

Alfred Montessori School Parent Handbook 2023-2024 School Year



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OUR SCHOOL:

Dear Families,

We want to welcome your family to the Alfred Montessori School, and we look forward to your presence in our school community! Alfred Montessori has been a valuable member of the Alfred community since its beginning in 1983. We are celebrating our 40th year in operation and are so grateful you have chosen to send your child/children to AMS.

Alfred Montessori School is a non-profit organization, and we rely on our community and families to support our success. As many of you know, AMS has been experiencing difficult financial times due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic, the yearly increases in minimum wage, and the rising cost of operating expenses. The Board, along with our Executive Director Mary Gallardy, has been working very hard over the past few months to put the school on sound financial footing. Thankfully, due to the success of our GoFundMe page and the hard work Mary has put in to tighten our budget, we are definitely moving in that direction. The Board is currently working on a fundraising plan for the upcoming school year, and we will share this information as it develops.

The success of any Montessori School is very dependent on parents' involvement. Due to the pandemic, we have not been able to have parents/families visit school for the past several years. We are now in a place to do so! We encourage you to observe your child in class and participate in the work that they are doing. Please make sure to coordinate the visit with Mary Gallardy so that staff members are prepared to welcome you into their classrooms.

The Board of Directors is always available to discuss your involvement in the school (our names and email addresses are included below). Board meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month and your attendance is always welcome. Please contact the director or any board member with questions/suggestions/concerns. We are glad you have chosen to be a part of the Alfred Montessori School community.

We are all looking forward to a wonderful year ahead!

Sincerely,

The AMS Board of Directors

Kathleen Sherman, President (kathynunansherman@gmail.com)

Ann Rossington, Secretary (a.c.rossington@gmail.com)

Geoff Lippa, Treasurer (geoff.lippa@gmail.com)

Linda Belle (lindabelle747@gmail.com)

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Chrissy Ziese (christine.perrotta@gmail.com)

Program Description

The Alfred Montessori School seeks to meet the needs of children and parents who live and work in Alfred and the surrounding areas by providing excellent Infant, Toddler, Preschool, and School Age programs. Centrally located near both Alfred University and Alfred State College, the Alfred Montessori School is an independently operated, non-profit organization. An active Board of Directors composed of parents, professionals and community members provide support and supervision to the school. All parents are welcome and encouraged to participate in all aspects of AMS life. The Alfred Montessori School has an absolute charter from the NYS Department of Education and is a licensed facility by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS).

Mission Statement

The mission of the Alfred Montessori School is to create a loving and nurturing environment where the children "learn, grow and become" their own productive beings. The school also strives to be flexible regarding our families' needs while having a positive impact on our community.

Licensing Agency:

Office of Children & Family Services
Division of Child Care Services
Buffalo Regional Office
295 Main Street, Room 545
Buffalo, NY 14203
Tel: (716)847.3828
Licenser: Patrick Louis (716) 847.3796

To access NYS regulations, go to: http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/daycare_regulations.asp
These regulations are also available in the director's office.

Child Care Complaint Line: Toll free at 1-800-732-5207

History of the Montessori Approach

The Montessori approach to education takes its name from Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator (1870-1952). Dr. Maria Montessori developed her educational philosophy as a result of her observations of the way children naturally learn. Dr. Maria Montessori's first class consisted of 50-60 children, ages 3-6, most of whom suffered from malnutrition and were shy and fearful since they lived in the slums of Florence, Italy. Montessori found that the children needed very little persuading to do everyday tasks, puzzles or other interesting activities which directed their energy away from destructive behaviors. She described the ages from three to six as a particularly sensitive time during which young children are especially attuned to acquiring knowledge from and about their environment. To enrich their experience, Dr. Maria Montessori developed a "prepared environment" of child sized furniture and material in order to adapt to the surroundings to the child's natural size and behavior. This helped the children to feel relaxed and comfortable which created a will to learn.

Through this interaction and experience, the children developed an extraordinarily high level of intellectual and social ability at young ages.

Maria Montessori expanded her study of the young child, and gradually refined her approach to all child development areas through her experience and research in countries as diverse as Spain and India until the time of her death in 1952. The Montessori Method is now being successfully implemented with children in nearly every country of the world. There was a significant influence in the United States in the early 1960's and today there are more than 3,000 Montessori programs in this country. The Montessori Method is applied most frequently in preschools and elementary education grade levels but is very effective in the high school setting as well. Montessori education has no religious affiliation, is not a therapy, nor is it an approach useful only with certain categories of children. In addition, Montessori techniques can be used successfully with all children regardless of whether they are gifted, have learning disabilities or other special needs.

The Montessori Philosophy

Dr. Montessori developed her educational philosophy as a result of observations and discoveries she made of the ways in which children learn. She found that they learn in distinctly different ways at different stages of development. She formulated an educational program to meet the particular needs of the child at whatever stage of development, to help him/her reach his/her fullest potential.

Dr. Montessori preferred not to call this a "method," but an "approach" to life. She said, "What I have done is merely to study the child, to take and express what he has given me." She believed that no one is educated by another- he must do it himself, and thus, the goal of early childhood education should be to cultivate the child's own natural desire and ability to learn and to protect the essential nature of the child.

Young children, she discovered, have a unique aptitude for learning not found again at any other period of life. Montessori identified this quality as the "absorbent mind." The young child literally absorbs information from his or her surroundings. During certain periods in this phase of development they are more easily able to absorb specific types of learning. Dr. Montessori referred to these as the "sensitive periods." Acquiring information in this way is a natural and delightful activity for the young child who employs all his senses to investigate his interesting surroundings.

