



Morning Star Montessori Handbook

Welcome to Morning Star Montessori School!

This handbook provides you with information about our school's policies and classroom procedures. Please keep this handbook handy for your frequent reference.

Montessori education is different than traditional philosophies of early learning because it is child centered, rather than teacher centered. The following guidelines follow the Montessori philosophy of a genuine child friendly classroom.

*** Many of the school procedures will be different this year due to safety practices that will be implemented for COVID. If you see an asterisk (*), please refer to the Morning Star Reopening Plan to review any procedures that override and are different than the ones laid out in this Handbook.**

Phase-In

The first few weeks of school are a time of adjustment for you and your child. That is why we begin our year with what Maria Montessori called the Phase-In period. This period of time allows your child to grow comfortable in our classroom gradually. **First year students will start school on Tuesday, 9/7. Returning students will start school on Monday 9/13.** The schedule is below:

First week (New students):	Second week: (all students)
Tues. 7th 8:55 - 9:45	Mon. 13th 8:55 - 10:45
Wed. 8th 8:55 - 10:00	Tues. 14th 8:55 - 11:00
Thurs. 9th 8:55 - 10:15	Wed. 15th 8:55 - 11:15
Fri. 10th 8:55 - 10:30	Thurs. 16th 8:55 - 11:30
	Fri. 17th 8:55 - 11:45

Arrivals and Departures*

Parents and students should arrive at school between 8:55 and 9:00 am. Our school day begins **promptly** at 9:00 am. It is important that your child participate in our morning meeting and group lesson time. Arriving on time and with the other students allows for a smooth transition from home to school. When your child arrives late, it is awkward for them to enter after the morning meeting has started, and can be disruptive to the flow of activities underway.

You and your child will be greeted at the Liberty Street entrance between 8:55 and 9:00 am. Please say goodbye *at the door* to ensure a smooth transition for your child. To ensure the safety of the children the Liberty Street door will be locked at 9:05. If you arrive after 9:05, please tap on the window *lightly*. We will come down and open the door. Parents should drop off and pick up students on time. If a student is consistently dropped off late or picked up late, the teachers, board and parents will communicate to discuss a plan of action.

Dismissal is at 11:50am. We will meet you at Liberty Street entrance at that time. In consideration for your waiting child, please be prompt. If you will be unavoidably late please text your teacher's cell phone so that your child will not worry.

Also, please notify us if your child will be leaving with someone other than the person(s) designated on your transportation form. Your child will not be released unless the school has received notification via a note or text.

Attendance

It is important for your child to gain the experience of participating in a weekly routine so that they may anticipate and make plans. If you are keeping your child home from school for any reason, please text or leave a message at 518-218-6656. Please note that you may not receive an immediate response if the teachers are with students.

Please notify the school at learn@morningstarmontessorischool.org if your child displays symptoms of COVID-19, has a contagious illness, or has the stomach bug or the flu. The School will share this information anonymously with the other parents via email.

Students/parents/guardians must immediately disclose to the school (learn@morningstarmontessorischool.org) if the child responds yes to any of the COVID-19 screening questionnaire questions (listed in COVID Plan & Symptom Sheet) or if the child tests positive for COVID-19.

Clothing

Plain Slippers – To cut down on dirt in the classroom, and to maintain a quiet environment conducive to learning, we ask that you send your child to school on the first day with *plain* slippers with *soft* soles. These slippers will be kept at school. Please be sure your child is able to put them on independently and that they fit properly.

Shoe Box - At the beginning of the school year, please send in a change of clothes (pants, 2 pairs of underpants, 2 pairs of socks and 2 masks) in a shoe box labeled with your child's name. We have smocks, but sometimes paint splatters or water spills and your child may need to change clothes to be comfortable. If soiled clothing is sent home, please send a replacement item for the box the following day.

