



Parent Handbook Children's School

2021-2022

6339 Carolina Beach Road

Wilmington, NC 28412

(910)796-3003

(910)550-3767-FAX

www.im.school



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"Follow the child"

Maria Montessori

Maria Montessori, born in 1870, was the first woman in Italy to receive a medical degree. She worked in the fields of psychiatry, education and anthropology. She believed that each child is born with a unique potential to be revealed, rather than as a "blank slate" waiting to be written upon. Her main contributions to the work of those of us raising and educating children are in these areas:

- Preparing the most natural and life supporting environment for the child
- Observing the child living freely in this environment
- Continually adapting the environment in order that the child may fulfill his greatest potential -- physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually

THE EARLY YEARS

Maria Montessori was always a little ahead of her time. At age thirteen, against the wishes of her father but with the support of her mother, she began to attend a boys' technical school. After seven years of engineering she began pre-med and, in 1896 became a physician. In her work at the University of Rome psychiatric clinic

Dr. Montessori developed an interest in the treatment of special needs children and, for several years, she worked, wrote, and spoke on their behalf.

In 1907 she was given the opportunity to study "normal" children, taking charge of fifty poor children of the dirty, desolate streets of the San Lorenzo slum on the outskirts of Rome. The news of the unprecedented success of her work in this Casa dei Bambini "House of Children" soon spread around the world, people coming from far and wide to see the children for themselves. Dr. Montessori was as astonished as anyone at the realized potential of these children:

Supposing I said there was a planet without schools or teachers, study was unknown, and yet the inhabitants - doing nothing but living and walking about - came to know all things, to carry in their minds the whole of learning: would you not think I was romancing? Well, just this, which seems so fanciful as to be nothing but the invention of a fertile imagination, is a reality. It is the child's way of learning. This is the path he follows. He learns everything without knowing he is learning it, and in doing so passes little from the unconscious to the conscious, treading always in the paths of joy and love.



Introduction

Welcome to Island Montessori School! We are pleased that you have selected a Montessori education for your child and want to make the experience a fulfilling one for you and your child.

Our facility offers programs for children ages 3 (fully potty trained) through 7 years of age. Our youngest students must turn three by August 31, 2021. Our school hours are from 8:15 am to 2:45 pm, Monday through Friday. We do offer 7:45 am early drop off for families who are in great need.

Island Montessori School is a nonprofit preschool that seeks diversity in its student/parent body, faculty, staff, administration, and board. IMS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or any category protected by law, in its recruitment of students, recruitment of staff, educational policies, employment practices and all other school administered procedures and programs.

The Board of Directors and Staff welcome your comments and suggestions. Please address them to:

Island Montessori Children's School
6339 Carolina Beach Road
Wilmington, NC 28412
Carrie O'Brien Dworshak-Director
(910) 796-3003
carrie@im.school



Mission Statement: Our mission at Island Montessori School is to create a Montessori community that respects each child as an individual and fosters in each student respect for self and others, joy in discovery, independence, communal responsibility, and a peaceful approach to problem solving.

Island Montessori School guides the growth and development of the whole child in an environment that:

- Fosters a love of learning
- Maximizes individual potential
- Promotes academic excellence
- Inspires creativity
- Celebrates diversity
- Encourages mutual respect
- Nurtures compassion and humanitarianism
- Advocates stewardship of the environment
- Graduates responsible, productive citizens of the world

"To assist a child we must provide him with an environment which will enable him to develop freely."

-Maria Montessori

The First Day of School

On the first day of school, your child may be somewhat tearful and have some misgivings about going to school. This is a natural response to a new situation. Your child will have already met the teacher and visited the classroom, so we ask that you smile assuredly, say goodbye and continue to drive through the carpool line. Prolonged goodbyes often increase, rather than alleviate, a child's anxiety. The teacher (staff member) greeting the students during drop-off will help the child enter the classroom. The children soon become accustomed to this morning ritual.

