

# Rochester Montessori School

A Montessori and International Baccalaureate School

how children learn influences who they become

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### Welcome to Rochester Montessori School

Thank you for choosing to become a member of the Rochester Montessori School (RMS) community for your child(ren)'s education. RMS is a diverse learning community comprised of families representing more than 25 countries. We look forward to partnering with you in support of your child(ren)'s developmental and academic learning experiences. Success in this endeavor requires support of the School and Montessori principles, engagement, and open communication. This Parent Handbook serves as a primary resource to learn about the School and applicable policies and procedures.

Most of our families didn't grow up attending Montessori school. For many, the introduction to the Montessori philosophy began at the first tour of RMS during the admissions process. As you will discover, the daily lessons and learning activities in Montessori and IB classrooms are truly unique as the inquiry-based curriculum uses different instructional methods than what most of us experienced. We expect our students to "learn to think" which is a very different kind of education.

Please stay informed by reading emails and newsletters. You can also stay current by accessing information on the school's website, Facebook page and by participating in our Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) or attending PTSA sponsored events and activities. Please attend regularly scheduled parent visits, parent-guide conferences, and parent education events. We want you to understand what your child is learning and, more importantly, how your child is learning. We also want you to know the "why" behind the learning processes. Support the various cultural events that take place, and participate in school fundraisers when possible.

We invite your partnership. The extent of your involvement in school activities strongly correlates to your child's academic progress. We expect your participation in your child's school life. Children thrive when the adults are active participants in their lives. It is our goal to create an environment that fosters open communication, creates an understanding of each other's expectations, and a mutual respect for the core educational values and principles at RMS. We invite and encourage you to share your expectations with us, participate in your child(ren)'s education and in RMS school life, attend RMS parent education meetings, and model core values outside of school. By working together, "we" will be working for the benefit of your child(ren). As you review this handbook, please let us know if you have questions or if there is anything that we need to know about your family that would help in making sure we are providing the best learning opportunities for your child(ren).

We hope that this Parent Handbook addresses many of your questions and it serves as a useful guide regarding our procedures and our mutual responsibilities. We welcome your questions and suggestions. We can better understand and address your needs when we communicate, keep informed, and work together.

"It is in the encounter of the maternal guiding instincts with the sensitive periods of the newly born that conscious love develops between parent and child." - Maria Montessori

### History and Philosophy

#### A Brief History of Montessori Education Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952)

Rochester Montessori School's educational programs are based on the pioneering work of Dr. Maria Montessori. Maria Montessori was an individual ahead of her time. She was born in 1870 in Chiaravalle, Italy, to an educated but not affluent middle class family. She grew up in a country considered most conservative in its attitudes toward women. Despite the considerable opposition of her father and guides,

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Dr. Montessori pursued a scientific education and was one of the first women in Italy to become a physician.

As a practicing physician associated with the University of Rome, Montessori was a scientist, not a guide. It is ironic that she became famous for her contributions in a field that she had rejected as the traditional refuge for women at a time when few professions were open to them other than homemaking, teaching, or the convent. The Montessori method evolved almost by accident from a small experiment that Dr. Montessori carried out on the side. Her genius stems not from her teaching ability, but from her recognition of the importance of what she stumbled upon.

In 1900 Montessori was appointed director of the new orthophrenic school attached to the University of Rome. The children there were probably developmentally delayed or autistic. She initiated a wave of reform in a system that formerly had served merely to confine mentally handicapped youngsters in empty rooms. Recognizing her patient's need for stimulation, purposeful activity, and self-esteem, Montessori insisted that the staff speak to each child with the highest respect. She set up a program to teach her young charges how to care for themselves and their environment.

Montessori refined the idea of a scientific approach to education, based on observation and experimentation. She pursued her work with the careful training and objectivity of a biologist studying the natural behavior of an animal in the forest. She studied children with special learning needs, listening and carefully noting everything they did and said. Slowly she began to understand them and what methods worked best. Her success was given widespread notice when, two years after she began, many of Montessori's students were able to pass the standard sixth grade tests of the Italian public schools. Acclaimed for this "miracle," Montessori responded by suggesting that her results proved only that public schools should be able to get dramatically better results with normal children.

After several years of study and work at the University of Rome, Montessori accepted an invitation in 1907 to coordinate a day-care center for working-class children who were too young to attend public school. This first Casa dei Bambini "or Children's House" was located in San Lorenzo, an extremely poor district of Rome. The conditions Montessori faced were appalling. Her first class consisted of fifty children from two through five years of age, taught by one untrained caregiver.

Montessori, not knowing whether her ideas would work under such conditions, began by teaching the older children how to help out with the everyday tasks that needed to be done. She also introduced the manipulative perceptual puzzles that she had used with children with developmental delays. The results surprised her, for unlike her earlier experiences with coaxing children with special learning needs to use the learning materials, the children of San Lorenzo were drawn to the work she introduced. Children who had wandered aimlessly the week before began to settle down to long periods of constructive activity. They were fascinated with the puzzles and perceptual training devices. But, to Montessori's amazement, children three and four years-old took the greatest delight in learning practical everyday living skills that reinforced their independence and self-respect. Each day they begged her to show them more, even applauding with delight when Montessori taught them the correct use of a handkerchief. Soon the older children were taking care of the school, assisting their guide with the preparation and serving of meals and the maintenance of a spotless environment, and even learning to write and read. Their behavior as a group changed dramatically from street urchins running wild to models of grace and courtesy. It was little wonder that the press found such a human interest story appealing and promptly broadcast it to the world.

Montessori called her discoveries the "secrets of childhood." As she opened more schools, she discovered further that these "secrets" were found in children everywhere. As summarized by her student and colleague E. M. Standing, young children prefer

- Work without compulsion;
- Spontaneous repetition;
- Work rather than play;

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- Concentration and self-discipline.

Montessori also discovered that two other qualities were necessary for this response from young children: a prepared, transformed guide and an environment specifically prepared for the learning capabilities found in its children. Montessori believed that the educator's job is to serve the child, determining what each one needs to make the greatest progress.

Montessori evolved her method through trial and error, making educated guesses about the underlying meaning of the children's actions. She was quick to pick up on their cues, and constantly experimented with her methods. The first "Children's House" received overnight attention, and thousands of visitors came away amazed and enthusiastic. World-wide interest surged as Montessori duplicated her first school in other settings throughout Europe, and then in the United States, with the same results. She made three American tours between 1912 and 1918 with the support of a Washington Montessori Society whose members included Alexander Graham Bell and Woodrow Wilson's daughter. Montessori gave lectures at the White House, Carnegie Hall, and numerous universities. She conducted guide education programs and developed a classroom at an international world's fair.

Dr. Montessori was a brilliant student of child development, and the approach that has evolved out of her research has stood the test for over 100 years in Montessori schools around the world. During her lifetime, Dr. Montessori was acknowledged as one of the world's leading educators.

Dr. Montessori summarized her life's achievement in this way:

*Ours was a house for children, rather than a real school. We had prepared a place for children where a diffused culture could be assimilated, without any need for direct instruction...Yet these children learned to read and write before they were five, and no one had given them any lessons. At that time it seemed miraculous that children of four and a half should be able to write, and that they should have learned without the feeling of having been taught....*

*And so we discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process, which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is not acquired by listening to words, but in virtue of experiences in which the child acts on his environment. The teacher's task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child.<sup>ii</sup>*

Today there is a growing consensus among psychologists and developmental educators that many of her ideas were decades ahead of her time. Only recently, as our understanding of child development has grown, have we rediscovered how clear and sensible her insight was. As the movement gains support and begins to spread into the American public school sector, one can readily say that the Montessori Way is a remarkably modern approach.

<sup>i</sup>From Tim Seldin and Paul Epstein. The Montessori way., <sup>ii</sup>Maria Montessori. The Absorbent Mind, p. 7.

### History of Rochester Montessori School

Rochester Montessori School was established in 1968 by a small group of parents seeking the best possible secular education for their children. After researching the possibilities, it was determined that the Montessori philosophy was the best option. Over the years, RMS has grown from its original class of twelve students to its present size of more than 200 children. With the investment of land in 2004 for a dedicated campus, long gone are the days of renting space. There will always be many fond memories of our early beginnings that included space at the Congregational Church, the Rochester Township Hall, Assisi Heights, Bethel Lutheran Church, and Christ United Methodist Church downtown. Today, RMS resides on a beautiful and serene 15 acre campus and it has served families in Rochester and the surrounding areas for over 50 years. The growth and success of RMS could not have happened without the support of our community. And, great pride is taken in the fact that the Montessori philosophy has

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been embraced and continues to thrive at RMS and the greater Rochester area.

### Important Dates for RMS

- 2019 8th grade students participated in the Montessori Model United Nations program in Rome.
- 2018 Celebrated 50 years serving the Rochester area
- 2016 Montessori/IB students traveled to Costa Rica
- 2016 Enrollment reached 200 students for the first time
- 2015 Students participated in the Montessori Model United Nations Program in China
- 2014 RMS graduated its first class of Montessori/IB eighth grade students
- 2014 6th grade students participated in the Montessori Model UN Program in New York
- 2013 RMS became an authorized International Baccalaureate World School
- 2013 RMS celebrated 45 years
- 2011 RMS became a candidate school for the IB Middle Years Program
- 2010 The elementary, music, and art classes moved into the new addition
- 2008 RMS celebrated 40 years
- 2005 RMS moved to a dedicated campus at 5099 7th Street NW
- 2004 Land was purchased in northwest Rochester and construction began
- 2002 RMS Board of Directors voted to establish a permanent home
- 1998 RMS celebrated 30 years of service to the child
- 1992 RMS moved to Christ United Methodist Church
- 1982 RMS moved to Assisi Heights
- 1980 The elementary program was added
- 1975 The extended day program was added
- 1970 The toddler program was added
- 1969 RMS moved to Rochester Township Hall
- 1968 Parents gathered 12 children and began RMS Children's House

### Mission & Vision Statement

Mission: Our mission is to guide the child through a prepared environment to become an independent thinker who is responsible, respectful, and compassionate to self, community, and the world.

Vision: How children learn influences who they will become.

### Core Values

Respect is our most basic and core Montessori value. Respect is central to everything that occurs at RMS. We assume that respect is one of your values too. We teach children "respect yourself, respect others, and respect the environment."

### A Montessori, International Baccalaureate World School

The Montessori philosophy is founded upon the premise that carried unseen within each child is the person the child will become. To develop to the fullest physical, spiritual, and intellectual potential, the child must have freedom - achieved through order and self-discipline. Montessori introduces the children to the joy of learning at an early age and provides a framework in which individual and social discipline go hand in hand.

RMS has educated children for nearly 50 years starting in a private home in 1968 with only 12 children. Today, the school is situated on a beautiful 15 acre campus where a complete Montessori education is offered for children from 18 months through the eighth grade. For students in grades 6, 7, and 8, RMS is

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both a Montessori School and an authorized International Baccalaureate (IB) World School.

The purpose of RMS is to provide a quality education pursuant to the Montessori philosophy for students in toddler to eight grades, by means of a regularly scheduled curriculum that instructs and trains with a view toward enhancing social and intellectual development, and employing a regular faculty of qualified guides and caregivers, in order to create a safe and healthy learning environment to cultivate students' natural capabilities, talents and strengths.

To understand RMS, requires learning about the Montessori and International Baccalaureate philosophy.

Montessori philosophy is based on the belief that children are highly intelligent. Montessori education was founded in 1907 by Dr. Maria Montessori, who based her educational methods on scientific observation of children's learning processes. She was guided by her discovery that children teach themselves and that each child learns in their unique way according to their strengths, personality, interests, and disposition. Consequently, RMS personalizes instruction to support each student individually.

RMS children are active learners in our multi-age classrooms. Furthermore, children progress as they are ready, learning at their own pace, and free to complete a project or pursue a subject as deeply as they wish, according to personal enthusiasm. Our hope is that all students will grow to be self-reliant, internationally-minded thinkers who inquire, reflect, seek knowledge, make decisions, solve problems, communicate, and care about the world and those around them.

RMS classrooms are referred to as "prepared environments" which are age-appropriate and foster children's engagement for long periods of time with challenging hands-on, minds-on academic activities that guide them to conduct inquiries and make discoveries. These activities are referred to as children's "work" where children discover and correct their own errors through feedback from the materials being used. Through repetition of work and self-discovery, children experience internal feelings of success. And, because the work of a child is to become an adult it means becoming independent thinkers responsible for their own choices.

The below chart briefly compares a Montessori educational environment to a traditional one:

<b>Montessori</b>	<b>Traditional</b>
School meets needs of students.	Students fit mold of the school.
Curriculum is structured for each child.	Curriculum is structured for the whole class.
A discovery model of learning where students learn concepts from working with materials.	Learn only from instruction, no room for discovery.
Multi-Sensory materials for physical exploration, organizes program for learning care of self and environment.	No organized program for self-care, left primarily up to parents.
Children are encouraged to speak and work in groups.	Children usually work silently at their desk.
Cognitive social, emotional and moral development emphasis.	Social development emphasis.
Uninterrupted work cycles.	Block time, period lessons.
Guide acts as a facilitator or guide.	Teacher lectures.
Mixed age groupings.	Same age grouping.
Child identifies own errors from feedback from the educational materials.	Teacher identifies errors.

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International Baccalaureate philosophy aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. By combining the Montessori tradition with the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (MYP), we strive to prepare students for their future.

