



*The goal of early childhood education should be to
activate the child's own natural desire to learn.*
Maria Montessori

North Star Montessori Academy

Preschool Handbook

2023 - 2024

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Notice of Nondiscrimination

It is the policy of North Star Montessori Academy district that no person on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, age, marital status, disability, weight, or height shall be discriminated against in employment, educational programs, or admissions. Questions or concerns regarding the policies should be directed to the CEO/Superintendent at 3030 Wright St, Marquette, MI 49855, and (906) 226-0156.

Our Mission:

North Star Montessori Academy fosters a Montessori environment allowing the whole child the freedom and support to question, think deeply, and make connections. Our Montessori environment yields confident, motivated, and self-directed learners able to think critically, work collaboratively, and become respectful citizens in an ever-changing world.

This handbook pertains to specific Preschool requirements, licensing laws and best practices. More information about NSMA can be found in the full handbook at: <https://northstaracademymqt.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/NSMA-2020-21-K-12-Handbook-Google-Docs.pdf> or by requesting a copy in the office.

Table of Contents

Program Philosophy	page 3
Criteria for Admission and Withdrawal	page 3
Admission Requirements	page 3
Withdrawal Policy	page 3
Potty Training Policy	page 4
Scheduling	page 5
2023-2024 NSMA Academic Calendar	page 5
Typical Daily Schedule	page 6
Rest	page 6
Recess	page 6
Meals and Snacks	page 6
Curriculum	page 7
Cultural Competency plan	page 7
Special Needs	page 7
Tuition and Fees	page 7
Exclusion Policy for Child Illnesses	page 8
Accidents, Injuries and Incidents	page 8
Medication Policy	page 8
Transportation Policy	page 9
Discipline Policy	page 10
What to Bring	page 11
Licensing Handbook	page 11
Please Sign and Return Form	page 12

The greatest gifts we can give our children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence.

Maria Montessori

Program Philosophy

Preschool children possess a remarkable ability to absorb the world that surrounds them. Maria Montessori believed that the years from three to six are the most critical period for nurturing a child's natural curiosity and for laying the foundation for future development.

The goal of North Star Academy's Primary Montessori program is to foster independence and to support children in moving toward a mastery of self and the environment. The classroom is a prepared Montessori environment designed to encourage children in their self-directed discovery of the world. Interest based activities encourage children to develop a love of learning and trust in their own ability to learn.

The classroom includes children aged three to six, and children may work individually or in small groups, learning and sharing with one another.

Our program will help children develop a rapport with their environment and support them as they develop physical, social and intellectual independence. The Montessori teacher intensely follows each child, presenting carefully designed lessons and materials, on a one-to-one basis as the child is ready to develop his/her skills.

Criteria for Admission and Withdrawal

Montessori Pre-K Applications must be completed and returned to the NSMA office with a \$50 non-refundable application fee. Students will be admitted to the program based on application date and age limitations. Class size is restricted to 20 students per classroom. Wait list applicants may be admitted later in the year if a position becomes available.

Admission Requirements

- Students birth certificate to verify age
- A copy of immunizations or waiver from the health department
- A copy of the child's most recent Well Child visit signed by their physician
- The admission form and non-refundable admission fee of \$50
- The child must be toilet trained, see page four

If any of these are not available a student may be denied admission.

Withdrawal

Please submit a letter of withdrawal to the office with your child's name and the date of their last day as soon as you know you will be withdrawing.

Potty Training Policy

Children enrolled at North Star must be potty trained before attending our program. Children must wear underwear, not pull-ups, and only rarely have accidents. There are strict licensing standards for changing and disposing of wet or soiled diapers, and our classrooms are not equipped with the equipment for changing diapers. When an adult is changing a child, they are taking away learning time and removing direct supervision and interaction of one adult from the rest of the class. We understand that accidents can and will happen, but accidents are unusual and infrequent. When helping children change we encourage as much independence as possible.

