Students will not give out personal information such as address, phone number, age or any other personal or school-related information.
- Students will not buy or purchase anything over the internet, or give credit card information, without the consent of Mt. Lebanon Montessori.
- The student will not use the internet for personal email or personal communication. Student will not use the computers for personal matters.
- Students will inform the teachers of exact sites, topics, and information being researched.

Electronic Devices, Cell Phones, and Other Communication Devices

Electronic devices are defined as any item needing batteries or electricity to operate. Students are prohibited from using electronic devices, including but not limited to cell phones, gaming devices, electronic toys, iPods, iPads, smart watches, or other disruptive or distracting electronics in the school building. Calculators and other educational devices approved by the classroom teachers are the only exceptions. The school is not responsible for loss or damage of electronic devices. Use of cell phones and other communication devices is prohibited during the school day. Students who use a cell phone (including the use of a camera phone) or have a cell phone visible will be subject to disciplinary action and confiscation of the cell phone, even if they are not using it. These devices may remain in lockers, powered off. The school is not responsible for the loss or damage of cell phones or other communication devices.

Lost and Found

All articles which are found at school are taken to a depository in the building where they may be claimed. Unclaimed items will be donated to charity at the end of each semester.

Baby Sitting

Parents recognize the nurturing quality of our staff members and naturally wish to invite them to baby-sit. However, we require that our staff members not contract privately with families of currently enrolled students. Please do not ask any members of our staff to babysit for your children.

Potty Training Policy

Mt. Lebanon Montessori prefers your child to be fully potty-trained. Your child is potty-trained if your child is consistently without accidents and informs adults when he needs to use the restroom. If your child is not potty-trained and has accidents on 3 consecutive days, you will be asked to bring your child in diapers or pull-ups until your child is accident-free, in order to maintain a sanitary environment.

Children who are not potty trained by 4 years of age will be withdrawn from the school.

Photographs and Video of Students

The instructional staff and administration photograph and video school activities throughout the school year. No photos or videos will be used for media without parental consent. Parents who do not wish to have their child photographed or videotaped should notify the school, in writing, of this request. A media release is sent home annually.

Use of Office Phone

Communication between parents and students using the school's telephone system for non-essential messages is highly discouraged.

Pet Policy

Mt. Lebanon Montessori houses and maintains certain animals on campus, including but not limited to birds, rodents, frogs, rabbits, lizards and fish. Children may be involved in the care of such animals, but are not involved in the cleaning of cages or living environments. Mt. Lebanon Montessori follows a strict hand-washing culture after the care of or interaction with animals. All of the Mt. Lebanon Montessori pets are up to date on immunizations, are in good health, show no evidence of disease and are not aggressive. Staff members are always present when children interact with pets.

Parking Lot and Carline

Child Safety

- Please do not allow your children to play in the parking lot or on the sidewalk in front of the Primary entrance after pick-up. The busses and other families are using the lot to pick up students.

- The school building is locked following dismissal. Our teachers are still in the building, but are preparing for the next day. The school office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Office personnel assist with arrival and dismissal and cannot respond during carline. Please do not ask to re-enter the building after you have picked up your child.

Carline

Arrival: When dropping your child off, you will form a line of cars at the designated drop-off point. For all students, this is in the parking lot on the side of the building between the Family Hospice building and Bower Hill Community Church. Parents remain in their cars with their children. No child is to be brought into the school before the start time. Teachers or assistants open the car doors at the curb, take the child's temperatures, ask for changes in COVID status and remove children from their car seats. Children are to be dressed and ready for arrival. They will be greeted by staff stationed between the drop-off point and their classrooms.

Please be prompt. A smooth arrival sets the tone for the day. If you arrive late, please park your car and escort your child to the school office for a tardy slip. Please be aware that late arrivals are a disruption to your child's education as well as a disturbance to the other children's concentration.

Please seat your child in the curbside car seat.

Dismissal: When picking your child up, you will form a line of cars at the designated drop-off point. Please note cars and busses will be in the same line. Teachers or assistants open the car doors at the curb and assist children getting into the vehicle. Note: Staff will not buckle children into carseats. Parents can park in a parking spot to buckle their children into carseats. We discourage parents from getting out of their car or walking between cars during carline.

Parking Lot Etiquette

- Please use carline at drop off for Toddler, Primary, Kindergarten and Elementary students.
- If you must leave carline for any reason, please park within the painted lines. Please do not use the lot nearest the playground.
- Please be aware that the lot is used by both cars and people.

These safety and security policies are in place to safeguard the areas and provide a safe transition between school time and non-school time.

Building Security and Emergency Preparation

Mt. Lebanon Montessori has an emergency management plan with specific details pertaining to the school. In partnership with community emergency responders, the Mt. Lebanon Montessori engages in emergency preparedness on an ongoing basis. The safety of the children is our highest priority. State law requires drills for fire, severe weather, and evacuation emergencies. A fire evacuation plan is posted in each room. Teachers will instruct students on these procedures. Examples of safety drills are fire drills, weather emergency drills as well as lock-down, shelter-in-place and other emergency drills at the discretion of the administration.

Although it is impossible to anticipate every type of crisis that might occur, Mt. Lebanon Montessori has developed many detailed procedures for use by employees in response to critical incidents.

Fire Safety inspection is done on a yearly basis. Mt. Lebanon Montessori conducts fire drills regularly throughout the year. We follow safety and emergency plans that are reviewed annually. During the day, all entrances to the building are locked (doors can be opened from

the inside). There are video monitors and doorbells on the entrances, but during the school day everyone is asked to use the main door.

In the event of a delay, dismissal, lockdown, partial/total building evacuation, parents should follow these procedures:

- Access all information from the Mt. Lebanon Montessori website, School Messenger; KDKA TV, www.kdka.com; WPXI TV, www.wpxi.com; and WTAE TV, www.wtae.com.
- Students will not be dismissed early. Do not come to the school as this will interfere with the ability of School and Emergency personnel to manage the situation.
- Do not call the school as this will disrupt our communication with emergency service providers.
- Email notification will be available to those users who have entered their email addresses on the School Messenger.

