



2013/14  
PARENT HANDBOOK  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  
&  
AGREEMENT

I acknowledge receipt of the Montessori Children's House Parent Handbook for the 2013/14 school year and agree to be bound by its requirements as a condition of my child's acceptance into the program.

PLEASE CIRCLE SCHOOL:    HR            BB

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PARENT SIGNATURE            DATE            CHILD'S NAME

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E-MAIL ADDRESS *(Please print clearly)*

*\* Please sign and return this form to be included in your child's school file.*



# **2013/2014 Parent Handbook**



*"Discover the Montessori Difference"*



## PARENT HANDBOOK 2013/14

This booklet contains important information about our School and explains our procedures and policies. Please read the information carefully, as it will assist your understanding and permit us to create a positive and supportive learning environment for your child.

### TELEPHONE/E-MAIL

Blue Bell School, Marsha Hirschhorn, Principal	215-646-6816; marsha@mch2learn.org
Horsham School, Nona Melnick, Principal	215-957-1571; nona@mch2learn.org
Accounting Office-Kathy Downing	215-643-4218 x2115; kdowning@playandlearn.com
Administrative Office	215-641-1761; admin@playandlearn.com

Please call the School directly with messages relating to your child's daily program, schedule and absences. An answering machine is used at busy times during the day and your messages which will be responded to promptly. For questions concerning tuition or payments, please call the Accounting Office.

### PROGRAMS

**Montessori Primary and Kindergarten** - Children ages 3 through 6 years attend five mornings per week from 9-11:45 AM. Kindergarten children also attend the Montessori Full Day class until 3PM. A child is eligible for Kindergarten in the same year he/she would be eligible in his/her school district.

**Montessori Full Day** - Children ages 3 and 4 may attend this afternoon program of enrichment activities in the areas of music, art, nature, science, and drama from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. An ongoing contracted schedule may be arranged with the Principal. "As-needed" care can be arranged in advance depending upon space availability.

**Montessori Prep** - Children ages 18 months to 3 years at Blue Bell and Horsham may attend 3 days (T,W,TH); 2 days (M,F); or 5 days a week. Morning (9AM-11:45 AM) or Full Day (9AM-3 PM) sessions are available. For consistency in programming, part-time Prep students must adhere to their chosen schedule. Parents have the option of moving to a 5 day program providing space is available. This will further prepare the children for the primary class.

**Supplemental Care** - Available before school (Blue Bell: 7:30AM to 8:45AM; Horsham: 6:30AM to 8:45AM) and after school (3PM until 6PM). Supplemental care may be contracted for on a prearranged schedule, or on an "as-needed" basis (depending upon availability). As-needed care will be billed at an hourly rate, as noted on the fee schedule. For school holidays and vacations, our school follows the local school district calendar. At times supplemental care is offered when our school is closed. Due to limited staffing, this is an option for children who are not regularly contracted for supplemental care only when space is available and at the hourly charge.

**Camp Discovery at Montessori Children's House** - Summer Camp programs are available at Horsham and Blue Bell for children ages 18 months-6 years. The children participate in many different activities based on weekly themes. The activities include arts and crafts, nature, music, science exploration, water play and games. Information and applications will be available at the school in February 2014.

### ENROLLMENT

Your child's participation in the program begins with your inquiry call. It is best to visit the School and "Discover the Montessori Difference" first hand. You are then ready to complete an application. The application should be returned to the school with a **\$60.00 non-refundable registration fee, a \$10 student insurance fee** and a **\$100.00 tuition deposit** to assure your child's placement. The tuition deposit is applied toward your tuition billing in January 2014 and is non-refundable.

A financial agreement will be prepared noting the payment policies and the tuition for your child. This form must be signed and returned to the Principal as soon as you receive it. A copy will be returned to you.

Enrollment of siblings requires a completed application and a \$100.00 deposit (non-refundable) which will be applied to the tuition as described above. A 5% tuition discount is applied to the child with the lowest monthly tuition.

Several area companies have joined the Montessori Children's House **Corporate Partners Program** which entitles their employees to special benefits. Please check with the school office to find out if your employer is a Corporate Associate. Verification is required by the employer prior to receiving any benefits.

