

# *Lake Mary Montessori Academy*

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## *Primary Family Handbook* **2018-2019**

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# CHAPTER 1

## About Our School

### Vision

Our vision is a world that can live in peace, a global community based on interdependence, have respect for all life and all people, which is reached through the only path that can truly lead us there: our children.

### Mission Statement

The Mission of Lake Mary Montessori Academy is:

- to inspire a passion for excellence
- to nurture the curiosity, creativity, and imagination born within us all, and
- to awaken the human spirit of the child.

### Montessori Stands on Four Pillars

1. The cultivation within our students of a passion for excellence in everything they do, both inside and outside of school.
2. The development of a strongly held set of universal values which include: self-respect, respect for others, honesty, integrity, responsibility, empathy, compassion, kindness, peacefulness, a sense of concern for others, warmth, and a love of community.
3. The development of a global perspective and a sense of international understanding.
4. A lifelong commitment to give something back through service to others who are in need.

### Narrative History of the School

LMMA is a private, not for profit, coeducational Montessori school educating 3 to 12 year old students. This encompasses pre-school through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The school was founded in 1994 and opened with one classroom of 5 students and two teachers. Sheila Linville is the founder and Executive Director of LMMA. Her driving force is based on her prior years of teaching experience at other schools and working with other Heads of Schools. She realized a need for a quality Montessori Program in northeast Orlando after extensive demographic research.

Sheila worked tirelessly with her mother, Eleanor Serocke, to establish the school and developed the vision for growth for the first five years. LMMA is truly a family history for the Linville's. Sheila and Scott have two sons, Mitchell and Aidan. They both have developed into creative and joyful learners. With them in mind, Sheila and Scott work together every day to create a nurturing environment for all LMMA children.

Currently, the school has 3 primary classrooms, 2 lower elementary classrooms and 1 upper elementary classroom. Our student population is between 130-135 with 15 full-time faculty members, 3 part-time faculty, 5 enrichment teachers, 2 office coordinators, 1

guidance counselor and 2 administrators. The school campus is in its original location, which is a village setting. We lease our academic classrooms and have added classrooms as we have needed them over the years due to growth.

The school has two wooded playgrounds, which are shaded from the Florida sun, a large newly turfed playing field, and a multi-use sport court. This outdoor recreational complex was constructed in 2007 and is ideal for physical educational activities for all of the different age groups. These additions are the results of our Annual Fund Drives. Soccer and volleyball make use of the playing field while hopscotch, basketball, tetherball, and foursquare comprise the sport court. There are various gardens, dispersed throughout the school, which the children and the gardening volunteers take care of.

# Chapter 2

## Your Child At School

### School Schedule

7:30-8:30	Before School Program (Children arrive to their classrooms)
8:30-12:30	Half Day Pre-school Program
8:30-2:30	Full Day Pre-school & Kindergarten
2:30-5:30	Aftercare Program

### Academic Calendar

LMMA gives your child the opportunity to participate in the Montessori environment half day, full day, or all day programs.

Although we offer the advantage of an all day program, we are first and foremost a school. Therefore, we do have time off during the school year for holidays, preparation for the new school year, conferences, etc. The tuition has been calculated to include these times.

Although we do our best to plan the calendar properly, unforeseen events may cause changes to the schedule. We will try to give you as much advance notice as possible if changes are necessary.

### Before and After School Programs

When school is closed for the day, we refer all day (after care) families to the calendar for this program to see if it is open or closed.

If county public schools have a one or two hour delay due to weather, the before school program will be closed.

When school closes early, due to changing weather conditions during the day, the aftercare program will close. Parents are required to arrange for an early pick-up when necessary.

### Arrivals and Dismissals

#### Arrival (8:30-8:45)

It is important that your child arrives by 8:45 a.m. (primary students) to ensure that he/she receives the full benefit of the program. **Latecomers disrupt the atmosphere in the classroom and cause distraction for the children already engaged in personal or group activities.** Late arrivals must sign in and you must walk your child to their classroom. Please wait to enter quietly by getting the attention of one of the teachers. Once the teacher has greeted the parent and child, the parent should excuse themselves. Lingering in the classroom only makes these goodbyes more difficult for the

children. This procedure is to minimize the disruption of the class and to show respect to the students who are already at work.

### **Tardiness**

Parent and Child are considered tardy if arriving any time after 8:45. Parent and Child must go to the office to sign in and then proceed to their classroom. Tardies are noted on you child's conference forms.

### **Resolution to Tardiness**

#### STEP I

Children who have 3 tardy days (within a close proximity) will be marked with an unexcused absence.

#### STEP II

Parents will meet with Administration and Teacher(s) to help develop a home strategy to help your family be on time for school.

#### STEP III

*You should not be on Step III!* However, if you are, then you **and** your child will be required to attend Saturday School, (date, time, and lessons to be determined by your child's teacher).

### **Absence**

We ask that you e-mail your child's teacher by 9:00 a.m. when your child will not be coming to school. In the event that you have verification that your child or anyone else in the family has a communicable disease (strep throat, pink eye, chicken pox, scarlet fever, head lice, etc.), please call or e-mail the school immediately so that the teachers can be informed and we can help stop the spread of the disease.

### **Make-Up Day Policy**

In the event that your child is absence and is enrolled in our three-day program, your child may only make-up the days in which they were absence if the absence was related to illness. Make-up days will not be provided for other miscellaneous reasons including vacation, visiting with family, or personal day. In order to arrange these make-up days, please email your child's teacher and provide them with at least 24 hours' notice to accommodate this request.