Child Abuse & Neglect

The Child Protective Services Law in Pennsylvania requires all school employees to report suspected child abuse. Any school employee who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is the victim of child abuse must make a report of suspected child abuse to the Childline and Abuse Registry (per state law). It is not the responsibility of school officials to determine if there has been abuse or neglect. The school may permit authorized personnel from the Department of Public Welfare or Child Protective Services to interview the student at school without prior parental consent if the suspected abuser is unknown or may be the parents. If the student has suffered injuries so severe that immediate medical attention is needed, the school will call the police and/or paramedics to take the child to the hospital. The police will investigate the matter if the suspected child abuse involves law violations under the Crimes Code.

Employee Screening

All employees are subject to criminal screening, fingerprinted as mandated by the State of Pennsylvania and are screened for abuse and child neglect. Volunteers are also required to submit clearances. Please see the office for necessary forms.

Visitors

We welcome and encourage visits to the school from parents, outside teachers, prospective families, and the larger community. It is the policy of Mt. Lebanon Montessori that all persons visiting any school building during school hours, other than students or employees assigned to such school building, shall promptly register at the office. Visitors should wear school badges when visiting the school.

Weapons

No weapons of any sort, including play or pretend guns, knives, and similar items, are allowed on our campuses.

Smoking

Mt. Lebanon Montessori is a smoke-free environment. All tobacco products are prohibited for employees, students, and all persons using or visiting school property.

Alcohol and Drug Use Policy

Mt. Lebanon Montessori recognizes that the use/abuse and possession of alcohol, controlled, illegal, addictive, or harmful substance(s), including anabolic steroids, is a societal problem and may represent impairment to the normal development, wellbeing, and academic performance of students. To ensure the safety, health, and wellbeing of all students, Mt. Lebanon Montessori is committed to the development of a program which emphasizes prevention, intervention, support, and necessary corrective actions.

We also recognize the effects to the school, home, and community resulting from drug and alcohol use/abuse. While the primary obligation to seek assistance rests with the student and his or her parent or guardian, school staff shall work with the home and community to develop and implement a comprehensive prevention and intervention program. Part of our responsibility is to inform parents each year of the MLM's policy on student use of drugs/alcohol.

This policy is as follows:

Any student who is under the influence of, or who possess, sells, offers for sale, or distributes alcohol or any controlled substances or drug paraphernalia will be considered under the disciplinary category of exceptional misconduct, which warrants an immediate resort to a short-term or long-term suspension or expulsion.

Personal Possessions

Children often want to bring favorite possessions to school, but we ask parents to discourage this practice. We welcome books, items made by the child, or objects related to culture, science, or nature. Sharing these items with other children in the class will become a part of the classroom learning experience. We do not allow children to bring toys, playthings, and or electronic devices, including cell phones, into the classroom. If your child asks to bring a toy or other personal property, simply explain that such items are not allowed at school. Please do not send valuables, including money, and label all items that are sent to school.

Keep Students Home When Sick

Staying home when ill is one of the most effective ways to minimize the risk of transmission of contagious illnesses.

We ask that if your child, or a member of your house hold is experiencing any of the following symptoms, that he/she should remain home until meeting the requirements to return to school:

SYMPTOMS:

- Fever - 100 degrees or above
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Any Contagious Illness - such as: but not limited to:
 - Strep throat
 - Conjunctivitis (pink Eye)
- Undiagnosed Rash
- New onset Loss of Taste and or Smell
- Difficulty Breathing
- Shortness of Breath
- Cough

- Generalized fatigue
- Body Aches
- Chills
- Sore Throat
- Congestion
- Not feeling well enough that the student is unable to function or concentrate at school

Handwashing

Handwashing is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of any virus and avoid getting others sick.

It is especially important to wash your hands frequently with soap and water while scrubbing the palms, back of hands, in-between fingers and underneath the fingernails.

Handwashing is recommended:

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage
- After you have been in a public place and touched an item or surface that may be frequently touched by other people.
- Before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth because that's how germs enter our bodies.

Health Policies

Immunizations

ALLEGHENY COUNTY SCHOOL IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Pennsylvania and Allegheny County Health Departments as per 28 Pa. Code, Chapter 23, Subchapter C, require that all children show proof of immunization before they can attend any public, private, charter or home school in the Commonwealth. Your child will not be permitted to attend school until you have submitted documentation of the required immunizations.

Students who are in GRADES K – 12 are required to have the following properly spaced vaccines:

- 4 doses of tetanus* (1 dose on or after the 4th birthday); 3 doses, if series started after 7 years of age
- 4 doses of diphtheria* (1 dose on or after the 4th birthday); 3 doses, if series started after 7 years of age
3 doses of polio
- 2 doses of measles**
- 2 doses of mumps**
- 1 dose of rubella (German measles)**
- 3 doses of hepatitis B
- 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine or written statement from MD indicating month/year of disease or proof of immunity by blood test

* Usually given as DTP or DTaP or DT or TD ** Usually given as MMR

Medical Exemptions: If the physical condition of your child is such that immunization would endanger life or health, a medical exemption must be submitted. Only licensed medical doctors and designated Health Department personnel may waive immunization requirements. Chiropractors' certifications for medical exemptions are not acceptable by law. If a medical exemption is for a specific antigen, this should be indicated in the statement of exemption. All other immunizations will still be required. These statements of exemption must be written by the appropriate medical personnel and submitted to the school.

Religious Exemption: This includes a strong moral or ethical conviction similar to a religious belief. The school must be notified by the parent or guardian in writing of the reasons for this exemption. If a child is exempt from immunizations and a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak occurs, he/she may be excluded from school per the direction from the Allegheny County Health Department.

Entering from Outside Mt. Lebanon School District: Students entering the school from other countries, states or districts, may be enrolled provisionally if evidence is provided that the child has received at least one (1) dose of each vaccine and a plan is provided to complete the remaining doses within the timeframe mandated by the state. The exception to this rule is for the Tdap and Meningitis vaccine. Both MUST be completed prior to a student entering the mandated grades for these. If requirements are not met within the mandated timeframe, exclusion procedures will be taken.

