





Montessori School of Central Vermont

Member Handbook

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PRINCIPLES

Welcome to the world of Montessori education. The purpose of this handbook is to provide parents of children enrolled in the Montessori School of Central Vermont, Inc. with a comprehensive overview of the school's operations. In its ideal form, it anticipates and answers any question that you might ask. Practically, it is a work in process and will change as the school grows and matures. Please be sure to read through this work and familiarize yourself with its contents.

Montessori Theory

Maria Montessori developed a broad vision of education. She viewed education not as the acquisition of information, but rather as the cultivation of the child's natural impulse to learn. Her vision was education as an "aid to life." The Montessori Method is a comprehensive educational approach that focuses on the development of the human being to his/her fullest potential.

Maria Montessori drew her ideas from her observation of children at different stages of their development and from her exposure to children of different cultures. She identified what she saw that was common in all children as the "universal characteristics of childhood." These commonalties existed despite differences in intelligence, learning styles, culture, and background.

Some of these universal qualities existing in all children include:

- periods of development when learning occurs effortlessly (the absorbent mind)
- passage through sensitive periods
- an innate desire to learn
- learning through activity (work/play)
- passage through several stages of development
- the desire to be independent

Montessori identified "planes of development" – stages of development through which children pass in distinct phases. In a Montessori classroom the practice progresses in manner and scope as the characteristics and interests of the children change. They provide for the development, evolution, and growth of the child. There are prepared environments for children at each successive developmental plane.

- The first plane of development occurs from birth to six. The children are sensorial explorers, constructing their intellect by absorbing all aspects of their environment, language, and culture.
- The children become conceptual explorers from 6-12. Their powers of abstraction and imagination develop.
 They discover and expand their universe.
- Between 12 and 18 adolescents strive to understand their place in society and how they can contribute.
- Young adults, from 18-24, reach maturity, become specialized in their work and seek to find a place where they can contribute to the world.

One of the hallmarks of Montessori education is that children of mixed ages work together in the same class. Under the guidance of an adult, the children are given opportunities to engage in spontaneous, purposeful activities. Children progress socially and intellectually at their own pace in a multi-age classroom. Typically Toddler classes are comprised of 12 children 18 months – 3 years: Primary classes consist of 24-28 students ranging from 2 1/2 to 6 years of age; and Elementary classes enroll 24-28 students from 6-9 years in the Lower Elementary and 9-12 years of age in the Upper Elementary. Cooperation rather than

competition exists in an environment that mirrors familial groupings.

The children have access to manipulative materials specially designed for discovery and auto-education that are arranged on open shelves in the classroom. These materials invite the children to engage in activities of their own choice. The children may choose an activity during work time, a three - hour period, and work for as long as they like, returning it to the shelf when they are finished. Each material isolates one quality: the pink tower – size, the color tablets - color. The materials interrelate and build upon each other. They encourage problem solving and analytical thinking. Children absorb many abstract concepts when using materials they can manipulate with their hands.

History

What is now the Montessori School of Central Vermont, Inc. began in September of 1999 as a home childcare operation with seven children at the former site of both the New School and the Institute for Social Ecology on Maple Hill Road in Marshfield, just outside of Plainfield Village. It was known as the Montessori Project. Within the first year of operation the project merged with Center School Playgroup, Inc. and moved operations to historic Center School in Plainfield and Center School Montessori came into being. By spring of 2005, a waiting list that extended into 2007 drove the expansion of the program to the founding of the Montpelier Montessori School in September 2005. Within one year, Montpelier Montessori outgrew its Spring Street site, moved to the Karl Circle site, and established a second developmental community (class). With three functioning Houses of Children at two sites, the organization changed the corporate name from Center School Playgroup, Inc. to the Montessori School of Central Vermont, Inc. in October of 2006 to reflect its commitment to the philosophy and practice of Montessori Education. In September 2010 the

Elementary program was launched with a first and second grade classroom, with plans to expand and grow with children and grades over the following years.

Purpose

The Montessori School of Central Vermont operates to create the conditions that are optimal for children to experience and manifest their true developmental natures. The school follows the guidelines discovered and articulated by Dr. Maria Montessori for this purpose. The school also accepts a role in the wider community to promote Montessori principles for the general benefit of children and therefore encourages the active participation of interested adults in the work of incorporating those principles beyond the scope of the school.

