

Atlantis Montessori Academy Parent Handbook



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Philosophy and Goals

Every teaching method sparks moments of learning. Then why is Montessori so different? The difference is the method itself. The mind of a child is like a sponge- absorbing everything, always at the ready to learn something new. The primary goal of Montessori education? To help children reach their full potential. Imagine a school where education is viewed not just as a means to an end, but as an aid to life; where the method for learning comes not from a curriculum, but from the natural development of your child; a place where creativity, innovation, and individuality are valued as much as concentration, motivation, and persistence; where your child is not just a student, but also a teacher.

As a student of Atlantis Montessori Academy, your child will be laying the foundation for every future educational experience, and something even more important: *the foundation for a happy and meaningful life.*

Montessori Students are...

- Joyful, self-motivated, enthusiastic learners
- Better socialized and able to solve conflicts
- Fluent readers
- In possession of natural self-esteem
- Courteous, compassionate, and respectful in their interactions

These key principles contribute to the success of Montessori education:

- Movement and learning are closely connected; movement enhances learning.
- Placing children in mixed age groups, corresponding to planes of development, allows a child to relate to other children who are both older and younger.
- Observation of the child reveals the proper timing for presentation of new information and experiences.
- Attending to sensitive periods of development guides the choice of classroom activities in which a child will be engaged.
- The classroom experience should build on the desire of the young child to master his or her environment.
- The use of self-correcting materials allows children to manipulate and explore at their own pace.

Outcome:

Montessori education assists children to develop to their full human potential by helping them “learn how to think.” What do thinking children do when they grow up? They become successful, accomplished adults contributing to a better world.

AMA promotes the teaching of Dr. Maria Montessori, who believed that all deserve the opportunity to become the most complete “person” possible; continuing her work, we are dedicated to growing confidence, creativity and strength in each of the children entrusted to our care.

Like the first *Casa de Bambini* that Maria Montessori opened in 1907 in Rome, ours is a “house” for children not a classroom, but a “community”. It is a special learning environment designed for your child – to touch, experience, care for and learn from. At AMA, *each child progresses at his or her own pace* – free to choose from work with a world of vivid “sensorial” materials and tools of “discovery.” Our dedicated staff encourages independent thinking and individual learning. We work toward the enhancement of each child’s awareness of and participation in the “*wholeness of life.*”

Atlantis Montessori Academy’s method is based on respect of the individual child and their timetable for growth and development. Each day we strive to:

- Awaken a love of learning, a passion for knowledge, and a joy of creativity in each student.
- Provide a peaceful, secure, prepared environment where children long to be.
- Help children discover their abilities, find their independence and develop their self confidence.
- Foster a strong sense of self, respect for others and an ability to work as part of a group.
- Help to develop a strong academic foundation and a repertoire of life skills in each of our students.
- Create and provide programs which will heighten a child’s development through the processes of exploration and discovery with concrete materials, while nurturing a natural curiosity and a love of learning.

- Provide a reliable source of care, support, information and training for families.

Elements of the Montessori Approach to Teaching

Montessori is both a philosophy of child development and a method of applying the philosophy in an educational setting to guide a child's growth. The Montessori classrooms at all levels are dynamic communities of learners and guides. Some basic premises of Montessori for all age levels include:

A Responsive, Prepared, Student-Centered Environment

Children are to be respected as unique individuals, different from adults, but not less important or valued as members of the community. The child possesses an unusual sensitivity and intellectual ability to learn from their environment. The focus of activity in our Montessori classroom setting is on the child's experience within the environment, and not on the teacher's teaching. Our environment is designed to meet the needs, interests, and abilities of the children within the class. Montessori guides adapt the environment through modifying the selection of educational materials available, the physical layout and equipment in the classroom, and shifting the tone of the class to fit the ever-changing needs of the children. Generally students work individually or in small self-selected groups. Community meetings or "circle times" are scheduled so as not to interrupt the child's work and are usual held at transitional points during the day. There is a conscious effort to design our classroom as a "children's house", making it as comfortable and inviting as a home.

A Focus On The Human Tendencies

Maria Montessori based her philosophy of education on the human tendency within the child to explore, to move, to share with a group, to be independent and make decisions, to create order, to develop self control, to abstract ideas from experience, to use creative imagination, to work hard, to repeat, concentrate, and perfect one's efforts and creations. Each of these tendencies is considered carefully when designing our environments, preparing materials, and planning activities for the students.

A Multiage Community of Learners

Our Montessori classroom is a community of children and adults. The classroom consists of children from a multiage span of three to four years. This creates a “family” like group where older children model and help care for younger children, and younger children look up to and learn from the older children. Varying levels of ability blend easily in a multiage setting, no child feels left behind and everyone learns at their own pace.

Cooperation and Collaboration

Montessori children learn “at their own pace”. When the child demonstrates readiness, they are guided gently by the guide in the classroom to explore increasingly challenging activities. In a Montessori setting, we refrain from comparing students to one another and base evaluations on the progress of the individual. Children are encouraged to work together as well as independently. Often a more experienced child will be asked to assist a less experienced child with an activity or lesson. Group discussion and problem solving are strongly encouraged. The adults work to create a sense of community within the classroom. Children feel a sense of belonging and responsibility toward their classroom and toward each other.

The Process of Learning

Montessori materials teach through hands on learning, spontaneous engagement, active involvement, and self- directed activity. Montessori materials have a control of error inherent in their design. This allows children to work independently, unafraid to make mistakes and to become comfortable with the fact that errors are essential to the process of learning. While making independent choices and exploring concepts largely on their own, Montessori students construct their own sense of individual identity. They become independent and confident individuals.