### **Dismissal (Half Day 12:30-12:45 / Full Day 2:30-2:45)**

Children are dismissed to you at carline. You will be considered late beginning at 12:46 p.m.(half day) or 2:46 p.m. (full day). Parents will be charged \$1.00 per minute until the child has been picked up. Time is calculated by classroom and outside clocks. If you know you are going to be late, please call the school office. Teachers will make accommodations for children waiting for their parents, but parents need to be aware that in many cases, Teachers are unable to follow their normal schedule until all children are picked up and the late fee will be applied.

### **Early Checkout**

In the event that your child needs to be picked up early, please come to the classroom to notify the teacher that you have arrived. The child will clean up and put on their shoes while you sign them out in the office. These procedures are to minimize the disruption of the class and to show respect to the other children.

### **Before Care/Aftercare Arrival & Dismissal Schedules**

It is important that children who are enrolling in Before Care and/or Aftercare have a consistent schedule. This not only helps to establish a routine for the child, but allows your child's teacher and Aftercare faculty to accommodate your needs and to appropriately arrange your schedule.

### **Car line / Parking Lot Safety**

At arrival and dismissal time we ask that parents turn off their engines prior to the children getting out of their car to ensure that the children are safe. **We ask that parents please utilize the car line for arrival and dismissal and do not walk your child to their classroom, unless they are enrolled in Before Care or Aftercare.** As the teacher approaches the car, they assist the child to get out of the car. The teacher holds the child's hand and walks him/her into their classroom. The same process happens in reverse order at dismissal. The teacher always needs to be holding the hands of the children. **Parents will need to buckle or unbuckle their child from the car seats. If you can, install the car seat on the left hand back seat; this makes the carline process safer and easier for us to assist your child in and out of their car seat.**

**Use of cell phones while driving on school property is prohibited.**

### **Orange Cones**

Cones will be placed outside to assist parents at car line. The cones will signal where the drop off should take place. Cones will also be placed at the crosswalk. Cones are on the primary playground to signal the space needed for the swings. Cones are placed in front of and behind the swings.

### **Crossing the crosswalk to get to the playground areas**

The primary children will cross the street holding a security rope with a teacher at the front and end of the rope. The teacher will ensure the safety of the children by clearly covering the ground rules prior to exiting the building. All teachers will look both ways prior to crossing the street with their class.

### **Use of the bathroom when on playground**

The primary teachers will walk the young children to and from the bathroom in their classroom.

### **Locking Doors**

All teachers and staff are responsible for unlocking the door to enter a classroom and locking the door upon leaving. Their keys are to be kept on them during the day. Each door is checked for its security and locked if needed. We are vigilant with this process. If the door is approached by an unknown person the teacher calls the school office and sends the person to the office. Parents who are volunteering need to sign in at the front desk and have a name tag to enter the classrooms.

### **Primary Field Trips**

The school does not provide transportation to or from any school events. Parents are expected to drive their own child or arrange a car pool. The school does not assist with carpooling. For primary field trips, students and parents meet at the location and only all day students can return to school.

### **Birthdays for Primary Students**

Children will be celebrated on their birthday with a birthday walk and special wish sharing time. Parents are invited to attend for a 15-20 minute circle time to take pictures. **This Birthday Walk will be around the child's normal arrival time at 8:45. This time frame is so the Great Period-the uninterrupted work cycle is not interrupted.** Please talk to your child's teachers to schedule a specific time. Also, confine any exchanges of gifts or cards, invitations included, to outside the school. Children who do not get an invitation feel left out and hurt and it creates a difficult situation for the class. **Please remember your visit is *not* a birthday party and goodies and goodie bags are not to be handed out.**

### **Birthday Invitations for all Children**

Invitations can be sent out via the school office. The family provides their invitations and the Administrative Assistant will stick mailing labels on and place in the mail. **The invitations must be stamped by the family.** For privacy reasons, the school does not provide email or mailing addresses. **Children are not to hand out any invitations during school hours.**

### **Home and School Connection**

When children enter the Montessori environment, they will be doing many things for themselves. They will want to continue to do these things at home as part of the process of becoming more independent. Help us by letting your children choose their own clothes, dress themselves, brush their teeth, pour their milk or juice from a small pitcher, or conduct any other easy household chores they enjoy. Do not rush your children as they perform these tasks and allow them to make mistakes. When they do make mistakes, show them how to do a task correctly rather than telling them that they are doing it wrong. We expect that children carry their own lunch boxes to and from school. This new environment may also cause changes in your child's behavior. Becoming independent may be a new experience and you may want to discuss this with your child's teacher. We have Parent Education Meetings to enhance your knowledge of Montessori and to discuss the concept of independence and how it encourages self-discipline.

### **Kindergarten Policy**

The Florida State Law mandates the cutoff date for children to enter Kindergarten as September 1<sup>st</sup>. A child must turn five years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> in order to enter Kindergarten.

### **Food**

At LMMA, we are very conscious of the value of nutritious foods to the good health of the child. Our organic snack program emphasizes non-gmo, nut-free whole grains, fresh fruits, and vegetables. We source our food from M&M vitamins, our local vendor. We give our full attention to providing "beautiful snack and lunch environments" for the children. Practicing grace, courtesy, independence, and caring for self and others is essential to a Montessori educational experience.

Morning snacks are given five days a week. An additional afternoon snack in the classroom is provided and again in the aftercare program. All cooking projects and food preparation activities in the class should follow LMMA policy of providing organic foods for children.

## **Lunch**

Please make sure all lunch boxes are clearly marked with your child's name, as we often have very popular lunch boxes in the same classroom. No candy or gum or other sweets should be sent to school. Nourishing lunches with small portions suit the young child's appetite. **Please let the school know of any food or related allergies your child has.**

**Lunch Program**-an optional lunch program is offered. The sign up form will be sent home in September and January and lunch can be ordered 5 days a week. **Please follow the guidelines for our Trash-Free Lunch Program.**

## **Trash Free Lunch**

We are committed to being an environmentally friendly school. We recycle rainwater, cardboard, and paper. Our Trash Free Program complements our science, nature, and peace curriculum at LMMA. Lunch is our largest trash generating activity at the school, creating a very large amount of environmental and food waste. Please follow the guidelines listed below when packing your child's lunch.