Prior to your child's first day in the program we must receive the following:

- Emergency Form
- Tuition Agreement (signed)
- First Tuition Payment
- Medical Health Form/Immunization Record
- Civil Rights Compliance Awareness Form (signed)
- Parent Handbook Form (signed)

According to state regulations, emergency contact forms and agreements must be updated every six months.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

If you are a person with a disability and require some special accommodations, please notify your Principal so we can do our best to accommodate your needs.

### **EARLY INTERVENTION**

If any early intervention services are provided for your child, it is necessary to give the IEP or IFSP documentation to your Principal. This information will be confidential and will assist in providing an appropriate program.

### **NEW PARENT/CHILD VISITATION**

New parents and students are invited to visit the classrooms before the first day of school. Please see the school calendar for date and time. This is an opportunity to chat informally with the teacher and to see the classroom environment before school begins.

### **RE-ENROLLMENT**

To reserve placement for the 2013/14 Montessori School Year, a \$100.00 deposit (non-refundable) will be due in January 2013. This deposit will be applied to the final tuition payment for the 2013/14 school year.

### **DAILY SCHEDULE**

In the morning, please park in the parking lot and take your child to the assigned room and check in with the staff. Please sign your child in on the attendance sheets. Breakfast may be brought from home until 7:45AM. Children arriving after 7:45AM should be fed at home.

When leaving at the end of the day, be sure to check the cubby outside of your child's class and your parent mailbox/pocket for any messages or work. Please be sure to sign your child out on the attendance sheets.

If you might be late for your child's pick up, you must call to inform the school. Whatever the reason for lateness, after 6PM a late fee of \$10.00 will be charged for each 15 minutes or portion of 15 minutes. We expect this will occur only in rare emergencies since staff expect to leave on time to meet personal commitments.

**If someone other than the parents will be picking up your child, the school must be informed in writing, and that person must be listed as an alternative pickup person on the child's emergency form. Alternate pickup people must present picture identification.**

Any special custody arrangements must be put in writing to the Principal.

**Children of any age should not be left unattended in a car or anywhere in the parking lot at any time. All children must be secured in the proper car/booster seat.**

**Montessori Children's House staff will not release a child to a pick-up person who appears to be, or whom the staff suspects, under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Staff will stay with the child at the school and contact an alternate pick-up person. If the pick-up person insists on taking the child, staff will contact an emergency pick-up person and the police.**

### **DAILY SUPPLIES**

All items and clothing must be labeled clearly. Labeling is essential and helps us care for your child's possessions. Unmarked items are easily lost. Glass containers or bottles are not permitted in school. Personal items such as toys or jewelry should remain at home.

You will need to bring the following supplies:

**Prep Room:** Lunch and beverage if staying after 11:45  
Changes of clothing suitable for the season  
Child size sleeping bag or sheet & blanket  
Drawstring or duffel bag for sleeping bag  
Disposable diapers & wipes  
Plastic bags - sent in regularly  
Bottles and pacifiers are not appropriate for our program

**Primary Room:** Lunch & beverage if staying after 11:45  
Complete changes of clothing suitable for the season

Please wash linens and blankets over the weekend; return these and extra clothing immediately.

### **DAILY OUTDOOR PLAY**

Your child should have comfortable, washable and weather appropriate clothing and footwear **at all times**. We go outside year-round; please check with your child's teacher for any additional clothing your child may need.

### **GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH & SAFETY**

**Illness - your child may not attend School if he or she is too ill to take part in the regular school activities including outdoor play, or may infect other children. Use the following symptoms as a guide:**

1. Temperatures : Greater than 101° (Temperature will be taken axillary and 1 degree added or with a tympanic thermometer)
2. Uncontrolled Diarrhea
3. Rash accompanied by fever and or behavior changes
4. Undiagnosed sore or discharging eyes or ears
5. Vomiting
6. Conjunctivitis(pink eye) until 24 hours after treatment begins
7. Infestation (lice, etc) until 24 hours after treatment begins and **nit free**



If your child becomes ill during the day, you will be called. You may be asked to come for your child. If you cannot be reached, we will call one of the three persons you have listed to contact in case of emergencies. It is the School's decision when a child needs to be taken home. Parents are required to accept this decision and to arrange for pick up within one hour of the call.