The child is intrinsically motivated to learn. In a Montessori classroom children do not work for grades or external rewards, nor do they complete assignments given to them by their teachers. Children learn because they are interested in things and in gaining an understanding of the world around them.

In the classroom there are three stages of learning a new concept or lesson:

1. Introduction to a concept. This usually occurs by means of exploration within the classroom, observing another child at work, a conversation, reading something in a book, etc.
2. Processing the concept. The child develops an understanding of the concept through working with materials that illustrate the ideas, provided opportunity's for exploration and experimentation, and provided opportunity's for repetition of an activity.
3. Mastering the concept. The child is confidently able to explain the concept and teach the concept to another person.

Evaluation of Student Progress

The Montessori curriculum is carefully structured and sequenced based on the developmental needs of each individual child. Teachers maintain careful records of each student's individual progress. Portfolios of work are kept for older children. Children are not compared against arbitrary standards or the performance of their classmates. Parent teacher conferences are held twice a year to discuss student progress. Additional conferences can be held at a parent or teacher's request. If requested, written summaries of conferences can be provided.

Overview of Curriculum

The child has a deep love and need for purposeful work. He works, however, not as an adult, for completion of a job, but for the sake of an activity itself. It is this activity, which enables him to accomplish his most important goal: the development of himself –mental, physical, and psychological powers.

The Primary classroom is an atmosphere of calm, order and joy, as children ages 3 through 6 learn together. The younger children are guided by the teacher and by observing and working with older students. Primary students literally absorb information, experiences, and life around them. The older children learn leadership and compassion in this mixed-aged setting. Children learn to work at a task from beginning to end and develop their self-discipline and the capacity for deep concentration. Respect for

others and good manners develop naturally as the children grow within the Montessori environment.

Practical Life: Young children, Toddler and Primary Students, have a natural urge to partake in the activities of daily living and be a participating member of family life. Simple chores adults may take for granted fascinate the child, engaging them in the meaningful learning of life skills. Practical life activities help children develop and coordinate movement, awareness of the environment, orderly thought patterns, independent work habits, and responsibility.

The lessons in Practical Life include:

Preliminary Exercises- preparing the fine motor skills for more challenging activities (spooning, pouring, stringing, etc.)

Care of the Environment- learning to respect and care for the tools in the space where the child lives and learns (food preparation, sweeping, dusting, washing, polishing, etc.)

Care of the Person- learning the basics of self care skills (hand washing, nose blowing, dressing, nutrition, etc.)

Grace and Courtesy- learning social skills (walking carefully, communication, manners, table setting, hosting a guest, etc.)

Sensorial: The materials and activities at the Primary level are iconic Montessori. They allow children to pursue their natural tendency to classify sensorial impressions and sort by size, shape, color, touch, sound, and weight. The sensorial materials isolate specific qualities, have a built in control of error, allow for repetition, and make abstract qualities concrete. Sensorial activities lay a foundation for math, geometry, geography, botany, art, and music.

Math: At the Primary level, children's mathematical sense is built on the strong foundation of the sensorial materials where many fundamental concepts, such as length, volume, gradation, sequencing, grouping and so on, are experienced through the senses. These activities make the abstract concepts of mathematics concrete for hands on learning. Each activity

isolates a particular concept and integrates with other activities to form a strong foundation for further exploration.

Beginning Primary math activities include: 1 to 10 (sequences, quantity, numeral names, combinations of ten, basic arithmetic), teens, tens, introduction to the decimal system, and the operations of addition, multiplication, subtraction, and division. Children explore fractional equivalences and the fractional names with manipulative materials. They use a wide variety of two and three-dimensional geometry materials and learn the basics of geometric nomenclature. They see and explore binomial and trinomial patterns in certain materials and gain a visual and tactile impression for later work when they will use such patterns to explore the concepts of squaring, square root, cubing, and cube root during the elementary years. The emphasis is always on examining patterns and sequences and the connections between arithmetic and geometry in order to help children develop their mathematical minds from an early age.

Language: Primary children are immersed in language the moment they enter the classroom. Spoken language is encouraged as children communicate with each other individually, in small groups, and in large groups. A library of books is available for enjoyment and information. Stories are read and told individually, in both small and large groups.

At the Primary level phonemic awareness is taught through hands on activities and games, the alphabet is learned with fun and interesting sorting and matching works, handwriting is practiced through tracing shapes, sandpaper letters, and using chalkboards. Moveable alphabet letters are used for writing words, and labels are used all over for word recognition.

Reading for 4 or 5 year olds in a Montessori program usually follows an immersion in writing activities, mostly done using the moveable alphabets. The children spontaneously synthesize all of the phonemes they have learned and the sight words they have been given and often discover one day they can now read. In addition to a wide range of suitable fiction and non-fiction books in each classroom, there are vocabulary cards in relation to every subject area (nomenclature of everyday objects, geometry, science, world cultures, etc.). Enrichment of vocabulary across the curriculum is a constant focus in the Primary classroom. Another daily occurrence is reading aloud to the children as a group.

Introductory activities in areas of grammar, syntax and word study form a part of the early language work. Dr. Maria Montessori described the 5 to 7 year olds as “word lovers,” such was their great interest in language at this age. The concepts of noun, verb, preposition, subject, direct object, etc. are introduced in playful activities using a miniature environment and a variety of movement games. The Montessori grammar symbols used throughout the Elementary Program are first introduced at this age.