1. Please pack all items in re-usable containers.
2. Everything packed in the lunch box will be sent back home, including any leftover food and pre-packaged containers such as applesauce, yogurt, and juice containers.
3. All unfinished food will be sent home so you know how much your child is eating.
4. Please provide a cloth napkin, fork and spoon every day.
5. Every child needs a water bottle that they will use for lunch, snack and playground.
6. For information on reusable containers, visit [www.mightynest.com](http://www.mightynest.com) and add the school's name in the comments so the school will get credit for your purchase.

## **Organic Snack Program**

The organic program provided by the school includes organic, non-GMO, nut and dairy free snacks. We ask that your child does not bring a special snack from home. We are encouraging the children to try new foods to broaden their horizons. Please make sure that the office is aware of any food allergies that your student has. All allergies and special needs will be accounted for with the snack supply.

## **Water Bottles**

Your child should come each day with a **full** water bottle **labeled** with their name. The water bottles will be filled as needed throughout the day. Please do not purchase bottles that make noise. **All water bottles should contain water only- please no juice or teas.**

## **Lunch with Your Child**

In the event that you would like to come in to eat lunch with your child, please email your child's teacher at least 24 hours in advance to allow them to make the necessary arrangements. This helps teachers to prepare the children so there are no hurt feelings or disruptions during your visit.

# Chapter 3

## Montessori Education

### Montessori Philosophy

Montessori Education is a preparation for life.

Dr. Montessori taught us that the most important aspects of education are to teach the child how to learn. The motivations for learning must come from within the child. Human beings are born with the desire to know, the urge to explore, and the need to master their environment. Thus, the Montessori environment is carefully prepared to train the senses, to stimulate curiosity, to satisfy the child's need to know and to protect him/her from unnecessary failure. Dr. Montessori observed that when children grow up in an environment that is intellectually and artistically alive, warm and encouraging, that they will spontaneously ask questions, investigate, create, and explore. She believed that learning can and should be a relaxed, comfortable, and natural process.

Dr. Montessori found that at every level, students learn in different ways and at different rates. Many learn more effectively from direct hands-on experience than from studying a textbook or listening to a teacher's explanations.

Montessori as an educational approach is designed to educate the whole child. Children will learn to trust their own ability, to think, and solve problems independently. Montessori encourages students to do their own research, analyze what they have found, and to come to their own conclusions. The goal is to lead students to think for themselves and become actively engaged in the learning process.

### **The Great Period---The Uninterrupted Work Cycle--**

One of the interesting aspects of Montessori education is that it sets up an environment for children in which they reveal characteristics that do not appear under other circumstances. One of these characteristics is the ability to work for long periods of time in concentrated activity. **For this to occur, it is necessary that children arrive at school in a timely manner.**

Many children will enter the classroom and choose something relatively simple and stay with it for a short time, almost as if they are re-establishing feelings of competence. Their next activity is generally more difficult and they stay with it for a longer period of time. This is followed by a "false fatigue," a time when many children have put their work away and have not selected another activity. If the teacher allows the children to take the time they need to experience the restlessness of the false fatigue, they will soon settle into their most difficult work choice of the cycle and stay with it for the longest period of time. During this time, their concentration is the deepest and they make the greatest strides in the development of skills and in the acquisition of knowledge. Montessori called this the "great work period". As the cycle nears its completion, the children put away their work and they appear to be refreshed and relaxed as they talk with one another.

For the work cycle we aim for the class to achieve stretches from two hours, then two and a half hours, and ultimately three hours.

## **Montessori Curriculum and Classroom**

The Montessori curriculum is organized as a building set of integrated studies. A traditional curriculum is compartmentalized into separate subjects, with given topics considered only once at a given grade level. However, Montessori uses an integrated approach that ties the separate disciplines of the curriculum together into studies of the physical universe, the work of nature, and the human experience. Literature, the arts, history, social issues, civics, economics, science and the study of technology all complement one another in the Montessori curriculum. The physical environment is carefully prepared, orderly, precise and attractive. It invites learning without being over-stimulating and allows the children to experience success that becomes truly meaningful to each child. The core areas of the classrooms are: culture, practical life, sensorial, math, language.

### **Montessori offers your child a way to grow in an environment which:**

- Permits your child to find and participate freely in activities suited to his/her individual level.
- Helps your child become an orderly, integrated person with self-direction, inner discipline, and a sense of responsibility.
- Fulfills your child's need to become independent and to be able to make wise choices. Makes it easy for your child to learn social skills as well as cognitive skills.

In addition to the core areas of the class, students at LMMA experience the following areas of study and growth.

### **Cultural**

The cultural area of the class provides an introduction to the world around the child through exercises in history, geography, science, art, music, and foreign language.

### **History**

We are all members of the human family. Our roots lie in the distant past and history is the story of our common heritage. Without a strong sense of history, we cannot begin to know who we are as individuals today. Our goal is to develop a global perspective. The study of history and world cultures form the cornerstone of the Montessori curriculum.

### **Science**

Science is an integral component of the Montessori curriculum. It represents a way of life, a clear thinking approach to gathering information and problem solving. As your child develops and advances to higher grade levels, the scope of the Montessori elementary curriculum includes a sound introduction to botany, zoology, chemistry, physics, geology and astronomy.

The program is designed to cultivate students' curiosity and determination to discover the truth for themselves. They learn to patiently observe, analyze, and work at each problem.