During the first two weeks of school, also known as the orientation period, each child will be gradually introduced to the classroom environment. Your child will be shown where the bathroom is, where to put lunch boxes and water bottles, and what the general classroom procedures and rules are. Your child will also be making new friends and getting to know the teacher. It is possible, therefore, that during these first weeks of adjustment, your child may temporarily regress in certain areas. This is normal behavior.

As your child becomes more familiar with the school environment and routine, a cycle of activity will emerge. This may be observed not only during a day's time span, but also over a period of a year. During this time, your child's emotional, social, physical, and intellectual development will



most likely progress in spurts rather than in a continuous linear pattern. Given this, we try to view the total child from a broad, long-term perspective.

In the event that your child begins to cry and does not want to enter the school or to leave you, please try not to be upset. This reaction is not unique, and often the parent's concern for the child transfers into the child's anxiety. We would advise that the best way to handle this difficulty would be to say goodbye as kindly and firmly as you can, give a kiss and leave quickly. The teacher will take loving care of your child and comfort him. **Lingering in the drop off line will only prolong trust between your child and teacher.** With encouragement, your child will learn to say farewell, enjoy his school day and look forward to your return.

Potty Trained

All children must be fully potty trained to enter the school program. Pull-ups are not allowed. The child must be able to use the facilities independently. Teachers are available to help with buckles and snaps if needed.

Arrival & Dismissal

Arrival

Please make every effort to be on time. Classes start promptly at 8:30. Your child will miss an important part of the day by being late. Doors open at 8:15 am. For parents in need of early drop off, our staff provides early care from 7:45am – 8:15am.

Please enter the charter/children's school main campus off Carolina Beach Road and bear right to drive in the designated line to drop your child off at the children's school main entrance gateway. A staff member will greet your child at the car upon arrival. At this time, we are not able to allow parents to walk their child into the building.

Dismissal

Half-Time Primary-	12:45 pm
Full-Time Primary/Kindergarten Students-	2:45 pm

Dismissal: Please enter the main campus off Carolina Beach Road and drive in the designated line and pull up to the children's school main entrance gateway. A staff member will bring your child to the car to greet you and say their goodbyes for the day. Please note: Only adults who are listed on the Emergency Contact Form will be allowed to pick up your child. Adults listed on the Emergency Contact Form will need to provide picture ID on their first visit.

Please place your child's car seat in the left back seat of your car for convenience. Once your child is in the car, please pull up and buckle him/her up.



Attendance

Regular attendance of the children is a vital requirement of our school program. The children who will benefit the most from the school are the ones who attend regularly. If your child cannot attend school for any reason, please let us know by calling the school's main line at **910-796-3003**.

If your child arrives late or is leaving early, please park your car and call the office at (910) 796-3003. A staff member will escort your child to the appropriate place.

Kindergarten students are part of the Charter School and must follow attendance policy. More than 10 unexcused absences can result in a meeting with the Director and teacher and 20 or more absences can result in retention (determined by Head of School).

Birthdays

The moment of birth, the beginning of the child's own personal timeline is of great importance and we celebrate this day at school. As a community, the children gather together honoring the birthday child by telling the story of where and when he/she was born, and of important events of his/her childhood. As the teacher tells the story of the child's life, he walks slowly around a lit candle – which represents the sun – while holding a globe – which represents the earth – to celebrate the number of years of his/her life. Due to Covid, in person parent participation will not take place at this time. Please contact your child's teacher for more details.

Your child will be showered with many gifts on his birthday, which can sometimes turn the child inward. One way for your child to express love and thankfulness on this special day is for him to bring a gift to the class, such as a plant, fresh cut flowers, class wish list item, or a book. ***NO cakes, cupcakes, candy, cookies, and sugary snacks will be allowed.***

Calendar

Island Montessori School does not follow the New Hanover County School calendar for the 2021/2022 school year. Please keep a copy of our school calendar on hand to be aware of holidays and other days when our school will be closed. Calendar can be accessed on school website www.im.school



Communication

Please advise the school of any change of student address or phone numbers that may occur during the year.

In the event of a significant change in the student's home, please consider informing your child's teacher as soon as possible. Common causes of distress include the following: moving, a parent's absence from the home, separation/divorce, an illness or hospitalization, and an accident or death in the family.