Science: Primary level sensorial exploration and experimentation is key as children learn about the natural world. For example, sand and water tables allow for open-ended work while other activities isolate individual concepts such as sink and float, magnets, botany, etc. Care for plants and animals overlap with practical life activities and teach science as well as responsibility.

At the Primary level basic skills of science, such as measuring, comparing, classifying, and keen observing, are carefully prepared and practiced. This work is accompanied by extensive classified nomenclature. For example, Primary age children learn the scientific nomenclature of the parts of a flower, such as the calyx and corolla. Classification systems such as living/non-living, and vertebrate/invertebrate are also taught. Children study the basic characteristics and nomenclature of plants and animals. They learn to name common domestic and wild plants and animals, and they work with materials to learn fundamental classifications such as mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish. Children are also introduced to some basic concepts of physical science, such as floating/sinking, magnetic/non magnetic. Non-fiction books related to science are read aloud to the children, and they have classroom responsibilities for the care of indoor plants, as well as feeding the birds outside. The children also plant, tend to, and harvest their own classroom gardens.

Geography: Working with the sensorial, language and cultural materials related to geography is an important part of the work of a Montessori Primary classroom. These materials help the child learn about the facts of the material world. Children are introduced to a sandpaper globe where they can have a visual and tactile experience of the Earth. Other sensorial materials and puzzle maps are used by the children to explore the continents of our world, the countries of each continent, and the states of our own country.

They also create key land and water forms such as lake, island, and peninsula. Geography vocabulary is given both orally and with prepared nomenclature cards that are used by the children as an integrated part of their language work. The children are introduced to the diversity of international cultures by means of stories, songs, celebrations, pictures, and artifacts.

History and Cultural Studies: Toddler and Primary students celebrate diversity of our world through language, music, art, traditions, food, stories, and history. A variety of cultural themes are integrated into all curriculum areas. Peace education is an integral part of the Montessori classroom and begins with respect for, understanding, and acceptance of differences as well as the celebration of the unifying aspects that connect us all.

Music: At the Primary level informal and formal music education occurs through singing, listening to music, introduction of instruments, introduction of musical notation, and exploration of sound.

Art: A range of art materials and activities are available to students in the classroom. Art activities in the Primary classroom are chosen by the child from the art shelf according to interest. There is a progression in the artwork as the child's skills develop. Cutting exercises move from very simple to quite complex exercises. Pasting work is followed later by collage. Coloring with various media (crayons, pastels, charcoal) is available. Painting on an easel, watercolor, and clay work are presented. Handwork, including sewing and embroidery, is taught. Seasonal inspirations using different media are a prominent feature in our primary classrooms.

Spanish: At the Primary the main goal is to create enthusiasm about speaking and learning Spanish. Many songs, rhymes and games are used. New vocabulary and expressions are presented in categories such as colors, foods, school, etc. By using a wide variety of resources in a creative way, we generate the interest and desire to communicate in the language.

Physical Development: At all levels, care of the body is equally as important as challenging the mind. At the Primary level movement is built into all Montessori activities allowing the child to develop gross motor as well as fine motor skills.

Universal Values and Global Perspective: Montessori deliberately teaches children not only appropriate patterns of polite behavior, but seeks to instill basic universal values within the core of the child's personality. These values include self respect, acceptance of the uniqueness and dignity of each person we meet, kindness, peacefulness, compassion, empathy, honor, individual responsibility, and the courage to speak from our hearts. The Montessori philosophy is international in its heritage and consciously seeks to promote a global perspective.

Hours of Operation

Monday- Friday 8:00 am - 5:30 pm

Office Hours 8:00 am - 11:30 am

Primary class schedule

8:00 - 8:30 am - morning care

8:20 - 8:30 am - drop off/ start time

8:30 - 11:30 am - morning work cycle

11:30 am - half day dismissal

11:30 am- 12:30 pm recess

12:30 pm - 1:00 pm - lunch

1:00 - 3:00 pm - afternoon work cycle

3:00 pm- full day dismissal

3:00- 5:30 aftercare hours

All students must be picked up prior 5:30 pm.

Holidays

A school calendar will be made available at registration. It will include dates of the scheduled holidays. We normally observe the standard holidays recognized by the local school systems.

The school will be closed the week of Thanksgiving, two weeks for Christmas break, one week for spring break, and for the months of June and July. Aftercare and summer camp options may be available at an additional rate for families in need of child care during holiday breaks.

Admissions

Admission Policy General Policy:

Atlantis Montessori considers itself more than just a school or daycare program, we consider ourselves a true community of families that share a vision, values, and goals for our children. Beginning the admissions process and learning about our school is a process of learning about each other, similar to dating. Our primary goal in the admissions process is to help each family find the perfect match. Just as not all great people would make us happy as our spouse or business partner, we recognize that we may not be the perfect match as a school for every family. The admissions process is a chance for us to get to know each other.

Honesty in any relationship is key to its success. We are not here to convince prospective families that our school is right for them. We actively encourage families to observe and explore the many school options available. Our goal is to present our program as truthfully as possible, help families to grasp the nature of our school and what we have to offer, and allow them to weigh all the factors out as they consider whether our school is indeed the right match for them.

School tours, classroom observations, open houses, Montessori education meetings, and meetings with the Head of School are important ways to get to know our community. We have a lending library of videos, DVDs, and books that describe the Montessori philosophy of education and are a great resource for current as well as prospective parents.

When we admit a new student, we are not simply bringing him or her into the school community. We are bringing the child, his parents, siblings, and extended family into the mix. In making admissions decisions we normally give strong preference to families who share common values and goals with the school, and who, after careful consideration and exploration, have concluded that our school is something that they want very much for their children, for the right reasons.