Attire - Please be sure your child is dressed in *comfortable play clothes* to come to school each day. An ideal outfit is a **plain shirt** with **no** consumer, T.V., movie characters or messages, long

pants, socks and closed toed shoes with backs. We will be working with your child on fastenings and independent dressing; you can help reinforce this at home. Also, your child should wear footwear that s/he can put on and remove independently. We can help with tying shoes.

Tote bag - Your child should bring a tote bag to school every day. Please **no** backpacks or other bags that zip. The tote bag should be large enough to hold school papers and should be labeled with your child's name. This enables us to send home school notices and your child's work, so please check the bag daily. If you wish to send us a note, please use a clothespin or bag clip to attach it to the outside of the bag, or deliver it to us personally at arrival time.

Health*

Our school policy for the care of the children ensures that the needs of the whole group are met. Please keep your child home if:

- Your child is unable to participate in routine activities
- Your child shows signs of illness prior to school hours
- Your child has been exposed to a contagious illness

It is recommended as a courtesy that you notify other parents in the school via our google group if your child has an illness that warrants medication, or is the stomach bug or the flu.

Also, please let the Teachers and Board know if there is an immunocompromised person at home, so they can notify them if an illness is spreading.

If your child becomes ill at school, we will contact you or the persons designated on your "emergency procedures" form. Your child will be made comfortable while awaiting your arrival.

School policy requires that your child's health form be on file at school before your child attends school.

Morning Star Montessori requires the same immunization requirements as outlined by the Troy City School District, which can be found at the following URL:

<https://www.troyusd.org/vnews/display.v/ART/5eb94fc28b78c>

Good Hygiene Practice

It is important that children develop good hygienic habits. We practice hand washing upon entering the school, after toileting, before snacks and other times during the day when it is deemed necessary. Because children learn by imitating adults, we ask that you support our hand washing efforts by role modeling hand washing practices at home.

At school, children are encouraged to cough and sneeze into their shoulder or elbow, away from others, and to use tissues.

Changes in the Home

Changes in the home can profoundly influence a small child. Parents are asked to keep teachers informed of such changes as a new baby, a move, a separation or divorce, a new child care provider, the death of a relative or a pet, or anything else which may cause changes in the behavior of your child. The exchange of this information can help both the teachers and the parents understand and meet the needs of your child. Any exchange of information will be kept confidential.

Changes in Address/Emergency Contacts

If you have a change in address or telephone number in either the home or workplace, please notify us in writing. Also, please remember to update us on any changes in emergency contacts.

School Closings

In the event of a school closing you will be notified by e-mail and/or text before 7:00 am.

Snow Days

If Troy City Schools are closed due to snow or ice, we will be closed.

If Troy City Schools are delayed one or two hours due to snow or ice we will inform you whether school will be open **OR** closed via email and/or text. Some of our teachers do not live in Troy. Generally, if Troy is delayed, it means that the roads in neighboring areas are dangerous to travel on, and may result in school closing even if Troy Schools are only delayed.

Parent Information Nights

There are three parent information nights scheduled throughout the school year. This event is for new and returning parents. Attending this event is a great time to get a sneak peek at what your child is doing at school. The teachers will give a brief overview of the educational materials that are currently in the classroom and will discuss the daily routine and Montessori values. This is a great time to ask questions and socialize with the other families!

Parent Child Evenings

These events occur about once a month. The purpose of this evening is for you to follow your child in the classroom and observe how they choose and complete the works that they have had a lesson on thus far. The focus of the evening is your child. It is an opportunity for your child to teach **you** the lessons they have learned!

Snack

Families will be asked to contribute snacks on a rotating basis. Please refer to the snack schedule and mark your calendar. A week's supply of snacks generally includes four sleeves of PLAIN rice cakes, 20 apples, two eight oz. bricks of mild cheddar cheese, a fruit and a vegetable for food preparation for the week.