Conduct

The Montessori School of Central Vermont values the practice of kindness and respect in all school-related interactions. The children bear witness to the behaviors of the adults in the community. "Grace and Courtesy" presentations of social interactions that the Montessori guides offer daily to the children are only as powerful as the social relations that the adult community models as a matter of course. The practice of awareness and care in all of our human exchanges is perhaps the most important gift that we can offer to the children. And, as often happens in a Montessori environment, it is in turn and more so, a gift that we receive from the children

ORGANIZATION

The Montessori School of Central Vermont, Inc. (MSCVT) is a non-profit organization incorporated in 1972. The school does business as both Center School Montessori in Plainfield and Montpelier Montessori School in Berlin. All parents of children enrolled in MSCVT are members of the corporation.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Montessori School of Central Vermont, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, or disability in the administration of its hiring, educational policies, admissions, scholarships and other school programs.

The Board of Trustees

MSCVT is governed by a Board of Trustees that is responsible for setting policy and ensuring the fiscal well being of the organization. The board may be comprised of parent members, Montessori professionals and community members. Board meetings are held monthly and are open to all members. Executive sessions are closed. The corporate by-laws and the minutes of all board meetings are on file at each school site and are available for perusal. An Annual Meeting is held each September when the membership gathers to elect new trustees and to vote upon by-law changes or other actions that may be recommended by the trustees.

Administration

The Board of Trustees hires a Head of School to be responsible for the operational execution of all policies that govern the school's operation.

Faculty & Staff

The faculty of MSCVT is made up of Montessori trained guides who are responsible for implementing the day-to-day practices for all MSCVT programs. Guides are fully trained professionals whose credentials are approved by either the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) or the American Montessori Society (AMS). The term "guide" provides a much more accurate description of the actual work that the Montessori trained person performs and helps to dispel preconceived notions about the role of the adult in the child-centered environment.

Staff members who are hired to directly support the work of the guides with the children or to maintain the administrative functions of the organization are trained in their duties by the faculty and/or the Head of School

Parents

Parents entrust their children to both the philosophic principles of Montessori education and the practical applications established by the Montessori professionals of the school. The MSCVT faculty and administration consider the needs of the parent body in establishing program adjustments and developments. Participation of parents may sometimes take the form of direct assistance, particularly with the Elementary program and school organized events. Parent participation may also come in the form of peripheral support, particularly with the Children's House classroom. (See Parental Involvement in the Procedures section of this handbook). The involvement of the parent body creates the community that forms around the children and makes future development possible.

PROGRAMS

Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952) dedicated the last forty-five years of her life to understanding the developmental nature of the human child. Her study was rigorous and thorough. She applied the highest standards of the scientific process to her observations, her experimentations, and the training of individuals to carry forth her work. Through the course of this work, she discovered within the children vast implications for self realization on the individual level and social reconstruction/world peace on a broader level.

Montessori was so profoundly moved by the depth and breadth of the capacity she witnessed in children, and so aware of the limited scope of traditional schools, that she referred to the developmental communities of children who lived out her practices as "houses of children" rather than "schools." Her work is best understood and appreciated as a "help to life" in which traditional learning is only a part of a much broader developmental context. It is with this same spirit of dedication and with a commitment to the highest ideals of human aspiration that MSCVT offers its educational programs.

MSCVT is a licensed Child Care facility under the Vermont Agency of Human Services and a Recognized Independent School under the Vermont Department of Education.

Children's House (Primary age 3-6)

Maria Montessori recognized four planes of development in the human child. These planes span six-year cycles from the time of birth through the age of 24. MSCVT provides a program to serve children in the second half of the first plane of development in what is called a Montessori House of Children. All children enrolled are organized to form multi-aged developmental communities of children from 3 through 6 years of age. Children enter the program as

novices and remain within the same community of children for the three or four years of their enrollment. They complete the first plane of development as masters, poised to accept the challenges of the second plane of development with their entry into an elementary program at the first grade level

Three and four-year-olds, traditional preschool years, receive benefit from one three-hour work cycle, five mornings per week (Monday-Friday). In order to create consistency for the children, and in the community this schedule is the minimum schedule provided for by MSCVT programs.