We consider applications for admissions on a case-by-case open admission basis. When no openings are available children will be placed in the applicant group waiting list.

In the event of an opening, children in this group will be considered based on the date an application was received and age and needs of the child (in accordance with the Montessori principle of a multi-age classroom). Siblings of currently enrolled students, children of staff members, and transfers from other Montessori schools may be granted priority in the admissions process.

Atlantis Montessori admits students of any race, color, nationality, and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Atlantis Montessori does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies and admission policies. Following the traditional multi-age Montessori classroom model, Atlantis Montessori is committed to creating a balanced learning environment for all students. We are committed to integrating and accommodating children with special needs into our program, in accordance with the Montessori philosophy and appropriate early childhood practices. In some circumstance's Atlantis Montessori May not be the "right fit" for a child and family. Atlantis Montessori reserves the right not to accept a child into the program or to ask a child to leave the program based on the school's inability to meet the needs of the child. We will support the family in finding a program better suited to the child's specific needs.

Admissions Process Observation and School Tour

Prospective families are required to have a school tour and are encouraged to observe in a classroom before enrolling their child. Appointments for school tours or observations can be made through the main office.

Application

Parents are encouraged to speak with the Head of School and tour the classroom before submitting an application. All applications will be processed upon receipt of a completed application form. The application is valid for three years from the application date or until the child is no longer eligible for enrollment. If an offer for enrollment is declined for any reason, the application will be withdrawn. Please remember to notify the school if you change your address or phone number.

Meet and Greet

After submitting your application for enrollment and \$50 application fee, we will schedule a time after school for your child to meet with their perspective teacher. Meet and greets are conducted Monday-Friday from 3:30 pm to 4:30pm. During this time your child will be introduced to the environment and will be given a few lessons. Parents may stay with their child if they or the child prefers.

Shadow day

The last step in our admissions process is a shadow day. Your child will be asked to come and spend ½ a day in their perspective classroom. After your child has shadowed you will meet with the Head of School to discuss your child's placement.

Waiting List

If there are no openings available in the program selected, your application will be placed on a waiting list. You will be contacted as soon as space becomes available and will then have two weeks in which to enroll your child by signing a contract and paying the non-refundable enrollment fee.

Provisional Acceptance

All children enrolled are accepted into the program with the understanding that if the teacher feels the program cannot meet the child's needs, the staff and parents will explore alternatives together.

Enrollment Agreement

A child is officially enrolled in the program when the application and enrollment fees have been paid and the school has received the signed enrollment agreement. Enrollment in all programs is binding. Parents are responsible for tuition each month regardless of the amount of time the child attends the school.

Withdrawal

If should a family initiate withdrawal of a child, a minimum of 60 days advance written notice must be given to the school in order to receive a full refund of tuition deposit.

The school's Board of Directors require that the following information be kept on file for each child enrolled in the program:

- Application
- Enrollment contract
- Registration form
- Medical report/immunization documentation
- Emergency medical treatment consent form
- Emergency transportation release form
- List of authorized people able to pick child up from school
- Topical ointment permission
- Photography permission and release
- Napping policy

It is your responsibility to notify the school when there is any change in the information provided on these forms.

Tuition

Primary Ages 3-6

	<u>Registration</u>	<u>Yearly Tuition</u>	<u>Monthly Payments (10)</u>
8:30 AM- 11:30 AM	\$125.00	\$5400.00	\$540.00
8:30 AM – 3:00 PM	\$125.00	\$6300.00	\$630.00

Tuition is due the 1st of each month, beginning on the first month of attendance. Parents may also choose to pay their tuition weekly. All payments are made 1 week or 1 month in advance through tuition Express.

Late Fees

There will be a \$50.00 late tuition payment charged for payments received after the 5th of each month.

Collection Policy

Parents are expected to make payment by the due date or make payment arrangements in writing. If no payment arrangements have been made, and the account has not been brought current after thirty days the Head of School may cancel the contracts of children with unpaid tuition. The school understands that families may experience some financial difficulties and are committed to working with any family to make acceptable arrangements for payment.

Returned Checks

A \$35.00 fee will be charged for all returned checks.

Non- Discrimination Policy

It is unlawful to discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color , religion, sex, national origin, or disability in violation of the ADA Act of 1990, 104 Stat. 32, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et. sq.

The School will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sexual or national origin, or disability in the administration of its admissions policies, educational policies, scholarships/loans/fee waivers, educational programs, and athletics/extracurricular activities.

Health and illness policies

Keeping your child healthy is very important to us. For this reason we must exclude children with contagious or infectious conditions. Each child will be checked upon arrival for illness and will be sent home if they show any symptoms. When your child becomes ill or is unable to participate in group activities, you will be asked to remove your child from the school within thirty minutes. A child who becomes sick at school will be sent to our “sick room” located near the Front Lobby.

Notices of communicable diseases and highly contagious maladies such as chicken pox or lice are sent by email to families in the affected classroom as soon as we are aware of the situation.

Atlantis Montessori lice policy requires the child to remain home until completely nit-free. We have a separate Lice Primer, which will help you identify, treat, and control a lice infestation.

If your child develops a fever, you must keep him or her home for at least 24 hours after the fever subsides without medication. If antibiotics are required, the child must stay home for at least 24 hours after beginning treatment.

Children who have been sent home from school may not return to school on the subsequent day. Children must be symptom free for a minimum of 36 hours from the time they are picked up from school, before they may return.