Allegheny County Health Department (412.578.8060) will provide school required vaccines, free of charge, to children if they are uninsured, have Medicaid, or are an American Indian or Alaskan Native.

Mandated Procedures

Pennsylvania school code 28; section 23 mandates the following screenings on school age children - public, private and homeschooled be completed

- Vision (Grades K-12 annually)
- Hearing (Grades K-3, 7, 11. Also per parent or teacher referrals and for students who have a known hearing loss.)
- Height & Weight (Grades K-12, annually)
- Scoliosis (Grade 6 & 7)

Parents/Guardians are notified only if a student does not pass a school screening. A referral is then sent home for the student to have a more thorough examination by his/her private health care provider.

Pennsylvania school code 1402 mandates the following examinations be completed:

- Physical (Grades 1, 6)
- Dental (Grades 1, 3)

New students are required to provide proof of being up to date on their Pennsylvania school mandates.

Parents are encouraged to have the physical/dental examinations performed by their child's healthcare provider, since he/she is aware of their child's health history and status. Proof of these examinations is required to be on file in the student's health record. Only the following licensed personnel in Pennsylvania may complete and sign a child's physical: Medical Doctor (MD); Doctor of Osteopathy (DO); Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner (CRNP); Physician's Assistant (PA). These examinations are at the parent/guardian expense. If you prefer, the school doctor or dentist will complete these examinations during the school year. If you choose this option, a parent/guardian will be required to sign for his/her child to have the required examinations completed at school.

Allergies

There is an increasing number of children with nut allergies. **Mt. Lebanon Montessori is a nut free school.** Students with food allergies will need to have a completed Dietary Permission Form on file with the school office. An Allergy Action Plan is established in collaboration with the student's parent, physician, and school administration for students with potentially life threatening allergies. Parents are asked to contact the administration to discuss the health and safety procedures for their child at the beginning of the year and as needed throughout the school year.

Gym Excuses

Students may not participate in gym or recess while they are under medical supervision that requires stitches, crutches, slings, casts, etc. A medical release is required for students to resume restricted physical activities.

Head Lice

All cases of head lice should be reported to the office so that the required examination procedures may begin. The infected student is not permitted to return to the classroom until the proper treatment has been completed and the student has been checked by a member of the office staff and deemed to be nit-free. Any student found to have nits after treatment will be excluded from school until found to be nit-free. The positive action of reporting, to the office, an incidence of head lice cannot be overstated. Parents who treat their child for lice, yet do not report it to the health office, risk the infestation of others and/or the re-infestation of their own child. All reports are kept confidential and when classes are checked by the office staff, no student is singled out.

Health Insurance

If your child does not have health insurance, free or low cost coverage is available through Pennsylvania's Children's Health Insurance Program, (CHIP). CHIP is administered by the Pennsylvania Insurance Department, and provides coverage for quality medical services through regular health insurance companies. Applications for CHIP are available in all the school office or you may call 1-800-986-KIDS.

Medication (prescription & nonprescription)

The administration of student medication, both prescription and nonprescription, (including herbal forms), during school hours is strongly discouraged as there are safety concerns about students forgetting to take the medication, having a reaction to the medication or another student taking the medication. If a physician deems it medically necessary for a student to take medication, either prescription or nonprescription during the school day, the Authorization for Medications Form (Form #440), signed by the parent and completed by the physician must be returned to the Office with the medication in a pharmacy labeled container or unopened bottle for nonprescription drugs. A parent, guardian, or designated adult must transport the medication each time to the student's school. Students may not bring their own medication to school. The medication must be FDA approved for the use it is being prescribed for. If it is not FDA approved for the specific prescription use, the school will contact the physician and parent/guardian/pharmacist to review the specified usage and a determination will be made for its usage. A new form is required for each medication change, dose change, time change, and for each school year. It is the responsibility of the student to report to the Office for his/her medication. Parents should remember that their child may not receive his/her medication if these procedures are not followed.

Re-admittance After Five (5) Days of Absence

After five (5) or more days of absence, students are required to re-enter school through the office. The office will obtain information pertinent to the student's Pennsylvania Health Record and will submit the completed readmission form to the attendance personnel and teacher. A parent's written statement for a school absence related to illness is generally all that is required. However, in special circumstances a physician's written statement may be requested. Parents are encouraged to notify the office of any illness or injury which results in a long absence from school.

Health Care Treatments

First Aid care is available in the office for any illness or injury sustained during school hours. The school cannot address injuries that occur outside of the school day. By law, a school is not permitted to make a diagnosis or prescribe treatment. Children may be sent home for the following reason (including but not limited to):

1 or more of the following:

- New Onset Cough - not Asthma or Allergy related
- Fever 100.4 or above
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty Breathing
- New onset loss of Taste and/or Smell
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Communicable Disease

2 or more of the following;

- Chills
- Muscle pains/aches
- Headache
- Sore Throat
- Nausea
- Extreme Fatigue
- Congestion/Runny Nose

Children and members of your household are required to be home 24 hours, fever-free without the use of fever reducing medication or 24 hours symptom-free to help prevent the spread of any illnesses. The school adheres to the Allegheny County Health Department Guidelines for Schools. The school is not equipped to provide advanced emergency care. Children needing emergency medical attention will be transported to an emergency care facility by Medical Rescue Team South Authority Ambulance Service. Please notify your child's school office of any health concerns your child may have.

Symptoms That Require Absence and/or Pick Up From School: (not inclusive)

- Fever of 100 -100.4 or above
- First 24 hours of an antibiotic treatment for a contagious illness
- Undiagnosed Rash and/or untreated rash or skin condition

If your child is sent home with any of the above, the following will need to occur before he/she will be able to return to school:

- Providing the office with a negative COVID-19 test result (if applicable)
 - If sent for a COVID test - your child MUST remain home until the results of the test are returned and reviewed by the office.
- Physician's note that states an alternate diagnosis for the COVID-like symptoms
- He/she staying home minimum of 24 hours symptom free if NOT COVID-19 related with physician's note

The direct contact for any illness/COVID or injury related questions or reporting of symptoms should be the MLM office.