### **Technology**

The technology in the classroom is used as tools for learning in much the same way as the other materials in the classroom. All technology is educational and developmentally appropriate.

### **Arts**

The arts are integrated into the rest of the curriculum. There are modes of exploring and expanding lessons that have been introduced in science, history, geography, language arts, and mathematics. Art/Music and History/Appreciation are woven throughout the entire curriculum.

### **Homework-No-Home Activities-Yes-**

Homework in general should be low stress and should not take up a lot of family time. For Kindergarten age children homework is not a necessity and is not always developmentally appropriate. Therefore, we are providing options for Home Activities that we agree are manageable and appropriate for the children.

When your child begins reading our 50 set phonetic book series they will bring home one or two books each Friday and they are to be returned on Monday. The expectations are for the child to read the book/s with family and friends to encourage the love of reading. It is important to return books promptly on Monday as we have a limited set for all students.

A list of helpful websites, apps, books, and ideas for additional enriching Home Activities can be found on the LMMA website.

### **Health, Wellness and Physical Education**

Montessori schools are very interested in helping children develop control of their gross motor movements. For young children, programs will include dance, balance and coordination exercises, loosely structured cardiovascular exercise, as well as the vigorous free play that is typical on any playground.

A child's early years are the foundation upon which the rest of his/her experiences are built. The importance of providing a strong and positive base is paramount. In Montessori education, the child is respected as an individual in the environment with unique potential. This careful and appropriately planned transforming environment provides a wide range of experiences; many opportunities encourage and enhance the child's ability to fulfill his/her potential.

# Chapter 4

## Medical Information/Safety

### **First Aid and CPR –**

LMMA requires ALL staff members to be CPR and First Aid certified. First aid supplies are stored in each classroom and in the school office. When on the playground, a first aid kit is always available. If a child is injured, the abrasion will be cleaned with soap and water and an accident form will be filled out. It is school policy that if a child receives an injury to the head, eyes, or mouth, the parent will be notified immediately and the child will need to be picked up from the school.

### **Illness Policy**

Contagious illnesses are a reality in any group of children. Please **DO NOT** bring your child to school when he/she is ill. If your child exhibits symptoms of illness during the 24-hour period prior to his/her scheduled attendance at school, then keep your child at home. In the event that a child shows symptoms of a fever or other illness while at school, the parents will be called immediately. The child must be picked up at this time. It is imperative that emergency forms be kept up to date so you can be reached immediately. Your child must be **FEVER FREE for 48 hours** before returning to school. Florida Social Service regulations require that you notify the school within 48 hours of any communicable disease within your immediate household.

\*If your child is not feeling well in the morning and needs medicine, please do not send her/him to school that day. Usually he/she will not be feeling well later that day.

### **Health and Medical Forms**

The Health Department and LMMA requires each **student** to have **current** medical immunization forms on file at the school. Since we are a pro-immunization school, we do not accept religious exemption forms. Therefore, each new child must have a physical examination with up-to-date immunizations prior to the first day of school. Your physician's office will have the required forms. **Established students need to update school records as they receive age appropriate immunizations and physicals. Please deliver forms to the office.**

### **Medical Documentation**

If your child has a medical need (asthma, allergy, disabilities, fevers, seizures related to fever, etc.) we need documentation from the pediatrician, an emergency medical plan, and information on how to properly administer medicine and under what circumstances. Medical forms are available in the school office.

### **Exclusion Guidelines**

**For the following, the child must stay home:**

#### **Appearance/Behavior**

A child should stay home if he/she acts unusually tired, pale, lacking appetite, confused, irritable, difficult to awaken or just not "themselves".

**Chicken Pox**

Until all blisters have dried into scabs, about 6 days after rash onset.

**Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)****Bacterial**

Until 48 hours after treatment begins.

**Viral**

Until a letter from a physician is provided to verify that the child does not have bacterial conjunctivitis. In both situations, the child should be well enough to participate in normal daily activities.

**Diarrhea**

An increased number of abnormally loose stools in the previous 24 hours. Observe the child for other symptoms such as fever, abdominal pain, or vomiting.

**Eye/Nose Drainage**

Green nasal discharge and/or thick mucus or pus draining from the eyes.

**Fever**

If a child has a fever they will remain at home until the fever is completely gone. Often a fever is accompanied by other symptoms such as vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea, headache, and stiff neck or undiagnosed rash. The child should have no fever for 48 hours before returning to school.

**Head Lice**

Children must remain at home until first treatment is completed and no live lice, eggs and/or nits are seen. Treat all members of your family, their bedding, car seats, hair brushes, ponytail holders, stuffed animals, etc. The office assistant will help you better understand about head lice and provide you with some suggestions and websites to visit. We will notify families in a particular class if one child has lice via e-mail or at car line. Head lice spreads rapidly and needs quick treatment. It is important to keep in mind that this is not a hygiene issue and does not reflect the cleanliness of your family or home environment. A packet is available in the office.

**Respiratory Illness**

Until the child is without fever, is not coughing for 48 hours, and is healthy enough to participate in the normal daily schedule.

**Respiratory Symptoms-viral or bacterial**

Difficult or rapid breathing or severe coughing; child makes high-pitched croupy or whooping sounds after he/she coughs; child is uncomfortable due to continuous cough. A cough that is non asthmatic which is viral or bacterial is very contagious. Your child needs to remain at home, until the cough is completely gone.

**Skin Problems**

Skin rashes, undiagnosed or contagious must have a doctor's note to return.

## **Sore Throat**

Sore throat or swollen glands in the neck are present.

## **Streptococcal Sore Throat/Scarlet Fever (with rash)**

Until at least 48 hours after treatment begins and the child is without fever for 48 hours without Tylenol or Motrin.