Often the most contagious state of a child’s illness is just before symptoms appear. Signals such as change in behavior, pulling at ears, drowsiness, loss of appetite, or inability to participate in room activities, might indicate your child is at the beginning stage of illness. Your child needs lots of cuddling and comforting during any illness.

Staying home and getting extra rest may ward off the illness, and will also help prevent spreading it to other children in the school.

The criteria used to determine when a child needs to be excluded from the school is based on State and County regulations as well as the guidelines set by the American Public Health Association, American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control.

Children have not fully developed their immunity to diseases, so they are ill more often than most adults. Often this happens just when you are most needed at work. The school will not be able to provide care for your child according to previously mentioned regulations. Therefore, it is very important that each parent make alternate arrangements for back-up care.

Health conditions that warrant exclusion from school

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in the school's activities. This includes being able to play outside, since outside play is a normal part of the daily program.
- The illness results in a greater care than the teachers can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
- Oral temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or above in the past 24 hours.
- Vomiting in the past 24 hours.
- Uncontrolled diarrhea (2 or more loose bowel movements within a 24 hours period).
- Symptoms and signs that could indicate a severe illness.

Your child will be excluded until symptoms disappear or a doctor authorizes a written permission for return to school.

Some examples would be:

Unusual lethargy
Irritability or persistent crying
Stiff neck or headache with fever
Sore throat
Pink or red eyes accompanied by white or yellow eye discharge
Undiagnosed rash, especially when accompanied by fever or behavior change
Uncontrolled coughing difficult breathing/wheezing
Jaundice (yellow skin or eyes)
Mouth Sores

Examples of communicable diseases that are excluded throughout the period of communicability:

Chicken Pox
Roseola – Measles
Colds with fever
Mumps
Influenza
Rubella
Fifth's Disease
Meningitis
Shingles
Coxsackievirus

Examples of diseases that are excluded until appropriate treatment has been completed (a doctor's authorization may be required for readmission):

Draining sores or wounds
Ringworm
Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
Strep throat
Lice
Scabies
Tuberculosis
Herpes
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)

Impetigo
Giardia
Hepatitis A or B

Medication policy

All medication must be hand delivered to the office, in the original package, by an adult. Parents are responsible for keeping up with supplies and expiration dates.

These are mandatory guidelines of the State of Florida. The parent must provide the following before any non-prescription or prescription medication is administered to a student:

1. A Medication Authorization form must be completely and accurately filled out and turned in to the office by the child's parent or guardian.
2. Your child's medication in the original container from the pharmacist. (If requested, the pharmacist will give you two original containers.)
3. The medication must be hand-delivered directly to a staff member by an adult. Please do not put medications in backpacks or send it in with your child, etc.
4. If your child is to receive medication for longer than two weeks, please provide a letter from your child's doctor stating that your child will be continuously medicated.
5. Chap stick and lip balms should be labeled with the child's name and given to the teacher or administrative staff. They will be kept on hand in the classroom.

Lunch and snacks

All full day students are required to bring lunch daily.

Primary Programs serve a healthy snack each morning. The following items are suggestions for snacks that will be provided to the younger students:

- Vegetables – washed and cut into bite sized pieces (with or without dip).
- Fruits – fresh or dried – seedless grapes, strawberries, banana (whole unpeeled), sliced apples, oranges, tangerines (peeled and sectioned), dried apricots, pineapple, etc.
- Cheese – cubes, slices or sticks, trail mix or granola bars without nuts or candy.
- Bite sized whole grain crackers.

Students are not permitted to have Juice boxes or pouches, cookies, pudding, sugar-coated cereal, fruit roll-ups, chips, cake, cupcakes or candy in their lunches. Please do not send your child with these items. Thank You!

Clothing/dress requirements

The student's clothing should be simple, washable, sturdy, and easy-to manage. Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes are highly recommended. At the beginning of the school year, your child will need to bring two complete outfits (shirts, pants, underwear, socks, and one pair of shoes) in a large "Zip-Loc" bag with your student's name clearly marked on one end of the bag.

Accidents do happen. It is very reassuring to the child to put on dry clothes that are his/her own. If your child's clothes should require changing, the soiled clothes will be sent home that day in a plastic bag. Please bring a new change of clothes the following day to put back into your student's box. A last name on the clothes would be very helpful in avoiding mix-ups. Please refrain from sending your children to school with clothing that contains media generated images as these clothing items can become a distraction in the classroom.

Toys

Students MAY NOT bring toys into the classroom. Encourage your student to leave toys at home or in the car. Experience has demonstrated it is more difficult to get students to leave toys behind when other children are admiring them.

Birthday celebrations

BIRTHDAY'S and BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS: A Student's Birthday may be celebrated at school according to the following guidelines:

- Please make arrangements with your child's classroom teacher prior to the date on which you wish to celebrate your child's birthday. • If you wish, you may provide a healthy snack in celebration of your child's birthday.
- Please refrain from bringing in "party bags" or other "gifts" for the students in the class.
- A Birthday celebration is a special time for your child.

BIRTHDAY INVITATIONS:

Atlantis Montessori shall not to be involved in any private Birthday Party Celebration which takes place outside of school and which is not directly affiliated with the school's programs.

We will, however be able to provide assistance to families in two ways:

- 1) A Family Directory is made available to every student. If a family is not listed in the directory, then they have requested that their information be kept confidential and we will not be able to provide their address or telephone number to you.
- 2) INVITATIONS: If you would like us to distribute Birthday Party Invitations, please adhere to the following guidelines:
 - a. You must provide an invitation for EVERY child in the class.
 - b. Hand the invitations directly to the Teacher and they will be sure to distribute the invitations at the appropriate time of the day.
 - c. Students may not hand out Birthday Invitations.