COVID-19

Daily Student Symptom Check

PRIOR to coming to school to help decrease the risk of spreading COVID -19 as well as any type of infection, all students and members of your household need to complete a self screening and answer the following questions before coming to school each morning:

1. Do you have any of these symptoms that are not caused by another condition?
 - Fever temperature 100.4 degrees or above
 - Chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Body Aches
 - New Onset Loss of Taste and or Smell
 - Sore Throat
 - Congestion
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Headache
2. Have you been exposed to or been in close contact with a COVID positive person?
3. Are you waiting for the results of a COVID test?
4. Have you travelled outside of the United States within the past 14 days?
5. Have you had a positive COVID-19 test for an active virus in the past 10 days?
6. Within the past 14 days, has a public health or medical professional told you to self-monitor, self-isolate, or self-quarantine because of concerns about COVID-19 infection?

****IF YOUR CHILD OR MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAVE ANY OF THE LISTED SYMPTOMS AND/OR YOUR CHILD HAS ANSWERED YES TO ANY OF THE QUESTIONS, PLEASE KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME AND NOTIFY THE SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY AS THESE INDICATE A POSSIBLE ILLNESS THAT MAY DECREASE THE STUDENT'S ABILITY TO LEARN AND ALSO PUT THEM AT RISK FOR SPREADING ILLNESS TO OTHERS.****

School Closing Due to COVID-19

If it becomes necessary to close a school due to COVID-19 concerns, we will move to remote instruction for the period of time established in consultation with the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD). We will communicate the school closing with parents through SchoolMessenger phone and email messages.

Face Coverings

All students, staff and visitors, regardless of vaccination status, are required to wear face coverings per PA Acting Director of Health's order (updated August 31, 2021).

CDC does not currently recommend use of face shields as a substitute for masks.

- Face Covering must cover your face and nose
- Must be secured on face
- Only be removed to eat or drink
 - If removed - must maintain 6 feet of physical distancing - while mask is off
- Mask breaks MUST be limited to:
 - NO longer than 10 minutes in duration
 - Physical distancing of 6 feet must be maintained if on mask break
- Change face covering if current one soiled



ARP ESSER Health and Safety Plan

- Do NOT share a face covering
- Do Not touch the front of your face covering
- Do NOT put around your neck or on your forehead

ARP ESSER Health and Safety Plan Guidance & Template

Health and Safety Plan Summary: **Mt. Lebanon Montessori**

Initial Effective Date: **August 9, 2021**

Date of Last Review:

Date of Last Revision:

1. How will the LEA, to the greatest extent practicable, support prevention and mitigation policies in line with the most up-to-date guidance from the CDC for the reopening and operation of school facilities in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning?
2. How will the LEA ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff members' social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services?
3. Use the table below to explain how the LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policy on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC.

ARP ESSER Requirement	Strategies, Policies, and Procedures
<p>a. Universal and correct wearing of masks;</p> <p>b. Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding);</p>	<p>Mt. Lebanon Montessori will follow guidelines, orders, etc. from the CDC, Pennsylvania Governor's Office, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania Department of Education, and the Allegheny County Health Department regarding the use of face coverings for students, staff, and visitors.</p> <p>Mt. Lebanon Montessori will follow CDC, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania Department of Education, and Allegheny County Health Department guidelines regarding student movement throughout the buildings.</p> <p>Class sizes will be balanced to the maximum extent possible.</p> <p>Install plexiglass dividers where appropriate.</p> <p>Use of outdoors when feasible.</p> <p>Visitors will not be permitted to enter the building without a previously scheduled appointment.</p> <p>Mt. Lebanon Montessori may continue to hold meetings virtually or via phone to the maximum extent possible.</p> <p>All group activities will be planned in accordance with CDC, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania Department of Education, and Allegheny County Health Department guidelines. This includes activities during the school day, in the evening, and all events.</p>
<p>a. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette;</p>	<p>Teach and reinforce good hygiene measures, such as handwashing, coverings, coughs, and face coverings.</p> <p>Hand sanitizing stations will be installed throughout the buildings.</p> <p>Provide hand sanitizer for students and staff.</p> <p>Encourage frequent handwashing for students and staff.</p> <p>Require handwashing for students before and after meal service.</p> <p>Provide hand soap and hand sanitizer with at least 80% alcohol, paper towels, and no touch trash can in all bathrooms, classrooms, and frequently trafficked areas.</p> <p>PPE will be provided to students as appropriate.</p>

ARP ESSER Requirement	Strategies, Policies, and Procedures
<p>a. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation;</p>	<p>A cleaning and/or quarantining procedure will be put into place for any shared items, works, materials, manipulatives, books, computers, etc.</p> <p>Daily cleaning of schools with EPA approved cleaner to decrease how much of the virus is on surfaces and objects, which reduces the risk of exposure. Apply to frequently touched surfaces and objects including door handles and sink handles.</p> <p>Follow standard protocols to clean surfaces that are not high touch.</p> <p>Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.</p> <p>Air Purifiers will operate in occupied mode for minimum period of one week prior to students returning (may be completed at same time as teachers start returning to building) while increasing the outside air.</p> <p>Air Purifiers will operate in all classrooms while occupied.</p> <p>The bathrooms will clean and disinfect frequently throughout the day.</p> <p>Close water fountains to students and staff except for filling water bottles and encourage the use of individual water bottles from home or disposable plastic bottles.</p>