When children reach the final year of their first plane of development, traditionally the kindergarten year, MSCVT provides a program to support the culmination of the developmental conquests of this plane, completing their preparation for the conquests of the next plane. These five-year-old children receive benefit from two work cycles per day, five days per week (Monday-Friday). This schedule corresponds to all-day Kindergarten and is provided for children in their culminating year.

Due to changing social conditions that increasingly force children into child care settings for extended hours, Montessori programs across the country are providing 3- and 4-year olds with the opportunities for the development that comes with enrollment for a second 3-hour work cycle in a day for some, if not all days of the week. MSCVT accommodates the needs of families for this service and provides Montessori programs for those younger children during afternoon hours. Scheduling for these children is arranged with consideration for the needs of the parents, the children, and the school.

Age Placement

We recognize that cut-off dates for placement sometimes seems arbitrary, particularly for children with late summer or early autumn birthdays. Montessori School of Central Vermont, Inc. does not provide advanced placement recommendations for children enrolled in its programs. Because the Primary Montessori curriculum extends beyond the first 6 years of a child's development, we emphasize the benefit of completing the work of the First Plane of Development rather than moving prematurely into work of the Second Plane of Development.

Elementary Program

The Elementary program is for the child in the Second Plane of Development. The Montessori Elementary classroom is a dynamic learning environment in which children explore their individual interests while understanding their role within in the classroom and society. Cosmic education, a term used by Dr. Maria Montessori to describe the curriculum. The curriculum aids in the general development of the child's knowledge of his or her place in and impact on their immediate community and the world at large. Math, language, geometry, geography, history, science and literature are just a few subject areas covered as the children explore individual interests after hearing the Great Lessons. The Elementary program is 5 days a week from 8:15am-3pm.

Extra Care

For the Primary age (3-6 years old) additional child care is offered to those families who need more than can be provided between the program hours of 8:30 AM and 3:00 PM. Parents may arrange to drop children off as early as 7:30 AM and to pick children up as late as 5:00 PM. Extra Care availability is dependent on the needs of enrolled families.

Extra care programs may be suspended on occasion to accommodate an overriding need. In such cases ample notification of this change is given. Billing for extra care is separate from tuition and will be billed monthly based on a child's attendance in these programs.

For the Elementary ages the Montessori School of Central Vermont, Inc. does not currently provide afterschool care.
Recognizing the needs of many working families for afterschool care, students from the Montessori School of Central Vermont can attend the afterschool program provided by Community Connections at the East Montpelier Elementary School.
Transportation to the program afterschool is composed of parent volunteers. For more information about the Community
Connections program please visit the
Community Connections directly

PROCEDURES

Because we are a Montessori school first and foremost, our procedures are guided by the principles of Montessori as interpreted by the administration and implemented by the faculty. The concept of the Montessori "prepared environment" extends beyond each "classroom space" to include all places and procedures within the parameters of the school's activities.

Assessment

It is important to understand and appreciate the development that the children demonstrate in both the short and long terms. Experienced Montessorians report a "leap of faith" among parents who sometimes suddenly realize just how wonderfully, spontaneously and naturally their children are developing. A level of deep trust emerges. MSCVT provides a variety of perspectives to help parents prepare themselves to trust not only the developmental conquests that their children display at this time but also as a basis for active participation in that development as it spans into later years.

In cases when extraordinary behaviors manifest and become a pattern we will discuss behaviors with parents to gain a greater understanding and address these behaviors as a team.

Observations

Observation by appointment, are open to parents each year around mid-autumn and to the public throughout the remainder of the school year. Observation is a cornerstone for practicing Montessori people and provides parents and prospective parents with a clear understanding of what happens regularly in the "house of children." We encourage and expect all parents to arrange an observation in the late Fall

Parent Conferences

MSCVT schedules parent conferences two times each year to provide a definitive opportunity for parents and guide to focus discussion entirely upon the developmental manifestations of each child as an individual. Many find these meetings as the most satisfying and comprehensive way to really understand and appreciate the impact of the Montessori experience upon the child's development.

Progress reports

Written progress reports are provided for each child, by his/her guide, two times per year. These are basically a recapitulation of the highlights brought out in the parent conference. They include a checklist of sorts which denotes certain activities and materials which have been of significance to the child during a particular period of time as well as a short narrative. Taken together over a 3 or 4 year period, progress reports create a record of the child's Montessori experience and are completed for each child in the program twice a year.