Sharing Items

Sharing Day is on Tuesday. We will begin Sharing after Phase In. Please do **not** send toys in to share. ***Sharing items should have educational interest.*** Items may include a book, a nature object, an artwork etc.

Observation

Parents may schedule a time to observe their child in the classroom starting in November. The children and teachers need to get to know each other and become familiar with the classroom environment before parents observe our class in session.

Conferences

Conferences are scheduled two times during the school year. Please consult the School Calendar for dates. Please be aware that you do not need to wait to discuss your concerns until conference time. Feel free to contact teachers after school hours until 5pm on any day. Or, leave the teachers a message and they will promptly get back to you.

Discipline

At *Morning Star Montessori* we seek to build your child's self esteem by helping him/her develop self-control and responsibility for his/her actions. We never use physical punishment or belittle a child in any way.

To limit the need for any disciplinary action a few simple ground rules are established. These ground rules set limits of behavior for the safety and protection of the children. The approach of the teacher is firm and supportive and takes into consideration each child's developmental level. Children are encouraged to use language to resolve conflicts and will be redirected to alternative activities as necessary. A child may be required to choose a different activity or refrain from interaction with others until appropriate control is regained. In this way children learn acceptable group behavior and develop positive techniques for solving problems.

Adjustment

In order to give top priority to the healthy development of each child, it is imperative that a stable classroom environment be maintained. The School will pursue all possible options to avoid suspension or termination of any student due to behavioral, social/emotional or academic concerns. The decision to remove a child from the classroom is something the school does not take lightly. A decision of this nature would only be reached after thorough discussion with all parties involved, including but not limited to the board, teachers, and parents/guardians. Procedures are detailed in the tuition contract.

Birthdays

We ask that parents distribute birthday invitations personally to the parents of the child(ren) you wish to invite. Please do *not* send them in with your child to put in bags. In this way we can avoid hurt feelings.

We celebrate your child's birthday at school with a traditional "Birthday Walk."

We create a timeline using the sandpaper numerals and photos from each year of your child's life. The child's family is invited and may want to talk about the events the photos depict. Your child will carry the Earth (globe) around the sun (a candle) as many times as they are in years, and finally we will sing "Happy Birthday."

Most children are excited to have a birthday with accompanying parties, well wishing, gifts and attention. Some children, however, may prefer **not** to be the center of attention and may **not** wish to have a celebration at school. No problem! We can modify the walk or eliminate it altogether if it makes your child more comfortable.

In preparation for the birthday walk, you and your child may want to:

- Write a simple one statement for each year of your child's life
- You can include developmental highlights, moves, trips, arrival of siblings, likes and dislikes etc.
- Bring a photograph or create a picture of where you live
- Bring a photograph or create a picture of your family
- Bring a photo for each year the child has been on this earth, a birth photo, a photo of the birthday child now

Donations

We are always happy to receive donations. We gladly accept the following donations on a continual basis:

- paper (blank, colored, lined, tissue, card stock, etc.)
- collage items (buttons, sequins, ribbon, pom-poms, pipe cleaners, etc.)
- pictures cut from magazines (for our picture story work)
- fresh flowers
- laminating film
- time to make classroom materials
- Consumable paper products (tissues, napkins, paper towels, toilet paper, cleaning wipes and 3 oz dixie cups)

Volunteering

As a not-for-profit organization, Morning Star Montessori is overseen by a volunteer Board of Directors made up primarily of guardians of currently enrolled students. The organization cannot operate without a vibrant and engaged Board of Directors. If you're interested in joining the board, please email learn@morningstarmontessorischool.org.

Aside from being on the Board, there are many other opportunities to volunteer. We will reach out to all parents for their participation in some volunteer activities through a Volunteer Opportunities sign-up sheet.

Parent Participation

We welcome the participation of parents in the classroom to share their talents, skills and ideas. When parents visit the classroom, we try to incorporate their talents into real learning and a

participatory experience for each child. If you would like to share a particular skill or talent with us let us know.