The MYP supports Montessori's interdisciplinary approach to international education. The three fundamental concepts of the MYP - holistic learning, intercultural awareness, and communication - readily build upon the curriculum goals found in our early childhood and elementary programs. In addition, the MYP's five global contexts frame and direct the interdisciplinary practices inherent in a Montessori middle school program.

Importantly, the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program adds a global dimension and context to teaching and learning at RMS. Students must engage in real and pressing global challenges. They must think creatively, design and implement workable solutions, participate in democracy, and act as entrepreneurs. We seek to prepare students for life, and this includes high school, college, work, and citizenship.

By situating learning experiences in both local and global contexts, the MYP encourages students to become engaged, thoughtful, and compassionate lifelong learners who embrace the challenge of living and learning in their local and global communities. Using diverse approaches to teaching and learning, the program fosters the academic, personal, and social growth of students. Through rigorous study and experiential learning, students will develop a comprehensive knowledge of the world, grapple with complex issues and problems, embrace civic responsibilities, and engage with people who are different from themselves.

The below chart compares an IB MYP educational environment to a traditional one:

<b>International Baccalaureate MYP</b>	<b>Traditional</b>
Our guides collaborate to create thematic, interdisciplinary units that address problems authentically.	Disciplines are separated
Mixed age groupings.	Same age grouping.
We ask questions and inquire, and collaboratively gain a better understanding.	We absorb information by listening to our teachers, who decide what we need to know.
We know how to learn, why we learn, and what our social, emotional, and educational needs are.	We learn how to fit into the "role of learner."
We work with our community and serve people throughout the program, participating in the MYP Community Project.	We work to be a productive member of society after graduation.
Success is gained over time, collaboratively, as we grow and experience the world.	Success is determined competitively, through recall and memory, at a specific time and place.
Students are the school, participating in and influencing the program to meet their needs and inquiries.	Students are a product of the school, participating in a program designed for them.
We intrinsically engage in school, and expect to learn, which will help us in life.	We expect school to prepare us for life.
We apply ideas, concepts, and processes to solve real-world problems.	Focus on memorization of facts, definitions, and formulas to score well on a test.
Our program is determined by our mission statement, philosophy, and goals.	Program is determined by the budget and test scores.

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In all our programs, the teacher is known as a “Guide” and serves as a facilitator in the growing and learning process. Instruction is individualized as much as possible rather than by group instruction. The role of the guide is to help children learn how to think deeply, for themselves, and to think about others. Our philosophy is to promote “how” by providing “self-teaching” materials. Our desire is that all children develop habits and skills that are critical for the kind of challenges adults face in our ever-changing, complex, international world. As Maria Montessori said, “How children learn, influences who they will become.”

### Communication

#### School Contact Information

Hours	Monday - Friday, 7:30 am - 5:30 pm
Phone	507-288-8725
Fax	507-288-4186
General email	reception@rmschool.org
Website	<a href="http://www.rmschool.org">www.rmschool.org</a>

#### Board of Directors

Rochester Montessori School is a secular, not-for-profit organization governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is responsible for safe-guarding the long-term financial health of the school, including asset management and capital development, as well as providing general oversight and strategic planning for school longevity. The Board is also responsible for hiring the Head of School, who is charged with administering the school. Anyone with an interest in RMS is welcome to attend board meetings which are generally held on the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm. At the conclusion of regular business, the board may move into closed session as necessary to conduct business that is sensitive in nature. Minutes from each meeting are available in the office a month after each meeting.

The Board is always looking for talented and dedicated individuals to participate with the Board. To learn more, please contact the Head of School or email the board at [rms-board@rmschool.org](mailto:rms-board@rmschool.org). Additional details about the board and current membership is available on the RMS website.

#### Administration

Interim Head of School	Deborah Summerson
Program Director	Michael Wridt
Bookkeeper/Accountant	Kristine Malone
Front Office Coordinator	Heather Gjervik
Technology Coordinator	Craig LeVan

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## Staff

<u>Toddler Community</u>		<u>Elementary 1</u>	
Acorns Classroom	Rhonda Khan, Guide Sally Johnson, Assistant	E1 East Classroom	Ruby Gulati, Guide Lisa Wridt, Assistant
Pinecones Classroom	Melissa Martinez-Miland, Guide Sarah Dennis, Assistant	E1 West Classroom	Andy Saunders, Guide Anne Moberg, Assistant
<u>Children's House</u>		<u>Elementary 2</u>	
Birches Classroom	Clarisse Colin-Hoag, Guide Doa Abdel-Ghany, Guide Debbie Lewis, Assistant	<u>E2 Central Classroom</u>	Sarah Buhmann, Guide Sharri Juhnke, Assistant
Cypress Classroom	Kelly Shinn, Guide Trisha Roeker, Guide Tina Xie, Assistant	<u>E2 West Classroom</u>  <u>E2 East Classroom</u>	Mark Seifert, Guide  Rosalee Kukuzke, Guide
Redwoods Classroom	Michelle Ebnet, Guide Nikki Brown, Guide Jessica Nelson, Assistant	<u>IB Middle Years Program</u>	Bre Scheer, IB/MYP Coordinator, Guide Greg Anderson, Guide
Willows Classroom	Kate Faruolo, Guide Sarah Streyle, Guide Niniek Pranoto, Assistant		

### Specialists

Nicole DeBurton, Environmental Education & MYP Spanish  
 Maria Grazia Gualandi, Toddler, CH, 1st and 5th Grade Spanish  
 Beatrice Castellano, CH, 2nd-4th Grade Spanish  
 Sharri Juhnke, Art & Librarian, PT E2 Assistant  
 Nolan McMonagle, Physical Education  
 TBD, Music  
 Diane Betzolt, Resource

### Additional Services

Laura Lawson, Day House, CH Before School Care & CH After School Care  
 Diane Betzolt, KG-3rd Before School Care  
 Jessica Nelson, 1st-3rd After School Care  
 Nolan McMonagle, 4th-8th Before School Care  
 Sally Johnson, Toddler After School Care

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Sarah Dennis, Toddler Before School Care  
Debbie Lewis, CH After School Care  
Tina Xie, KG After School Care  
Niniek Pranoto, Day House  
Shelby Steier, Day House Before School Care, 4th-6th After School Care  
Beatrice Castellano, 7th-8th After School Care

### Who to Contact When

When parents have questions and/or concerns it is important to know who to contact. It is our intention to work together to answer questions and address concerns as effectively as possible. Please use the following guidelines when contacting us:

What	Who	How
Questions regarding your child in the classroom including everything from academics to behavior	Your Children's Guide(s)	<a href="#">Email</a> or call the office (507.288.8725) to get in touch with your child's guide(s).
Questions regarding admissions, placement, change in schedule, registration, re-registration, or transitions, facilities, fund raising	Head of School	Email <a href="mailto:deborah@rmschool.org">deborah@rmschool.org</a> or call the office (507.288.8725).
Questions regarding Montessori/IB Programming, Additional Services, After School Studios, and Summer Programs	Program Director	Email <a href="mailto:michael@rmschool.org">michael@rmschool.org</a> or call the office (507.288.8725).
Questions regarding finances, tuition, fees, billing, auto withdrawal, account balances	Bookkeeper/Accountant	Email <a href="mailto:accountant@rmschool.org">accountant@rmschool.org</a> , or call the office (507.288.8725) to set up an appointment.
Still not sure where your question should be directed?	Administrative Coordinator	Email <a href="mailto:reception@rmschool.org">reception@rmschool.org</a> or call the office (507.288.8725).

At any time you feel a concern warrants the attention of the Head of School, do not hesitate to send an email to [deborah@rmschool.org](mailto:deborah@rmschool.org), call 507-288-8725, or stop by to make an appointment.

**Grievance Procedure:** In the event a problem exists; RMS wants to correct it as quickly as possible. This can only be achieved if it is identified and communicated immediately. Parents with concerns should first discuss them with the classroom guide if the concern is not related to a guide or staff member. If the classroom guide is unable to resolve the concern independently and to the satisfaction of the parent, then the matter should be brought to the attention of the Head of School. If the concern is with the Head of School the parent may contact the Board of Directors. If any of these persons are not able to resolve your concern you may contact the Department of Health and Human Services.

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**Privacy Notification:** All data collected by RMS to meet Minnesota licensing requirements or RMS internal needs is stored securely and made available to parents/guardians and RMS staff per policy.

## Communication Tools

Communication is of vital importance to ensure understanding and efficient operations of our school. RMS has several avenues for communicating with parents:

**Schoolcues:** Our main conversation tool is Schoolcues ([www.schoolcues.com](http://www.schoolcues.com)) Information will be sent upon enrollment to get your account set up and download the app for your devices.

**Email:** This method is used frequently. All staff members check email regularly and will use this as a primary form of communication with you.

**Website:** Our web address is [www.rmschool.org](http://www.rmschool.org). Our website has much information including information about Montessori, our individual programs, an updated calendar, photos of events, staff email addresses, school cancellation information, newsletters and more. Please visit often to stay informed and up to date on school happenings.

**Facebook:** School information is also available on our two Facebook pages. We have our school Facebook page and our PTSA Facebook page called RMS Community Connections. We use Facebook to share pictures and information on daily school activities, upcoming PTSA or school events and general information about our school.

**Take Home Folders:** Information that cannot be sent electronically from school or that requires hard copies will be sent home with your child. Children's House and Toddler's will send information home on Thursdays. Elementary, the Middle Years Program and all Specialist Programs (Art, Ecology, Spanish, etc.) will send information home as needed. We'll keep these hard copies to a minimum, but we do suggest that you regularly ask your child if anything was sent home.

## Contacting your Child's Guide

In general, your child's guide is not available for conversations during the morning arrival time due to obligations to the children. If you need to speak to a guide, please make an appointment or call before 8:15am or after 3:30pm. Information about trips, appointments, illnesses or other miscellaneous considerations should be emailed to your child's guide, to reception, or written down and given to the office.

## School Programs

### Program Schedules

<u>Program</u>	<u>Begins</u>	<u>Ends</u>
Toddler Half-Day	8:30 am	11:30 am
Toddler Full-Day	8:30 am	3:00 pm
Children's House Half-Day	8:30 am	11:45 am

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Children's House Full-Day	8:30 am	3:00 pm
Elementary 1	8:30 am	3:15 pm
Elementary 2	8:30 am	3:30 pm
Middle Years Program	8:30 am	3:30 pm
<u>Additional Services</u>	Before School Care Opens at 7:30 am	After School Care at 4:30 or 5:30 pm
<u>After School Studios</u>	Varies by Studio offered. See After School Studio brochure.	
<u>Summer Programs Half-Day</u>	9:00 am	12:00 pm
<u>Summer Programs Full-Day</u>	9:00 am	3:00 pm

## Educational Programs

Our educational programs form a continuum from 18 months through the eighth grade. Each program offers developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences designed to maximize each child's learning and thinking capabilities. In the following descriptions, the ages quoted are approximate. RMS reserves the right to alter age minimums or maximums based on individual and community needs.

Please go to the RMS [website](#) for additional curriculum information beyond the following:

### Toddler Program (18 months to three years)

The Toddler Program is designed for children from 18 months to 3 years of age. Our Toddler classrooms are referred to as a seed (Acorns or Pinecones). Each classroom is staffed by a Montessori Guide and a trained Assistant. We maintain a 6:1 child/staff ratio or smaller.

The Toddler program is an amazing community of young friends who learn and grow together. The classrooms provide activities that help these children develop independence, self-mastery, and social skills. The activities promote movement, exploration, and discovery. The activities also help children develop eye-hand coordination as they string beads, sequence cubes, arrange objects on pegs, match pictures, complete puzzles, and paint. Language activities promote early literacy as children sequence objects, match pictures, and use vocabulary enrichment exercises. Spanish lessons are also a part of this program.

Children enrolled in the full day Toddler program have lunch in a family style and is followed by a rest period. As the children wake, additional activities take place.

### Children's House, Day House, and Kindergarten

In keeping with RMS tradition, each Children's House classroom is named for a tree (Birches, Willows, Redwoods, and Cypress). These classrooms are staffed by three adults – either one or two Montessori Guides and one or two trained Assistants. We maintain a 8:1 child/staff ratio or smaller. Children explore and investigate well over 150 learning activities grouped as art, geography, history, literacy, mathematics, music, practical life, science, and sensorial. Spanish is also taught during the week. The children develop self-confidence, initiative, persistence, independence, concentration, orderliness, cooperation, and

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respect for others.

Lunch takes place in the classrooms for full day children older than three years ten months. The children then enter an afternoon work cycle and continue their afternoon work in the classroom.

Children enrolled in the Kindergarten program have additional afternoon lessons in math, reading, writing, Spanish, music, and physical education. An outline of the Kindergarten year curriculum is found on the School website.

Children under the age of three years, ten months who are enrolled in the full day program transition to the Day House at 11:45 AM where they will eat lunch together. They are offered a thirty-minute rest time. After thirty-minutes, those children who are not sleeping may get up and enjoy work activities. These age-appropriate activities emphasize practical life, sensorial, and social skills. Children who continue to sleep will be woken to prepare for 3:00 pm dismissal.

### **Elementary Programs (first through sixth grade)**

The Elementary Programs are designed for children from first through sixth grade. Our Elementary classrooms are staffed by a Montessori Guide and a trained Assistant. We maintain a 12:1 child/guide ratio or smaller.