Children dismissed from School for any of these medical reasons must not return for 24 hours unless they have a doctor's written approval. If your child becomes ill at night (example: vomiting or diarrhea) but appears fine in the morning, it is advisable to keep your child home to insure that he or she is healthy. It is not possible for us to keep a child isolated.

**Our goal is to provide care as long as the child is comfortably able to participate in the program, will not infect others, and does not require more attention than the staff can give in a group setting.** If your child is absent for 3 days or longer, a doctor's note is required before the child can return.

You might expect your child to be sick more often when he/she is in such close contact with other children. However, past research has shown that children in school are actually not sick more frequently than children who spend most of their time at home. When illness does occur at the school, you will be informed of any contagious diseases.

### **Hand Washing Policy**

Montessori Children's House has adopted a hand washing policy. All children will wash their hands before and after eating, after outdoor play, after using the bathroom and periodically throughout the day.

**Health Evaluations/Inoculations** - We recommend that all children receive the standard immunizations including DPT, measles, rubella, polio, and Hepatitis B as well as a TB test. At enrollment, we require physician's statement of inoculation and general medical health. Medical Health forms must be updated on a regular schedule to comply with our licensing regulations according to requirements based on your child's age. Failure to provide updated health forms may result in termination. See the Principal for a form.

**Medication** - It is our policy **not** to administer any medication (including non-prescription drugs and prescription ointments) at the School unless it is an emergency. Please observe the following rules:

1. Request that your doctor give you a medication schedule such that the medicine can be given while your child is at home.
2. If your child must have medication during School hours, arrange to come to the School to give the medication.

Only when the schedule can not be altered and with physician approval will medication be administered at Montessori Children's House. The following guidelines must be followed:

1. Provide written instructions from your doctor which include the date, name of medication, name of patient, dosage frequency, and reason for medication.
2. Medicine should be in the original container labeled with child's name, name of drug, physician's name, pharmacist's name and address, dosage time and frequency to be given.
3. Fill out a medication form, detailing medication type, dosage, and administration. Forms are available in the School office.
4. Hand all medications and written permissions to the Principal. Medications should **never** be left in lunch boxes, backpacks, or cubbies.
5. Written permission from parents and approval by the Principal must be received before administering any medication.

While these procedures may seem tedious, they are necessary to protect your child as well as others.

**Emergencies** - In case of accident or sudden illness, the following procedures are followed:

1. A phone call is made to 911.
2. Child's parents (or emergency contact person) are called.
3. Child and health records are taken to emergency service at the closest hospital.

In all cases an emergency report is completed and given to the Principal. Minor accidents are recorded on an Incident Form and reviewed with the Lead Teacher who will then share the information with parents. **It is very important, especially in instances of illness or emergency, that the contact information that we have on file is current and complete.** Report any changes in address, telephone number, employment, physician, or health insurance information to the Principal or Administrator immediately. Be sure to keep alternate emergency contact information current.

### **CHILD ABUSE REPORTING**

All Montessori Children's House staff are trained in child abuse reporting obligations. Staff are required to make reports of child abuse when the person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child may be an abused child.

### **FOOD SAFETY**

Some children may have food allergies; therefore no food may be distributed or shared among children without permission of the Principal or Lead Teacher in Principal's absence. At times we will ask parents not to send certain foods due to another child's severe allergy. We expect all families to cooperate. We are a "peanut-free" school and ask you to keep peanut related foods at home. You will be provided a list of safe food alternatives.

### **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

It is the intent of the Montessori Children's House to create a positive and supportive play and learning environment. At times, limits must be set for the safety and welfare of each child. Children will be redirected, distracted or gently removed from any problem situation. Staff will give choices and positive alternatives rather than punish negative behavior. Physical punishment is unacceptable as means of discipline at the Montessori Children's House.

### **SUPERVISION POLICY**

Montessori Children's House is open from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM at Horsham and 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM at Blue Bell. **You are responsible for your child until you sign your child into his/her classroom and after signing him/her out at the end of the day. Be sure to watch your child in the hallways and parking lot.**

When leaving at the end of the day, check your child's cubby/parent mailbox/pouch for messages. Please replenish supplies the next day. **Remember, you are required to sign your child in and out each day.**

### **BABY-SITTING**

It is against Montessori Children's House policy for employees to provide babysitting services for our enrolled families. Montessori Children's House offers a school environment in which staff are supervised and cannot endorse care in a private home.