Parent Meetings

Parent meetings are held throughout the school year in order to provide opportunities for parents to develop a deeper understanding of the philosophy and practice of Montessori principles. These meetings are organized to be introductory for parents of newly enrolled children and deeper for veteran parents. They are the best opportunities for parents to discuss, question and share their own perceptions and

experiences as a Montessori parent, as well as getting a close-up look at the fascinating Montessori materials and the manner of their presentation. MSCVT highly encourages participation in these meetings.

Montessori Resource Materials

Montessori resource materials are available for parents to borrow. Independent study by parents enlivens all aspects of the assessment process and often proves to be exceptionally inspiring.

CLOTHING

Montessori education recognizes the clear link between independence and development. In considering the clothes that your child will wear on any given day, please support the child's capacity to manage his/her clothing independently.

Extra Clothing

Each child keeps a set of extra clothing at the school. With water work, outside activities and toileting difficulties, it is important that the school be able to help the child change from soiled or wet clothes into clean and dry ones. It is important that parents replenish the extra cloths as soon as the child comes home with wet and/or soiled clothing.

Indoor Shoes

Both as a psychological transition point for the child and a practical housekeeping technique, children (and the adults) keep indoor shoes at school and change into them every day. These can be firmly cushionsoled slippers or sturdy shoes that support the foot and fit well. One of the keys to indoor shoes is to make sure that the child is capable of putting them on and taking them off independently.

Outdoor Wear

MSCVT faculty and staff are committed to providing regular outdoor experiences for the children. While children do not go outside during extreme weather conditions, appropriate outdoor wear is an essential part of making sure that all children are prepared to take part in all aspects of the program. Please remember to label ALL outdoor gear with the child's name or initials

Personal Possessions

Children in the primary classes do not bring personal possessions to school. If your child needs something to help in making the transition from home to school, invite him or her to bring a book to share in the book corner, a flower to put out in a vase, food for the classroom pet, or a small gift for the guide or classroom, etc. There are times when a young child may want something special when resting at nap time and families can speak with their classroom Guide individually on this matter.

Because the children of 0-6 years are developing a reality based perception of the world, MSCVT suggests avoiding fantasy characterizations on clothing, tote/lunch bags, etc. The benefits of avoiding the cultural trappings of these characters will manifest here in the classroom, in your home life and in the psyche of the child. We also ask children of the Elementary years to avoid character clothing and accessories including lunch boxes and backpacks.

COMMUNICATION

Open communication is essential in a small school community. Misunderstandings have less opportunity to grow and fester when the entire community is committed to addressing questions, comments and concerns in an open, direct way. MSCVT makes every effort to keep parents informed. The school offers a number of vehicles to keep communications flowing. If some information is not being adequately transmitted, the school would like to know so that lines of communication will improve.

Bringing something up is often the most helpful thing that one can do.

Newsletter

MSCVT generates a monthly newsletter that is loaded with information. Please read it. The newsletter is emailed to all parents and hard copies are sent to families who do not have an email address or who request a hard copy.

Message Board

A message board is placed at the entrance of school daily. This provides parents with daily reminders or other information that may need to be communicated between newsletters. Please make it a point to read the messages at drop-off and pick-up times.

Web Site

The school's web site is updated regularly. Schedule changes, upcoming events and pertinent information will be posted online.

Phone Messages

The MSCVT staff answers phone calls whenever possible. At certain times during any given day, this may not be possible. Please leave a phone message should you call and get voice mail. The school seeks to account for every child every day and so appreciates a message informing the office, preferably before 8am, whenever a child's schedule will be different.

Email

The use of email is another effective way to transmit information. The office checks email correspondence daily and often more than once a day. It is important know however, that lengthy emails delving into deeper philosophic questions may not be addressed immediately. The logistics of responding, in writing, to potentially numerous lengthy emails affects the capacity of the guides to attend to their primary responsibilities. If you have concerns or questions, and find that composing your thoughts in writing to be the most effective way to communicate

them, please do. Faculty and/or administration will offer a response upon due consideration.