## **Vomiting**

No more episodes of vomiting within the previous 48 hours.

## **Medicine**

### **Administration of Medication**

Our policy for administering medication is that we do not administer any over the counter medication or prescribed antibiotics. We administer medication for acute illness, such as a fever, with the parent's verbal consent over the phone. This is to provide the child some comfort while the parents are in route to the school. If a child has an accident and breaks a bone, (usually it is the arm) we will administer Tylenol for pain management with verbal consent from the parent over the phone. This is when the parent is in route to the school.

We do administer Epi pens for severe allergic reaction or allergy medication for a significant problem the child is having. The child's file must have a written Emergency Medical Plan.

### **Procedure**

First, we speak directly to the parent or adult listed to contact. We dialogue about the medical issue the child is having. We confirm the dosage and read the package carefully. An office staff/teacher administers the medication. We confirm on the phone that we have given the medicine. We fill out the medicine authorization form. (It includes the child's name, prescription number, physician name, who is administering and what time) The parent signs the form when he/she picks up the child.

### **Epi Pens, Asthma, Acute Allergic Reaction or Diabetes**

A written authorization must be given to the school and signed by the parent, authorizing a staff member to give (epi pen, asthma inhaler, allergy medication for allergic reaction). A school form containing the following essential information must be obtained from the office, and completed by the parent:

- the name of the drug
- dosage to be given
- time of administration
- proper storage, i.e. refrigeration
- any special instructions or concerns

Any changes to the above require a new written note.

1. The medication must be in the original container with the pharmacy label affixed including the child's name, the name of the medication, the dosage amount, and the time to be administered.

2. In addition, it is required that you educate the teachers, and/or administrator about your child's medication.
3. Parents are responsible for bringing their child's medicine to the office. Children may not have possession of any medication (epi pens, inhalers, cough drops, etc.) in the classroom or in their backpacks. All medication will be kept under lock and key and administered at the appropriate time by trained staff.
4. Please send the proper device to administer the medication.
5. It is imperative that parents monitor the expiration dates on epi pens, inhalers, and nebulizer medications.

If any of the above guidelines are not complete, written or unclear concerning the administration of the medication, the staff will not administer the medicine. We will attempt to contact you in this event.

Please be advised that the above stated guidelines are intended for medications that are given on an "acute need". All long term medications for the above require that a physician fill out the information concerning administration of the medication.

### **Allergies**

All allergies should be reported to the school administration and your child's teachers. If your child has a food allergy, parents should provide an alternative snack for the child. If a child has a **severe** nut allergy in their class, **we will not permit any nut products to be served in that class for snack or lunch.**

This is a life-threatening allergy for children and we take it very seriously. Please help us ensure the safety of all children. If this applies to your child's class you will be notified. All food products brought from home must be given to the teacher to assure that the food product is nut free.

### **Emergency Health Care Plan**

If your child suffers from any chronic health problems that require special procedures or medications, there must be an Emergency Health Care Plan on file with the school. The form can be obtained in the school office and must be updated on a regular basis. It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure a meeting with the staff to inform them of the child's needs if an emergency situation arises.

### **Emergency Procedures**

In case of serious injury/illness, the rescue squad will be called and parents notified. Otherwise, you will be called immediately and first aid will be administered to your child. If you cannot be reached, the emergency telephone numbers you listed will be called. If that person is not available, your child's physician will be contacted. For this reason, we require that you confirm the names and numbers on your child's application. It is essential that emergency names, telephone numbers, and work information be current and accurate.

### **Outdoor Play**

The children will be outside for a portion of each day except in extremely inclement weather. Be sure that your child is dressed properly for the weather. **A child who is not well enough to play outside should not come to school.** It is difficult to make accommodations to watch a child in the classroom when the teachers are needed to supervise the playground.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

Under Florida Law, teachers are required to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to the local Department of Social Services. All teachers, administration, and staff are mandated by law to report their suspicions of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment in accordance with section 415.504 (1) (e) of the Florida Statutes. Reports must be made immediately to the centralized Florida Abuse Hot Line. All reports are confidential. However, persons who are a mandated reporter are required to give their name when making a report. The categories include: physical abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse.

## **Safety**

### **Fire**

The children will practice fire drills once per month. Each classroom has the emergency evacuation exits posted. In September, we spend a lot of time discussing fire safety and practicing the fire drill procedure. Children will walk in silence and in single file to the door and are led outside by the teacher. The classroom teacher is responsible for securing the room and is the last person to leave the class. The teacher is responsible for bringing the attendance book, calling the roll and ensuring that all children are accounted for.

### **Tornadoes, Hurricanes, and Natural Disaster**

In the event that there is significant risk to the safety of the children, parents will be called to pick them up. Until pick-up, blinds will be closed and children are moved away from windows and doors to designated safe areas within the building (i.e. closets, bathrooms).

### **Inclement Weather**

If it is storming, thundering or lightning outside, the children will remain within the buildings.

### **Accident/Incident**

Given the nature of children, accidents will happen. Hopefully, they will be minor bumps and bruises. In case of an accidental injury, the staff member present will care for the child and notify other staff members and the administrator. We will attempt to make a determination as to the severity of the injury, and if necessary, a parent will be notified. If medical treatment is needed, the child will be sent home. If necessary, emergency aid may be called. An accident report will be filled out. The form will be kept on file with the school. The teacher will explain the accident and answer any questions that the parent may have and the parent will sign the report.

### Identifying Where Children Are During the Day

At the beginning of the class session, attendance will be taken to determine the number of children in school each day. As the day progresses, a count of the children will be taken when they return from the playground or move from their classroom. Each classroom, staff members, enrichment/aftercare teachers are provided a school cell phone for use in case of an emergency.