### **TUITION AND PAYMENT INFORMATION**

There are three payment options:

- 1) Tuition for the school year may be paid in full by 8/10/13 at a 2% discount.
- 2) Tuition may be paid in 2 equal payments:  
1st semester due 8/10/13 & 2nd semester due 12/07/13.
- 3) Tuition may be paid in nine monthly payments beginning 8/10/2013. The remaining 8 payments are due the 25th of each month September through April.

Payment may be made using the following methods:

- A) Check: All payments should be placed in the safe located in the School office or sent directly to the Accounting Office: 200 Camp Hill Road, Ft. Washington, Pa. 19034.
- B) Cash: All cash payments must be brought to the Accounting Office in Fort Washington
- C) Click to Pay: Your tuition bill will be sent by e-mail from the Accounting Office by the 15th of the month. You will be able to pay your bill online following the prompts on your invoice using a credit card or bank draft at anytime.
- D) EZ-EFT: You may sign up for **Automatic** electronic payments that will transfer funds from your checking or savings account or Visa or MasterCard on the 25th of each month. You will receive your bill before transfers are made. Your record of payment will be listed each month on your banking or credit card statement.

**Invoices will be e-mailed monthly to the e-mail address you provide.** Please direct any questions regarding tuition or billing to Kathy Downing in the Accounting Office: 215-643-4218 x 2115.

### **CHILDREN ENTERING AFTER November 1, 2013**

Children entering after November 1, 2013, are required to pay a deposit of \$670. This includes the \$60 registration, \$10 insurance, \$100 deposit credited towards your final tuition payment and \$500 deposit credited towards your first tuition invoice.

### **ANNUAL SCHOOL FEES (Due September 25th for October billing)**

\$90.00 Activity Fee - For Primary & Kindergarten Children

\$50.00 Prep Activity Fee

\$40.00 Kindergarten Supplies

\$25.00 Annual Registration Fee

### **OTHER FEES**

\$15.00 Late Fee - Any monthly payment, school or supplemental, not received by the monthly due date will be charged a late fee.

\$20.00 Returned Check Fee

\$10.00 Late Pick-Up Fee for each 15 minutes or portion of 15 minutes beyond 6:00PM closing time

### **DISCOUNTS**

The following discounts are available:

1. Sibling Discount - 5% discount for siblings, computed on the child with the lowest yearly tuition.
2. CCIS and other subsidies accepted for qualified families
3. 2% discount for full payment by 8/10/13
4. Corporate Discounts-See Principal for detailed information

### **WITHDRAWAL**

Tuition fees paid in advance, excluding non-refundable deposit and registration, shall be refunded if a registered student withdraws or is requested to withdraw 30 days or more before the beginning of a semester. The Fall semester begins 9/1/13 and the Winter semester begins 1/21/14. A semester is equivalent to 1/2 of a school year based on 180 school days.

If a student withdraws during a semester, full payment of the tuition for that semester must be made.

### **DISMISSAL POLICY**

A child may be dismissed from the school for any of the following reasons:

1. Failure to make payment for services within the required time frame
2. Conditions exist in which the child's individual needs can not be met by the school
3. Failure to provide required paperwork/forms

### **TRANSPORTATION**

There is no busing available through the Montessori Children's House; but it may be available to Kindergarten children through their local school district. See the Principal for details.

### **SCHEDULE CHANGES**

If you wish to request a temporary or permanent supplemental care or other schedule change, please plan it through the Principal. These changes can be made based on available space. Permanent reduction in time requires 30 days advance written notice and all fees are due during the notice period. Billing related to schedule changes will be reflected in the following month's bill. Families are granted one permanent schedule change per school year. An administrative fee of \$15.00 will be charged for additional changes involving a reduction in hours. All schedule changes must follow this procedure.