***Birthdays are an exciting time in a child's life. It is exciting for the birthday child and also for those who are invited to attend the party. For those who have not been invited, however, the knowledge that they have not been invited can be extremely upsetting. We are aware that it is not always possible to invite every student in your child's class and we support your decisions in this matter. In this instance, we simply ask that you gently remind your child to be aware of the feelings of other students.

Vacations

A school calendar will be made available at the start of the school year. It will include dates of the scheduled holidays. We normally observe the standard holidays recognized by the local school systems. We strongly encourage families to take vacations during the scheduled holiday breaks. No tuition discounts will be given for additional holiday breaks taken at the families leisure.

Discipline

Behavior Management/Discipline Policy:

Atlantis Montessori has a strong commitment to implementing the discipline of students in a respectful, firm manner. One of the ultimate goals of Montessori is to develop a self-disciplined individual. We have established clear limits, and provide consistency in maintaining these limits. The goal of each classroom and of the entire school community is that it functions as a community with each individual respectful of the needs and rights of one another. The basic ground rules of the school are that no child may hurt another in any way and no child is to interfere with the work of another. Atlantis Montessori monitors behavior while being aware of the student's individual needs and current stage of development. Children are taught socially appropriate behavior, self-control and respect for others in order to avoid incidents while attending school.

Every child has the right to express their feelings; anger, hurt, frustration, etc. When aggressive behavior occurs, the children involved are taken aside by a teacher. The teacher will try to help them express their feelings verbally. With younger children, a teacher assists by giving them the language to communicate their feelings. At no time will excessive discipline measures ever be used, such as corporal punishment or verbal abuse.

(A) A staff member in charge of a student or a group of students shall be responsible for their discipline.

(B) The school's discipline policy contained herein describes the school's philosophy of discipline and the specific methods of discipline used at the school. This policy shall be on file at the school for review. Constructive, developmentally appropriate student guidance and management techniques are to be used at all times, and shall include such measures as redirection, separation from problem situations, talking with the student about the situation, and praise for appropriate behavior.

(C) The school's actual methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on the premises and shall be restricted as follows:

(1) There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.

(2) No discipline shall be delegated to any other student.

(3) No physical restraints shall be used to confine a student by any means other than holding a pre-school student or toddler for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the student may regain control.

(4) No student shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family, or other verbal abuse.

(5) Discipline shall not be imposed on a student for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.

(6) Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten a student.

(7) Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toilet use.

(8) Separation, when used as discipline shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the student's age and developmental ability, and the student shall be within sight and hearing of a staff member in a safe, lighted, and well-ventilated space.

(9) The school shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the school program.

(D) The parent of a student enrolled in a school shall agree to the school's written discipline policy.

(E) All staff members shall receive a copy of the school's discipline policy for review upon employment and reviewed periodically as needed. It should be noted that the administrator will notify the children's services agency and/or the police department in any suspected case of child abuse or neglect.

The Montessori philosophy involves "inner discipline." Good behavior is not equated with silence and/or immobility. The children are free to walk,

talk, and move around as they engage in their daily activities. However, all activities are guided by a respect for others, a respect for the work of others, and a respect for the materials being used. Self-discipline is acquired gradually through meaningful work.

Conferences with the student's parents are held at regular intervals. Discipline can be one of the topics discussed. If a student has a particular problem in this area, close contact with the parents is maintained so we can all positively assist the child. Occasionally, outside professional help is recommended or required.

In the event of a recurrent problem with aggressive behavior, such that the safety of other children or adults is a concern, the following steps are taken:

- 1) The Lead Teacher will schedule a conference with the child's parents to discuss the situation, concerns, suggestions and next steps. The Director will be informed about the situation and subsequent status.
- 2) If the aggressive behavior (including, but not limited to: biting, hitting, scratching and spitting) continues after a reasonable amount of time and effort, and the teachers are unable to assist the other students as needed due to the disruption, the Lead Teacher will schedule a second conference with the parents. This conference will include the Lead Teacher, and the Director.
- 3) During the conference, several options will be explored taking into consideration the specifics of each case. Parents are encouraged to suggest options as well. One or more options chosen might include: requirement for a "shadow" to accompany child at school, recommendation of psychological consultation, early dismissal from school, development and implementation of an action plan, requiring the parent to accompany the child to school and remaining with the child during school hours for a set period of time, or the temporary removal of the child.
- 4) If the aggressive behavior continues and all other efforts have been unsuccessful, the school reserves the right to ask the parents to withdraw their child from the school. The school reserves the right to dismiss a student whose presence in the school is considered detrimental to the best interest of the student, or one of their peers, or to the school in general.

Atlantis Montessori is a SCHOOL OF CHOICE. We are happy that you have chosen Atlantis Montessori for your child. However, students who are unable to progress or become responsible, independent, and productive members of the Montessori Community have the option to return to the school offered by their local public school district in accordance with their financial agreement. Traditionally, public schools offer a more structured group approach to instruction and classroom set-up and this approach may be more suitable for some children. Parent understanding and support of the expectations established by Atlantis Montessori is vital to each child's behavior and successful performance.

As mentioned in much of our literature, this is a COMMUNITY EFFORT. While children should not be denied access to educational opportunities based on their parent's unwillingness to follow the strategies outlined for success outlined above, these same children cannot be permitted to interrupt the learning environment and process for others.

Authorized Pick-up

If your child is to be released to any person other than his/her own parents, legal guardians, family listed on the authorized pick-up list or pre arranged car pool group, written notification must be given to the teacher or the office before the start of class on that day. The notification must include the date, the name and relationship of the person authorized to transport your child and must be signed by the parent or legal guardian.