A potty trained child can do the following:

1. Communicate the need to go to the bathroom
2. Alert themselves of the need, stop their activity and use the bathroom
3. Pull up and down clothing on their own
4. Wipe themselves after using the bathroom, a teacher can check or help after an independent try by the child
5. Get on and off the toilet themselves
6. Wash and dry their hands
7. Postpone using the bathroom if the room is occupied
8. Awaken during nap if necessary

We will ask and offer many opportunities throughout the day to use the bathroom for all children. We will also encourage bathrooms before resting and leaving our room. A teacher will assist if necessary, but only when necessary for the child to walk away clean.

Many children have setbacks when entering a new environment, teachers are aware of this. Please send extra clothing in case of accidents, we will send them home for washing if an accident occurs.

We will allow four weeks from your child's first day of school to fully demonstrate their achievement of full potty training. However, if the situation is not manageable, we will discuss the issue with the family and we reserve the right to suspend attendance of the child if need be.

The following policy will be in place for children who continue to have accidents after the first four weeks of school:

1. If one or two accidents occur in one week, the parents will be notified with the understanding that the situation needs to be addressed and corrected
2. If three or more accidents occur in one week, the parent will be notified with the understanding that if the issue is not corrected by the end of the second week the child will have to stay home a week or longer until the child is completely potty trained
3. If multiple accidents occur in one day, the parent will be notified on that day, and if not corrected by day three, the child will have to stay home a week or longer until the child is completely potty trained

Please note that this policy is not in place to shame or punish a child or inconvenience primary caregivers for a child who is not developmentally ready to be potty trained. Rather the policy is in place because our facilities are not prepared to handle potty training, and having a staff member assisting a child takes away from the class. This policy is intended to ensure the happiness and safety of all the children and staff at North Star.

Scheduling

Students should be at school by 8:30am. Please do not drop children off before 8:15am as supervision is not provided and the classrooms are not open. Classes begin at 8:30am. Students should be picked up from school no later than 3:40pm unless they are enrolled in the NSMA after school program.

The Montessori preschool program will follow the school calendar. The program will not open on snow days, professional development days, or vacation days.

Academic Calendar: 2023-2024

- **August 31** - Open House 4:00 – 6:00 pm
- **September 5** - First Day of School - 8:30am - 3:40pm
- **September 20** - Half Day for students - Early Release - 1:00pm
- **October 16** - No School for students District Professional Development
- **October 18** - Half Day for students - Early Release - 1:00pm
- **October 31** - Half Day for students - Early Release - 1:00pm
- **November 3** - End of Marking Period One
- **November 15** - Half Day for students - Early Release - 1:00pm
- **November 20 & 21** - Parent Teacher Conferences
- **November 22** - Half Day for students - Early Release - 1:00pm
- **November 23 & 24** - Thanksgiving Break
- **December 20** - Half Day for Students - Early Release - 1:00pm
- **December 21-January 2** - Holiday Break
- **January 3** - Students and Staff Return
- **January 17** - Holiday Break
- **January 18** - Half Day for Students - Early Release - 1:00pm
- **January 19** - End of Marking Period Two
- **January 23** - Start of Second Semester
- **February 19** - Holiday Break
- **February 21** - Half Day for students - Early Release - 1:00pm
- **March 20** - Half day for students - Early Release - 1:00pm
- **March 22** - End of Marking Period Three
- **March 25 - April 1** - Spring Break
- **April 17** - Half day for students - Early Release - 1:00pm
- **May 15** - Half day for students - Early Release - 1:00pm
- **May 27** - Holiday Break - Memorial Day
- **May 31** - End of Semester Two
- **June 6** - Last day of school - Early Release - 1:00pm

Typical Daily Schedule

- *Schedule can vary with new lunch schedules and class preferences*
- 8:15-8:45 students arrive at school and begin their independent morning routine. Breakfast is available. Students should be in their classroom for attendance by 8:30am
- 8:45-9:00 Morning meeting
- 9:00-11:00 Work Cycle (including morning snack)
- 11:00-11:25 Clean up and prepare for lunch, story and singing time
- 11:25-11:55 Lunch
- 12:00-1:00 Recess
- 1:00-2:15 Rest/nap time, quiet indoor play
- 2:15-2:30 Snack time
- 2:30-3:30 Various specials (art, music, gym, Spanish, and technology)
- 3:40 Dismissal

Rest

Rest is required by licensing standards for each preschool child. Children must rest quietly for 30 minutes. Napping is encouraged, otherwise looking at books or quietly coloring will be granted on individual rest mats. Every child must provide a small pillow and blanket to rest with. These will be sent home regularly for washing.