Elementary students study a broad curriculum emphasizing exploratory materials designed to provide instruction in anthropology, archeology, biology, botany, chemistry, earth science, geography, geology, geometry, government, literacy, mathematics, meteorology, oceanography, sociology, and Spanish. Children also work to become responsible for time management, self-guided learning, and effective teamwork with others.

The elementary years are divided into two groups. Elementary 1 (E1) is for children in the first through third grades. Elementary 2 (E2) is for children in fourth through sixth grades. Children in each program work through a set curriculum at a rate that is determined by both ability and interest. The E2 curriculum further prepares children for the educational challenges of our International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program, which begins in the sixth grade.

### **The Middle Years Program (seventh and eighth grade)**

RMS is an authorized International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (MYP). The MYP is designed for children from sixth through eighth grade. Our MYP classrooms are staffed by licensed guides trained in the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program methodology. We maintain a 12:1 child/guide ratio or smaller.

The RMS MYP program provides a framework of academic challenge that encourages students to become critical, reflective, and creative thinkers and to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and their lives in the international world. Through rigorous study and experiential learning, students develop a comprehensive knowledge of the world, grapple with complex issues and problems, embrace civic responsibilities, and engage with people who are different from themselves.

The curriculum consists of eight subject groups – Language and Literature, Individuals and Society, Sciences, Mathematics, Spanish, Design, Physical and Health Education, and the Visual and Performing Arts. These subjects are integrated through six global contexts, which provide authentic settings through which students engage with issues and ideas of personal, local, and global significance.<sup>1</sup> The global contexts include Identities and Relationships; Orientation in Space and Time; Personal and Cultural Expression; Scientific and Technological Innovation; Globalization and Sustainability; and Fairness and Development. Our MYP students also complete service and business projects.

As children progress through RMS, they are introduced to a greater number of subjects from specially trained guides. Current offerings are Spanish, Art, Outdoor Environment Education, Music, and Physical Education.

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Additional information is found in the MYP Program Handbook on our [website](#).

### Spanish

Spanish is taught school wide at RMS. Spanish lessons take place daily and are integrated into the Toddler and Children's House programs. These lessons focus on language exposure, speaking, and listening. Elementary and Middle School students engage in speaking, listening, cultural studies, and appropriate reading and writing activities.

### Music

The RMS music program is introduced during the Kindergarten year and continues through 8th grade. The program includes a varied and active curriculum that focuses on rhythmic and tonal development, movement, and music appreciation as well as investigating how music relates to other subject areas. Performance opportunities are available within music class on Sharing Days. Students in the MYP program also complete projects based on various aspects of in-depth music study.

### Physical Health Education

The physical education curriculum formally begins during the Kindergarten year and offers age appropriate learning experiences for each child in a variety of content areas such as basic movement skills, physical fitness, rhythm and dance, games, sports, tumbling, and health. Our program encourages each child to do their best and guides them to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.

### Art

While children produce voluminous amounts of art before their elementary years, the RMS Art program formally begins in Elementary 1. The children will have a mixture of dedicated art classes and open studio time. Children focus on different artists and genres of art through short readings, videos, and discussion and explore connections between art and other subjects of study. The elements of art and principles of design are then emphasized and practiced in the creation of the child's own art pieces.

### Outdoor Learning Environment

The Ecology Outdoor Learning Environment encompasses the areas of restored prairie grasses, a variety of coniferous and oak trees, compost pile, vegetable, flower and pollinator gardens, chicken coop, beehives and fruit trees. Beginning in children's house, students take part in learning about:

- The importance of soil health and methods of improving soil,
- Using sustainable/regenerative agriculture practices to grow annual and perennial food crops, and edible and medicinal herbs
- Cooking and preserving harvested foods, as well as identifying and foraging for and using wild edible food and medicine sources,
- Caring for chickens
- The life cycles and the importance of pollinators, with opportunities for older students to work in the beehive with adult supervision, as well as harvesting honey from comb

The outdoor learning environment affords many experiences to connect with nature and enjoy time to observe, journal and just "be" in nature.

### The Virtues Project

The Virtues Project was honored as a model global program for families of all cultures by the United Nations Secretariat during the International Year of the Family. It is based on the simple wisdom of the world's diverse cultures and about living by the best within us – courage, honor, justice, kindness and all of our innate virtues. Schools, businesses, diverse faith communities, prisons, counselors, drug and

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alcohol recovery programs, and families throughout the world are using the Five Strategies of The Virtues Project with transformational effect.

The Five Strategies of The Virtues Project means to transform the culture of our school and provide simple tools to use every day to make character education a natural part of the child's experience. It is far more powerful to integrate the cultivation of virtues into the existing curriculum, the discipline system, the counseling experience, and the daily classroom life. The Five Strategies of The Virtues Project are:

### *1. Speak the Language of the Virtues*

Language has great influence to empower or discourage. Self-esteem is built when shaming or blaming language is replaced by naming the Virtues, our innate qualities and character. Virtues are used to acknowledge, guide and correct. The Language of the Virtues helps us remember what kind of people we want to be.

### *2. Recognize Teachable Moments*

View life as an opportunity for learning, using our mistakes as opportunities to hone our virtues. It is an approach to bring out the best in each other by asking, "What can I learn from this situation?," "What do I need to do differently next time?," and "How can I make it right?"

### *3. Set Clear Boundaries*

Clear boundaries, connected to a Shared Vision of the virtues with which we want to treat one another, help to prevent violence and create a safe learning environment. Clear ground rules based on virtues build an atmosphere of order and unity.

### *4. Honor the Spirit*

School spirit grows through simple practices that illuminate our sense of values. For example, creating Shared Vision Statements or a school wide moment of silence each morning can bring a sense of peace to the day. Virtues Sharing Circles allow us to reflect on what matters. Participation in the arts honors meaning and creativity. Celebrations bring meaning to special events.

### *5. Offer the Art of Companionship™*

This is the art and skill which supports healing, encourages moral choice, and allows the safe expression of feelings. It helps in counseling, conflict resolution, and behavioral situations. Companionship helps us get to the heart of the matter when individuals are in crisis or grief. It involves true presence and listening, asking clarifying questions, which allow individuals to empty their cup, and then to solve their own problems with the help of the virtues.

Please go to the RMS [website](#) for additional information on our school wide implementation of the Virtues Project.

## **Additional Services**

Before School and After School Care services are available on a contractual basis. Due to limited space in these programs, we accept registrations on a first-come, first-serve basis. You must reserve a consistent weekly schedule. Priority is given first to full week registration.

### **Before School Care (BSC): 7:30-8:30am**

BSC is available to all age groups. This is a relaxed indoor care program in the Dayhouse environment. Toddlers will meet in the Toddler Activity Room. Children may bring breakfast and eat at school if they arrive before 8am.

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### **After School Care (ASC): Two Options: ASC 1 until 4:30pm OR ASC 2 until 5:30pm**

This is an after-school care program where children can read, study, play games or use a variety of materials. Children will also enjoy daily time in the gym or outside. Toddler ASC is held in the Toddler Activity Room. Children's House ASC is held in the Dayhouse and Elementary and Middle School ASC is in their own late pick up room.

### **Drop-in BSC & ASC**

BSC & ASC may be used on an as-needed basis provided there is space. These placements will only be assigned a maximum of two weeks in advance. This service is generally meant for a last-minute or emergency reason. There is an additional \$5.00 charge per time used.

### **After School Studios**

Rochester Montessori School offers an exciting After School Studios program which covers a wide variety of learning activities for Children's House through Middle School. After School Studios are offered 3 times per school year. Examples of After School Studios offered in the past include:

- Children's House: American Sign Language (ages 4-6 years old), Drawing (ages 4-6 years old), Amazing Athletes, and Ballet, Tap, & Jazz with Tippi Toes Dance Co., and Chess (Kindergarten)
- Elementary & Middle School: Drawing Studios, Mission to Mars (ages 11 and up), Robotics, New Global Citizens (grades 4-8), Running Club, (grades 4-8), Planting and Wildcrafting (grades 4-8), Flag Football, Grandmasters of Chess, and Fencing.

Brochures and Registration Forms are sent home with students for sign up purposes. Information is also available on our website.

### **Summer School**

Rochester Montessori School offers an 8 week summer school program. Our program is available for age 18 months to 8th grade, with various ½ and full day options for our Toddler and Children's House programs. If your child attends ½ day programs during the school year then they must attend ½ days during the summer program. Toddler and Children's House students must attend Rochester Montessori School a minimum of ½ the school year before they are eligible to sign up for the summer program. Summer programs for students who have completed 1st through 7th grades are open to non-RMS students.

## **Admissions Policies**

### **Application Process**

- New families are asked to tour the school and observe at least one classroom.
- Applications are accepted year round.
- An application will be considered only when the application fee is paid in full.
- No applicant is accepted without a signed Enrollment Agreement that officially offers enrollment to RMS.
- Your child may be invited for a classroom visit as a part of the application process. This usually occurs when children are applying for the Elementary and Middle School programs.
- If RMS cannot enroll your child during the application academic year, you may be asked to complete a new application for the next school year. A second application fee will not be required.

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### Enrollment Policies

- Enrollment Agreements will be offered to new applicants starting in early spring and continue until classroom openings are full.
- All new enrollments are subject to a 60-day probationary period during which time any issues that cannot be resolved may warrant a cancellation of the placement without an obligation on the part of RMS.
- In the case that action is taken in regards to a probationary period, tuition and fees will be refunded as described below under withdrawals and refunds.
- After the 60-day probationary period, enrollment is continuous, meaning your are enrolled with RMS year after year, with no further action needed, until you tell us otherwise.
- Although parents may request a classroom via email to the Head of School, we cannot guarantee enrollment in a specific classroom.
- Once children are placed in a class, they continue in that class until moving to the next program level. In rare cases, the school may move a child to a different room or make a mid-year move to the next program to better provide for the student's needs. This determination is made by the Head of School after lengthy discussions with parents and teaching staff regarding the child's needs.
- Throughout the school year half day students will have opportunities to move to full-day enrollment. Changes will be considered provided that space and staffing are available. The determination is made by the Head of School after discussion with parents and teaching staff.
- Generally, full-day enrollments will not be changed to half days (Toddlers & Children House). However, there are times when staff may recommend this change based upon the observed needs of the child. Changes will be considered provided that space and staffing are available. This determination is made by the Head of School after discussion with parents and teaching staff regarding the child's needs.
- A child's enrollment in the school may be continued during the school year if that child is unable to attend school for an extended period of time and if the family meets all fee and tuition responsibilities during such period.

### Waiting Lists

Waiting lists are kept when classes reach maximum capacity. As openings occur, students on the waiting list are contacted and admitted based on several factors which include the application date, desired starting date, and student makeup of the requested program among other things. No applicant will be placed on the waiting list without receipt of a completed application and fee. When placing students from the waiting list into a classroom, students of current families and employees are given priority.

### Program Transitions

Student transitions between programs are determined by several factors. To ensure student success, transitions are monitored by guides of the current classroom, guides of the student's next classroom, and administration.

Factors that impact the timing of transitions include age, social and developmental needs, concentration and focusing abilities, and academic skills. Guides and administration will work closely with the parents during this process and encourage input and feedback to ensure a successful transition. All final decisions are at the discretion of the Head of School.

In general, students in our Toddler program move into the Children's House program at the age of 3. Transitions from Children's House to Lower Elementary must begin at the start of the academic year.

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Transitions between Lower and Upper Elementary and Middle Years Program occur at the beginning of the academic school year.

### Classroom Ratios

All class sizes are designed to be large enough to optimize each child's learning experience, but small enough to allow for appropriate guidance and supervision. Because the Montessori classroom has a three-year cycle, ratios are typically adjusted to maintain the efficacy of this structure. Our general student to adult ratios are:

- Toddler - 6:1
- Children's House - 8:1
- Elementary - 12:1
- Middle Years Program - 12:1

### Equal Education Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that equal educational opportunity is provided for all students of Rochester Montessori School.

A. It is the policy of Rochester Montessori School to provide equal educational opportunity for all of its students.

B. Rochester Montessori School does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of:

- Race
- Color
- Creed
- Religion
- Marital Status
- Parental Status
- National Origin
- Disability
- Status with regard to public assistance
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender or Gender Identity
- Age

C. This policy applies to all areas of education including admissions, academics, coursework, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, or other rights or privileges of enrollment.

D. Violators of this policy shall be subject to discipline consistent with the Employee Handbook and applicable law.

E. Rochester Montessori School prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or participates in any investigation of such report under this policy.

### Responsibility

A. It is the responsibility of every employee and other personnel of Rochester Montessori School to comply with this policy.

B. The Head of School may promulgate regulations and procedures, as needed, to execute this policy.

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C. Rochester Montessori School urges the reporting of all incidents of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position in the school. Any student who believes he or she has experienced conduct that is contrary to this policy, or who has concerns about such matters, should file a complaint as soon as possible.

D. Reports under this policy shall be directed to the Head of School. All reports will be documented in writing and investigated impartially as appropriate given the circumstances. In circumstances where the Head of School is unavailable or concerns involve the Head of School, a report should be made to the President of the Board of Directors.

### Billing Policies

#### Tuition and Fee Payment Procedures

RMS is supported by student tuition and fees. All tuition and fees (with the exception of the application fee and the security deposit) are collected via auto withdrawal.