Since the child retains the ability to learn by absorbing until they are almost seven years old, Dr. Montessori reasoned that a classroom where they could handle the materials that would demonstrate basic educational information could enrich their experience. Montessori designed just this kind of classroom, and she called it the "prepared environment." In this environment everything is scaled to the child's size; the material is attractive, didactic, and presented in an orderly manner. The materials cover the areas of practical life (care of the person and the environment); sensory awareness; language; mathematics, and cultural subjects (art, music,

geography, history and science). In the classroom the environment is the real teacher; the child, the central focus.

The task of the Montessori teaching staff is:

- ❖ To awaken children's spirit and imagination.
- ❖ To encourage their normal desire for independence and high sense of self esteem.
- ❖ To help them develop kindness, courtesy and self discipline that will allow them to become full members of society.
- ❖ To help children learn how to observe, question, and explore ideas independently.
- ❖ Having created a spirit of joyful learning, to help children master the skills and knowledge of their society.

Within the prepared environment children of different ages and abilities work at their own rate, never under pressure to compete with other classmates. Children refer to their activities as "work." They speak of their "work" with pride, equating it to their parents' work.

The program is designed to help the child to develop concentration, coordination, inner discipline, and good working habits. As the child grows to self-discipline, they are allowed greater and greater freedom to move about the environment and work with whatever materials they choose, provided they are appropriate to the child's developmental level and that they are used in a constructive way.

The children in a Montessori classroom learn by doing; they pursue their tasks independently either in a group or alone. The Montessori Teaching Staff acts as a guide and a stimulus to their never-ending curiosity. Montessori materials are designed to be self-correcting, which encourages independent problem solving and eliminates the correctional, disciplinary role of the traditional teacher. Montessori Teaching Staff and students are fast friends with a healthy respect for one another.

Montessori believed that a child who is allowed to develop their personality freely and independently, who is encouraged to investigate and try new things would grow to be a far more responsible and creative adult than one who is heavily suppressed and disciplined. Her philosophy is not to be confused with over-permissiveness. There is an order in a Montessori classroom that works to the advantage of everyone. Children quickly learn that if they care for their environment and their fellow human beings, they themselves will have a richer variety of experiences. They learn that freedom is precious, but to retain it we must assume certain responsibilities.

The Montessori environment is a highly social one in which the children are continually interacting with and caring for each other. They are proud of their environment because they are directly involved with caring for it and contributing to it. There is a great deal of material available to them concerning plants and animals throughout the world. Artists and musicians are represented through reproductions and recordings of their works, and children enter the world of the arts through participation in arts and crafts and musical activities. The Montessori

environment is designed to be a total environment, representing the child's world. It is hoped that each child will achieve a feeling of self-confidence, enthusiasm and responsibility about his/her world, and a sense of satisfaction about him/herself.

Montessori Goals Summarized

1. To promote the growth of a positive self-image in each child and satisfaction about themselves which is the key to the development of a person's full potential.
2. To promote feelings of enthusiasm and responsibility about one's world.
3. To create an awareness of one's own feelings and sensitivity to the feelings of others.
4. To encourage the natural desire, ability, self-discipline, and independence inherent in learning.
5. To ensure mastery of the basic skills required to pursue knowledge.
6. To teach physical coordination and control.
7. To develop the ability to concentrate and to attend to details.
8. To develop a sense of order.

Montessori Materials & Activities

The materials in the classroom can be divided into five main areas. Activity with these materials involves physical and mental action, linking body and mind.

1. **Practical Life Exercises** such as pouring, grating, polishing, sorting, washing, buttoning, etc. help the child learn to function in his own environment, and are preliminary to more advanced learning. The child develops an attention to details, a lengthened span of concentration and muscular control and coordination through the successful completion of these basic exercises.

2. **Sensorial Activities** are designed to isolate and sharpen each of the five senses. Grading and comparing sounds, sizes, colors, textures and shapes help organize the impressions a child receives. The materials have a built-in control of error so the child can correct his own mistakes. Sensorial materials are sequential and provide a foundation for mathematics and language.

3. **Language Materials** are presented individually to take advantage of the greatest interest on the part of the child. Children are taught the sound and formation of the letters kinesthetically through the use of sandpaper letters and similar materials. Word building activities of increasing difficulty are done over a long period of time. Reading follows naturally.

4. **Mathematical Concepts** are presented through extensive use of concrete materials. The child's sensorial training enables him to identify and differentiate the idea of quantity that is built into the Montessori materials. The child gains the conception of numbers and their application on arithmetical operations.

5. **Geography, history, botany, biology, music and grammar** are introduced through the use of concrete materials.

6. **Enrichment activities** are offered when available. Volunteers among parents and community members may provide special interest units.

In addition to activities involving the materials described above, the full Montessori day includes a morning and afternoon snack and lunch time. Students will also participate in circle time, rest time, and individual/group activity periods. These include art and craft projects, special interest units, music, games, and outdoor activities. Unless the weather conditions are unsafe for children to be outside, all classrooms will go outside every day. The children may also go on field trips during the school year. Parents must sign a permission slip before any child is allowed to participate in a field trip.

Montessori Classroom Guidelines

The word "rule" often seems negative because it usually includes a lot of "don'ts" and connotes authority. However, within the Montessori framework, ground rules have evolved from a much more positive base. Dr. Maria Montessori believed that "education centers upon the care of the living being...the total person including the biological and social." Education is a natural process which develops spontaneously. It is acquired by experiences in which the child acts on his environment. The guidelines or "ground rules" have evolved to provide a balance of rights and responsibilities. Without them, there would be confusion and disorder. They are ways of saying to the child, "I know you can and expect you will." The adult is there only to see that the limits are respected; the limits themselves are not within the adult, but within the situation.