Written Notification

Folks sometimes need to communicate adjustments in a child's regular routine. Often this will happen with a certain quality of immediacy. MSCVT needs to have such communications presented as a written notification. Verbal messages passed on at arrival, dismissal or other times are invariably lost in the numerous other activities that come from attending to a large number of children. Paper and pencils are kept at the entrance ways so that you can write down information that needs to be passed on. Written notices are posted by the door every day and staff and faculty refer to these notices as a matter of course.

Grievance

In most cases, a personal meeting is the best way to come to understanding and to reach resolution on an issue. The classroom guide or administration will help to arrange a meeting with parents who need to discuss any aspect of the school's philosophy or practice. Should a grievance develop, the Head of School will arrange and facilitate a meeting to address the issues associated with that grievance. If a grievance develops with the Head of School, the matter will be facilitated by a panel to be chaired by a current trustee.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

MSCVT strives to represent an expansive array of cultural perspectives to the children in the school. This may include holidays, rituals and celebrations associated directly with present day American culture or aspects of cultures from other parts of the world and/or other times in history. MSCVT arranges such representations with the intention to broaden the experience of the children and help them to understand and appreciate the diversity that exists in our

world. Children's observation or participation is not presented as a "practice". In cases where a presentation provides an alternative perspective than one that is held in the child's family, to presents an excellent opportunity for parents to discuss and clarify their own heritage and point of view.

Birthdays

MSCVT celebrates the birthdays of children. Celebrating the birthday of each child in the class is a wonderful way to show our appreciation and affection for each other. While the specifics of each classroom's traditions vary, all classes celebrate children's birthdays with a short ceremony of song during the morning. Any gift giving between children is to be done outside of the context of the school. Weekend birthdays are celebrated soon before or after the date. Summer birthdays are often celebrated on the "half birthday," or just before the end of the school year. Parents of the birthday child are invited to send in a special snack; fully prepared, bite sized, and ready to serve, for the birthday celebration. This treat must be wholesome and natural, and low in or without added sugar, artificial ingredients and preservatives, and in very small protion (2-3 bites). Remember to be aware of allergy concerns in your child's class. Some ideas are: fresh fruit, homemade breads or mini muffins, popcorn, yogurt covered pretzels, etc. If in doubt, ask your child's guide for ideas.

Field Trips

MSCVT organizes field trips to places of interest within a short drive of the school. Parent volunteers provide transportation and act as chaperones assisting the classroom guide. A permission slip is sent home at the beginning of the year and kept on file for each child. Parents will be notified in advance of the date and destination of upcoming trips. On the date of the field trip parents leave their child's car seat at school if they are not volunteering to drive.

"Going Out"

Children in the Elementary program will regularly be "Going out" into the community. Going out provides opportunity for extended research, or experiences using real tools and resources in the community to accomplish goals and tasks. The children of the elementary years are drawn to community and discovering their place in the community. Going out provides an opportunity to participate in the larger community as an important part of education.

Holidays

Holidays provide excellent opportunities to introduce children to cultures and religions represented within our community. This is done primarily through dance, song, stories and artifacts. Parents may assist in this cultural exploration by coming into the school and giving short presentations to the children. Please contact your child's guide to arrange a visit if you are interested. Aside from distinctly human aspects of holidays, our celebrations tend to recognize and highlight the seasons and cycles of the natural world.

FOOD

Food plays an integral part of each day at MSCVT. It provides opportunities to practice nutritious eating habits, social grace & courtesy and activities of practical life.

Snack

The children have access to a healthy and wholesome snack during their morning in the classroom each day. Snacks are prepared by the children and are either self-served in pairs or served to the group when they are gathered together. The snack is provided by families on a rotating basis and each guide provides their families with a schedule and a list of ideas or specific requests. When you are responsible for snack the following

week, your child will bring home the snack basket, or bag, as a reminder.

Lunch

Lunch is a treasured social time for the children. Children bring their own lunches. They set up for lunch using cloth placemats and napkins, glass plates and utensils. Water will be available at all times. When deciding what to send with your child, please consider the healthiest possible options and pack these in containers that your child can open independently. You may wish to invite your child to help pack their lunch – they are often more likely to eat it if they do! Your child will bring home what they do not eat to give you a clearer view of his/her eating habits. NO gum or candy is permitted at school (even during the holidays of Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, etc.)