Recess

Outdoor free play provides the children a chance to work on large and small motor skills, as well as social skills. We will go outside daily unless the temperature is below (feels like) zero degrees or it is too wet. Please send your child with weather appropriate clothes each day. You may keep winter gear at school on your child's hook.

Meals and Snacks

The school participates in the National School Lunch Program and makes lunches available to students for a fee or at an adjusted cost if the student qualifies for free or reduced lunch. Students may also bring their own lunch to school.

Applications for the free and reduced price meal program are distributed to all students. If a student does not receive one and believes he/she is eligible, please contact the Food Service Coordinator at the office.

Breakfast is provided, but not required. The school's breakfast program is available at no cost. A small morning and afternoon snack can be brought from home, or supplied by parent donations. Food must be in original packaging for the safety of students with food allergies.

Curriculum

Our Primary Montessori program blends a hybrid of Montessori philosophy and methods, Common Core State Standards and Michigan standards. Children are met at a developmentally appropriate level on an individual basis. Some primary students may begin working on academic work, but the focus is on pre-academic and social skills. These include (but are not limited to): patterning, sequencing, matching, grouping, sorting, counting, fine motor skills such as grasping and pinching, large motor skills such as running, skipping, jumping and throwing, social skills such as communicating, waiting and trying your best, and practical life work such as pouring, serving, and taking care of the environment.

Cultural Competency Plan

Montessori curriculum teaches exposure to various cultures, countries, families and traditions. Maps and globes are referenced throughout the year through both casual conversation as well as lessons, exploring interests that the students show. Other resources include a wide variety of books representing different cultures within yearly topics. Families are consulted about traditions and celebrations from home that can be incorporated into the classroom when appropriate. This mostly happens in December when we celebrate many different festivals of light, family and kindness from around the world.

Special Needs

Each child in our classrooms is a unique individual and celebrated for their best qualities, and accommodated in areas of weakness. Everyone is to be treated kindly and respectfully, and every milestone, academic, social or physical is celebrated. We observe all of our students, and if additional screening in speech, occupational therapy or special education is needed we start a child study process. If a student receives services outside of school, we encourage families to share reports from their therapist. We strive to meet each child at the level they are at, and this includes using similar language, techniques and materials as their services use.

Tuition and Fees

A non-refundable application fee of \$50 is due with the completed application. Tuition for the 2023-2024 school year is \$6500. A 5% discount will be applied if tuition is paid in full by September 1, 2023. Monthly payments of \$650 for ten months may also be made starting September 1, 2023. Non-payment of tuition will result in dismissal from the program. Payments may be made via check or cash either mailed or turned in at the front office. All tuition payments are due in full and in advance of the month services are rendered. This includes whether your child attends or is absent. Tuition credit is not given nor is it refundable for holidays, sick days, inclement weather days or any other absences that may occur.

Exclusion Policy for Child Illnesses

Because a school has a high concentration of people, it is necessary to take specific measures when the health or safety of the group is at risk. The school's professional staff has the authority to remove or isolate a student who has been ill or has been exposed to a communicable disease or highly-transient pest, such as lice. Specific diseases include (but are not limited to): conjunctivitis (pink-eye), diphtheria, scarlet fever, strep infections, whooping cough, mumps, rubella and other conditions indicated by the local and state health department.