Rights of the Child

- a. To program his/her own day (during the work period) and choose his/her own friends to work with.
- b. To work alone if desired.
- c. To repeat an activity as many times as needed or desired.
- d. To observe others in an activity (with their permission) without participating.
- e. To ask for and receive help from an adult.
- f. Not to join a group activity if s/he prefers.

Responsibilities of the Child

- a. To respect the rights of others.
- b. To respect the environment.
- c. To complete the work cycle of the activities s/he has chosen (including project storage for completion at a later date).

Role of the Adult

- a. To respect the child.
- b. To prepare the environment.
- c. To act as an appropriate model.
- d. To observe the child at work.
- e. To reinforce the guidelines.

f. To intervene if the child is disturbing, dangerous or destructive to him/herself or others.

Children move their bodies slowly and quietly, using "quiet voices". Children walk around someone's work (denoted by a mat or rug) and walk when moving anywhere through the building. Children ask to join someone's work and move away when another child prefers to work alone. Children return the materials to the shelf from which the work has been taken before choosing another activity.

We view the roles of the teacher and the parent as complementary, and may consult with you to determine optimal approaches for working with your child. Our goal is to communicate with you in an open and honest way.

OUR PROGRAM:

AMS Classrooms

Infant Classroom (6 weeks – 18 months old)

Our infant program is designed for children 6 weeks to 18 months old. This program is designed to provide the loving care and gentle stimulation that an infant needs to grow and develop their potential. Flexible scheduling allows each child to eat, sleep, or play according to their own natural timetable.

Toddler Classrooms (18 months – 3 years old)

In the Toddler Program, children use hands-on materials. They are given opportunities to begin building the foundations of social skills, including manners, self-care, and social cooperation, while building independence and self-confidence. Group circle incorporates stories, songs, and sharing, while also helping children learn core concepts like letters, numbers, shapes, and colors.

Preschool Classroom (3-5 years old)

Our Preschool program, for children aged 3-5, has been the Alfred Montessori's flagship program since 1983. Teachers act as facilitators, stimulating interest in the child-centered learning environment. An emphasis on order and completion balances their freedom of choice, resulting in a calm, yet active atmosphere. Children continue to develop their independence and become academically and socially prepared for full-time kindergarten.

The School Age Program (AACS students grades K-4th)

Students in Kindergarten-4th grade may enroll in this program. The AACS bus will drop off students in front of AMS where the school age teacher will meet them, around 3:30pm. Upon arrival, students will come into AMS and the teacher will sign them in and bring them upstairs to their classroom. On good weather days, students will spend some time outside. In addition, they will have the opportunity to work on homework, play games with friends, work on crafts, and participate in group activities.

Teachers and Staff

All staff at AMS is Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) approved, and qualified teachers and assistant teachers. Interns and work study students through Alfred University and Alfred State College are supervised by full time staff and also must have all clearances through OCFS.

Admission Criteria

- Our school admits children of any race, creed, religion, nationality or ethnic origin.
- Children ages 6 weeks – 18 months are eligible to enroll in our Infant classroom. Children ages 18-36 months are eligible to enroll in the Toddler classrooms. Children ages 3-5 years of age are eligible to enroll in the Preschool Classroom. Children in Kindergarten-4th grade are eligible to enroll in our school age program.
- Parents are required to fill out all required paperwork **prior to their child/children attending AMS** These include the following:
 - Application form,
 - Tuition agreement,
 - OCFS Child in Care Medical Statement (completed by child's doctor)
 - Allergy Plan of Action if child has medically diagnosed allergies
 - Authorization to Remove Child form
 - Emergency Medical Release form
 - Topical/Photo Release form
 - Napping Agreement (Infant-Preschool)
 - Signed Parent Handbook Receipt

Trial Period for Acceptance into Classrooms/Programs

All students new to the program are accepted on a 90 day trial basis. The purpose of the 90 day trial period is to ensure that this is an appropriate program for your child. After alerting the parents of any issues, and if no progress is made with the child's actions, it is at the director's discretion to withdraw the child from the program. Other instances of developmental readiness may pose a problem for the child's safety and will be dealt with on an individual basis with the Montessori teaching staff.

In addition to this trial period, if the director and the teaching staff are concerned with a child's safety or developmental readiness at any point throughout the school year, a conference will be set up with the child's family. During this conference, the parents and teachers will discuss the concerns and work on a supportive plan for this child. If no progress is made after this conference, the director/teaching staff will meet with the parents again and determine if other plans need to be made or if the program is no longer appropriate for the child.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

Morning Arrival: Alfred Montessori School opens at 8:00am. For drop off, you sign your child in by writing the arrival time next to their name. Parents and children say their goodbyes in the foyer and the Director will then take your child to their class. Please make sure to complete a daily communication sheet for your child every morning.

AMS asks that **your child please arrive no later than 9:30am**. The Montessori school day begins at 8:30am. Arrivals later than 9:30am present disruptions to the work cycles, schedules, and concentration of the classroom.

If you have a doctor appointment or other special circumstances that would make for an arrival after 9:30am, please let the director know in advance. If you do not have a doctor's excuse, or an established a plan with the director, you will be charged a late drop off fee of \$20.