All parents or legal guardians are required to complete the "Child Pick-Up Release" form. This form must be kept updated on a regular basis. Staff WILL NOT release a child to anyone other than the person specified in writing. A picture ID will also be required to verify the persons' identity if it is the first time picking up. If there are any doubts, the child will not be released until verbal confirmation can be made with a parent. The School will adhere to the mandates of individual court ordered Custody Agreements. A telephone call will be acceptable ONLY UNDER EMERGENCY SITUATIONS.

Volunteering

Parents are the heart of our school! We have a parent organization whose members rise to the occasion and make things happen. Functions are scheduled throughout the school year for social, educational and fund raising purposes. Please check the school calendar and/or notes sent home with your child with updates regarding these special events. Each family is required to complete 10 volunteer hours per year. If you are unable to meet this request you may chose to opt out from this requirement by paying \$10 per hour of volunteer work you are unable to perform.

Emergency Plans

General Safety Measures: The school prides itself on maintaining rigorous safety and security procedures, which are periodically reviewed and modified as needed. The school employs the following measures to ensure the safety of the children in our care.

- All doors are locked at all times. Please inform the administration if you find an outside door propped open without a teacher present.
- No one is allowed to enter the building through the carpool door without a faculty member present. If you are exiting through this door, please do not hold the door open to allow others to enter with the exception of a faculty member you recognize.
- The school is closely monitored inside and outside by Closed Circuit TV cameras. Images from these cameras are recorded in and stored in our system.
- All classrooms have two-way radios. The teachers use the radio to contact the administration when they need assistance. Teachers also take the walkie-talkie onto the playground or any time they are outdoors.
- Unoccupied classrooms must have their windows closed. • When picking up your child, please directly interface with a teacher to confirm they know your child is leaving.
- Please note that all employees must request identification from any adult on the property they do not recognize.

- Occasionally parents may have the need to send someone who is not on their emergency pick up list to collect their child from school. In this event, the parent must send an email or fax in addition to a phone call in order for the school to release the child. Please ensure that the adult picking up the child is aware of our policy to request identification from any adult picking up a child from school.
- To ensure the safety of the children in our care, we also frequently implement several drills throughout the year.

Fire Drills: Monthly fire drills are required by the Volusia County Fire Department. The majority of these will be unannounced drills. All faculty and staff have pre-arranged responsibilities in the event of a drill or a real fire. In the event of a real fire, activation of the school's fire alarm will automatically summon the local fire department. Upon evacuation, all classrooms will gather on the large field and parents will be notified.

Severe Weather Drill: The school runs severe weather drills during certain times of the year. During a severe weather watch or warning, an administrator continually monitors the school's weather alarm and local news stations for updates. For their safety, students are asked to wear their outdoor shoes during all severe weather watches and warnings.

Stranger Drills and Lock Down Procedures: Practice and drilling are key elements in ensuring the school is as prepared as possible for potentially unsafe and threatening situations. In the event of an unknown or potentially threatening individual or situation on our property, the school has protocols to address multiple scenarios.

The administration will periodically schedule stranger drills to make sure the process runs as smoothly as possible.

Low Level Lock Down: The school will enter a low level lockdown if there is an unknown/concerning individual or situation on or near the school property, or if other local schools are in lockdown. During this lockdown, children will not be allowed outside, and carpool will be cancelled. Parents are able to access the building during a low level lockdown, but once they leave the building, they must leave the premises immediately.

High Level Lock Down: The school will initiate a high level lockdown in the event of a threatening situation on or in close proximity to the school property. For security reasons, the school does not publish the details of this lock down procedure. During a high level lock down, the school will alert 911 via a panic button and/or by calling emergency services, or by other means. Once it is safe to do so, parents will be alerted to the status of our situation via email and/or text.

For the safety of everyone present, we ask that parents do not attempt to enter the school building if we are in full lock down. Please note that during a full lock down procedure, all door codes will be deactivated and no staff member will be available to open the door for parents to enter. All lock down modes will remain in place until the school determines that the situation is completely safe.

Rest Periods

All Full Day children ages 3 and 4 are encouraged to participate in a rest period each afternoon after lunch. Each child has their own cot. These students will have the option to rest in the classrooms if they are tired. Children ages 4 1/2 and older are invited to work during the afternoon work cycle.

Injuries/ Emergencies

It is required of all Atlantis Montessori staff to obtain current First Aid and CPR knowledge and certification. If a child is injured at school, the teacher will assess the situation. If it is a minor injury the teacher will treat the child with the appropriate means; band-aid, removing a splinter, ice pack, etc. The staff person will write the incident in the Injury Log and make direct contact with the parent, either by phone or in person.

In the event of an accident or sudden onset of illness, the School staff will immediately seek proper care for the child. The child's individual emergency instructions listed on the Child Enrollment and Health Information and the Emergency Medical Authorization forms on file in the office will be consulted. The parents will be notified immediately. If necessary, a staff member will call 911 if it is in the best interest of the child.

It is IMPERATIVE to keep both the Child Enrollment and Health Information and Emergency Medical Authorization forms current.

In case of general emergency, serious accidents, injury or illness, the staff will call 911, notify administration, and notify parents immediately. If additional assistance is needed for supervision of children, all non-teaching staff within the building will be utilized. If children are required to evacuate the building, the fenced area in the rear of the building will be used until the school building is secured, or until pick-up by parents is possible.