<i><b>What</b></i>	<i><b>When</b></i>	<i><b>Amount</b></i>
Application Fee	At the time of application	\$100 per application
Enrollment Security Deposit	At the time the Enrollment Agreement is accepted	\$500 per enrollment agreement
First Tuition Installment	June 2nd OR at the time the Enrollment Agreement is accepted if after June 2nd	1/10th of the total tuition
Annual Fees - Buildings & Grounds, Family Activity Fee, and Classroom Fees, if applicable (all non-refundable)	August 2nd OR at the time the Enrollment Agreement is accepted if after August 2nd	\$480: Family Bldgs. & Grounds \$40: Family Activity Fee Classroom Fees: \$100: Elementary 1 \$130: Elementary 2 \$175: Middle Year Program
Second - Tenth Tuition Installment	2nd of each month, September - May	The remaining nine installments.

- The application fee is paid by check at the time of application.
- The enrollment security deposit is paid by check when the Enrollment Agreement is accepted. A voided check is required to set up future auto withdrawals.
- The Security Deposit of \$500 per child (max of \$1,500) is paid by check at the time of acceptance into RMS. All security deposits will be placed in a low risk account. Parents will not be paid any interest when the security deposit is returned. The security deposits are non-transferable.

#### **Tuition**

- The first tuition payment is paid by check if the Enrollment Agreement is accepted after June 2nd.
- All remaining payments are made through auto withdrawal.
- Tuition is paid in 10 installments. The first installment is made at the beginning of June or at the time

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of enrollment if enrollment occurs in June or later. The subsequent 9 installments are made monthly from September through May.

- Tuition does not cover school fees, summer school, additional services, after school studios, specialty offerings and other miscellaneous fees.
- Fee and tuition auto withdrawals are made around the 2nd of each month or the next business day if the 2nd falls on a weekend or holiday.
- Tuition statements are not sent monthly. However, a yearly account statement will be sent to each family in January. If you require a statement outside of this time frame, please contact the RMS office to request one.
- Tuition payments are required even when a student is absent due to illness, family vacations, etc.
- A tuition discount is offered to families with more than two children currently enrolled in the school – a \$500 discount for the third child and a \$1,000 discount for each additional child. In order to receive this discount, families must have at least one child enrolled in the Elementary program. In the case of triplets, quadruplets, or greater multiples, the family will receive the discount regardless of the program in which the children are enrolled.

### Midyear Changes

- When midyear changes have been agreed upon and approved by the Head of School the following process will be adhered to determine new tuition costs.
  - The per day rate of tuition will be used to determine the cost of the remaining days of service for the current academic year.
  - Any adjustments to the payment schedule will be determined by RMS and communicated via email and with an updated enrollment agreement.
  - The updated enrollment agreement must be signed and returned to RMS.
  - Tuition changes and adjustments will be effective for the next month of tuition payments after the midyear change date.

### Fee Payments

- Payment of fees are made through auto withdrawal in August and include:
  - Annual Building & Grounds Fee per family (supports facility needs).
  - Annual Family Activity Fee per family (supports PTSA).
  - Annual Elementary 1 Class Fee per child.
  - Annual Elementary 2 Class Fee per child.
  - Annual Middle Year Program activity fee per child.
- Collection of these fees will be due upon admission if enrollment occurs after August 2nd.
- Fee payments are required even when a student is absent due to illness, family vacations, etc.
- All fees are non-refundable.

### Re-enrollment

- Enrollment for the following school year is continuous; meaning, you are automatically enrolled for the following school year.
- There is no fee for returning students during the re-registration period.
- Security deposits will be rolled over for current students who are returning for the next school year.
- Update enrollment agreements will be provided to families for signature by April 30th.

### Withdrawals and Refunds

- If you intend on withdrawing at the end of the current school year, you must communicate your intention to withdraw to the Head of School in writing (email preferred) by February 16th of the current school year.
- Current families who will not be re-enrolling for the following school year and have communicated

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their intention to withdraw by February 16th will have their security deposit returned on the last day of school of the current school year.

- If the statement of withdrawal is received after February 16th but before July 31st, your security deposit will be forfeited
- If the statement of withdrawal is received after July 31st but before the 1st day of school, the first tuition installment, any fees paid by the date of withdrawal and the security deposit will be forfeited.
- If the statement of withdrawal is received on the 1st day of the school or later, RMS will retain all tuition installments paid in accordance with the installment schedule, including the tuition installment for the withdrawal month. Any fees paid and the security deposit will be forfeited.
- If for any reason RMS formally asks a student to withdraw, refunded tuition is prorated to the day of departure, and the Security Deposit will be returned. The Security Deposit will be returned within 60 days of withdrawal.
- All fees are non-refundable.

### Non-Sufficient Funds/Non-Payment Collection Procedures

#### TUITION, BUILDING & GROUNDS FEES, FAMILY ACTIVITY FEES, CLASSROOM FEES

- All payments are due the 2nd of the month in which they are charged.
- Any payments received after the 2nd of the month will be subject to a \$50.00 late fee.
- A fee of \$50.00 (fifty dollars) will be assessed for non-sufficient funds (NSF).
- Communication to parents with outstanding balances after the due date of the 2nd will be conducted by the accountant and/or Head of School with the expectation that payment will be either automatically withdrawn or paid by check by the 20th of that month.
- Failure to remedy an NSF situation or pay tuition payments due after the 20th may lead to suspension or termination of services.
- Failure to remedy an NSF situation or pay tuition payments over the course of 45 days from the due date will lead to a suspension or termination of services.
- Failure to bring an account current within 90 days will result in submission to a collection agency.
- In the event that RMS must take legal action to collect delinquent accounts, RMS will also pursue collection costs.

#### STUDIOS, BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CARE

- All payments are due the 20th of the month in which they are charged.
- Any payments received after the 20th of the month will be subject to a \$50.00 late fee.
- A fee of \$50.00 (fifty dollars) will be assessed for non-sufficient funds (NSF).
- Communication to parents with outstanding balances after the due date of the 20th will be conducted by the accountant and/or Head of School with the expectation that payment will be either automatically withdrawn or paid by check by the end of that month.
- Failure to remedy an NSF situation or make payments due by the end of that month may lead to a suspension or termination of services.
- Failure to remedy an NSF situation or pay tuition payments over the course of 45 days from the due date will lead to a suspension or termination of services.
- Failure to bring an account current within 90 days will result in submission to a collection agency.
- In the event that RMS must take legal action to collect delinquent accounts, RMS will also pursue collection costs

### Tuition Assistance

- Rochester Montessori School offers limited tuition assistance to families.
- Application forms are available on the RMS website and are due by April 15th for the upcoming school year.

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- Applicants must annually complete an application form and send it directly to Tuition Aid Data Services (TADS). TADS will determine the level of need. RMS awards tuition assistance based, in part, on this report.
- Information provided in the application process is kept strictly confidential.
- Applications for tuition assistance submitted after April 15th will be processed but may be ineligible for assistance regardless of need.
- RMS does not guarantee tuition assistance to any person for any reason.

### Additional Services, After School Studios, Summer School

- Additional Services and After School Studios are invoiced around the 15th of the month and withdrawn on the 20th or the next business day if the 20th occurs on a weekend or holiday. You will be billed for these services whenever school is scheduled to be in session based on the RMS calendar, whether you use it or not. We require a two-week notice to accommodate changes in your schedule.
- Summer School tuition is made in two installments via auto-withdrawal. The first installment occurs shortly after registration opens. The second installment is made at the end of May. Summer School registrations made after May are paid by check.

### Student Records

RMS has adopted a policy about the rights of parents and students with respect to school records. This policy complies with federal and state laws guaranteeing the right to examine and challenge the contents of student records. The Minnesota Legislature has said that all school records are deemed private. This means that RMS cannot release any information without permission.

### Student Information Packet

The student information packet must be completed and turned into the school every year. The due date for these forms is August 1st. Students will not be allowed to attend school until these forms have been completed and turned into school. All school forms are completed and submitted via SchoolCues. More information on SchoolCues and submission of forms will be provided annually and upon enrollment.

### Registering with your Public School District

All students must be registered with their local public school district. This must be done before the beginning of each school year. This registration may also provide you benefits towards transportation.

### Arrival and Dismissal

Normal arrival time begins at 8:25. Arrival and dismissal procedures are designed to facilitate greater independence and freedom for your child. Safety is of the utmost importance at Rochester Montessori School.

### Early Arrival

Receiving children for early morning drop off begins at 7:30. Children may not be left alone before arrival time. Parents must sign in students at their before school care room.

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### Arrival

#### Toddlers

All toddler parents walk with their children into the building and to their classrooms where the Guide or Assistant will be waiting to greet and receive them. The separation point is in the hallway by the classroom door. Please allow your child(ren) to walk into the building and to manage his or her belongings. These are important parts of the Montessori experience that build self-esteem and independence.

#### Children's House, Elementary, and Middle Year Program

Most parents use our morning arrival parking lot procedure outlined in the parking lot section of the handbook, making the car the separation point. Children then have the added benefit of entering the building independently. If parents elect to walk their child(ren) into the building, the doors at the foyer will be the separation point. The children then walk down the hall and into the classrooms independently.

### Dismissal

#### Toddlers

Please park on the west side of the parking lot. Pickup occurs outside of your child(ren) classrooms. If you arrive early, please refrain from congregating in front of the classroom doors. This can be a distraction to the children.

#### Children's House, Elementary, and Middle Year Program

Pick up functions similar to the drop off procedures. Please pull into the parking lot and form a line on the east side of the lot leading to the front door. Staff will bring students out to the pick up location at their assigned dismissal time at which time you may pull up to the pick up location. **Please do not block the crosswalk.**

Children's House parents should display their assigned car identification number. Returning parents use the numbers assigned to them when they first came to the school. If you need a new number card, please contact the office. Elementary and Middle Year Program parents do not have these numbers.

We will only release children to those adults authorized by parents. If we do not recognize the person picking up your child or, if for any reason, a person is deemed unfit to receive a child (i.e. is suspected to be under the influence, acting oddly, violent, etc.), RMS staff will not release a child from the school and will contact you immediately. This is to assure the safety of your child. We ALWAYS err on the side of caution.

### Late Arrival

It is important for your child(ren) to arrive at school on time for the start of the school day, but we do understand that late arrivals happen.

- Call to let us know you will be late.
- **Please park and escort your child(ren) into the school.** Do not drop your child off outside to walk into school alone.
- Sign in at the office upon your arrival so that we can account for your child's attendance.

### Early Departure

If your student is leaving early for the day this must be communicated with the office and the assigned

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guide. Please park and sign your child out for the day at the reception desk.

## Parking Lot

### Supervision

Staff will be outside of the building at 8:25 to begin drop off. Drop off will end at 8:40. Please obey traffic flow and safety procedures outlined below.

### Traffic Flow

- Prior to 8:25 am, you may pull into the parking lot and form a line on the east side of the lot leading to the front door.
- Staff members will appear at 8:25 am, which is a signal to pull forward and stop in front of one of 4 drop-off locations.
- Please **do not stop in the crosswalk** or you will be asked to move forward before unloading can occur.
- Once stopped, a staff member will open the door and greet you and your child.
- Children should get out of the car by themselves, if possible.
- If a child is having a difficult morning or refuses to get out of the car, you may be asked to park and walk with your child into the foyer.
- Staff members will receive children until 8:40 am. If you arrive after 8:40 am, please park on the West side of the parking lot and walk with your child into the building. Please sign your child in at the reception desk. **Do not park in front of the school** as this area must be kept open in case of emergencies.

### Safety Procedures

The parking lot is a busy place during arrival and departure times. Accidents are more likely to happen when drivers are distracted. The parking lot is a **CELL PHONE FREE ZONE** and has a **SPEED LIMIT of 5 miles per hour**. Do not put our children at risk by talking on the phone or speeding in the parking lot.

- Staff will park on the east side (side closest to the toddler rooms) of the parking lot.
- The west side of the parking lot is reserved for parent parking. Parking is used for drop-off and pick-up that requires exiting your car. The overflow zone at the bottom of the drive is a waiting area and is not intended as a parking zone due to safety.
- Student drop off and pick up flows through the east side parking lot to the front of the building exiting through the west side of the parking lot.
- **NO PARKING** is permitted in front of the building, in front of any **yellow curb**, or along the driveway. These are all access points for emergency vehicles.
- Please do not use the disabled spaces without the appropriate disabled placard or plate.
- Space is available for new/expecting mothers.
- NEVER leave a child in your car unattended.

### Entering the Building

- Please use sidewalks and crosswalks to enter the building.
- When parking at the center island, you must use the crosswalk and wait for traffic to clear. If cars are present, make eye contact with drivers and practice good traffic crossing habits - stop, look, listen, look again. Please use an orange flag when using the crosswalk to aide in letting drivers

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know you are crossing.

- Please talk about these safe habits with your child(ren).

### **Bringing Lunches into the Building**

There are two ways in which lunches are brought into school. Toddler, Elementary, and Middle School students bring their lunches directly to their respective classrooms. Children's House students place lunches in the cart located in the foyer.

## Disciplinary Philosophy

### **Our Prepared Environment**

The Rochester Montessori School expects all members of our school, including children, parents, faculty and staff, to treat each other with grace, courtesy, and respect. As a Montessori school, we emphasize education over punishment and respect over disrespect. In keeping with our Montessori philosophy and curriculum, our tradition is to prepare children for life. We teach children skills to handle conflicts and difficult social situations, minimize and respond to bullying, and know when to independently solve problems and when to get help. Our goal is to help each child develop his/her full potential in a safe and nurturing learning environment that is free from all forms of harassment including bullying.

### **Relationship to the Montessori Method**

As a Montessori school, we hold as a part of our mission the belief that each child develops to his/her full potential in a safe and nurturing environment.