Afternoon Departure: When you arrive at the school for pick up, you will be met in the foyer by the Director, Assistant Director or a staff member. You sign your child out, and then the staff member goes to your child's classroom while you wait in the foyer and your child is brought to you.

The Montessori school day ends at 3:30 pm. After school care is available between the hours of 3:30 and 5:00 pm. It is imperative that you sign your child out when you are leaving, so we always have an accurate record of attendance. State law requires that we maintain a list of names of persons to whom your child may be released. Please list their names and addresses on the Authorization to Remove Child form, which will be kept on file.

If you are unable to pick up your child by 5:00 pm due to an emergency, please call the school as soon as possible. If you are able to do so, call one of your emergency contacts to pick up your child. If you are not able to do so, a staff member will call your emergency contacts. If your child has not been picked up by 5:20pm, the staff member will notify the police and Child Protective Services. The staff member will contact the director if the director is not onsite, and the staff member or director will stay with the child at school until the child is picked up by the police or CPS.

Schedule Changes: Upon enrollment, parents will denote expected pick up and drop off times. Staffing and coverage are based on those commitments. If a schedule needs to change, please notify the director as soon as possible. **Changes as small as a drop-off fifteen minutes early or a pick-up half-hour late can affect staffing schedules and classroom licensing ratios.**

Home-School Communication

We want every AMS child and family to have a positive learning experience. It is extremely important that we create open lines of communication between home and school.

Communication between AMS and home is essential to both parents and teachers for greater understanding of the child and his/her development in the Montessori environment. We welcome your involvement, your questions, comments, suggestions, and we want you to join us as full partners in your child's educational experience.

Our guidelines for home-school communication include the following:

Parent-Teacher Communication Forms

AMS has two-way communication sheets that are used daily. Each morning, parents will fill out the top part of the form. Throughout the day, the teacher will fill out the remainder of the form and return it in your child's backpack or lunchbox. Email is also a main method of communication at AMS.

- Director: amsdirector@yahoo.com
- Infants Class- amsinfants@gmail.com
- Toddlers 1 Class – alfredmontessoritoddlers@gmail.com
- Toddlers 2 Class – amstoddlers2@gmail.com
- Preschool – preschoolams@gmail.com
- SAP- please email the director

Remind App

The Remind App is a free communication platform that is available to download on smart phones. Remind will be used in the event of an emergency, such as school delay or school closure. Each of our school families and staff members will receive a message in the Remind app- essentially as soon as the decision has been made.

Observations

Parents are encouraged to make classroom observations, especially before participation in parent/teacher conferences, so that there is a basis for discussion with the teacher. We acknowledge that it is through direct observation of your child that you gain an understanding of the Montessori approach to education. We sincerely hope that if you have any questions about the program, you will take time to observe and then discuss any concern with us.

Protocol for Classroom Concerns

If you have a question or concern about your child's experience at AMS, please immediately contact that classroom's lead teacher or Director to schedule a conference. The lead teacher has the most current knowledge of all aspects of the classroom and its procedures, and they will be best equipped to fully address any parent questions. If the concern involves another staff member, the lead teacher will schedule a meeting with the parent and the other staff.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

A formal parent-teacher conference is set up twice each year. Additional conferences may be set up at the request of the teacher or parents.

Items from Home for School

All items from home must be labeled with your child's name.

Food

Alfred Montessori School does not have a kitchen; therefore we do not provide any meals or snacks.

ALFRED MONTESSORI SCHOOL IS A NUT FREE SCHOOL. NO TYPE OF NUT PRODUCT IS ALLOWED.

Lunch

Students should bring a nutritious lunch from home in a lunch box or bag, labeled with the child's name. As much as possible, have the food ready to eat for your child (already sliced or cut, etc.)

Please include an ice pack, as refrigeration of the lunches is not possible. In addition, per OCFS guidelines AMS is unable to re-heat or microwave food.

Snacks

In addition to sending a lunch for your child, please send a morning and afternoon snack as well. If you want specific items for snack, label which items are for snack and which items are for lunch.

Milks

AMS is able to refrigerate milks and must per OCFS regulations.

AMS does not allow bottles in the Toddler and Preschool classrooms. If you wish to send milk for your child in the Toddler or Preschool classroom, please send it in a water bottle or cup with a lid to be stored in the fridge.

Bottles for Infant Classroom

Bottles and cups must be labeled with your child's first and last name.

For breastfed infants, we welcome mothers to come breastfeed if they wish. If they are unable to do so we ask that bottles for the day come pre-poured and thawed in bottles. These will be placed in the classroom mini fridge and warmed up in the bottle warmer when ready to be consumed.

For formula fed infants, we ask that bottles are sent in with pre-poured water to the desired

amount. Parents are free to send in a container of formula to stay and have teachers prepare bottles by parent instruction, or send in the daily amount of formula needed.

Water Bottles

We ask that all students in Toddlers, Preschool and SAP please bring a water bottle daily to school labeled with their first and last name.

Birthdays at AMS

The students enjoy celebrating their birthdays with their classmates and are welcome to bring in birthday treats to share with their class. **All birthday treats must be nut free.** Please ask the Director if you have any questions about what to bring.

Holiday/Community Celebrations

AMS has celebrations for various holidays from all cultures throughout the school year. When we have classroom celebration, we invite families to attend and to donate celebration snacks. Signups for these celebration snacks will be available before the event. We welcome and encourage families to come share their culture with us at the school

Clothing

Since many activities are done on the floor, play clothes are appropriate. We suggest slacks, and closed toe shoes. We try to go outside every day, so please send outdoor clothing for the daily weather conditions. Clothing that the children can put on and fasten by themselves should be selected as much as possible to foster independence.