Conferences

Student conferences will be scheduled two times during the school year, as well as any additional conferences that may be needed to ensure a good communication between the child's parents, the teachers, and the school. These conferences may be via Zoom.

Conflict Resolution

In most cases, if a parent or guardian has a school-related problem, question, or complaint, he/she should communicate the complaint to the child's Lead Teacher. The parent/guardian should feel free to communicate openly with his child's Lead Teacher. In unusual circumstances, when it is not appropriate to communicate a complaint directly to the Lead Teacher or the Director, then a parent/guardian may address their complaint directly to the Island Montessori Head of School or board president.

Dress Code

It is suggested that children wear easy to launder play clothes. Although children will wear aprons and smocks when working with water and paints, accidents will happen. Children will avoid potentially messy works if they are overdressed and afraid to get dirty.

Choose clothing that will be easy for the child to take off and put on themselves – as this will facilitate independence especially when the child is using the bathroom. As a good rule, ask yourself if the child can put it on himself in the morning.

Avoid clothes with cartoon characters and/or logos, overalls, sun suits, pants with heavy snaps or buttons, tights or leotards and belts. Also, clogs and flip-flops are not suggested as they tend to be dangerous when children are running and playing. Closed toe shoes are best for indoor and outdoor activities.



We ask each parent to send in a complete change of clothes for your child (including underwear and socks) labeled in a gallon-size ziplock bag. Remember, as the seasons change, the spare clothing will need to be changed out to reflect current weather conditions and growth.

The children will play outside each day, weather permitting. In cold weather, please send a jacket, gloves or mittens, and a hat for hoodless garments. When raining, please send your child to school in rain boots and a rain jacket. **Please label everything!**

Discipline Policy

Procedures and classroom rules are structured to foster the growth of self-direction and self-discipline. These expectations are based on three simple rules:

Respect Self

Respect Others

Respect the Environment

Our classroom management presumes that behavior will be followed by natural and logical consequences. If a child behaves inappropriately in the classroom we:

- Remind the child of the classroom rules
- Separate the child from the situation
- Ask the child to put away work that is being mishandled
- Ask the child to move to a different location
- Ask the child to come and stay by the teacher (to observe others working)
- Remove the child from the classroom until the child chooses to re-enter the classroom with appropriate behavior, or until a parent has been contacted to pick up the child. Your child will continue to be visually supervised by the director or another staff member.

We minimize the use of negative phrases, such as “No, you can’t do that,” and substitute positive language. For example:

“You may do the counting work after you have put away your puzzle.”

“If you want to continue pouring, you must use the materials carefully.”

The focus is not on the adults’ power to control the room, but rather on the child’s power and will to make successful decisions.

Repeated behavioral problems will result in a request for a parent-teacher conference. This conference will enable us to try and solve the problem together, and help us gain insight as to the possible causes of the behavior. If the behavior does not resolve itself, the family may be asked to withdraw the child from the school.

Children at Island Montessori School will not receive physical punishment.



Disciplinary Action

Island Montessori Children's School believes in a positive discipline approach. The teachers guide and direct children toward appropriate behavior through direct lessons of grace and courtesy, modeling respect for one another. Our ultimate goal is to assist the child in developing self control and problem solving attitudes, using their words. Most importantly, we encourage the child to have positive feelings toward him or herself. In order for a child to respect and love others, one must respect and love themselves.

In the event of a student causing harm either physical or emotional to another student or teacher, the parents/guardians will be notified of the incident by the child's teacher.

In the event of a second incident, the parents/guardians will be notified and asked that they take their child home for the remaining portion of the day. A conference will be scheduled with the child's teacher and Director of school. Together, parents/guardians will develop and document a plan of action, implement corrective procedures and monitor progress.

If the child or parents/guardians are unwilling to comply with the steps outlined or the incident occurs a third time it is with the director's discretion to dismiss the child from our school program. In this event, the Director will determine the termination date and give the parents/guardians 24 hours notice.