A parent or guardian will be called to come and get a student if a student is experiencing any of the these health concerns:

- Fever - a temperature of 100°F taken orally or 99°F taken underarm
- Diarrhea - if a child has two loose or watery stools, even if there are no other signs of illness
- Vomiting
- Unexplained/sudden rash
- Any serious accident or injury

A child must be free of fever, vomiting, diarrhea or pink eye symptoms without the aid of medication for 24 hours before returning to school

Guidelines are taken from the Michigan Department of Human Services and the Michigan 4C Association

Accidents, Injuries and Incidents

In case of an accident or illness, NSMA will contact the parent, or a listed emergency contact. If the injury is minor an ice pack and/or band aid will be applied and parents will be notified by the end of the day. If the injury needs immediate attention their parents will be notified immediately and 911 will be called if necessary. In the event of an incident, parents will be notified by the end of the day and an incident report may be filled out.

Use Of Medications

In those circumstances when a student must take prescribed OR over the counter medication during the school day, the following guidelines are to be observed:

- A. Parents should, with their physician's counsel, determine whether the medication schedule can be adjusted to avoid administering medication during school hours.
- B. The Medication Request and Authorization Form 5330 F1, F1a, and F1b must be filed with the respective building principals before the student will be allowed to begin taking any medication during school hours.
- C. All medications must be registered in the main office and will be administered based on the directions provided by the physician.
- D. Medication that is brought to the office will be properly secured.

- a. Medication may be conveyed to school directly by the parent. A two to four (2-4) week supply of medication is recommended.
 - b. Medication MAY NOT be sent to school in a student's lunch box, pocket, car or other means on or about his/her person, except for emergency medications for allergies and/or reactions.
- E. Any unused medication unclaimed by the parent will be destroyed by school personnel when a prescription is no longer to be administered or at the end of a school year.
- F. A log for each prescribed medication shall be maintained which will note the personnel giving the medication, the date, and the time of day. This log will be maintained along with the physician's written instructions and the parent's written permission release.

Asthma Inhalers:

Students, with appropriate written permission from the physician and parent, may possess and use a metered dose inhaler or dry powder inhaler to alleviate asthmatic symptoms. Students may possess and self-administer a metered dose or dry powder inhaler for relief of asthma, or before exercise to prevent onset of asthma symptoms, while at school, on school-sponsored transportation, or at any school-sponsored activity in accord with the CEO's guidelines, if the following conditions are met:

There is written approval from the student's physician or other health care provider and the student's parent/guardian to possess and use the inhaler (Form 5330 F1c), and the building administrator has received a copy of the written approval from the physician and the parent/guardian.

Non-prescribed (over-the-counter) medications (including lotions and creams):

Parents may authorize the school to administer a non-prescribed medication using a form which is available at the school office. A physician does not have to authorize such medication. If a student is found using or possessing a non-prescribed medication without parent authorization, s/he will be brought to the school office and the parents will be contacted for authorization. The medication will be confiscated until written authorization is received. Any student who distributes a medication of any kind to another student or is found to possess a medication other than the one authorized is in violation of the school's Code of Conduct and will be disciplined in accordance with the drug-use provision of the Code.

Before any prescribed medication or treatment may be administered to any student during school hours, the school requires the written prescription and instructions from the child's physician accompanied by the written authorization of the parent. Both must also authorize any self-medication by the student. Before any non-prescribed medication or treatment may be administered, the Board shall require written consent of the parent along with a waiver of any liability of the District for the administration of the medication.

Transportation Policy

North Star Montessori Academy offers transportation services within Marquette County through Checker Transport. The office provides detailed route information and bus stop request form. All parents and students must sign a bus policy agreement form before riding the bus. Please note that any change/request for route drop off location must be received by the main office by noon of the day change. Please see the full K-12 handbook for information on bus infractions and consequences. Field Trip notifications using bussing will always be sent home ahead of trips for parental consideration.

Discipline Policy

Because of the carefully designed environment and range of hands-on, interest based activities available, Montessori children are less likely to exhibit chronic behavior problems. However, with young children, discipline and redirection are a part of the learning process.