As a Montessori community we promote the following Universal Expectations:

#### ***Be Responsible & Respectful for Yourself, Others & the Environment***

This basic set of universal expectations applies to all children to assure that each child has a safe and secure learning environment. Internal motivation and self-discipline are the goals of RMS's character development. Nevertheless, problems do occur as the children learn more about themselves and their relationship to others. Our goal is for children to grow into ethical, independent thinkers who are willing to stand for what is right and to take action when necessary. We provide children with skills, knowledge, and strategies to respect and acknowledge differences and to give support to others when needed.

We do this through our shared Core Character Education:

#### ***Virtues, Grace & Courtesy, Peace Education and Mindfulness***

This begins in the Toddler and Children's House programs. As students enter the Elementary program, they begin their exploration of the Montessori values of freedom and responsibility, which tie personal freedom to the willingness to take responsibility for one's words and actions. They also begin the Cosmic Education curriculum, which introduces the child to the world beyond their own neighborhood and their own ideas. They continue their work in Peace Education by learning conflict resolution and furthering their social skills. In the Middle School program, students may become peer mediators.

We believe that rewards and punishments are ineffective tools for discipline and academic success and therefore use them limitedly as a strategy. Instead we work to identify the child's needs in a positive manner. We attempt to understand the child's behaviors as strategies for meeting their needs. We can then work with the child to creatively develop alternative ways for meeting needs. We approach issues through natural and logical consequences, recognizing the importance of the student becoming responsible and self-reliant.

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### **School Culture**

Montessori Guides are not an authority over children but work together as co-creators of the school environment. As a result of multi-age groupings, students may have the same Guide for multiple years. This enables the development of rapport and trust. These supportive connections can serve as the basis for strong behavioral health and provide students with the comfort to confide in adults.

In addition, the Virtues Project transforms the culture of our school and provides simple tools to use every day to make character education a natural part of the child's experience. Please see our school programs section for more information on the Virtues Project.

### **Emphasis on Community**

Montessori schools allow for independence and, at the same time, foster collaboration. Students may occasionally meet as a whole class to reflect on what they are learning, both academically and socially. Class agreements are made that are often reviewed or referred to during this time. This supports students in making decisions that have a positive effect on their peers.

### **Safe Learning Environment**

The prepared environments promote safety and learning and place a strong focus on the child as a whole in an individualized learning environment, which includes academic achievement and social skills development. Our programs promote inquiry through both independent and collaborative exploration. The classroom materials and instruction are differentiated to provide students at all levels with satisfying work. Through a combination of self-directed and guide-directed learning, students are engaged in high level, non-competitive tasks that absorb their attention and build their confidence. Given these aspects of the Montessori Method, students are less likely to engage in negative behaviors.

### **Observation**

Observation is a fundamental tool of all Montessori trained educators. Observation is used in a variety of ways, in both the academic and social arenas, to evaluate student progress and identify lessons directed by the Guides. These observations allow Guides to monitor the social, emotional and behavioral development of each student and to foster effective learning, identifying when additional support may be needed. This may lead to, for example, providing lessons on social skills.

## **Academic and Behavioral Student Intervention**

### **Tiered Support**

In keeping with the Montessori philosophy and working with every child individually in support of their academic and behavioral growth, we have developed guidelines to support students who may benefit from additional intervention services. These services can be for academic or behavioral purposes. These additional intervention services are only utilized when standard Montessori methods do not prove effective.

We have identified four levels of support services.

#### **Tier 1 - Our Standard Curriculum**

The Montessori method will successfully meet the needs of approximately 80% of our children. Our Montessori Curriculum is grounded in standard Montessori methods both academically and behaviorally. Examples of standard Montessori curriculum provided to students are a prepared environment, small group and one on one lessons, regular observations, hands on Montessori materials, frequent movement, grace and courtesy, virtues, student choice and low student to guide ratios.

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### Tier 2 Support

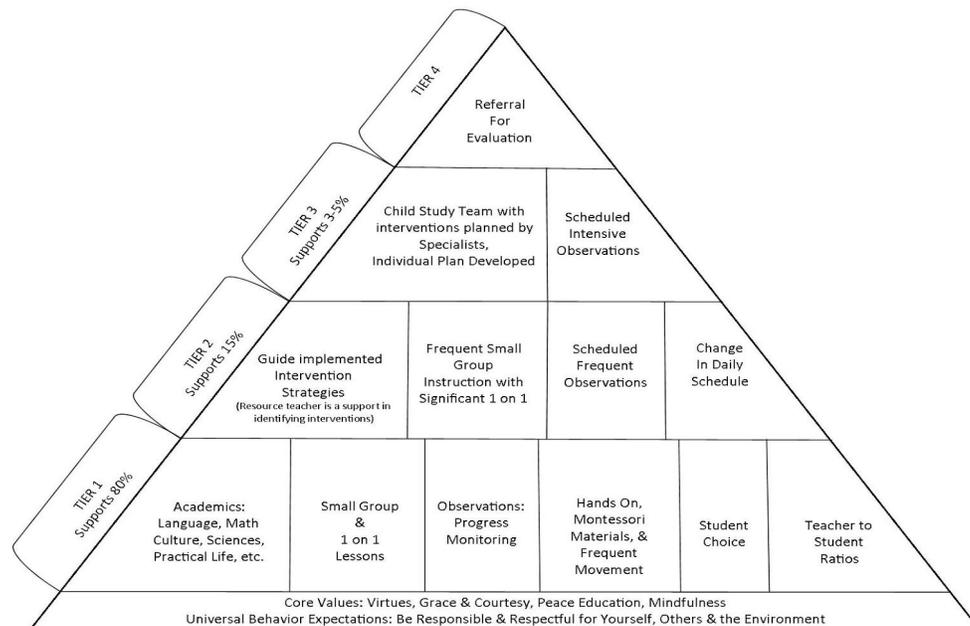
Tier 2 supports are typically utilized for approximately 15% of our children. Tier 2 supports begin when a specific academic or behavioral concern has been identified by the guide. Tier 2 supports target these identified concerns and may involve the use of an intervention strategy to encourage growth in the concern. Examples of supports and interventions that could be provided are: more frequent small group, increased one on one lessons and follow-up activities, scheduled frequent observations on the specific concern, or a change in the child's schedule. Guides will complete an initial concerns form and communication with parents will occur prior to the implementation of any Tier 2 supports.

### Tier 3 Support

Tier 3 supports are typically utilized for approximately 5% of our children. Tier 3 supports are a continuation of tier 2 supports and begins when tier 2 support are not effective. The child study team comprised of our resource guide, guides from all classroom levels, and the Head of School, is engaged and further supports the planned intervention strategy for the child. This could include a specific individualized plan and scheduled intensive observations by members of the child study team. The child study team serves as a support and as fresh eyes to provide additional insight and perspective on ways to support the child's needs. Communication with parents will occur prior to the implementation of any Tier 3 supports.

### Tier 4 Support

Tier 4 support utilizes Rochester Public Schools for the purposes of an evaluation. Referrals for evaluation are not taken lightly and are decided in collaboration with the Head of School, resource guide, guides, and parents. The evaluation is conducted by Rochester Public Schools in collaboration with RMS. At the end of the evaluation process a determination will be made regarding the qualification for additional services provided by Rochester Public Schools. Once the evaluation is completed, parents, RMS and Rochester Public Schools will meet to discuss the findings and determine next steps.



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### Student Code of Conduct

RMS believes that it is important to establish an understanding of unacceptable behaviors to ensure our safe and respectful environment. The following behaviors may be subject to disciplinary action:

- Repeated acts of dishonesty
- Any criminal activity or violation of the law
- Cheating & plagiarism
- Damage to or misuse of property, including the misuse of technology or use of technology in a way that causes property damage.
- Failing to follow the instructions of an RMS staff member
- Gang activity
- Inappropriate physical contact with another person, as well as physical aggression and fighting
- Possession, distribution, or use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco or paraphernalia
- Possession of weapons, explosives, incendiary devices, or any type of combustible substances
- Substantially interrupting the learning environment
- Sexual misconduct and sexual assault
- Theft
- Threats of violence
- Using language that is inappropriate in a school setting or possessing materials containing language that is not appropriate in a school setting. Inappropriate language includes abusive, profane, obscene, or threatening language. Inappropriate language also includes language that constitutes cyberbullying, bullying, discrimination, harassment, or hazing. Teasing and name-calling may also be considered inappropriate language.

### Separation Report

MN Rule 3 9503.0055, subpart 4 & 5 require documentation of separations for our Toddler and Children's House students. When problems arise, our first priority is to protect the children from physical harm. If redirection does not work, guides may remove a child from an activity for a period of time. This separation will occur within the classroom unless the child's behavior warrants removal from the classroom. When separation occurs the Guide will complete a Separation Report. Parents may be communicated with regarding the reason for the separation depending on the severity of the issue. Parents can request to see the separation report at any time. We will respond to the child's behaviors and reason for the separation using our student intervention guidelines.

### Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

This policy is intended to address bullying behavior, including cyber-bullying, on the part of students enrolled in the school at the time of the incident. The scope of this policy covers any activity (whether initiated within the classroom, on the school grounds, at home through the use of RMS accounts or during school trips) that has a demonstrated, adverse impact on a targeted child. It will apply to the use of electronic devices including school or non-school computers, programs, or networks.

In this plan, we address our Montessori philosophy as it relates to nurturing and promoting compassionate behavior. We describe our school's approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying that is consistent with our core values.

All members of the RMS community are expected to participate in this plan.

- The Head of School is responsible for the implementation and administration of the plan, and questions and concerns related to this plan may be referred to the Head of School.
- Parents are asked to follow through with issues communicated by Guides.

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- All children, parents, faculty, and staff are to refrain from participating in spreading rumors, accusations, and negatively commenting about children, parents, faculty, and staff.

### Definitions

A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more persons, and he or she has difficulty defending him or herself.

Bullying can take on many forms such as verbal, non-verbal, written, electronic, or physical behavior. Bullying can include derogatory comments and bad names; social exclusion or isolation; physical harm; lies and false rumors; theft; threat or being forced or coerced to do something against one's individual will.

Cyber-bullying occurs through the use of digital technology. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages and internet postings. Unwarranted contact may take place in, or occur on, social networks, chat rooms, blogs, or cell phone texts.

### Reporting

We are intent upon creating a school culture that encourages the community to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behavior, both experienced and witnessed. We are a community committed to addressing these incidents and empowering students to be part of the solution. The school has an open reporting system where any concerned person may report an incident of bullying or cyberbullying. Designated school personnel will respond to the reporting party. Insofar as is legally allowed by Minnesota state law, confidentiality will be maintained with respect to the parties involved in the report, however the party reporting the incident will be notified that it has been investigated and results may be shared as appropriate. Reporters and targets shall not be subject to any retaliatory action because they have initiated a complaint.

### Process

Incidents of bullying will be dealt with in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the ages of the children involved.

The following process is non-chronological and will be the school's response to reported incidents of bullying behavior:

#### 1. Reported Incident

- a. The student(s) involved will be addressed by the Guide to whom the incident was reported. If the incident is reported to other school personnel, they will report the incident to the student's Guide.
- b. The Guide will speak privately with the student(s) to determine the severity and intent of the situation. Factors used to determine this will include age, maturity level, special needs, degree of harm, surrounding circumstances, nature of behavior(s), past incidences, pattern of behavior, relationship between the parties, and the context in which the alleged incident occurred.
- c. If the findings reveal a lack of intent to bully, the student will be directed to complete mediation with the other student(s) involved. The Guide will facilitate mediation over the course of one or more meetings until the incident is sufficiently resolved. The parents of all parties and the Head of School will be informed when the investigation has been completed.
- d. If the findings reveal intent, the process will continue. Part 1 of the Incident Report will be completed at this time and given to the Head of School.

#### 2. Finding of Intent

- a. The instigating student(s) will be brought to the Head of School, and the school personnel involved will review the situation. The Head of School may ask for further information, seek appropriate

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resources, as needed, as well as speak with the Guide(s), Resource guide, or other students.

b. The parents of the instigating student(s) will be called and a meeting will be arranged to discuss the situation and the consequences as relevant to the severity of the incident.

c. If it is found to be warranted and age appropriate, the instigator(s) may be sent home at the time of the incident and will not reintegrate into the school until a meeting with parents occurs.

d. At the time of the parent meeting the following steps (as is appropriate) may be taken.

i. The student(s) will explain what happened.

ii. The parents will be given time to respond.

iii. The Head of School will state the consequences. These may include warning, written apologies to another child, close supervision of the child, community service, an academic assignment(s), remediation, suspension, or, in extreme situations, expulsion from school.

e. The Meeting Record Form will be completed and signed.

f. The parents of the targeted student(s) will be called and a meeting will be arranged to discuss the situation and steps taken for support and prevention.

g. Follow up will include, but is not limited to the following:

i. If it is age appropriate, a peer mediation session facilitated by the Head of School, Guide, Resource guide, or other appropriate person will occur prior to returning to the classroom.

ii. The involved student(s) will check in regularly with appropriate school personnel such as the Guide, Resource guide, and/or Head of School. Depending upon the circumstances, there may be a follow up session with the whole class or classes to discuss and reinforce school values.

iii. The Head of School will meet with involved personnel to discuss the incident and identify, if warranted, additional resources for the student(s), faculty, and possibly refine this system.

h. Copies of all reports will be maintained and secured in the office.