ARP ESSER Requirement	Strategies, Policies, and Procedures
<p>a. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State and local health departments;</p>	<p>Mt. Lebanon Montessori will work with the county and state health departments to determine when students, staff, or visitors should isolate or quarantine at home.</p> <p>Mt. Lebanon Montessori will work with the county and state health departments to determine when isolated or quarantined individuals should return to school/work.</p> <p>Mt. Lebanon Montessori will monitor the latest recommendations from the Governor of the Commonwealth, PDE, PA DOH, and the CDC. The guidelines will change as the directives and recommendations change.</p> <p>Identify an isolation area to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-like symptoms.</p> <p>According to the CDC, people with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fever or chills ● Cough ● Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing ● Fatigue ● Muscle or body aches ● Headache ● New loss of taste or smell ● Sore throat ● Congestion or runny nose ● Nausea or vomiting ● Diarrhea <p>Unvaccinated employees and children should not come to school and are to notify school officials if they become sick with COVID-19 symptoms, are awaiting a COVID-19 test result, test positive for COVID-19, or are exposed to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or to someone with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19.</p> <p>An unvaccinated employee or student who is a close contact of a person who is diagnosed with or tests positive for COVID-19, as defined by the Department or local health department in accordance with CDC guidance, are to notify school officials, may not continue to work/attend school in-person, and must quarantine in accordance with the direction of the Department or the local health department unless PA-HAN-551 or its successor is applicable. Close Contacts are individuals who have been exposed (within 6 feet distance for at least 15 consecutive minutes) to someone who is a case during the infectious period.</p> <p>Vaccinated employees and children, who are symptom free, are able to attend school. Each individual should notify school officials of an exposure. See PA-HAN-551.</p> <p>Should an individual student, employee, or visitor display COVID-19 symptoms, he/she should not enter the school building, and/or be placed into an isolation room, and/or be immediately removed from the school building and masked if not already. The parent or guardian, if a student, will be notified immediately. Testing for COVID-19 will be recommended to the staff member or student.</p> <p>Mt. Lebanon Montessori will contact the Allegheny County Health Department, make a joint determination about isolation or quarantine needs, and comply with the recommendation(s).</p> <p>Employees or students who demonstrate COVID-19 symptoms, but receive an alternate diagnosis from a medical professional, will be required to have a release from their healthcare provider prior to being permitted to return, which will be reviewed.</p>

ARP ESSER Requirement	Strategies, Policies, and Procedures
<p>a. Diagnostic and screening testing;</p>	<p>Check for signs and symptoms of students and staff daily upon arrival.</p> <p>Consider a process to address privacy concerns of monitoring practices and the potential stigma associated with monitoring and confirmed exposure or cases.</p> <p>Implement home/self- screening and reporting procedures.</p> <p>Staff and students must stay home if they are sick.</p> <p>Encourage students/families and staff members to conduct a daily self-check at home for symptoms of COVID-19, in accordance with the Symptom Monitoring Tool.</p> <p>Use email communication and social media to regularly remind students/families staff of the symptoms of COVID-19 and to encourage them to monitor their symptoms and remain home if they are experiencing any symptoms or are feeling ill.</p> <p>Individuals who are symptomatic in a school building will receive a health check, which includes a check for history of exposure. Anyone who is exhibiting symptoms must wear a mask in the building until they can return safely home.</p> <p>Identify a space in each school to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms.</p>
<p>g. Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities;</p>	<p>Vaccine clinics have been held and will continue to be held in collaboration with local health providers.</p> <p>Mt. Lebanon Montessori will send notices to the school community regarding vaccine clinics.</p>
<p>h. Appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies; and</p>	<p>PPE will be provided to students as appropriate.</p> <p>The students will collaborate with families of students with disabilities and will make appropriate accommodations on an as needed basis.</p> <p>Ensure that any policy regarding face coverings or any other parts of the health and safety plans should be sensitive to the needs of students and staff with medical issues. Appropriate accommodations in compliance with federal and state laws should be made for students with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies and procedures.</p>

ARP ESSER Requirement	Strategies, Policies, and Procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Coordination with state and local health officials. 	<p>Mt. Lebanon Montessori will follow the guidelines of the CDC, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania Department of Education, and the Allegheny County Health Department.</p> <p>Mt. Lebanon Montessori will work together with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Governor's Joint Task Force, PA DOH, CDC, PDE, and community health agencies and County Emergency Management Agencies to coordinate resources in accordance with their health and safety plan.</p>

Disciplinary Policies

Positive Approaches to Discipline

Mt. Lebanon Montessori grounds its entire program in the significant relationship between adult and child. A positive, supportive and loving bond promotes the child's self-esteem and sense of security. The role model provided by the adult teaches children positive problem-solving techniques and courtesy. Children are continuously taught how to solve problems, deal with frustration, and express feelings in a manner that is growth-producing and positive.

Students who are disruptive or hurtful to others may require a teacher intervention until they are ready to rejoin the class. Parents of children with multiple disruptive or hurtful behaviors will be notified and appropriate actions will be taken. Parents may be required to remove their child from the class if his/her behavior significantly disrupts the harmony of the group. (See: Withdrawal and Enrollment Termination.)

Grace and courtesy are the underlying goals of the rules and regulations that govern student behavior at Mt. Lebanon Montessori. Positive reinforcement of desired behavior is provided by the staff through teaching, discussion, and role modeling. Students are expected to demonstrate good citizenship at school as well as during the time they are traveling from home to school and back. In the event that students disobey the rules, disciplinary action may include a reprimand, withdrawal of privileges, or notification to parents. In-school suspension and out-of-school suspension may occur depending on the seriousness of the offense depending on school policy.

Peace Education, Bully Prevention, and Behavior Management

Children at Mt. Lebanon Montessori are educated in peace throughout each 3-year cycle. We focus on core values and using respectful communication skills to solve conflict. We closely monitor and observe the behavior of students and staff to ensure that bullying is not allowed to occur and we take swift action to deal with any incidents. We also work together to ensure that conflict resolution skills are taught and practiced, giving children the necessary tools to deal with Normal Peer Conflict. Mt. Lebanon Montessori encourages students to show respect for differences in others, including but not limited to race, gender, and religion while fostering a school environment free from all forms of bullying and intimidation.