Each child should have a minimum of one complete outfit in his/her cubby (shirt, pants, underwear and socks) labeled with the child's name to prevent possible loss. Change of clothing is to be used in case of an accident and should be replaced seasonally and as-needed. In warm weather, please do not send your child to AMS wearing clogs or flip-flops, as these are hazardous for outdoor activities. Sunscreen, hats or sunglasses are suggested during warmer weather.

In winter, children will need inside shoes, warm boots, snow pants, heavy jackets, hat, mittens, and snow pants.

For those enrolled in the Infant or Toddler classrooms the following supplies also need to be provided: diapers or pull-ups, wet wipes, diaper rash ointment, and 3 changes of clothes.

Bedding

All students (except for school agers) will need to bring a sheet and blanket for rest time at the start of each week. We provide cots for students, and they are labeled with your child's name. Students may also bring in a small comfort item for rest time. These items will be kept at school for the week and sent home on Friday to be washed.

Toys from Home

Children have a natural desire to bring their own toys to school. However, doing so often causes conflict between peers that they are unable to cope with or resolve amicably. Children may have difficulty sharing a special toy and they may have an equally difficult time choosing to put it away instead. Other children may feel upset or anxious when someone else has a special toy and they don't.

At AMS we strive for collaboration, cooperation, and harmony in our days. For this reason we do not allow toys from home at school. Should a toy from home become present in the classroom, the toy will be placed in the child's backpack or cubby and will be returned to them at pick up.

Alfred Montessori School is not responsible for any lost or damaged toys from home.

Program Hours, Tuition, Billing, Etc.

Program Hours

School is open from 8:00am to 5:00pm every day. We will open the doors at 8:00 am, and all children must be picked up by 5:00pm. **Please make sure you are in the parking lot by 4:50pm, so that we are able to ensure all students are signed out by 5:00pm.**

Tuition

The tuition for each classroom is set based on a full year of attendance from September through June. Families are given the option of paying the full year of tuition at the beginning of the school year, for a 5% reduction in cost. Otherwise, families will be billed on a monthly basis, with bills being due on the 10th of each month. Keep in mind that while school is not in session every day of every month, the yearly tuition charge is divided equally from September through June. **The full yearly tuition is required for all students, even if a student does not attend the entire school year.** Since we are a non-profit organization, we operate on an incredibly tight budget and our financial planning/staffing is based on the yearly tuition of each student. **Tuition adjustments will ONLY be made in case of disability/extended illness, a move beyond 75 miles from Alfred, or the Director's determination of an unsatisfactory adjustment of a child to the school. If a family experiences extenuating circumstances not listed above, they can contact the Board of Directors.**

If we need to close AMS due to a power outage, building damage, COVID-19, or inclement weather, tuition for those days will not be refunded.

Billing

The due date for the monthly tuition payment plan is the 10th of the month, for current month's attendance. For example: September first, billing is sent out and payment is due by September 10th for September tuition. The payment due date for Before and After School

Program charges is also the 10th of each month for services previously used. These charges are reflected on your monthly statement and must be paid with your tuition payment.

Registration Fees

A one-time registration fee is charged at the beginning of the school year for each child and/or family. The registration fee is non-refundable.

Before and After School Childcare Hours

For students in the Toddler and Preschool classrooms, the tuition covers the hours from 8:30am-3:30pm. Additional childcare time is offered from 8:00-8:30am and 3:30pm-5:00pm at an hourly rate.

Late Drop –Off Fees

Alfred Montessori School asks that your child arrives at AMS no later than 9:30am. The Montessori school day begins at 8:30am. Arrivals much later than that result in disruptions to the classroom work cycles, daily rhythms, and concentration. If your child arrives after 9:30am a \$20 fee will be added to your invoice.

If your child has a doctor's appointment or other special circumstances that would warrant a late arrival, please let the Director know in advance.

Late Pick-Up Fees

We understand that life can be unpredictable, and sometimes circumstances arise that cause delays. However, it's essential to maintain a safe and organized environment for all children in our care. We kindly request your cooperation in adhering to our pick-up times to ensure the best experience for both your child and the other children under our care. Late fee charges are as follows:

5:00-5:05-\$20

5:05-5:10-\$30

5:10-5:15-\$40

5:15-5:20-\$50

If your child is not picked up by 5:20pm, we will call the police and Child Protective Services. A staff member will wait with your child until either the police or CPS arrives to pick up your child.

PayPal Fees

Unfortunately, we are not in the financial position to pay the fees for processing PayPal payments. Therefore, if you pay via PayPal, there will be a remaining balance on your next statement for the PayPal fee. The fee will be 2.2% of your invoice plus 49 cents.

Late Payment

If tuition payment is made after the 10th of the month, a late fee of \$25 will be assessed.

Returned Check

\$45 fee will be assessed.

Policy on Attendance/Rescheduling

Due to the school's fixed cost structure, missed days due to reasons such as student illness, school closings, inclement weather cancellations, or family vacations cannot be credited, reimbursed, or rescheduled. Please inform the director or the lead teacher if your child will miss class for a scheduled reason.

Past Due Accounts

All past due accounts will receive a written courtesy reminder sent home during the last week of each month.

If your account is 30 days past due:

1. You will receive an email/phone call from the director to discuss your outstanding balance and plans for payment;
2. If no payment or written/signed payment plan within 1 week of the email/phone call, you will receive another email/phone call from the director and the board will be notified;
3. If payment has not been made within 60 days, and no payment plan has been set up with the director, the family will be notified that the child will be un-enrolled from AMS as of a particular date.
4. The board of directors reserves the right to send outstanding bills to collections.