## **HOLIDAYS, SICK DAYS, IN-SERVICE DAYS, VACATION, EMERGENCY OR WEATHER DAYS**



Attendance is expected for the entire school year. Credits are not given for any absences from the Montessori School, Montessori Full Day, or Supplemental Care Programs. Full fees are due for holidays, weather or other emergency closing days, conference and in-service days for school and supplemental care. Full payment is also due for all absences including those due to illness and vacation. These fees must be paid to insure a continuing place for your child.

### **Snow & Emergency Closings**

Snow or emergency closings or late openings for the School and Supplemental Care programs will be announced on KYW News Radio. The school closing numbers are:

**BB 384**

**HR 3133**

**KYW will contact you when our school is closed! Register by visiting the CBSPhilly.com school closings site and select school closing text and telephone alerts.**

### **PHASE-IN SCHEDULE**

At the beginning of each year, our school follows a special schedule so that children feel comfortable and can learn classroom routines. At both the Blue Bell and Horsham schools, each child is assigned a start date during the phase-in period. Bringing children into the classroom a few at a time during the phase-in period allows each child to make a smooth and comfortable adjustment as they become familiar with the Montessori environment. We appreciate your cooperation during the phase-in period. Full tuition fees are due regardless of the phase-in start date.

### **OBSERVATIONS AND CONFERENCES**

Parent observations and conferences are scheduled twice each year; progress reports are given to parents at these times. Parents may arrange to discuss questions and concerns with the staff at any time during the year by calling the School Office.

### **WEBSITE/ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER**

The website for Montessori Children's House is [www.mch2learn.org](http://www.mch2learn.org). The website includes general information about the Montessori philosophy, descriptions of our Montessori classrooms, information about the different opportunities for parent involvement and more. The Electronic Newsletter will be emailed to you on a monthly basis and will contain information specific to your child(ren) school. See your principal to be placed on the email distribution list for the Electronic Newsletter.

### **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

Parent involvement in our educational process is welcomed and encouraged. Opportunities exist to help with field trips, plan and execute parties, help with fund raising, volunteer time as a classroom assistant, teach a foreign language, decorate bulletin boards, make material for the classrooms, act as librarian, and many more. We also encourage parents to give presentations to the classes on any special talent, skills, knowledge or profession in which they are involved. If you would like to be actively involved in any way, please contact your child's teacher. Your efforts will be most appreciated.

### **PARENT MAILBOXES/POCKETS**

Parent mailboxes/pockets are for use by MCH staff for distribution of school related materials only. Parents may distribute birthday party invitations only if the entire class is invited. Otherwise please send invitations from home.

### **CHILDREN'S CLASS DIRECTORY**

Each year we publish a class directory to be distributed to parents. If you do not wish your name, address or phone number listed, please submit this request in writing. This directory is provided as a service to help parents in arranging parties or visits with other children. It is not to be used for business soliciting.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

For the primary classes there are a combination of field trips and in-house presentations planned for the year. Parents are always notified in advance when a trip involving transportation is planned and permission slips will be sent home. The cost for field trips and special events is included in the activity fee.

### **FUNDRAISING**

Montessori Children's House is a non-profit organization. If you would like to make a donation please check with your child's teachers and school administrators for a list of the most pressing needs.

Fundraising enables our school to provide special programming and to purchase materials and equipment. Events throughout the school year are planned and carried out with the help of parent committees. Other fund raisers include seasonal candy and gift sales as well as our pizza and cookie dough sales which support the schools' special music, gym programs, foreign language and yoga. We encourage your assistance in making such events successful by participating and providing organizational help.

### **UNITED WAY**

The United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania raises money for non-profit agencies that offer community services to the families of Southeastern Pennsylvania. The United Way gives all of us the opportunity to help these community service agencies. Many corporations also have matching gift programs for their employees, when they choose to donate to a specific agency.

As a Donor Choice Agency, **Montessori Children's House** is eligible to receive donations from the United Way. You may select the Montessori Children's House as your Donor Choice Agency by using the Donor Choice Option number **03017**. All donations received through this option program benefit the Montessori Children's House schools in Blue Bell and Horsham. All contributions will be acknowledged with a thank you letter.

Montessori Children's House is a not-for-profit organization and does not discriminate in admission, programming, policies or employment on the basis of sex, religion, race or national origin.