Mt. Lebanon Montessori requires all employees, and encourages parents, to report any known incidents of bullying or willful or deliberate violence within 24 hours to their child's teacher and/or the Administration. When such an incident is observed, employees are required to complete a Behavior Documentation Form and send copies to the Administration. Families of the children involved in bullying or willful violence will be notified. Incidents of Normal Peer Conflict may or may not be reported, depending on the details and events.

The school's focus, based on Montessori pedagogy, is on preventative measures for such behaviors, by teaching children to:

- Be caring and courteous
- Cooperate with others
- Deal with negative feelings (anger, jealousy, etc.)
- Stand up for themselves without being aggressive
- Engage in discussions to resolve differences, express feelings, and show empathy

- Respect and celebrate the unique qualities of every person

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is a willful, conscious desire to hurt, frighten, or threaten. Bullying is a series of repeated, intentionally cruel incidents, or threat of harm, that involve the same children, in the same bully and victim roles. It involves an imbalance of power, either real or perceived. It can be physical and/or verbal and may include racial, religious and sexual harassment. Additionally, it can include offensive gestures, inappropriate touching, intimidation, extortion and social exclusion. The behavior is designed to intentionally hurt, injure, embarrass, upset, or discomfort the other person. Due to the willful and conscious nature, preschool children are not characteristically developmentally capable of carrying out bullying and are often involved in Normal Peer Conflicts.

Definition of Normal Peer Conflict

Normal Peer Conflict is part of every child's life experience. As children learn to give and take, learn about cooperation and social interaction, conflict naturally occurs. Children in the early years do not always think of others. Their goal in both friendship and play is egocentric, or self-centered. A common response to frustration is one of rejecting the other child, both emotionally and physically. Pushing or getting upset about not being first in line, grabbing an item away from another child, disagreeing about what to play or how to proceed in a game, or saying, "I'm not going to be your friend anymore" or "You're not invited to my birthday party," are all examples of Normal Peer Conflict. It is typically characterized by the developmental level of the children involved. Relationships and social struggles often surface in the early elementary years, as children become more independent and attempt to navigate friendships and group dynamics. Aggression and hurtful remarks are part of conflict at all ages; they do not necessarily mean that a bully-victim problem exists.

Commitment of Mt. Lebanon Montessori

Non-violent Communication

- Mt. Lebanon Montessori will make every effort to:
 - Encourage teachers to embody peaceful programs against bullying and violence in their classroom curriculum in order to develop a positive educational approach to minimize such behavior.
- Encourage parents to work as a member of a peaceful team with teachers, staff, other families, and administration to resolve issues in a way that respects the individual needs of all children and adults involved.
- Record incidents of bullying or willful violence in a consistent way, using the Mt. Lebanon Montessori Behavior Documentation Form, that allows for monitoring of such behavior.
- Maintain respect for the privacy of students and family information, including discipline issues.
- Discuss appropriate standards of behavior and school rules with all students.
- Involve other agencies as necessary.

Student Support

To support our students and encourage peaceful conflict resolution, we will:

- Strive to improve the self-esteem of victims through activities that build self-confidence, self-awareness, and the ability to stand up for themselves.

- Request counseling when appropriate, and reserve the right to require counseling to continue a student's enrollment.
- Develop programs to assist students to work cooperatively with others rather than in a confrontational way.
- Teach conflict resolution skills.
- Take bullying and willful and deliberate violence seriously and thoroughly investigate every known instance.
- Help children develop positive conflict resolution skills to deal with Normal Peer Conflict.

Discipline Policy

Discipline at Mt. Lebanon Montessori is based on a positive attitude toward children. Students are taught that Mt. Lebanon Montessori is a peaceful school, based upon mutual respect. Students know that intentional violence or bullying will not be tolerated. Appropriate use of non-violent communication and frustration tolerance skills are expected and modeled.

Discipline Procedures

Following Montessori philosophy, our policy is to assist children in arriving at inner discipline through concentrated work, developing the skills necessary to control their own actions to develop self-discipline. Natural or logical consequences are used as a means of helping the child to develop inner limits.

Unacceptable conduct is defined as any willful, deliberate behavior that created unsafe conditions including, but not limited to, acts of bullying, willful and deliberate physical violence, harassment, illegal acts and actions that impose on the rights and responsibilities of other students. It does not include Normal Peer Conflict. (See Montessori Child's Rights and Responsibilities).

- If a child is disruptive or endangering others, staff immediately intervenes in as positive a manner as possible.
- If a child has trouble settling into the class, they are redirected to an activity by the teacher.
- If the child is still unable to settle down, the teacher will intervene and may have the child remain beside them until the child is able to calm down and make respectful choices.
- When an incident occurs, the teacher or staff involved will submit a Behavior Documentation Form.
- Parents/guardians will receive verbal notification of unacceptable behavior. Staff will work with all involved parties to create a plan for subsequent action.
- If the behavior becomes extreme, the teacher will schedule a meeting with the parents and, depending on the circumstances, with the Director or appropriate staff, while the incident is still fresh in the child's mind. **Staff, parents, and child will respectfully work together to modify the behavior.** It is important to note that modifying the behavior will take time as the child develops inner limits.
- If a child persists in the unprovoked, willful and deliberate hurting of others, after being reasoned with and experiencing consequences, there will be an immediate one day suspension from school.

- Continued negative behavior will result in the school requiring a behavioral evaluation by the SAP Team (Student Assistance Program, made up of teachers, the Director, and guidance counselor), and the possible removal of the student from the school.