### Emergency Action Plan

In case of an emergency situation, the Administration and Staff will protect the safety of the children in the school and rejoin them with their respective parents/guardians as quickly as possible. The plan is frequently reviewed by the school Administration to ensure that it still reflects the current situation, is consistent with the plans of the local government agencies and can realistically be executed. The following chart provides a description of emergency responses available to the Administrator.

<b>Emergency Response</b>	<b>Description</b>
Early School Closure	<b>This will always be the first level of response.</b> In any situation that may arise, the Head will evaluate whether there is sufficient time to call or email parents and notify them that the school is closing early. The children remain in the classrooms until their parents arrive to pick them up.
Fire Evacuation	This response will be implemented if there is an emergency situation within the school, but it is not necessary to leave the school grounds. The school practices this response on a monthly basis. The children leave the classroom and go directly to the predetermined fire evacuation location/s. The building is cleared by the staff and roll taken by individual teachers and reported to the administration.
Weather Lockdown and Crisis Lockdown	This response will be implemented if the Administrator determines that there is significant risk to the safety of the children if they are removed from the school. In this situation the children are moved away from the windows and doors of the building. Access to the building is controlled in order to maintain the integrity of the “safe area” within the building. There are two levels of lockdown response: Hurricane/Tornado (Weather Lockdown) Local Danger (Crisis Lockdown)
Evacuation	This response will be implemented only if the following situations exist: the immediate evacuation of the building is ordered by authorities; or there is a strong indication that the safety of the children would be at risk if they remained in the building and on the premises of the school campus.

**Teachers/School Cell Phones**

Each teacher at the school is issued a school cell phone for use in an emergency and for rapid access from the office.

# Chapter 5

## Enrollment and Financial Information

### Admissions

Lake Mary Montessori Academy is open to all preschool aged children through the sixth grade. LMMA admits students of any race, color, religion, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, athletic and other school administered programs. Children with learning disabilities or handicaps are accepted on a case-by-case basis according to LMMA's ability to fully meet their specific needs.

### Application and Registration

The application process to LMMA includes a tour and a family visit. At the time of the family visit an application fee (per sibling, if more than one child) is due. There is also a re-enrollment fee per family remitted at re-enrollment time each year to hold a space for your child the following year. All fees are non-refundable.

### Tuition

LMMA operates throughout the year, offering programs during the academic year as well as summer months during our Fine Arts Summer Camp. Tuition costs are based upon the program in which the child is enrolled.

The philosophy of LMMA is to include most expenses into school year tuition. This practice is different from many other private schools where the cost of materials, and some field trips, is priced and paid separately. LMMA tuition includes: materials, enrichment classes, LMMA T-shirts, field trips and organic snack program.

### The Tuition Plan

The tuition may be paid on an annual, semester or installment basis. Tuition is remitted as executed on the Tuition Agreement.

Families choosing to use the installment payment plan will make ten payments (June - March).

Enrolling siblings will receive a 5% tuition discount. The discount is applied to the lesser of the tuitions paid.

### Late Payment Charge

A \$20 late fee is charged for tuition received after the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month. If tuition has not been paid by the end of the month, the child will not be able to continue his/her enrollment.

## **Returned Check Fee**

A \$25 fee will be charged for returned checks.

## **Annual Fund**

The LMMA Annual Fund relies on the support of our school community to develop and expand our academic programs, enhance and grow sporting and cultural activities, recruit and retain top notch faculty, and improve and maintain our facilities. We strive to achieve 100% participation from our families in the Annual Fund. We have a 4 prong approach to our fundraising for the Annual Fund:

- Parents
- LMMA Students
- Friends and Families
- Community/Corporate

As a 501 (c) (3), not for profit, one of our endeavors is The Annual Fund. The focus of the drive changes and is communicated to the parents at the start of the school year. The expected contribution per child is approximately \$200.00 - \$300.00 (depending on the drive).

## **Program Schedule Changes**

At times during the year, it may become necessary to change a child's schedule. In order for a change to be made, the parent will speak with the Heads of School directly; a Tuition Enrollment Agreement must be filled out and signed by the parent. Changes in a child's program are made in the best interest of the child; therefore all changes must be approved by the teacher, and the Heads of School.

## **Children's Records**

According to the Florida Department of Social Services, the following documents must be on file at the school before your child enters the school.

- Application/Enrollment Agreement
- Emergency Information
- Emergency Health Care Plan-if applicable
- Physical and Immunization Forms
- Child Illness Policy

It is the parent's responsibility to keep all forms updated with all necessary telephone numbers and any new information pertinent to their child's well-being.

**Your child will not be permitted to attend school until all documents are provided.**

# Chapter 6

## Parent Involvement and Communication

### Involvement

Active parent involvement is an integral part of an effective school program. Besides the obvious benefits of shared communications and direct support to the functioning of the school, your interest in the school shows your child that school holds an important place in your lives and that you value his/her accomplishments at school.

### Adjustment to School

Most new students will adjust to school easily. The transition process is a six week time frame. A child who is very dependent upon his/her parents or a sitter may experience difficulty for a longer period. A great deal of the responsibility for an easy adjustment rests with the parents. If the parental attitude is positive, the child usually has a positive experience. The first separation should be short and matter of fact. Never leave your child without saying good-bye and reassuring him/her that you will be back. Help your child by being relaxed and supportive. We realize that it is often as hard for parents to separate from the child as it may be for the child to separate from the parent. They may cry as you leave, but seldom for long. It is important that when you and your child have made a decision about going to school that you be supportive, calm, and consistent and matter of fact, especially through any insecure periods your child may experience. It is not unusual for the child to have potty accidents on those first days of school. Be sure to be on time to pick him/her up. Also, bring several changes of clothes. Please trust that we will call you if your child cries in excess of 5-10 minutes.