Corporal Punishment

The IMS Board of Directors prohibits the use of corporal punishment in any form.

For the purpose of this policy, corporal punishment shall be defined as any kind of physical punishment inflicted upon the body of the student. Any employee shall be responsible for notifying the Director of any observed or suspected incidence of corporal punishment.

School personnel may use reasonable force to control behavior or to remove a person from the scene in those situations when necessary, such as:

1. To quell a disturbance threatening injury to others.
2. To obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects within the control of a student.
3. For self-defense.
4. For the protection of persons or property
5. To maintain order on school property, in the classroom, or at a school- related activity on or off school property.

LEGAL REF: NCGS 115C-390-392



Emergencies

In the event of an accident or illness, the school will not hesitate to seek proper care for the child. The child's individual emergency instructions on file with the child's teacher will be consulted immediately and the parent or emergency contact person called. Please be sure to keep emergency contact information up to date as well as the phone number of a person available during school hours.

The Main Line is 910-796-3003

Enrollment

Enrollment at Island Montessori Children's School will be based on a first-come, first-serve basis. A one-time non-refundable \$50.00 application fee must be paid before we can accept applications. A non-refundable \$135.00 will be collected to hold a seat in a class. This \$135.00 will be put toward the student's Montessori material/snack fee of \$270.00 that is collected at the beginning of every school year. The balance is due the first day of school, August 24th.

Before allowing your child to start at Island Montessori School, all enrollment forms must be filled out completely by the parent or guardian. A Parent packet will be given to all parents at our orientation prior to the first day of school. The school is required to have all of the following documents prior to the child's first day of school:

- Child's Application
- Child's Medical Report
- Emergency Form
- Handbook Agreement
- Media Form
- Disclaimer Form
- Authorized Pick Up Form
- After School Transportation Form

Please provide us with updates on your child as changes occur. This includes changes to immunizations, parent/guardian contact information, emergency contacts, etc. It is vital that we are able to contact you at any given time.



Food

Children need a balanced diet to function well at school. Be especially careful to limit sweets and to provide a protein-rich breakfast. **Each child needs to bring a water bottle filled with only water and labeled with the child's name every day.**

Snack

A light nutritional snack will be provided by the school during the morning work cycle. Water is readily available throughout the day.

Lunch

Families are responsible for providing a packed lunch for their child to eat at school. **Please make sure the lunch box is labeled with your child's name & date.**

Lunch is a happy, relaxed time at Island Montessori Children's School, as well as, an occasion for the children to practice their grace and courtesy. Preparing lunch can be a learning experience, which starts at home as you and your child prepare a well-balanced meal together. A healthful and well-balanced lunch of protein, whole grains and cereals, fruits and vegetables may include:

- **Two slices of bread or crackers with a luncheon meat, cheese, or spread in a container**
- **A fresh apple and carrot sticks**
- **A wholesome protein source**
- **Water will be provided, so no other drink is necessary**

We feel that a healthful, well-balanced lunch gives the child what he needs to be at his best at school. Foods high in sugar such as juices, cookies, and candy impair that balance, and make it difficult for the child to enjoy a positive and productive day. **Please do not include candy, juice, cookies, or other foods high in sugar in your child's lunch.**

Health Policy

Please see Covid Handbook for more information.



HEAD LICE POLICY

Island Montessori School will follow the New Hanover County Schools lice policy. The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines regarding the control of head lice in Island Montessori School. The scope of this policy also applies to IMS personnel.