Allergies

MSCVT is aware that at times, children who are enrolled in the school will have serious or life-threatening allergies to certain foods. The school monitors this situation closely and will declare a site to be "free" of that food for the entire time that such an allergy is present in the school. Parents of children with such an allergy must inform the school about this condition at the time of enrollment. MSCVT is grateful to all parents who make it possible for all children to take part in the school's programs by honoring the need to sometimes do without a food that is dangerous to another.

PARENTAL GOALS & EXPECTATIONS

We want parents to know and support what we offer in our work with the children. To support the school in this regard it is expected:

1. That parents commit to learning as much as possible about the Montessori approach so as to be able

to support their child in his or her day to day school life. (a suggested reading list is sent to parents upon enrollment and can be requested at any time.)

- 2. That parents commit, as part of this education, to observing their children in class during scheduled observation periods.
- 3. That parents sign up and attend scheduled conferences.
- 4. That parents attend all informational/educational events clarifying expectations and deepening knowledge of the Montessori philosophy.
- 5. That parents, as best they can, be willing to support the values and expectations their child experiences at school.

(Expectations credited to Judi Orion, NAMTA Journal, Spring 2006)

Parent Participation

MSCVT welcomes the participation of parents in helping to develop the community to be of ever greater benefit to the children. Inevitably, parents working together strengthen the school's capacity to do for the children. There are numerous ways for parents to become involved.

Volunteering

MSCVT asks each parent in the school to contribute 20 hours of volunteer time per year and welcomes the efforts of those who are able and willing to do more. The school benefits from every volunteer who comes forth and helps. Volunteer projects range from construction support and material making, to presenting a special lesson in the classroom based on personal interest or expertise. Every volunteer effort makes the school a little better and our community a little stronger. Working together with other parents helps to establish the bonds of community.

Community Events

The school holds a number of community events that provide opportunities for parents to work, socialize, or play together.

Separation, the 1st Steps to Independence

Parents' attention to drop-off and pick-up routines will help them run smoothly. When it is time for separation of parent and child to occur, parents say "goodbye" cheerfully and confidently. The child makes the step in independence more easily if s/he walks from the car carrying her/his own things. An assistant or guide will greet the child and walk her/him into the building. We find that the discomfort that a child may be feeling with separation almost always passes as s/he enters the classroom and becomes engaged in the activities of the day.

The child's day is most positively affected when s/he arrives on time. Classroom assistants or guides begin greeting children and helping them from their cars at about 8:25. This service continues until about 8:40. If you are earlier than this time, please wait until an assistant or guide begins meeting children at the cars. Parents who arrive late are asked to escort their children to the main entrance, and step inside the door while making eye contact with the guide or the assistant to ensure that one of them is aware that the child is now "present."

In picking the children up, all children should be picked up promptly at dismissal time. If an early dismissal is needed, please notify classroom staff to allow your child time to independently get ready. Written permission is required to release a child to anyone except her/his parent. General notes/forms are accepted for regular picker-uppers. School staff will need to check identification for individuals that are not parents before dismissing a child. Please make sure that anyone who may drop-off or pick-up your child is fully apprised of the school's procedures.

SAFETY

MSCVT is committed to the safety and well-being of all children enrolled in the school. As a school organization in the State of Vermont, we are required under Vermont Law as mandated reporters to report any suspicion of abuse to a child.

Illness

Our goal is to help keep each classroom community healthy. Children who are ill should not come to school (ie, fever, vomiting, runny nose that is not manageable by the child, etc). Illnesses should be reported to the school immediately to assess if precautions or other steps are needed to assist with exposure or other outbreaks. When illnesses do arise, a child must be free from a fever and/or vomiting for at least 24 hours without medication in order to return to school.

Immunizations

All children are required to be up to date on immunizations or submit an exemption form by the beginning of the school year. If an outbreak should occur, those who are not immunized will be required to stay home from school until the appropriate time period has lapsed.

School Closing or Delay

In cases of inclement weather or other calamity, it may be necessary to issue a school closing or a school delay. The decision to change the school's schedule for any day is made by 6:30 AM. It is based upon the decisions of area schools and weather forecasts. The information is carried by major TV and radio stations. A message will also be recorded on the school's voice mail answering message (223-3320).