Field trips

Field trips are an important part of our educational program and are conducted regularly for the Children's House Programs. You will be notified in advance of all scheduled field trips. Your signed permission slip is needed for your child to participate.

Chaperones will be requested and approved by the individual classroom teachers. If you are interested in chaperoning on Field Trips, please let the teacher know by completing the Chaperone section of the Field Trip Permission Form.

The classroom teachers will solicit and choose the chaperones for each trip to ensure that a safe ratio is met.

- The students and chaperones will be transported from the school to the field trip destination and back to school.

- With ADVANCED notice, any parent who wishes to drive their child directly to the destination may do so, as long as they stay with their child throughout the entire trip and transport them home on the return trip. The parent, in this case, assumes full responsibility for their child's safety and discipline but agrees to participate in any and all of the scheduled activities.

As chaperone assignments are finalized prior to the day of the trip – NO Drop-In Adults on the day of the trip will be allowed. Drop-Ins are incredibly time-consuming and takes away from the teacher's focus on the students.

- Parents who are not considered a designated Chaperone are responsible for purchasing their own admission ticket. Information related to the cost of attending a trip will be provided by the classroom teacher.
- On full day field trips (those that include lunch), children who are transported by a parent may return to school that day only if they are enrolled in the After School Care Program. In that case, the parent needs to drive them back to the school and escort the child to the appropriate place (either classroom or After School Care room).
- No shopping is allowed on any field trip by either children or chaperones. This includes parents who choose to drive their child separately.
- Siblings may not attend.

Additional Chaperone Guidelines: When willing to chaperone a field trip, the chaperone agrees to the following items:

- No smoking.
- Chaperones will follow the schedule set by the teachers and will ensure that students attend any and all of the scheduled events on the trip.
- If you feel that you will not participate in all of the scheduled events, we ask that you not volunteer for this particular trip, as it is disruptive to the group.

Photographs

Throughout the school year, we take photos of your child working and playing at school. Because Montessori work is done mainly with the materials themselves, often there is little “paperwork” sent home to show the work your child is doing each day. These photos show your child happily learning and growing, and we use them in gifts.

In addition, we like to document our field trips and other special events. We like to post photos on our website and Facebook page so that other families can see our school and get a feel for the work that the children do. In addition, our website is a place where you can send family and friends to see photos of your child at school. However, the safety and privacy of your child is of great importance to us. The Photo Consent Form gives you the opportunity to decide under which conditions you give consent regarding photography and videography by Atlantis Montessori.

Arrivals and Departure Information:

Arrival Times:

Children's House Programs8:20am - 8:30am

Student drop-off will take place at the school main entrance. Please walk your child into the building, please park in the front parking lot, hold your child's hand while walking across the parking lot and driveway and enter the front door. We encourage children to be independent by allowing them to walk and carry their own belongings into the building.

Please bring your child to school on time. Arriving on time for school helps your child make a smooth transition into their day at school. Please be aware that late arrivals also disrupt the classroom. This is not fair for your child or to others in the classroom. If you arrive after 8:30 am, you must park in the playground parking lot and walk your child into the building and check him/her into the front office. Please be aware that after 8:30am the front door will be locked.

If you need to drop off your child earlier than the program start time listed above, you will need to sign your child into the Before School Care Program. Morning care drop offs take place at the morning care entrance off of the playground.

Frequent and Excessive Tardies

We understand that things happen time to time and on occasion your child may be late for class. However, Excessive tardiness is a disruption to the class and interferes with our morning work cycle. Children must arrive before 9:00 am. Children who arrive after 9:00 am will need a doctor's note in order to be admitted to class, if no prior arrangements have been made.

Departure Times:

Children’s House Morning Program..... 11:30 am
Full Day Program 3:00 pm
Aftercare Program.....5:30 pm

Departure Information: Student pick up for the Children’s House half day and full day program is at the playground entrance. A staff member will be at the playground door to assist your child from the building to the car.

Children must be seated and buckled before the vehicle proceeds through the parking lot. Parents must drive carefully and responsibly on school grounds at all time. If you are running late, please call the office as soon as possible. Any children who have not been picked up within 10 minutes of the departure times listed will automatically be enrolled in After School Care Program and you will be charged a drop in fee.

Entering and Exiting the Facility: During the course of the school day, all students, family members, and visitors are required to enter the building via the Side Entrance. Please do not try to access the building via the rear loop or near the Front entrance. Please call the school at 386-277-2099 if someone is not at the front office. Please do not bang on the classroom windows.

Individuals not on the authorized pick up list for a student will still need to be added to the list by a parent and provide photo identification for our file.

EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM:

Atlantis Montessori Academy offers many services through our Extended Care Program. The various services and times are listed below. For more detailed information, please refer to our Extended Care Program brochure.

Before School Care.....8:00 am – 8:30 am
After School Care Program.....3:00 pm – 5:30 pm
Vacation Care Program.....8:00 am – 5:30 pm

If a child is not picked up by the 5:30 pm pick up time, parents will be billed an additional \$1 for every minute after 5:30 your child is left at school. For further information, please refer to our Extended Care Program brochure.

Families may enroll in or opt out of both the Before School and After School Care programs at any time, simply by submitting written notice in email or letter form addressed to both the Extended Care Director and the Business Manager.

Students may drop in to both the Before School and After School Care programs at any time, simply by emailing or telephoning the office to give notice.

When Applicable the Vacation Care program is available to all students but you must register by the two-week deadlines indicated in the school newsletter.

Snack will be provided for those students who attend the After School Care Program. Any person, including parents, will be required to show photo identification when picking up a child if the After Care Counselor is not familiar with them.