<h2>Montessori Child's Rights and Responsibilities</h2>	
Rights	Responsibilities
The child is free to work with any material that has been presented to him by either the teacher or another child.	The child must use work respectfully, not abusing it and may not use it in a way that disturbs another's activity.
The child may work on a table or on a rug, as is most comfortable to the task.	The child may not work at a shelf, as this would obstruct free access for other children.
The child may use the environment as his/her own and feel comfortable in it.	The child must restore the environment to its original condition, ready and attractive for others to use and is responsible for returning all work to the shelf and for cleaning it.
The child has the right to work undistracted by others. The child may initiate, complete, or repeat any exercise alone.	No child may join the work of another without an invitation to do so. The child's right to privacy and concentration is respected.
The child has the right to not join a group activity. The child may continue working with individual activities, or can stand apart as an observer of a group activity without an active part.	The child is not allowed to interfere or disrupt an activity which the child has chosen not to join. This is the child's responsibility to the group.
The child has the right to work alone.	A child is not forced to share work. Sharing develops from within as a child matures and gains self-security. To rush this trait often produces the reverse attitude, that of the possessive "MINE".
The child has the right to do nothing at times during his or her day. The child has the right to watch another child's work.	The child may be learning by observing others, or may be thinking or simply relaxing. Again, this is not a time to disturb others' work.
The child has the right to speak with others freely, to share experiences, and to socialize.	The child needs to be respectful of those in quiet work, so soft voices are encouraged.
The child has the right to move freely around the room whenever he or she needs to.	The child needs to be respectful of other's work while walking around.
The child has the right to ask for help if it is needed.	The child must not disturb another's presentation, but may wait for an available teacher.

Behavior Document and Notification Form



Behavior Documentation and Notification Form

NAME _____ LOCATION _____
 AGE/GRADE _____ ROOM _____ Classroom
 DATE _____ TIME _____ Playground
 TEACHER: _____ Library
 ISSUED BY: _____ Cafeteria
 _____ Hallway _____
 _____ Bathroom _____
 _____ Other _____

Others involved in incident: None __Peers __Staff __Teacher __Substitute __Unknown __Other

Minor Problems Behaviors	Major Problems Behaviors	Possible Motivation
<input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate Language <input type="checkbox"/> Intentional Physical Contact <input type="checkbox"/> Defiance <input type="checkbox"/> Disruption <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate Behavior <input type="checkbox"/> Misuse of Materials <input type="checkbox"/> Dress Code <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Abusive Language <input type="checkbox"/> Fighting <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Aggression <input type="checkbox"/> Defiance/Disrespect <input type="checkbox"/> Harassment/Bullying <input type="checkbox"/> Lying/Cheating <input type="checkbox"/> Stealing <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Obtain Peer Attention <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain Adult Attention <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain Items/Activities <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid Peer(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid Task or Activity <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Comments/Description of Behavior: 		
Outcome: <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of Privilege _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Restitution <input type="checkbox"/> Detention _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Conference _____ <input type="checkbox"/> In-school Suspension (____ hours/days) <input type="checkbox"/> Parent Contact or Meeting with Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Out of School Suspension <input type="checkbox"/> Reteach <input type="checkbox"/> Other		

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please Sign and Return

Parent contacted by: __email __phone __in person __signature only

Office Use Only:

Previous Behavior Violations: Minor # _____ Major # _____ Three minor violations will result in a major violation. Copies: __Parent __Teacher __Office __SAP Team

Special Events and Programs

Dates and times for special events and programs can be found on our website, as well as in weekly flyers sent home with students, and School Messenger emails.

NOTE: This school year events and meetings may be held via zoom, video or other means due to COVID 19.

New Student Orientation

The first days of the new school year are devoted to the children who are new to our environment. Orientation is a crucial component in your child's successful introduction to the class. Please plan vacations, appointments, etc., around these important days.

Parent Information Nights

At the beginning of the year, each classroom holds an informational meeting for new and returning parents/guardians. These parent/guardian-only evenings are an opportunity to explain the school and classroom plans, policies, and procedures for the new year. Parents have an opportunity to get acquainted, meet all classroom staff, and learn about the specifics of their child's classroom. The Lead Guide and teaching assistants will answer questions about field trips, classroom procedures, volunteer opportunities, etc.

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled in the Fall and early Spring. Parents are given the opportunity to select a convenient time from a list of available times. Lead Guides are available for special conferences as necessary. Speak directly with your child's teacher to make arrangements. We believe good communication between home and school is essential to the best learning environment for the child. Lead Guides may periodically make personal phone calls to families throughout the school year.

Unity Night

Children love to share their experiences, so these evenings are set aside for the children to show parents and other family members around their classroom. It is always a very special evening for your student.

Assembly Programs

Several cultural and educational programs are presented for students by outside groups. Also, students are given the opportunity to showcase their skills with instrumental and vocal numbers.

School Picture Day

Students are photographed each year by a professional photographer. Parents will be notified of the dates the student's picture will be taken and of the package options. Retakes are offered

for students who were absent. The school does use these images for other relevant student identification purposes (i.e., permanent files, student information system, and yearbook).

Birthdays

Birthday Walk Around the Sun: In the Primary classrooms, each child is honored in a special celebration called "The Birthday Walk," an international Montessori tradition. Parents can share in this important occasion by helping their child select photographs from each year of his or her life and by helping the child prepare a written history of milestones reached and fun times had during each year. These milestones are shared as the child walks around the 'sun', once for each year celebrated. It is a Mt. Lebanon Montessori tradition for the child celebrating his or her birthday to give a gift to the class. This gift can be a book or other material for the classroom. Please check with your child's teacher for appropriate material suggestions or book recommendations.

In the Elementary program, birthday celebrations are handled differently. Your child's teacher can explain how birthdays are celebrated in the class. Children with summer birthdays select a date during the school year to celebrate their birthday.

Invitations and Presents: If you are planning a birthday party for your child, please do not send invitations to school unless all the children in the class are invited. If your child is attending a party after school, please do not send gifts to school with your child. We have found that these situations can be upsetting for those who are not invited.

Valentine's Day Celebration

- If you would like to send a 'treat' for the students in your child's room, please remember that **food is not permitted**. Send in stickers, pencils, or some other item for your child to share with his/her classmates but know that this is not a requirement.
- Your child should bring one Valentine card for each student. Do **not** write the name of the other students on the envelope but **DO** have your child sign their name to each Valentine card.

PPE

Masks will be worn by all staff and students. Our mask policy may be adjusted in the future based upon updated health guidelines.

Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting

Enhanced sanitizing and cleaning processes are being implemented. Staff will clean and sanitize the room and materials.