### Transition Schedule Option

A transition schedule of ten days can be implemented for new primary children with teacher recommendation or parent preference. The child's hours for this period of time will be 8:30-10:30 a.m. This program allows the new child and parents' time to warm up and it helps everyone feel comfortable.

### Potty Training

Potty training is described as a young child's ability to use the toilet and to recognize that he/she needs to urinate or have a bowel movement. It is expected that all new children are potty trained and can clean themselves after using the toilet. If a child has 2 accidents in a day, he/she will be asked to go home. If the child has 3 or more accidents in a week the child needs to stay home the next week for the parents to work on potty training. Children are expected to use the toilet independently with a little bit of prompting. The teacher will encourage the child to clean himself/herself after a bowel movement. **Please don't have your child wear a belt as it is difficult for the young child to remove.**

### Communication

Communication between parents and teachers is the key ingredient to creating a community for our families. To make an appointment or to get a message to your child's teacher you may call and leave a message, e-mail the teacher, or send a note to school with your child and give it to the staff member greeting the children at arrival time.

**Teachers are available a half-hour before or after school by appointment.** They are happy to answer your questions and show you your child's work.

Arrival and Dismissal are typically not the appropriate times to have in-depth conversations with the teachers because they need to be available to greet all of the children. Make a point to let your child's teacher know of unusual events in your family (i.e. visitors, new birth, or family death) since these events can explain changes in behaviors of your child.

**On Tuesdays mornings the teachers invite you to come in to view your child's work and lessons. Tuesday Morning Visits are from 8:00 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. and will begin in early October.**

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Individual conferences will be arranged for all parents to discuss their child's progress with his/her teacher. Primary parents will have an opportunity to meet with their child's teacher in November and April. Parents are encouraged to call the school for an appointment to discuss any special circumstances or problems as needed. Please do not wait until parent/teacher conferences.

### **Teacher's Recommendation for Referral**

If the teacher notes a concern about your child's growth and development (academic, social, emotional, or physical) she will meet with the parents. If an evaluation or intervention is recommended from the school guidance counselor, it is not optional, but required for the parents to follow through with all appropriate referrals and assessments. This will enable the teachers to attempt to meet and respond to the needs of your child.

### **Classroom Observations**

Parents are welcome to observe a primary class in action. Appointments for observations can be made with your child's teacher. We have observation guidelines in the school office. Please stop by the office to sign in and pick up a copy so you can get the most out of your observation. No observations are scheduled during the month of September.

### **Academic Calendar**

The current academic calendar will be uploaded to the website for families at the start of the school year. Consistent attendance is important for the children to develop friendships within their class. Please review that calendar often to take notes of days off and fun events happening on campus.

### **The Primary Classroom Newsletters**

Monthly newsletters will be emailed from your child's teacher, highlighting areas of study and special notes of interest. We encourage you to read them in order to find out all of the amazing things happening in your child's classroom.

### **Parent Education**

We encourage all parents to expand their knowledge of the Montessori educational Program so that their child can attain the full benefits of their learning experience. Please plan to join our Montessori community with our parent education programs and workshops which include:

- Community Meetings
- Parenting Workshops
- The Journey

### **Parent Volunteer Organization (PVO)**

This organization is a great program for the teachers, parents, and children. The Parent Volunteer Coordinator will be on hand at orientation, and/or the community meetings. She will educate parents on all the wonderful volunteer opportunities and match parents' talents with our needs. Each family is expected to fill out a survey to volunteer during the school year. We have had 100% participation in past years in our PVO. Parents are required to fill out a volunteer packet with a background check at the police department. After the records are on file at LMMA, the Parent Volunteer Coordinator will schedule a training workshop and then we can all get busy.

### **Commitment of Support for School Programs**

The educational model at LMMA is based on a two-way partnership. It requires an investment of trust, cooperation, time, and energy in support of each child's education both at home and at school. Parents will be expected to actively participate in the life of the school, including scheduled conferences and meetings for the family and community meetings. Parents are expected to support and promote LMMA's programs, policies and values.

### **Confidentiality of Student / Family Records**

Student/Family information is not given out from the school. The records are kept confidential. Only the Administration can give out Student/Family information, after receiving verbal or written consent.

# Chapter 7

## Policies and Procedures

### Uniforms

LMMA Uniforms are available for purchase from Lands' End Uniforms.

### Primary Uniforms

#### Girls

- Khaki or Navy shorts and long pants
- LMMA dark green, light blue, white knit polo shirt or t-shirt.
- Plaid, Khaki and Navy jumpers and skorts

#### Boys

- Khaki or Navy shorts and long pants
- LMMA dark green and light blue polo shirt or t-shirt

### Outerwear

An LMMA dark green and navy sweatshirt may be worn throughout the day, with a uniform shirt underneath. Non-uniform coats or jackets may be worn to school and on the playground. Please label all outerwear clearly with your child's name.

### Accessories

One of the purposes of school uniforms is to take the emphasis off the clothing worn by the children and place it on the learning taking place in the classroom. With this in mind, hair accessories should be understated and consistent with the uniform colors. **Due to safety concerns, no hoop earrings, bracelets, or necklaces should be worn to school.** Small stud earrings and a watch are appropriate.

### Spirit Day

On **Tuesdays**, primary students may wear the LMMA spirit t-shirt with uniform shorts, skort, or long pants. LMMA spirit t-shirts can be obtained in the office.

### Birthday Clothing

On the day that your child celebrates his/her birthday with his/her class, he/she may wear non-uniform clothing to school. The clothing selected on this day should be appropriate for usual school activities, such as outdoor play and art.