### Monitoring the Implementation of the Policy

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Head of School and reviewed at the close of any incidents. It will be revised as necessary to reflect the scope and severity of issues which arise. In addition, training protocols and prevention plans will be updated at least once every two years. Input may be solicited from school personnel, parents, and the Board of Directors to plan modifications.

### Health

Rochester Montessori School takes the health and safety of its children very seriously. School personnel are trained in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). We err on the side of caution in cases related to illness and accidents.

### Reporting Absences

Regular attendance at school is very important for the children. Prolonged absences can be affect learning. **All absences must be reported.** If your child will be absent from school, please notify the

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office before 8:30 am and let us know the reason for their absence. Attendance is taken in each classroom at the end of the official arrival time (8:40 AM) and all absences are reported to the office. If your child is not present at school at this time, and you have not notified us, we will call you at home or at work. Prolonged absences OR absences that are not consistently reported to the office may require a meeting with the Head of School.

### School Nurse

While RMS does not employ a nurse, a public health nurse visits RMS regularly and provides a full range of health related services including hearing and vision tests and various trainings for the staff. Olmsted County Public Health provides RMS with the services of a variety of specialists for testing and referrals. An LPN comes to RMS weekly. You may contact the RMS office to request an appointment for your child.

### Accidents at School

RMS keeps emergency contact information on file in the school office. Please notify the office of any change to your primary contact information. We will notify you immediately of an emergency or serious illness.

If a student has an accident at school, we will assess the situation and take one of three actions:

1. Administer first aid before your child returns to activities.
2. Administer first aid and contact parents as a precautionary measure.
3. Administer first aid or CPR, call 911 for help, and then notify parents.

In all cases, an accident report will be provided to you, which specifies the details of the accident.

### Sick at School

If a student becomes ill at school and/or cannot participate in regular activities, we will call you to pick him/her up. There is a waiting area in the office with a cot and chair to rest in.

RMS is not licensed to operate a sick care program. A child with any of the following conditions or behaviors is ill and must be excluded from a center not licensed to operate a sick care program. If the child becomes ill while at school, the child must be isolated from other children and a parent will be called immediately. A child who is ill must be supervised at all times. The license holder must exclude a child:

1. With a reportable illness or condition as specified in part 4605.7040 that the commissioner of health determines to be contagious and a physician determines has not had sufficient treatment to reduce the health risk to others;
2. With chickenpox until the child is no longer infectious or until the lesions are crusted over;
3. Who has vomited since admission that day;
4. Who has had three or more abnormally loose stools since admission that day;
5. Who has contagious conjunctivitis or pus draining from the eye;
6. Who has a bacterial infection, such as streptococcal pharyngitis or impetigo and has not completed 24 hours of antimicrobial therapy;
7. Who has unexplained lethargy;
8. Who has lice, ringworm, or scabies that is untreated and contagious to others;
9. Who has a 100 degree Fahrenheit axillary or higher temperature of undiagnosed origin before fever reducing medication is given;
10. Who has an undiagnosed rash or a rash attributable to a contagious illness or condition;
11. Who has significant respiratory distress;

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12. Who is not able to participate in child care program activities with reasonable comfort;
13. Who requires more care than the program staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other students in care.

### Administering Medication at School

#### **Non-Emergency Prescription Medication:**

For the safety of students, it is recommended that medication be given at home whenever possible. For example, medication prescribed three times a day can be given before school, after school and at bedtime. If medication must be given during school hours, the following requirements apply:

1. School personnel can only give medication with the written order of a health care provider that is licensed to prescribe and the written consent of a parent/guardian. A copy of the Authorization to Administer Medication form is available on the school website or in the office.
2. Medication must be brought to school in a container labeled by the pharmacy. The following information must be on the label:
  - a. Child's full name
  - b. Name and dosage of medication
  - c. Time and directions for administration
  - d. Licensed prescriber's name
  - e. Current date
  - f. Description of the medication (size, color, markings)
3. Medications should be brought to school by a parent/guardian or a responsible adult. Office staff will count or measure the medication in front of the parent/guardian and document this.
4. Ask the pharmacist to put the medication in two containers, one for school and one for home.
5. Mixed dosages in a single container will not be accepted for use at school (for example, 5mg and 10mg tablets in the same bottle).
6. All medication administered at school will be kept in a locked cabinet.
7. A new Authorization to Administer Medication form is required:
  - a. When the dosage or time of administration is changed
  - b. At the beginning of each school year
  - c. If discontinued medication is restarted
8. Parent/guardian must notify the school in writing when the medication is discontinued.
9. Over-the-counter medications must be in the original container with dosing recommendations visible. Secondary students may self-administer non-prescription pain medication that does NOT contain ephedrine if the parent submits written authorization annually and the medication is brought to school in a properly labeled bottle. Parents must complete and sign an Authorization to Administer Medication before over the counter medication may be administered at school. The privilege to self-medicate can be revoked at any time if unsafe use of medication is observed.
10. It is the joint responsibility of the parent/guardian, student, and school personnel to see that the medication is given at the right time.
11. If there is medication remaining after treatment or at the end of the end of the school year, please make arrangements for it to be picked up. Medications that remain unclaimed or cannot be returned to a parent/guardian will be destroyed at the end of the school year.

Rules regarding school administration of drugs and medicine are found in MN Statutes 121A.22, 121A.221, 121A.222, 121A.2205.

#### **Non-Prescription (Over-the-Counter) Medication can be given with the following requirements:**

1. Medication must be in the original labeled container with your child's name on it.
2. You must fill out a form in the office specifying the name of the medication, the amount to be given, the time (and/or frequency) for administering it, and the reason for its use.

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3. Medication can only be administered in accordance with the directions or as per a doctor's written permission.

### Sunscreen

RMS staff may only apply sunscreen to children with written permission from you. In general, and because of the number of children in a classroom, please apply sunscreen to your child in the morning before arriving at school. Elementary children and Middle School students may bring sunscreen to school for their own, personal use only.

### Allergies

Allergies are common. RMS does not prohibit families from sending items to school that are common allergens (peanuts, milk, eggs, gluten, etc.). Please talk with your child about the dangers of allergens and to be a conscientious lunch preparer! Our guides will make you aware of any allergies present in your child's classroom.

It is of the utmost importance that you provide the school with all information regarding any allergy your child may have. We will plan accordingly in respect to classroom pets, snacks, etc. Upon initial enrollment, please be sure to fully disclose any allergies on the health form documents. If an allergy develops AFTER enrollment, please notify us immediately. We need to know how to care for your child. RMS staff is trained in the use of EpiPens. If a student does have an EpiPen, it is required that you provide the school an EpiPen together with the Medical Authorization form to be kept in the school office.

### Communicable Diseases or Illnesses

You must contact the school office within 24 hours if your child contracts a communicable disease (i.e. chicken pox, strep throat, scabies, impetigo, ringworm, lice, conjunctivitis). We will notify you by letter whenever we confirm that your child could have been exposed to any communicable disease at school. The Health and Human Services listing of Communicable Diseases is available in the RMS office. Let RMS know the nature of your child's illness or if your child has a communicable illness as we keep records of this information for the State.

### Head Lice and Nits

Due to the tenacious nature of head lice/nits, RMS urges parents to follow these procedures closely. When head lice are discovered at school, the parent/guardian of the child will be notified immediately. The child may remain in school until the end of the school day and return to school after the first application of treatment has been completed per directions sent home with the child. For more information please contact the Olmsted County Health Department, 507-328-7500, or your physician for more information.

### When to Stay Home

Students should stay home when:

- Severe cold, cough, or sore throat.
- New skin rash, especially if draining – unless medical opinion states the rash is not contagious.
- Temperature of 100 degrees or more with or without symptoms of an illness.
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or abdominal pain.
- Any other sign of acute illness.
- Until results of laboratory tests (i.e., throat culture, nasal swab) are known.

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### When to Return to School

Students may return to school when:

- Well enough to participate in normal school activities.
- Free of all symptoms for 24 hours.
- Temperature remains normal for a 24-hour period without the use of fever reducing medications.
- On an antibiotic for at least 24 hours OR
- Your health care provider states your child can return to school.

### Vaccinations

Rochester Montessori School is required by Minnesota State Law to have a physician signed Health Care Summary form for all children 18 months to 4 years of age. The Health Care Summary form is included in the student information packet. Current immunization records are required for each child enrolled.

All immunization forms must be on file in the office by the **FIRST day of school** or the child will be unable to attend school until the immunizations are up to date or an appointment is scheduled for the purpose of accomplishing this.

#### Exemptions

RMS feels strongly that modern medicine greatly reduces illness, especially communicable diseases. If there is a medical reason for a child not receiving vaccinations, we must have a physician's written explanation on file in the office. Parents may conscientiously oppose immunization. In this case, parents will complete and notarize Part D of the Child Care Immunization Record form.

### Safety and School Security

#### General Safety Measures

RMS is a controlled access facility. The doors are locked at all times other than the main entryway exterior door which is open from 7:30-5:30. When you arrive at school please ring the doorbell located inside the vestibule on the east wall and a staff member will let you in. Parents, it is important that you let staff members open the doors for individuals waiting in the vestibules. If you are not attended to immediately, please be patient; someone will be with you shortly.

#### Signing In and Out

Anytime you come to the school during normal working hours to visit, volunteer, or observe, you must sign in at the office and receive a corresponding badge. A badge is an indication to others that you are supposed to be in the building. If you are not wearing a badge, you will be asked to visit the office to receive one. Please sign the visitor or volunteer log when you enter and leave the school, except during large school gatherings. Please return the badge and sign out when you leave.

#### Authorized Pick Up Person(s)

You must complete and turn in the [Transportation Authorization](#) form indicating who is authorized to pick up your child(ren). We will only release your child to those individuals you have indicated on your [Transportation Authorization](#) form. You may add or delete people from the [Transportation Authorization](#) form in writing or by [email](#). In the event an unauthorized person comes to pick your child up we will attempt to call parents and emergency contacts to determine next steps. The child will not be released until we have contacted someone.

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### Fire Drills

Fire drills will be regularly conducted throughout the school year. These drills will be announced and unannounced to ensure proper awareness of procedures for staff and students. All faculty and staff have pre-arranged responsibilities in the event of a drill or a real fire. In the event of a real fire, activation of the school's fire alarm will automatically summon the local fire department. Upon evacuation, all classrooms will gather at their designated locations and parents will be notified.

### Severe Weather Drills

The school runs severe weather drills during certain times of the year. During a severe weather watch or warning, an administrator continually monitors the school's weather alarm and local news stations for updates.

### Intruder Drills

Practicing drills is a key element to ensure the school is as prepared as possible for potentially unsafe and threatening situations. In the event of an unknown or potentially threatening individual or situation on our property, the school has protocols to address multiple scenarios. The administration will periodically schedule intruder drills to make sure the process runs as smoothly as possible.

### School Closure

Rochester Montessori School typically follows Rochester Public Schools for closure purposes. However, there are occasions when RMS *does not follow* the Rochester Public Schools in delaying or canceling school due to bad weather.

#### **RMS Closure/Early Dismissal Policy**

1. When the Rochester Public Schools (RPS) close due to snow or ice, **RMS** will also close.
2. When RPS schools are delayed due to snow or ice, **RMS** will open for school at 10:30 am unless otherwise specified. Early Arrival and Morning 1/2 day programs will be cancelled.
3. When RPS closes due to cold temperatures, **RMS** will have school unless otherwise notified.
4. Parents will be notified regarding early dismissal due to inclement weather or utility failure.

#### **Communication of Closure, Delay or Early Dismissal**

We will announce school delays or closures due to weather or unforeseen circumstances via email, on our [website](#), facebook page, and on the "School Closing" information on [KTTC](#) and [KAAL](#) Television Stations. There is a link to these sites on the school's web page. You may also wish to download the KTTC and/or KAAL app on your phone or other device.

In case of an early dismissal due to weather or unforeseen circumstances such as utility failure, the school will contact parents to come and pick up your child/children. We will contact you as indicated on your [emergency information form](#).

### Driving for Field Trips

We will use school buses when possible for transporting children. A fee may be collected to cover this cost. At times, parent drivers with private vehicles may be used. Parents will be asked to give permission to ride in another family's car prior to the trip. Parent drivers will be required to provide proof of insurance.

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for the vehicle they are driving, a copy of their driver's license and a motor vehicle report will be run. The results of the motor vehicle report may prohibit a parent from driving for field trips. RMS staff members are not to use personal vehicles for transporting children for field trips. All children must use car seats as required by law, otherwise, seatbelts must be worn by everyone in the vehicle at all times.

### Background Checks

Rochester Montessori School complies with the Department of Human Services (DHS) background study policies and conducts background checks on all employees. For more information on DHS background requirements please refer to DHS rule 245C.

Background checks are also conducted on volunteers who have regular unsupervised contact with our students using a 3rd party vendor.

### Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect

**Mandated Reporting:** for compliance, RMS has adopted this policy directly from the Department of Human Services for licensed programs)

#### Who Should Report Child Abuse and Neglect

- Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.
- If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

#### Where to Report

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 911.
- Reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in a licensed child foster care or family child care facility should be made to county child protection services
- Reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in all other facilities licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services should be made to the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake line at (651) 431-6600.
- Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to Olmsted County social services agency at 507-328-6400 (day) or 507-535-5625 (after hours). Reporting can also be made to the Rochester Police Department at 507-328-6800 or the Olmsted County Sheriff's Office at 507-326-6800.
- If your report does not involve possible abuse or neglect, but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern the facility, you should call the Department of Human Services Licensing Division at (651) 431-6500.