The Montessori classroom is a community of learners with rules very similar to real society. Children and teachers are required to abide by a few simple rules:

- There is typically only one of each material in the classroom, so you must wait your turn and respect the concentration of the individual using the materials. You may ask to share a material, but only if the other student agrees.
- You can only use materials that have been presented to you by the teacher.
- If you misuse a material you will be asked to return it to the shelf.
- You must return a material to the same place on the shelf and in the same condition in which you found it.
- You must abide by all grace and courtesy rules which are role modeled and taught daily, including, but not limited to: hands to self, kind words, respect quiet/concentration of others, take care of your own belongings/space, follow safety rules in the classrooms and on the playground.

If any of the above rules are broken, the participating children will be first asked to correct the mistake or be retaught the rules through modeling.

Sometimes it is necessary to remove the child's freedom of choice temporarily. Teachers may ask a student to follow them around the classroom until they are ready to go back to work (referred to as "glueing"). If all attempts do not successfully redirect the student, a specific area in the classroom is used to further reduce freedom until the child is ready to return to learning.

Children who do not respond to reduction of freedom after multiple attempts may not be suited to a classroom that relies on independent choices and activities. Those children may be asked to try alternative daycare or schooling in a more structured and unison environment. NSMA will not keep students enrolled who are a threat to others, to the integrity of the program or the welfare of teachers and staff. All members are expected to behave respectfully. The safety and welfare of our students are always our first priority.

Please Note

There is no smoking, marijuana use or vaping on school property.

What to bring

Please bring (or leave at school) these items everyday, or when seasonally appropriate:

- At least one extra set of clothes in case of accident
- Indoor shoes (no laces please)
- A small pillow and blanket for rest
- Weather appropriate outdoor gear
- Optional :
 - A water bottle, we do have a drinking fountain in our room
 - Snacks and a lunch from home, or you may eat communal snacks/order hot lunch

Licensing Handbook

The licensing notebook contains all the licensing inspection and special investigation reports and related corrective action plans for the last 5 years. The licensing notebook is available to parents during regular business hours, 8:15am-3:45pm. Licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports, and corrective action plans from at least the past 3 years are available on the department's child care licensing website at www.michigan.gov/michildcare.

Our care of the child should be governed, not by the desire to make him learn things, but by the endeavor always to keep burning within him that light which is called intelligence.

Maria Montessori

2023 - 2024

Child's full name _____

In case of accident or illness, I request North Star Montessori Academy staff contact me, or the person listed below if I am unavailable. I hereby authorize NSMA staff to secure medical treatment for an acute emergency by calling 911.

Parent printed name _____ Date _____

Parent signature _____

Alternate contact

Name _____ phone _____

Family Doctor _____ phone _____

Preferred Hospital _____

Insurance Company _____ Policy Number _____

Transportation Permission

I hereby give my permission to North Star Montessori Academy for my child to participate in field trips and when necessary be transported in an approved vehicle.

Parent signature _____

Immunizations and General Health Assessments

- My child has received a physical evaluation performed within the preceding year, signed by a licensed healthcare provider. Any restrictions should be noted. A copy of this evaluation is on file.
- My child has had all required immunizations and is free from communicable disease, is in good health and is able to fully participate in North Star Montessori Academy activities

Parent signature _____

Please check one:

____ North Star Montessori Academy may photograph my child

____ North Star Montessori Academy may photograph my child for in school use only

____ North Star Montessori Academy may **NOT** photograph my child

I understand North Star Montessori Academy maintains a licensing handbook that I can review at any time.

Parent signature _____

Agreement

I have read ALL THE INFORMATION in the North Star Montessori Academy Primary Handbook and agree to abide by all the policies and regulations. Information regarding attendance, behavior, and programing will be shared between program staff and appropriate school personnel when deemed necessary.

Parent signature _____

<p style="text-align: center;">What to return:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Registration forms *Child Information Record *Health appraisal or copy of well child exam *Copy of vaccines *Copy of child's birth certificate *Permission form (last page of the handbook) * \$50 non refundable deposit 	<p style="text-align: center;">What to return:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Registration forms *Child Information Record *Health appraisal or copy of well child exam *Copy of vaccines *Copy of child's birth certificate *Permission form (last page of the handbook) * \$50 non refundable deposit
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