POLICIES:

Transportation Policy

Transportation to and from program is the responsibility of the parent. In the event of a field trip, we will ask parent volunteers to drive students and will provide permission slips for the event.

Unexpected Behavior Policy

To "discipline" literally means to educate or train. Alfred Montessori School encourages the growth of self-discipline within the child. Maria Montessori believed that the only true discipline is "active" or "inner" discipline, developed by the child him/herself as s/he works at interesting tasks at home and/or school. The "joy of obedience" is developed. First, basic classroom policies, school policies and etiquette are explained to the children. Students will all be given time to learn the classroom policies/procedures and how to demonstrate expected (versus unexpected) behavior.

Children learn best by example. Teachers model expected behaviors to students and show them how to engage in Montessori works, activities, and routines.

When unexpected behaviors occur at Alfred Montessori School, the following steps are followed:

1. Verbal redirection. When a child first demonstrates an unexpected behavior, it is assumed that they did not know or remember the expected way to do something in the classroom. The teacher will demonstrate to the child what the expected behavior is as well as provide the words to use in a particular situation.

2. Warning & Incident report. If the unexpected behavior continues, the teacher will again discuss expected behavior with the child. In addition, an incident report will be sent home to the parents if another child is involved as a result of this unexpected behavior.

3. Phone call & conference. If the child continues to have difficulty demonstrating expected behavior, the lead teacher will call/email the parents to schedule a conference between the parent, and lead teacher. The conference will aim to determine the reason for the unexpected behavior and determine steps to help the student move towards expected behavior.

4. Dismissal from Program. When all efforts made have been exhausted to help the child change his/her behavior, and the integrity or safety of the Alfred Montessori School is compromised by such behaviors, parents will be asked to find an alternative learning/child care environment for their child.

The director may temporarily or permanently remove a child from a program if the behaviors of that child place other children, the staff, or the school in immediate danger.

The Unexpected Behavior Policy is a guideline for working with students/families and not all of these options need to be exhausted prior to dismissal from the program. The steps in this policy serve as general guidelines and are not mandatory.

Unexpected behaviors are evaluated according to age and include, but are not limited to:

Minor

- Teasing
- Attempt to bite
- Pushing/Shoving
- Improper manners
- Not following directions
- Disrespect

Moderate

- Teasing/Taunting
- Fighting
- Misuse of playground
- Misuse of materials
- Insubordination
- Inappropriate language

Severe

- Inappropriate contact
- Hitting, kicking, biting
- Verbal abuse, bullying
- Harassment
- Threats
- Stealing
- Defiance
- Throwing objects
- Possession of any and all dangerous objects

Biting Policy

The safety of all the children is our primary concern. Biting is a natural developmental stage that many children go through. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age.

In the event that biting occurs, a staff person will immediately attend to the bitten child and remove the biting child to a break area. Staff will wash the bite area with soap and water, and apply ice if necessary. If the bite breaks through the skin, the child's parents will be notified and asked to take their child to a health care provider. An incident report will be completed and given to all parents involved.

AMS staff will work closely with the parents to manage & stop the biting behaviors. Following a biting incident, the student will be closely monitored to prevent further incidents. The staff will work to determine the cause of the biting. Staff will remind the child that biting is not acceptable and give praise for appropriate behaviors.

If the biting is not resolved within 2 weeks from the first incident, a conference will be requested with the student's parents. If the biting cannot be resolved within 4 to 6 weeks, depending on age and maturity of child, the child may be dismissed from Alfred Montessori School. The child may be re-enrolled at the start of the next semester, or after 3 months have passed, whichever is longer.

Child Abuse Policy

All staff are required to take a course in recognition of signs of child abuse with periodic retraining as required by the Board of Directors and OCFS.

Employees of Alfred Montessori School must report any suspected incidents of child abuse or maltreatment of enrolled students to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment in the following manner:

1. School staff must report such information to the director of the program or their designee.
2. When a report of alleged abuse or maltreatment of a child or children in a day care center is being made by a mandated reporter, who is a staff member of the day care center, the report must be made by a staff member who has direct knowledge of the allegation(s) of suspected abuse or maltreatment.
3. If the director of the child day care center is the person allegedly responsible for the alleged abuse or maltreatment, staff must report the alleged abuse or maltreatment directly to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment.
4. The director of the child day care center is responsible for implementing procedures which ensure the safety and protection of any child named in a report of child abuse or maltreatment involving a situation which occurs while the child is in attendance at the center. Immediately

after making a report, the director or operator of the center must take such appropriate action as is necessary to ensure the health and safety of the children involved in a report and as necessary, of any other children in the center. The director must also take all reasonable steps to preserve any potential evidence of abuse or maltreatment. Insofar as possible, any action taken under this subdivision must cause as little disruption as possible to the daily routine of the children in the center.

Corporal Punishment Statement

Children's Bill of Rights of the American Montessori Society defines the Montessori Mission as protecting "the right of each child to have the freedom and opportunity to develop to his or her full potential". The Montessori approach cultivates a classroom order and the child's responsibility within that order as opposed to overly restrictive or suppressive forms of discipline. As such, there is no place for corporal punishment, nor is it permitted anywhere in the Montessori environment.

Policy On External Advertising within AMS

Applicable events, offerings, and promotional materials may be approved by the director for posting on a community bulletin board in the lobby. This bulletin board will be the primary means of external advertisement within the school, and will serve as an unobtrusive method for communication of outside materials. The director will use discretion in the handling of external promotional materials to be sent home via folders, based on appropriateness and frequency.