#### What to Report

- Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) and should be attached to this policy.
- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.

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- An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

### Failure to Report

A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Human Services and by the Minnesota Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations.

### Retaliation Prohibited

An employer of any mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the mandated reporter for reports made in good faith or against a child with respect to whom the report is made. The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act contains specific provisions regarding civil actions that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe that retaliation has occurred.

### Internal Review

When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review within 30 calendar days and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care. The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:

- (i) related policies and procedures were followed;
- (ii) the policies and procedures were adequate;
- (iii) there is a need for additional staff training;
- (iv) the reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved; and
- (v) there is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care.

### Primary and Secondary Person or Position to Ensure Internal Reviews are Completed

The internal review will be completed by the Head of School. If this individual is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, the Program Director will be responsible for completing the internal review.

### Documentation of the Internal Review

The facility must document completion of the internal review and make internal reviews accessible to the commissioner immediately upon the commissioner's request.

### Corrective Action Plan

Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan designed to correct current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder, if any.

### Staff Training

The license holder must provide training to all staff related to the mandated reporting responsibilities as specified in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556). The

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license holder must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.

### Permission for Research, Names, and Photos

All families are asked to sign a release waiver (on your School Contact & Permissions Form) regarding the use of their child's image in any capacity. Pictures are primarily used on our website and social media outlets such as Facebook. Those students whose parents have stated they don't want their photos used will be cropped out of or have their faces blurred from any photos that are used with their presence. Any press releases using student names will be approved by parents before release. Permission will also be obtained from parents for any research conducted involving their children.

### Outdoor Environment

RMS is fortunate to have an outdoor environment that includes gardening, chickens, a fitness course, playground equipment and a large open space to let their imagination soar. Students are taught proper ways to use all of the benefits of our outdoor environment dependent on their age and the appropriateness for their use. When students are enjoying our outdoor environment during school hours, supervision is provided. Parents are expected to supervise their children should they visit our outdoor environment with their kids who are no longer under the direct supervision of RMS staff. Most of the outdoor environment is appropriate for all ages except as follows:

Large playground structure: located at the bottom of the hill directly west of the Children's House classrooms, the playground structure can be used by children ages 5 and above, per manufacturer guidelines. The lower level dome structures, climbers and in-ground slides may be used by ages 3 and up. Please abide by this expectations when visiting our grounds. Should you have any questions, please contact the Head of School.

Fitness Course: located in the northwest area of the outdoor environment, beyond the chickens, the fitness course may be used by students in Elementary 1 or above under supervision of an RMS staff member.

### Emergency and Accident Policies

At Rochester Montessori School, all staff are informed of the Emergency/Accident Policies, Risk Reduction Plan, Allergy Response Plan and Emergency Plan at orientation, when changes are made to the plan and at least annually. These policies are maintained onsite and are readily accessible to staff at all times. Documentation of annual plan reviews are maintained in the administrative records and staff training is kept in personnel files. Rochester Montessori School is committed to monitoring the implementation and adherence to these policies and procedures.

### First Aid/CPR/OSHA

All staff are required to have pediatric first aid training and infant and child CPR and treatment of obstructed airways every two years by a qualified trainer, which must be completed within 90 days of employment. The first aid training may be less than eight (8) hours and CPR training may be less than four (4) hours. At least one staff person that is fully trained must be present during the hours of operations, including field trips, and when transporting children in care. This includes the first 90 days of employment..

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If first aid procedures are required they will be administered by the first person on site. The second teacher/aide will remain with the rest of the children. If additional help is needed, additional staff will be called. All first aid procedures administered will be documented and kept in the office.

All staff will be OSHA trained regarding Bloodborne Pathogens and Employee Right to Know at orientation and at least once each calendar year. This will include universal precautions to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and the handling of disposal of bodily fluids. Documentation of training will be kept on file.

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.41, subdivision 2, Rochester Montessori School ensures the following procedures for the safe handling and disposal of bodily fluids which are reasonably anticipated such as nose bleeds, bites, cuts and abrasions:

1. Staff will wear disposable vinyl gloves in the presence of blood or broken skin.
2. Staff will be provided with single-use resuscitation mouthpieces for CPR.
3. Staff will ensure that any surfaces that come in contact with potentially infectious bodily fluids, including blood and vomit, shall be cleaned and disinfected according to Minnesota Rules, part [9503.0005](#), subpart 11; which requires rinsing or wiping with a solution of one-fourth cup chlorine bleach plus water to equal one gallon or an equivalent product or process.
4. Staff will ensure that blood-contaminated material is disposed of in a plastic bag with a secure tie;
5. Staff will ensure that sharp items used for a child with special care needs are disposed of in a "sharps container." The sharps container will always be stored out of reach of a child;
6. Administration will ensure that inventory of the following bodily fluid disposal supplies are available at all times: disposable gloves, disposal bags, and eye protection; and
7. Administration will ensure that each staff member follows universal precautions to reduce the risk of spreading infectious disease which includes:
  - o All body fluids will be treated as if they are known to be contaminated with an infectious disease.
  - o All staff must always use disposable gloves when handling body fluids.
  - o Staff and children must wash their hands often and at the appropriate times.
  - o Strict guidelines are followed regarding toileting, diapering and cleaning and sanitizing of contaminated surfaces.

A first aid kit shall be maintained in each classroom together with this policy information.

It is the responsibility of each program guide to check the kit monthly and to keep the kit stocked with all of the items required by state licensing. Administration will ensure that first aid supplies are available in the office.

## Attendance Policy

### Attendance

We are committed to providing a high quality education. Much of our instruction is hands-on and involves student-guide interaction. Consequently, it is difficult for students to catch up after missing significant time from school. Regular attendance is important and helps set the stage for your child's attitude toward school, consistency of expectations, and to reinforce concepts and skills your child is learning.

We understand that absences are occasionally necessary. Please notify the school and your guide and office as soon as possible, but no later than 8:30 a.m. if your child will not attend that day. Students who are absent or anticipate being absent for two or more days may arrange to get assignments from their guide ahead of time.

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### Excused Absences

We encourage you to schedule appointments and travel during non-school hours and on scheduled breaks. Some examples of valid conditions for excused absences are:

- Illness or injury that makes the student physically unable to attend school
- If your child has a contagious disease or infection
- Medical or dental appointments
- Death in the immediate family
- Court or administrative proceedings
- Religious observance
- Educational opportunity

### Excessive Absences

If absences become habitual, we will request a meeting with you to discuss this situation. We do this because habitual absence affects your child's educational opportunity as they have missed essential learning and socialization time. Our responsibility is to ensure students are successful and happy at school.

### Tardiness

A child is considered tardy when arrival occurs after 8:45am. Please help us manage tardiness. If tardiness becomes habitual, we will request a meeting with you to discuss this situation. We do this because habitual tardiness affects the whole classroom and your child has missed essential learning and socialization time. It is difficult to form friendships and make up missed lessons.

### Early Dismissal and Return

If you intend to pick up your child earlier than their usual end of day, please send administration or the guide a note or email indicating the time the child will be picked up and when/if returning. When you pick up your child inside the building, you will need to sign them out at the reception desk. The same procedure is followed for their return to school.

### School Community

#### New Student Orientation

Orientation typically takes place during the last week of August. All new students or students moving into a new program and their families are expected to attend whether entering Toddler, Children's House, Elementary, or Middle Years Programs. The purpose of the orientation is to assist your child with becoming accustomed to the classroom. The orientation also assists your child with developing a sense of belonging and comfort before the school year actually begins.

#### Dress Code

##### **Clothing and Shoe Requirements - All Students**

- All clothing and shoes should have the student's name clearly marked with permanent black ink, preferably in a place that won't get worn.
- Students are outside during all seasons. Your child should be dressed appropriately for the

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weather and be prepared for changing weather conditions.

- Students must keep an extra pair of shoes at school to leave in the classroom. Tennis shoes are recommended as they are required for participation in physical education.

### Children's House and Toddler Additional Clothing and Shoe Requirements

- Children's House and Toddler children must have an extra set of clothing stored in a large plastic zip-lock bag at school. This includes shirt, pants, socks and underclothing. Remember to label each item with your child's name.
- Help younger children become independent dressers by choosing clothing and shoes that allow for self-care in toileting and dressing – elastic, velcro, and loose fitting items are MUCH preferred over snaps, laces and tight clothes until children are more proficient dressers.

### Restrictions on Clothing and Shoes - All Students

- Children should refrain from wearing clothing and shoes that contain pop culture characters or imagery, that distract, have hurtful images, or suggest violent or inappropriate behaviors as these items are inappropriate for school. We will help children wearing these items to change into spare clothing and/or contact parents as necessary. If you have questions please contact your child's guide.
- Shoes may NOT have flashing lights.
- Shoes may NOT have wheels in them.
- All shoes and boots must have non-marking soles. Students that have shoes that mark the floor will not be able to participate in some activities and the shoes will be sent home.

### Winter Boot Procedures

All children must remove their boots in the lobby and either put on their shoes at the lobby benches or walk to class in their stocking feet. Children DO NOT need to remove winter gear items (coats, jackets) as it is difficult to carry everything to class. **Parents**, if for some reason you must walk down the hallway, **please respect the children by removing your shoes/boots prior to walking down the hallways.**

### Toileting Independently

In a Montessori environment, the term "potty training" is referred to as "toilet learning" or toileting independently." In our Toddlers program, the goal is to empower children to increase their desire for independence and to place more emphasis on the child's engagement in the process. Children are never forced or shamed into using the toilet. In order to transition or be admitted into Children's House, children must be able to toilet independently. Children's House classrooms are not equipped in the same way Toddlers classrooms are for diaper changing and RMS must adhere to strict licensing requirements for soiled and wet clothing. Of course, we understand that children will have accidents from time to time. In these instances, the guides will help children to change their clothes and encourage independence as much as possible.

A child is considered to be able to toilet independently if the child is able to:

1. Communicate the need to use the bathroom.
2. Recognize the need to use the bathroom and will stop what they are doing to use the bathroom.
3. Push down and pull up their pants without assistance; and
4. Wipe after using the toilet, with minimal assistance.
5. Get on and off the toilet by themselves.
6. Wash and dry their hands by themselves.
7. Wait to use the bathroom if its in use by another child or a bathroom isn't readily accessible (e..g, recess)
8. Wake upon napping should they need to use the bathroom.

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Please note that in Children's House, training pants and pull-ups are not permitted.

### Lunch

At RMS lunch is eaten together in the classrooms. It is a time for the children to slow down, relax, have quiet conversation, practice basic social skills, and learn good nutritional habits. To reinforce this learning process, we ask that you:

- Prepare a nutritious lunch, including all the basic food groups. RMS provides milk or water for students.
- Involve your child in helping to prepare lunch.
- Use reusable and manageable containers – **a child should be able to open it.**
- Use a sturdy lunch box and label it with your child's name.
- We ask that you do not send the following items:
  - Sugary drinks such as soda and other sweetened beverages.
  - Candy or foods high in sugar.
  - Lunch boxes with pop culture figures depicted on them
  - Anything that requires more than 2 minutes to "reheat" with a microwave.
- If your child forgets his/her lunch, we will do our best with snack foods.

### Snacks

- The school provides snacks for children in the Toddler and Children's House classrooms. Snacks are generously provided by parents for our Elementary and Middle School classrooms.
- Parents often help shop for these items; in such cases the Guide may give you a charge card.
- Snack may consist of juice or milk and nutritious foods such as cheese, crackers, breadsticks, fruits, and vegetables.
- RMS strives to not serve snacks that could be considered "junk food."

### Toys and Personal Belongings

In general, children are encouraged to bring items which are clearly of educational interest, and which are "the real thing," or a realistic model. Objects from nature, such as flowers, leaves, and stones are also welcomed additions. We also encourage children to bring meaningful items from home, especially objects related to trips or other special events in their lives. Anything related to class studies are excellent items to share.

Children may NOT bring toys, trinkets, candy and gum, cartoon or figure toys, electronic games, pocket knives, mock weapons etc. to school as these cause disruptions and distract from the prepared environment. If such items find their way to school, they will be held for the child until at least the end of the day or until they can be sent home.

### Lost and Found

Lost and Found items are located in the office and front lobby. Prior to the end of the school year any unclaimed clothing that is not retrieved or labeled will be donated. RMS will notify parents prior to this donation so you have adequate time to check for lost items.

### School Belongings

In some cases, if a child intentionally damages school materials, we may ask for reimbursement for the cost of the material. If your child brings home a piece of material from the classroom, please return it

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promptly. Missing pieces render some of the classroom materials unusable. RMS does not loan or rent any of the Montessori material for home use. In the event the classroom bag is lost or damaged, we would also ask for reimbursement for the cost of replacing the bag.

### Field Trips

The RMS Contact and Permissions Form provides parent consent for all short walking field trips within a mile or two of the school. For all other field trips, guides will send out specific permission forms for your approval and signature. The form will contain information about the trip, time of departure, means of transportation, and time they will be returning. Permissions slips will be sent out at least 2 weeks in advance. Emergency contact and medical need forms will be taken on all field trips. It is important that parents ensure that these forms are always up to date. Please contact the office to make any changes.