### Shoes

Closed-toed and closed-heeled shoes are required. **Plain sneakers are appropriate.** If a child arrives at school in improper shoes, the parents will be called to bring appropriate shoes to school. (Optional) Primary children may wear plain, simple slippers in the classroom. The parent provides the slippers.

### Miscellaneous

**Names should be clearly marked on all clothing, particularly outerwear.**

Primary children bring an extra set of clothes (it does not need to be a uniform set) with underwear and socks in a marked zip lock bag. We keep it on hand in case of a bathroom

emergency. If your child comes home with any extra set clothing due to a spill/accident please replenish the following school day.

### **Uniform Compliance**

Students are expected to be in uniform each day without exception. The parents will be notified to bring an appropriate uniform when a student arrives for class out of uniform. The school requests full parental support of the uniform policy. **However, there is “Free Dress” on the child’s birthday.** Uniform violations will be reported to the office. For the first violation, a written notice will be sent home. For a second violation, the teachers will speak to the parents. For a third violation, a brief conference will be scheduled with the parents to discuss a solution.

### **Items from Home**

**Do not allow your child to bring electronic devices, money, candy, gum, toys, or other possessions to school.** We cannot be responsible for these items and they invariably cause friction among the children or get lost. Please return everything your child may bring home that does not belong to them. Even the smallest bead or shell may mean the loss of a whole activity.

### **Lost and Found**

There is a lost and found bin located at the bottom of the staircase going to the office. Articles left over 60 days will be added to our extra clothes box at school or donated to a local charity. Please contact your child’s teacher if you are missing items.

## **Boundaries for the Children**

### **Discipline Policy**

Discipline for children should have a positive focus. We want children to learn inner controls. To this end, we have ground rules and boundaries that are developmentally appropriate. There will only be a few rules/boundaries and they will be enforced consistently to help children remember them. Children will be invited to think about the consequences of their actions. When necessary, we may ask children to take “time away” to regain control of themselves. This will be done in a positive, non-punitive manner. Children will be treated with respect at all times. Our policies prohibit the use of corporal punishment.

### **Boundaries the Children Are Learning:**

- a. Respect for themselves
- b. Respect for each other
- c. Respect for the teachers
- d. Respect for classroom work

### **Absolute Limits: Not Acceptable For Any Age Child**

- a. Purposely hurtful behavior-harming another child-i.e. biting, hitting
- b. Deliberate, destructive behavior and misuse of materials
- c. Volatile and spontaneous expressions of anger
- d. Yelling or lashing out at teacher or adult in environment
- e. Child is overly exhausted and child falls asleep
- f. Inappropriate language-use of profane words

These boundaries and absolute limits are for the safety and well being of all the community members. The teachers will call and ask you to pick up your child and take him/her home for the day if he/she exhibits these behaviors. An Incident Form will be filled out for the parents to sign and a conference with the teachers will be arranged.

### **Bullying Policy**

For our students, we have a high code of conduct directly linked to respect for one another and themselves. As a designated peace site the following policy describes our expectations:

- **LMMA prohibits acts of bullying. A safe and kind environment in school is necessary for students to feel safe and to learn.**

### **Discharge & Withdrawal Policy**

Generally, if a child is non-conformant to the ground rules of the school, a meeting with the parents will be organized. Sometimes the child will be placed on a probationary period. After that time, if the child still has not conformed to the rules (i.e. absolute limits), for his/her own safety and that of the children around him/her, the administration or guidance counselor will then inform the parents of a course of actions to benefit the child. The administration or guidance counselor will, upon discharge of the child, aid in another referral pertaining to the child's needs. In some cases, an immediate dismissal may be necessary to serve the needs of all. Written notice of withdrawal and all unpaid balances must be paid according to the Enrollment and Tuition Agreement.

### **Transfers / Family Relocation**

When applying to another school please allow for a 30 day completion of forms. A maximum of two applications per student will be completed. There is a fee of \$25 per application. All applications must be submitted to the office. Teachers will not accept or complete applications that are not from the LMMA administrative staff.

### **Parent Conduct**

Parents and teachers are role models for displaying appropriate and acceptable behavior. Lake Mary Montessori Academy demands and expects that all members of the School, community, students, teachers, and parents be treated with dignity and respect. Rude, loud, and/or abusive behavior by any members of the community, students, parents or relatives will not be tolerated. Parents may not use inappropriate language or cursing on campus. Parents are expected to behave appropriately and work on resolutions of concerns and/or problems with the School. Negative communication pertaining to resolution of any problems and/or concerns is not to be communicated to other parents, teachers, staff etc. either in person, electronically, or any other means. It is to remain strictly confidential between the person(s) of interest and the School. Failure to adhere to the above will, and is, cause for dismissal.

### **Facebook / Social Networking / Texting**

Due to privacy and LMMA Policy, please note that all teachers, faculty and staff will not be on any social or business networking sites. With that in mind, all teachers, faculty, and staff will need to deny all invites.

Also, Teachers are not to provide personal phone numbers or text messages under any circumstances.

**Exit Interview**

A family can go through an exit interview upon leaving the school. The administration will ask questions regarding the reasons for departure and their experience at the school. This is an optional meeting.



Dear Parents,

As you read this Handbook, please remember that it is an important part of your orientation process that will aid in the understanding and compliance with all school policies and procedures. Please sign and return this page to the Office as acknowledgement of your receipt and review of this handbook and your agreement to abide by the rules and regulations contained within.

Sincerely,

Lake Mary Montessori Staff

I/We acknowledge receipt of the Family Handbook. I understand that by signing this form I also agree to abide by the rules and regulations contained within the Handbook.

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Parent Signature

Parent Signature

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Print Name

Print Name

---

Child's Name

---

Date

Office Use Only:

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