Procedures

Upon identification of lice on a student, the school employee shall contact the Director to verify head lice. The Director shall:

- Directly examine the hair and scalp for lice and nits, especially at the nape of the neck and around the ears.
- If lice are verified, notify the student's parent/guardian and encourage picking up student to go home for treatment. A letter shall be sent home to parents of students in the classroom notifying them that lice have been verified in their student's classroom.
- Reassure student that head lice are not a social disgrace and can be eliminated.
- Send home instruction sheets for lice control; "Stop Head Lice" and "Alternative Treatment for Head Lice". (<http://www.nhcs.net/forms.htm>) Answer all parent/guardian questions regarding lice treatment, removal of nits and home cleaning that may cause recurrence of lice. (**Nits are head lice eggs – eggs are laid by the adult female louse and hatch in seven to ten (7-10) days from a viable nit (egg casing), which appears as a clear, grayish ellipsoid, firmly attached to the hair shaft at the junction of the scalp with 1/4" or less. Viable eggs camouflage with pigment to match the hair color of the host. Hatched or empty casings (nits) can be distinguished by the milky white color and are easier to see. The empty nits are seen on the hair shaft further away from the scalp than the viable nits**)
- **Requirement for student to return to school**
 - PARENT MUST ACCOMPANY STUDENT TO SCHOOL.
 - Upon student's arrival at school after lice identification, the Director will examine the student's hair and scalp.
 - If student has not been treated for lice or lice are present, the student will be sent home.

"No School" Announcements

Emergency Closing

When IMCS must dismiss students unexpectedly due to adverse weather conditions, cancel or delay school or other types of emergencies, the important information will be announced via School Cues, social media, and our school website. **IMCS may choose to open or close independently of the public school system.**

Please do not call the school office for this information.



Visitors

Due to Covid restrictions, visitors are not allowed at this time.

Parent Participation

Island Montessori School believes that the education of a child depends upon the positive collaboration between the school staff and the child's parents.

All parents are encouraged to:

- Attend school-sponsored workshops
- Read the classroom's newsletter, website and the school handbook
- Educate yourself on the Montessori Method of Education*
- Check the school website and Facebook page for information and updates
- Stay in communication with your child's teacher

*Suggested Montessori Books to Read:

Maria Montessori, Her Life and Work / E.M. Standing

Montessori, A Modern Approach / Paula Lillard

Montessori Today / Paula Lillard

The Secret of Childhood / Maria Montessori

Montessori from the Start / Paula Lillard

How to Raise an Amazing Child the Montessori Way / Tim Seldin

The Discovery of the Child / Maria Montessori

To Educate the Human Potential / Maria Montessori

Spontaneous Activity in Education / Maria Montessori

Personal Belongings

Please leave candy, toys, and gum at home. Only send in those items listed on the School Supply List, and check with your child's teacher before sending in any additional items. Please mark or label personal items and clothing brought to school for ease of identification.

For nappers, bedding and a small blanket will be provided by the school at this time.



Responsibility to Report Abuse/Neglect

“Abuse occurs when a parent or caregiver injures or allows another to injure a child physically or emotionally. Abuse may also occur when a parent or caregiver puts a child at risk of serious injury or allows another to put a child at risk of serious injury. Neglect occurs when a child does not receive proper care, supervision, or discipline, or when a child is abandoned. North Carolina law requires any person who suspects child abuse or neglect to report the case to the county department of social services. In addition, any person can call the Division of Child Development at 919.662.4499 or 1.800.859.0829 and make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect in a child care operation. Reports can be made anonymously. A person cannot be held liable for a report made in good faith” (North Carolina Child Care Law and Rules; November 2000).

Transportation

Transportation is not provided.

Tuition Payment Policy

This section is for our Preschool students only. This information does not pertain to Kindergarten students, who are part of our public, tuition-free charter school.

Registration Fee: There is a non-refundable, one-time \$50 registration fee due with each application.

Montessori Materials and Supply Fee: **Once you have been accepted into the program,** there is an annual, non-refundable Montessori Materials and Supply Fee of \$270 per child. This fee is used to cover the high cost of managing a Montessori classroom. **High quality Montessori materials are essential for a true Montessori experience and we pride ourselves in choosing only the finest consumable products (paint, clay, markers, pencils, paper etc.) in our classrooms. Montessori believed that if children were able to experience well-made, beautiful materials in their classroom environments, they would learn to appreciate these intrinsic values in the world around them as well. A light nutritional snack will be provided by the school during the morning work cycle.**

Tuition Payments: Parents have two options for paying tuition: 1) pay in full and receive a 5% discount, or 2) pay in ***9 monthly installments***, due by the first of each month, September through May. A \$30 late fee will be added to any tuition payment not received by the 5th of the month. The 9 monthly installments are due regardless of the actual days in any particular month or days/hours in actual attendance and are due on the first day of each month.