Emergency Procedures

MSCVT develops and revises plans for emergency procedures to address situations when exceptional caution or action is needed while children are in the care of the school. These include fire drills, transportation of children to an alternative location, keeping children onsite beyond the normal hours of operation.

Written Permission

MSCVT requires all parents to give written permission to the school to allow: transportation by someone other that the parent, use of photographic images of children for publicity purposes, or the dispensation of medicines (in their original containers with *written* instructions).

Parental Access

MSCVT does not hinder parental access to their children during the course of the school day. We ask that parents use conduct that shows respect for the children and the integrity of the Montessori classrooms.

Confidentiality

MSCVT maintains records on all children that include health and immunization forms, permission forms, progress reports and copies of correspondence that are related to the child's enrollment. The records are kept confidential and are available to parents for inspection upon request.

Arrival and Dismissal

MSCVT develops specific procedures to assist in the arrival and dismissal of children. These procedures are developed with consideration for the safety of the children, their developmental need for independence, and their smooth transition into and out from the house of children. Environmental considerations play a big role in determining the specific procedures. It is the responsibility of the Montessori trained faculty to consider the numerous factors that go into dealing with all of the cars, all of the children and all of the belongings that the children may be carrying with them to school in establishing the procedures that will provide for these considerations in an optimal way. Drop-off and pick-up

procedures are different for children who participate in Early or Late childcare options. Drop-off and pick-up procedures are explained to all parents at Back to School Night before the school year actually starts

No Smoking

There is NO SMOKING on school grounds for the health and safety of children, families and staff while at school

Cell Phones

Cell phone use is not permitted during dropoff and pick-up to help maintain safety for children, families and staff during arrival and departure times.

Policy on Prevention of Harassment of Students

See appendix A

FINANCES

MSCVT runs primarily upon tuition that parents pay to make sure that the school keeps running. As a 501 c 3 non-profit organization, the school also collects donations that offset some costs and thereby reduce tuition costs.

Deposit

The Montessori School of Central Vermont, Inc. requires a deposit to secure placement in each of the multi-year programs. Deposits are non-refundable.

Tuition

The Board of Trustees approves an annual budget that set tuition rates for the school year. Parents enter a contractual arrangement with the school by signing an **Enrollment Agreement.** The enrollment agreement covers the entire school year unless established otherwise to cover unique circumstances. Parents may be released from

this contract only with approval by the Board of Trustees.

Tuition through the entire month of last day of attendance is due in cases where an early withdrawal from the program applies.

Late Fee

A late pick up fee of \$6.00 per each 15 minutes interval past dismissal time will be charged to families who arrive late for dismissal

Sibling Discount

MSCVT provides a sibling discount of 10% for each additional child from a family who enters the program.

Financial aid

MSCVT offers financial aid to parents with a demonstrated need. To be eligible for financial aid, the child's family must: have no outstanding balance due from the previous year, register with Student Scholastic Services (SSS), complete inhouse application form requesting aid. understand that any award will not exceed 50% of tuition cost, waive sibling discount and place a deposit for the year in which the aid is requested. All financial aid applications must be completed by Feb. 15 to allow for proper consideration of all applications. The application review process is conducted by the Head of School with board oversight and approval. It is conducted with strict adherence to confidentiality and a clear process. The Board of Trustees approves a percentage of projected tuition income that is to be earmarked to fund financial aid. Financial aid awards are announced by April 1st unless delayed by extenuating circumstances.

Vermont Child Care Assistance

Because we are a licensed child care facility, parents with limited resources may be eligible for the Vermont Child Care Assistance Program to offset tuition costs for the preschool years in the primary

classrooms. Please contact the school office for more information about this opportunity.

Fundraising

MSCVT conducts regular fundraising activities to take advantage of the school's non-profit status and to hold tuition costs down. Tuition covers between 80% and 90% of the cost of running the school. The remainder must be made up through fund raising activities. The school's fund raising efforts include: annual giving, grant proposals and small fund-raisers. Annual giving provides the best way for those who have more resources to help provide balance for those who have fewer resources. The school seeks to raise an average of \$300 per family through the Annual Giving campaign. When most, or all, families participate in the annual giving it makes grant proposals to foundations more likely to succeed also.

Family Resources

Child Care Services: 1-800-649-2642 Washington County Family Center: 262-3292 National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4-A-child 1-800-422-4453