### Going Outs

Maria Montessori's ideal for the Elementary experience was a purposefully limited environment where key lessons provide jumping-off points for additional exploration outside the classroom. Going outs, as known in Montessori terms, is designed to foster independence and resourcefulness, and to give children important real-life experiences. As students pursue greater depth in their work, they find the need to enter the "real world" to gather additional information. Perhaps they visit a museum, interview a specialist, or investigate a rock outcropping firsthand. Trips are typically planned by a small group of students engaged in a specific type of work or research. Through the guide's assistance, but ultimately on their own, students must plan their own trip, arrange transportation, and make necessary appointments. These Practical Life experiences place the responsibility on the students and allow them to develop vital communication and organizational skills. Going outs are typically for Elementary and MYP students.

### Conferences and Progress Reports

During conferences you will receive information about your child's work, progress, and growth. As such, it is vital that you arrange to meet with your child's Guide. Two formal conferences are held during the year - one in November and one in March (please refer to the calendar for dates). Arranging your conference times and dates takes place electronically, and you will receive an email regarding how to do this.

### Evaluation and Assessment

Toddler, Children's House, and Elementary children are not "tested" or graded in the traditional sense. The Guides instruct them in the use of the materials and then carefully observe their development. Our Guides are trained to observe and record each child's progress. This record plays an important role in communicating progress with parents and forms the basis of a progressive evaluation.

Children in Elementary 1 will experience taking tests as they learn, for example, math facts and spelling words. Testing becomes still more formal in Elementary 2 and Middle School classes. We also administer a standardized test called NWEA's MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) annually in the Fall and Spring to students in second through eighth grades. NWEA's MAP is a nationally normed "smart" test used by many public and private schools throughout the United States. The purpose of this testing is:

- To help students understand how to take tests since they will take many once they leave RMS;
- For the Guides to obtain further information about each student's progress and use this to support their learning;
- Provide parents information on their students progress relative to national norms.

Progress reports will be provided during two formal conferences. These conferences are designed to

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help you understand where your child is in relation to his or her development, not in relationship to other students. Middle school students receive four report cards during the school year with letter grades.

Becoming skilled in time management is a part of our Elementary and Middle School curriculum. In the Elementary programs, the Guide plays a greater role in determining each child's lessons and work because there is a very specific curriculum. In Elementary 1, the children receive work plans. These plans are both a to-do list and a record of their work and are key documents in understanding what your child is learning. Elementary 2 children also receive work, which is logged into a personal planner. As such, each child tracks what is assigned, when it is due, and what has been completed. The planner is also used for parent communication and can greatly aid parents in understanding what their child is doing day by day. Middle School students will receive study guides in several of the subjects. A study guide is a mini-syllabus that explains lessons and assignments.

### IB MYP Project Rubrics

Students in our MYP program (grades six through eight) complete projects in each of their MYP subjects. These projects are evaluated using MYP criteria and rubrics. The rubrics are displayed in the Elementary 2 and Middle School classrooms.

### Classroom Observations

Parents are encouraged to schedule several observations throughout the school year to further understand their child's learning activities and progress. During observation, you may wish to note how your child uses the materials, relates to the staff and other children, and becomes responsible for the care of the classroom environment. Formal observations are scheduled from 9:15 am to 10:15 am in the mornings, between mid-October and mid-May. Observations of Art, Music, Physical Education, and Spanish classes are scheduled on an as-needed basis. Please contact the office to schedule an observation.

### Animals in the Classroom

Animals are an important part of the Montessori classroom. Children learn responsibility while caring for animals and develop a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of life. Often, there is a need for animals to be cared for over the summer months and holidays; we welcome your help with this task.

If your child has pet allergies, please notify the office (in addition to indicating this on the Health Summary Form) so appropriate accommodations can be made. If an allergy develops during the school year, we will ask for medical documentation before removal of any animal from the environment.

Students wishing to bring a family pet to share with the classroom should make prior arrangements with their Guide.

### Child Care Program Plan

Minnesota Department of Human Services Rule 3 requires a Child Care Program Plan for licensing purposes. These are the policies and practices of Rochester Montessori School, which pertain to compliance with DHS Rule 3 requirements. Questions and comments regarding these policies and rules should be directed to the RMS office.

**Requirement A:** *Mandate that children have supervision at all times.* It is the policy of Rochester Montessori School to provide supervision for children at all times.

**Requirement B:** *Describe the age categories and number of children to be served by the program.* See the above Education Programs section.

**Requirement C:** *A description of the days and hours of operation of the program.* See the above Daily

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Schedules section.

**Requirement D:** *Describe the general educational methods to be used by the program and the religious, political, or philosophical basis, if any.* Rochester Montessori School is a non-sectarian, non-profit organization dedicated to providing authentic Montessori education to the children of the Rochester Community. Montessori education is based on the premise that children learn best if provided with an interesting environment containing learning materials designed for their level of cognitive development. They learn best and develop the best self-image when they are given responsibility and freedom to choose their work and to establish and maintain their own relationships and community. Thus the classroom is amply equipped with materials designed specifically for the child's level, and the rules of the class are very few and very basic.

**Requirement E:** *Ensure that a staff person qualified as a guide under part 9503.0032 develops and evaluates this plan in writing on an annual basis.* It is the responsibility of the Rochester Montessori School Head of School, who qualifies as a guide under part 9503.0032, to develop and evaluate this Plan in writing on an annual basis.

**Requirement F:** *State goals and objectives to promote the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development of the children in each age category in part 9503.0005, subpart 3, for which care is provided.* It is the policy of Rochester Montessori School to promote physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development of children. guides are free to use their own means toward this end while working within the Montessori context. Progress reports are prepared by guides and discussed with parents at conference time. The completed forms are kept in the child's file at the school.

**Requirement G:** *Specify activities designed to promote the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development of a child in a manner consistent with the child's cultural background.* Rochester Montessori School emphasizes sensitivity to the cultural background of its students. We make it a point to study and appreciate all cultures, and we encourage children and families to share their cultural heritage in school. Our environment provides flexibility in terms of cultural diversity and appreciation.

**Requirement 9503.0050: Naps and Rest:** It is the policy of Rochester Montessori School to provide opportunities for naps for children below the age of three years, ten months. Provision for naps includes:

**Confined Limitation:** A child who has completed a nap or rested quietly for 30 minutes will not be required to remain on a cot or mat or in a crib or bed.

**Placement of Equipment:** Naps and rest will be provided in a quiet area that is physically separate from children who are engaged in activity that would disrupt a napping or resting child. Cribs, cots, beds, and mats are placed so there are clear aisles and unimpeded access for both adults and children on at least one side of each piece of napping and resting equipment. Cots, beds, and mats with children on them are placed directly on the floor and are never stacked.

**Bedding:** Parents are to provide crib-sized sheets and a blanket. Bedding is sent home for washing every other Friday or when it becomes soiled.

## School Traditions & Special Events

### Birthdays

For birthdays, Children participate in a Sun Ceremony which is a celebration of the child's life story. You are invited to attend and share photos and memories of your child for each year of life.

- Please contact your classroom Guide at least one week in advance to arrange the celebration and to inquire about food allergies. If your child(ren)'s birthday falls in the summer, the Sun Ceremony should be planned for your child's half-birthday.

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- Please check with your child's Guide for expectations on treats. Some Children's House classrooms offer an opportunity for children to bake their own snacks under the supervision of their Guides. Please check with your classroom to see what opportunities are available to you.
- In accordance with state law, food brought to school during the school day must be pre-packaged and purchased from a store. Accordingly, RMS cannot accept food brought from home.
- Gifts will not be given to your child, but it is common for the child to give a gift to the classroom - such as a book or a needed educational material. Please contact your child's Guide for suggestions.

### Holidays

Rochester Montessori School recognizes holidays as historical and cultural events, and each may be studied in some capacity. As such, we must be sensitive to and respectful of the diversity in our school.

### Ribbon Ceremony

A ribbon ceremony takes place near the end of each school year as a way to commemorate students' accomplishments. Students completing their Children's House cycle will receive a Golden Bead and Medallions are given to students at the completion of their first elementary year with the year they began at RMS inscribed on it. The medallion is threaded on a set of colored ribbons, corresponding to the number of years enrolled, and the colors correspond to the colored bead chains used in Montessori math. This is a very special program that represents the transition to the next academic year. The medallion and ribbon(s) are sent home with the child but must be returned at the end of each year for the ceremony. A small fee will be charged to replace lost medallions.

### Academic Events

Montessori Model United Nations: Peace education was a cornerstone of Maria Montessori's educational philosophy. The preparation for the MMUN trip in the Spring allows our 6th grade & 8th grade students to dive more deeply into understanding the world and the people around them. They travel to New York and Rome to attend an international conference which culminates with a voting session in the actual United Nations building. It is frequently a life-changing experience where our students gain confidence and global awareness.

"MMUN students formulate, present, debate, and revise positions on current issues that are affecting people of the world. By assuming the perspectives of a citizen of their selected countries, MMUN students not only develop an understanding of the needs and rights of others, but also learn the respect the cultures, the political views, and the belief system of others." -[Montessori Model United Nations Mission Statement](#)

Writers' Cafe: The Writers' Cafe provides students in Elementary 1 & 2 an opportunity to showcase their skills in researching, writing and presenting in a fun, relaxed setting. Thematic evenings may include historical figures, scientific discovery, or various genre explorations.

Parent Education Opportunities: Parents who choose RMS for their children's education have an interest in creating lifelong learners. We not only strive to quench the student's thirst for inquiry, but the parents as well. Throughout the year, parent education days and nights are available to help parents learn more about and understand how and why the Montessori philosophy is implemented. These parent education opportunities are presented through classroom visits and invitations to experience Montessori teachings through hands-on student guided lessons.

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## Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) Events

The Parent Teacher Student Association offers many opportunities for us to come together as a community. Here is a highlight of some of our larger traditional events led by the PTSA.

Harvest Festival: This event brings families together to celebrate the Fall. Students, faculty, and parent volunteers make soup from scratch. There are games and crafts for kids. Families and classrooms bring carved pumpkins which are lit and displayed in the field for all to see.

International Festival: International Festival is one of the largest events of the RMS school year. Our families herald from countries all around the world. For this event, we come together to celebrate and learn about these different cultures and traditions through traditional dress, crafts, entertainment, and food!

Annual Carnival: There is no better way to bring the community together than with a fun family picnic and carnival. Many games, activities, and raffles are available for people to enjoy! It's a wonderful way to spend time with other families and friends as we celebrate friendships and community at RMS.

## Parent Involvement

### PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association)

The RMS Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) is a great way to get involved at Rochester Montessori School. The PTSA's role is to promote greater participation in the school community to enrich each family's experience and to play a crucial role in enhancing communication between parents and staff. All parents, staff and students are welcome to participate. In order to fulfill its mission, the PTSA organizes, sponsors, and hosts activities that provide opportunities for parents to participate in the life of the school and benefit the school socially, culturally, and financially including appreciation of our staff. PTSA-coordinated activities include, but are not limited to:

- Book Fair
- Bowling Night
- Canvas & Chardonnay
- End of Year Carnival
- Flower Deliveries
- Garden Work Day
- Harvest Festival
- Ice Cream Social
- International Festival
- Nature's Playground Challenge
- Orchard Playdates
- Parent Social Night
- Picnic Playdates
- Small Hands
- Staff Appreciation
- Summer Picnic

## Volunteering Opportunities

Rochester Montessori School welcomes and greatly appreciates parent participation. Each time your child sees you involved, you make a valuable contribution to your child's development. Additionally, you are

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able to connect with other parents and staff which strengthen our school community.

The following are some examples of ways to volunteer your time:

- Start with attending parent orientation night (even if you have before)
- Attend Montessori parent nights
- Observe in any one of the classrooms
- Help weed the gardens or water plants
- Clear snow drifts off the sidewalks during the winter
- Help out in one of the school programs
- Attend a PTSA event
- Set up before an event or clean up after
- Wash some windows
- Give a talk on your area of expertise
- Sign up to work in the Elementary classroom; and on and on.

RMS suggests a minimum of 10 hours over the course of the year or one hour per month. Please check with the office about how you can participate in the school and enhance your child's educational environment.

### Volunteering Policy

All individuals interested in volunteering at RMS must go through an orientation prior to their first day of volunteering. Volunteers who spend regular unsupervised time with children, attend overnight trips or otherwise determined as needed by administration or the board will be subject to a background study prior to their volunteering.

### Recommended Reading List for Parents

Lillard, Paula P. (1966). *Montessori Today and Montessori: A Modern Approach*. NY: Random House.

These books describe Montessori theory and contemporary American Montessori schools.

Lillard, Angeline Stoll. (2005). *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius*. NY: Oxford University Press.

Lillard describes the basic ideas of Montessori education and how these are validated by today's scientific findings.

Montessori, Maria (1972). *The Secret of Childhood*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Montessori discusses the hidden learning potential of the young child and how to develop learning activities and experiences to maximize the child's unique capabilities.

Montessori, Maria. (1948). *To Educate the Human Potential*. Madras, India: Kalakshetra Publications.

Montessori describes the needs of the Elementary-aged child and how he or she learns history, science, math, and language.

Montessori, Maria. (1956). *The Child in the Family*. Chicago: Henry Regnery.

A series of short essays about the child, the family, the school, and the Montessori philosophy.

Montessori, Maria. (1948). *From Childhood to Adolescence*. Oxford, England: Clio Press, Ltd.

Montessori describes how children learn during their elementary, adolescent years, and university years. She describe curriculum and the optimal learning environments for each age.

Seldin, Tim and Epstein, Paul. (2006). *The Montessori Way*. Sarasota, Florida: The Montessori

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The authors present an illustrated guide to Montessori philosophy, history, and the curriculum for infants through high school.