Hand Sanitizer, as well as soap and water, will be available in each classroom and in stations located throughout the building at restrooms, sinks and main entrances.

Each classroom will be furnished with a disinfectant spray that will be used on tables, chairs, handles, counters, and other high-touch surfaces throughout the day.

Restrooms are cleaned, sanitized and disinfected multiple times throughout the day using EPA and CDC -recommended products.

Student Support Services

Health Services

The Office maintains emergency information for each student. All staff is first aid and CPR certified and a certified nurse is available for consultation as needed to address student medical needs.

Special Education Services-Elementary - Meeting the Needs of All Students

Mt. Lebanon Montessori provides support for students with a broad range of educational needs. The majority of students are educated with minor modifications to the regular education program. A small percentage of students may need additional accommodations to enable them to progress in the regular education classroom. Other students may need more extensive support offered through a special education program, provided these accommodations do not conflict with Montessori Philosophy. For additional information, contact the office at 412-563-2558.

School Counselor

School Counseling is provided by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit.

What is School Counseling? School counseling describes a comprehensive, developmental and systemic program of services based on the American School Counseling Association's (ASCA) National Standards for Students offered to all children in Mt. Lebanon Montessori's elementary schools program. Elementary school counselors are professional educators who understand and respond to the challenges presented by today's diverse student population. Elementary school counselors do not work in isolation; rather they are integral to the total educational program. School counseling services focus on academic, social/emotional, and behavioral concerns related to academic success.

What do School Counselors do? School counselors are an integral component of the school's total educational system. Through a comprehensive school counseling program, all students have the opportunity to recognize their significant role in the school community and learn the skills necessary to maximize their educational potential. School counselors implement comprehensive supports in the realms of personal/social development, academic development, and career development by teaching classroom guidance lessons based on developmental skills necessary for student success.

School counselors provide short-term small group and individual counseling for students, including those identified through the IST/RTI-I (Instructional Support Team) or an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) process. In addition to the IST/IEP referral process, parents, teachers, and students may make referrals to the school counselor. Counselors also work collaboratively with teachers and administrators to support students and families. Additionally, school counselors provide referrals for community medical/mental health resources as requested by parents. Finally, school counselors collaborate with community medical/mental health professionals to support students in the academic environment.

The Elementary School Counseling program includes the following delivery methods to support all students in our school:

- Guidance Curriculum (ASCA)

- School-wide Activities
- Classroom Guidance Lessons or Small Group Lessons
- Individual Student Support and Intervention
- Individual Student Planning (ASCA) – School counselors coordinate ongoing systematic activities designed to assist students individually in establishing personal goals and developing future plans.
- Responsive Services (ASCA) – Responsive services consist of activities that meet individual students' immediate needs. These needs may require counseling consultation, referral and/or additional medical/mental health related information.
- Systems Support (ASCA) – Like any organized activity, a School Counseling program requires administration to establish, maintain, and enhance programming for students. This component provides support for the preceding delivery methods.

SAP

The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is composed of a small group of specially trained teachers, the school director, and the school guidance counselor. They are all trained to help your child better succeed in school. The SAP program is a confidential intervention, referral, and support program. Information and support groups are offered to the students. The team will gather information to identify difficulties that your child may be experiencing, suggest and implement strategies to help your child, and follow up as needed. The goal of the team is to work with you and the other teachers or professionals who serve your child to help succeed in the school environment. Parents and or student wishing more information on the SAP program should contact their Lead Guides or the administration.

Parental Rights

Separated and Divorced Parents

Mt. Lebanon Montessori is dedicated to the total development of each unique child. We believe that all children need a loving, supportive family. When a family separates, it is especially difficult for the children. Their loyalties are torn as they love and need both parents. The school will be supportive, open, and welcoming to both parents. We must remain neutral in conflicts between parents.

School records, conferences, meeting information, educational materials and similar items are available to both parents. Parents should try to schedule joint conferences with the teacher, but accommodations can be made for separate conferences. Parents, regardless of the custody arrangement, are entitled to information about the activities of the school and access to certain records. These records include: medical, dental and school records, and notification of meetings regarding the child's education.

Mt. Lebanon Montessori honors all court orders or other legal documents on file in the child's records at the school limiting or specifying particular conditions for a parent's access to the child.

The school recognizes the wide responsibilities parents have with respect to the education of their children. In instances of separation and divorce, the following procedures govern communication practices with parents:

- Both parents are responsible for providing current contact information to the office and lead teacher then updating as necessary. Contact information includes address, primary phone, email, work phone and cell.
- It is the responsibility of the parent to keep the school informed of court decisions regarding custody.
- Unless there are court-imposed restrictions, both parents will receive copies of all progress reports, scholastic records, and any other information provided about the student.
- At all times, the school abides by the most recent court order on file with the school.
- Unless there are court-imposed restrictions, the non-custodial parent is entitled to participate in all school activities to which the custodial parent is invited.

Parent Handbook Agreement

Thank you for taking the time to read the Student and Parent Handbook. All parents and students K-6th must read and sign an agreement stating that they have read the handbook and agree to abide by the requirements and practices set forth in the handbook. This includes necessary information about our school, its policies, tuition and programs. By returning this page or by printing the page, signing it and returning it, you state that you have read the handbook.

Parent/Guardian Name Print	Signature	Date
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Parent/Guardian Name Print	Signature	Date
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Student Name Print	Signature	Date
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Student Name Print	Signature	Date
--------------------	-----------	------

Student Name Print	Signature	Date
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Student Name Print	Signature	Date
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School Excuse



School Excuse

Date: _____

Teachers' Name: _____

Child's Name: _____

Absence - Tardy

This form or a written excuse must be sent in to the office within 10 days of absence.

was absent on: _____

Reason: Please circle

Illness Medical appt. Death In Family Religious Holiday

Other: _____

* 5 or more consecutive days must be readmitted with a doctor's excuse

will miss school on: _____

* Complete form 173 "Request for Excused Absence: 5 days before absence.

is late because: _____

will require an early dismissal at: _____

Reason _____

Is permitted to go home with: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

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