Health & Safety Guidelines

During the hours when children are in school, every precaution is taken to protect each child and ensure good health. **Alfred Montessori School staff is unable to provide any medication,** but we invite you to come to the school to give medications that your child must have during school hours. When medication is given at the school, the name of the medicine, dose, and the parent giving the dose will be logged for the school records.

A list of emergency numbers is filed in the school, which contains parents' phone numbers, addresses, and emergency contacts. Should a parent be unavailable, however, it is necessary for the school to have authorization to receive medical treatment for the child. Teachers MAY NOT administer any medication to a child.

Contagious Disease

Whenever a contagious disease or illness has been reported to the school, the school will notify all parents. **If a doctor has diagnosed your child as having any contagious disease or illness, you are required to call the school and inform the director of the diagnosis.**

Injuries

If your child sustains a serious injury during the school day, an OCFS incident report is filled out describing the situation that resulted in the injury, the injury itself, first aid procedures taken and the name of the adult supervisor who handled the situation. Both school personnel and parent sign this report when the child is picked up from school. Parents may request a copy of this report. In addition to this report, parents are notified via email or phone call.

If your child sustains a minor injury during the school day, a courtesy email is sent to the parents, and an AMS ouch report is filled out. A copy of this ouch report is made and kept in the students' file.

School Insurance

The Alfred Montessori School does not provide medical insurance for the students enrolled in the program. If a child is injured during the school day and requires medical attention, parents are responsible for payment.

Emergency Drills

Because it is necessary for all children and teachers to clear the building immediately in any fire, disaster, or emergency, the school will practice at least one fire drill per month. We will also be conducting two shelter-in-place drills per calendar year. Families will be informed prior to the shelter-in-place drills.

Outdoor Activities

Unless extreme weather conditions exist, all students will have time outside during the school day. Throughout the day, students will leave the school to take walks, visit the library, or play at the playground. A sign will be left on the door stating where the children have gone and the answering machine will be on if there is no one in the school.

Illness Policy (created with our medical consultant)

To protect children and staff from exposure to infections and contagious disease, the Montessori Teaching Staff or Director will contact you to come and take your child home if your child exhibits any of these conditions during the school day:

Key criteria for exclusion of children who are ill

- The child is too ill to participate in program activities.
- The illness results in a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children;
- An acute change in behavior – this could include lethargy/lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, or having a quickly spreading rash;
- **Fever:** Temperature of 100°F or higher taken in the ear or on the forehead. **If a child is sent home with a fever, the child needs to be fever-free (without medication) for 24 hours before returning to school.**

- **COVID-19**
 - Any student or staff who has tested positive for COVID-19 will remain isolated at home for a period of at least 5 days and symptoms should be improving and be fever-free (without medication) for at least 24 hours before returning to AMS.
 - After day 5, the individual who tested positive may return to AMS, wearing a mask for an additional 5 days, if they are able to tolerate one.

- **Diarrhea:**
 - Diapered children whose stool is not contained in the diaper or if the stool frequency exceeds two or more stools above normal for the child.
 - Toilet-trained children if the diarrhea is causing soiled pants or clothing.
 - Blood or mucous in the stools
 - Confirmed medical diagnoses of Salmonella, Campylobacter, E.coli, Shigella, Rotavirus, or Norovirus infections, until cleared by the child's health care provider to return to the program.

- **Vomiting:** more than two times in the previous 24 hours, unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by a non-infectious condition and the child remains adequately hydrated.

- **Abdominal pain** that continues for more than two hours or intermittent pain associated with fever, vomiting, or other signs or symptoms of illness.

- **Mouth sores with drooling** unless the child's health care provider states that the child is not infectious.

- **Active tuberculosis** until the child's primary care provider or local health department states child is on appropriate treatment and can return.

- **Streptococcal pharyngitis** (*strep throat or other streptococcal infection*) until 24 hours after treatment has started.

- **Head lice** until after the first treatment

- **Scabies** until after first treatment has been given.

- **Chickenpox** (varicella) until all lesions have dried or crusted (*usually six days after onset of rash*).

- **Rubella** until six days after rash appears.

- **Pertussis** (whooping cough) until five days of appropriate antibiotic treatment.

- **Mumps** until five days after onset of parotid gland swelling.

- **Measles** until four days after onset of rash.

- **Hepatitis A** virus infection until the child is approved by the health care provider to return to the program.

- **Impetigo** until after 24 hrs after initiation of therapy

- **Conjunctivitis** (pink-eye) until 24 hrs after initiation of therapy

- **Rashes:** As emergent rashes can be contagious, children with rashes will be required to see their health care providers for clearance

Please keep your child home if s/he exhibits any of the above symptoms. Contagious diseases often begin with symptoms of a common cold. Your child may be refused admission to the classroom or sent home during the day if the staff detects an illness. The AMS teaching staff also may request that the child stay home the entire following day, and/or request from the parent a written opinion from an appropriate health professional when the health of a child is in question. If a child is well enough to attend school, the child will be expected to participate in both indoor and outdoor activities.

If a parent fails to pick up a sick child within one hour from the time they are notified that the child needs to be taken home, a \$20 an hour fee will be levied. The director reserves the right to request withdrawal of a child whose parents fail to abide by the prompt pick-up policy.