A full installment of tuition is due the first of each month, with the first payment September 1st and the last payment May 1st. The \$30 late fee will be charged after noon starting on the 5th day of the month, and then \$5.00 a day after that. If fees are unpaid one week after the due date, Island Montessori School reserves the right to put a hold on your child's attendance until full payment is made. Please speak with us if there's a reason you're unable to make timely tuition payments. We do understand that at times there will be circumstances out of your control. Please contact us at the earliest time possible so we can work together to set up a payment plan. Checks that do not clear the bank will receive a \$30 charge, in addition to any other charges occurred. Continual delinquency may result in enrollment withdrawal.

Please note: Island Montessori School reserves the right to change its tuition policy as deemed necessary.

2021-2022 Student Tuition

½ time yearly tuition cost is \$5950.00

Full time yearly tuition cost is \$7500.00

Sibling Discount: Families with more than one child enrolled at Island Montessori Children's School will receive a 10% discount off of the enrollment cost of the second child in the family.

Please consider holidays and weekends as you send in your payments. At this time, we are able to accept payments via check or money order. Credit card payments can be made at the front office at the Children's School. Credit card payments cannot be accepted over the phone.

Credit Card Use Policy: Island Montessori would like to make it convenient to make tuition payments. We accept MasterCard, Visa, American Express and Discover. ***There will be a convenience fee of \$15.00 applied to the payment if a credit card is used to make a tuition payment.*** Only tuition will be able to be paid with a credit card. Cards must be swiped and present at time of payment. Card numbers cannot be manually entered.

Checks can be mailed to: IMCS, 6339 Carolina Beach Road, Wilmington, NC 28412. You can also hand checks to staff members in the car line or come into the front entrance to pay at the office window.

After Care

Island Montessori Children's School is pleased to partner with AlphaBest to provide after school care for our families. More information will be sent directly from AlphaBest.



ISLAND MONTESSORI SCHOOL WITHDRAWAL AND TERMINATION POLICY

Island Montessori Children’s School is a Montessori school for young children. **We do not consider ourselves a “child care facility” in the traditional sense.** In that regard, when you register for our program, you do so for the academic year. We do not permit withdrawals during the school year, absent extenuating and severe circumstances. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to, loss of employment, death in the family, moving from the metropolitan Wilmington area, or request by the Director or board of directors of the school that the family withdraws. Other than an exception approved by the Director or the Board of Directors, each family is committed to paying the school for the entire school year for each child. To receive approval to withdraw for an extreme circumstance, the parent or guardian must file a written request with the Director or Board of Directors requesting permission to withdraw. The written request must be dated and signed.

If, however, an extreme exception exists, and if appropriate approval is received, the family is required to give the school 30 days’ notice of an intent to withdraw and the family will be responsible for payment for those 30 days. You will then not be assessed for the remainder of the school year.

Additionally, if the family paid in full for the school year, no refund is available unless there are extenuating and severe circumstances. These will be determined by the Head of School and Director. Their decision is final.



Disclaimer

This handbook has been prepared to introduce parents and guardians to Island Montessori Children's School and to acquaint them with the policies that apply to enrollment. These policies are not intended to provide fixed rules for dealing with all issues that arise at the school but rather, they set forth general guidelines, subject to amendment. In addition, policies and procedures are changed from time to time as the needs of our school dictate.

This handbook is neither intended to serve as contract nor is it intended to create enforceable rights on the part of families. Therefore, Island Montessori Children's School expressly disclaims any contractual intent by the printing and distribution of this handbook. The school retains the right to release preschool students from enrollment at any time and for any reason. Enrollment at the school (unless otherwise agreed to in writing) is an at-will agreement and any representation by school personnel to the contrary is unauthorized and invalid.

*Thank you for choosing
Island Montessori Children's School.
We look forward to a successful school year.*