When a Sick Child Can Return to School Guide:

- **COVID-19:**
 - Any student or staff who has tested positive for COVID-19 will remain isolated at home for a period of at least 5 days and symptoms should be improving and be fever-free for at least 24 hours before returning to AMS.
 - After day 5, the individual who tested positive may return to AMS, wearing a mask for an additional 5 days, if they are able to tolerate one.
- **Cold/flu:** Your child should be **fever free without fever reducers for 24 hours** and symptoms down to a few sniffles
- **Strep Throat:** On antibiotics for at least **24 hours**
- **Conjunctivitis:** On antibiotics for at least **24 hours** with **no** discharge
- **Chicken Pox:** All lesions should be crusted over (generally 6 days after the rash breaks out).
- **Ear infection:** As long as the child is not in pain
- **Parasitic infections:** As directed by the child's physician
- **Vomiting/ Diarrhea:** A minimum of 24 hours after last vomiting episode, and stools should have returned to normal
- **Hand-Foot-Mouth disease:** When the fever has resolved
- **Impetigo, MRSA skin infections:** On antibiotics for at least 24 hrs
- **Influenza / RSV infections:** When fever resolved, and symptoms quieted

Illnesses NOT reason for exclusion:

- Common colds
- Ear infections
- Fifth disease
- Roseola
- Hand-Foot-Mouth disease in the absence of fever

- Cold sores
- Teething
- Non-contagious rashes (dry skin, eczema, cradle cap)
- Lyme disease
- Pink eyes with no discharge (allergic or part of common colds; eye crusting after waking up is not considered a discharge)

Immunizations:

No Vaccines given or Immunization record not available:

Student may be admitted if immunizations are in process and pending availability of records.

Religious exemption:

The state of New York no longer allows immunization exemptions for religious reasons.

Missing vaccinations:

Student is admitted as long as physician writes a statement explaining medical contraindication to missing vaccine.

Allergy Action Plan

Students with life threatening food allergies are required to provide an “Allergy Action Plan” completed and signed by the parents and health care provider.

Inclement Weather Policy

The decision to close or delay opening of the Alfred Montessori School will be made by the director in consultation with the board president. Once the decision is made to delay opening or close school, the director will send a message to all families/staff via email and post of the school’s social media accounts. In most cases, when AACCS is delayed or closed, AMS will follow suit. In the event of a school delay, AMS will make a determination on what time school will open. Credit will not be given, or days rescheduled, due to school closing for inclement weather.

Electric Outage and Building Damage Policy

When an electric outage occurs at the school, the director and board president will be in contact to determine if the school will remain open. If the decision is made to close the school, families will be notified via email. Upon notification, the parent and/or emergency contact will be expected to pick up your child within 1 hour. When the school is closed due to an electric outage, it will not re-open until the next school day. Refunds will not be made when the school is closed due to an electric outage.

If damage occurs to the building, and repairs need to be made before students can attend, the director will notify families via email. Unless damage is school-wide, we will only close the classroom where the damage occurs until the repairs are made. Refunds of tuition will not be made for the days a classroom is closed due to damage.

Emergency Relocation Sites

If there is ever an emergency when our school is not safe to go back inside, there are cleared relocation sites for staff and children. Our primary relocation site is Alfred University's Powell Campus Center located at 1 Saxon Drive (607)-871-2175. Our secondary relocation site is Alfred's Public Library, the Box of Books located at 1 W. University (607)-587-9290. Our staff's primary concern is to get the children safely to the relocation site. After all of the children are safely at the site, a message will go out to all families via email.

Parent Involvement

Maria Montessori believed that a child's education is enriched by parental involvement in the fabric of the school, and she saw parental involvement as an essential component of her philosophy. Parent involvement is the backbone of our school community, and there are a wide variety of volunteer opportunities with differing time commitments to encourage all parents to contribute their energy and skills. Some activities may include event planning, fundraising, attending school outings, joining the Board of Directors, or volunteering at the school. Being involved at AMS is a great way to get to know each other better, and to learn more about the school. Don't hesitate to ask how your talents could be used within our school!

Fundraising

Fundraising is essential to the success and permanence of our school as we are a non-profit organization. In order to foster a relationship between AMS and the community, while raising money to support our school's operating budget, the school organizes 2 or 3 major fundraising events per academic year. There is no requirement for families in terms of participation in these fundraising activities. However, we will ask for support from families for these events, and we hope many of you will consider volunteering your time, preparing a food item, or doing something else related to these events.

Board of Directors

We are a non-profit School and are run by a Board of Directors. Members of the board are parents or grandparents of children, former parents/grandparents, and community members. The members direct our operations, goals and finances. **Meetings are held once a month at 6 pm either at AMS or another location that will be shared prior to the meeting.** If you would like to learn more about serving on the board, please contact any board member or the director.

PARENT HANDBOOK RECEIPT

I acknowledge receipt of the Alfred Montessori School's 2023-2024 Parent Handbook. I understand that it contains information pertaining to AMS policies and procedures. I agree that it is my responsibility to thoroughly read, to become familiar with, and abide by the contents.

Please specifically read and initial each of the following policies:

- _____ pg 11 Arrival and Departure Procedures
- _____ pg 13-15 Items from Home
- _____ pg 16 Late Drop off and Pick up fees
- _____ pg 15-17 Program Hours, Tuition, Billing
- _____ pg 20 Health & Safety Guidelines
- _____ pg 21-24 Illness Policy
- _____ pg 24 Inclement Weather/Electric Outage/Building Damage Policies

Parent or Guardian Name (Please print)

Date

Parent or Guardian Signature

**Please return signed
Parent Handbook Receipt to the school.
Thank you!**