



PARENT HANDBOOK

2011-2012

311 Castle Pines Parkway * Castle Pines * CO 80108-8101

- Attendance Line: 303-387-5627
- Main Number: 303-387-5625
 - Fax: 303-387-5626
- Weather Hotline: 303-387-7669 *Rock Canyon Feeder Area*

Website: www.dcsmontessori.org

[Email Links](#)

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MISSION

The Mission of the DCSM is to provide students with an opportunity to acquire an education based on an authentic and accredited curriculum founded on the educational philosophy of Maria Montessori.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Primary students are Preschool and Kindergarten students.

Elementary students are from 1st through 6th grade. Elementary students are further divided into two groups...

Lower Elementary or "**Lower EI**" students are 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade students.

Upper Elementary or "**Upper EI**" students are 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students.

DCSM is the acronym used for DCSM.

HOS is the acronym used for Head of School (our term for Principal)

The District will refer to the Douglas County School District

ADMISSIONS

AGES OF CHILDREN ACCEPTED

All children regardless of race, gender, national origin or religion are eligible for enrollment. DCSM accepts children ages 3 through 6th grade. All children must be out of diapers and pull-ups and toilet trained. Children with special medical conditions requiring diapering will be accommodated.

APPLYING TO THE SCHOOL

All students will be admitted through a lottery process. Lottery information can be found on our website. All current DCSM students maintain their enrollment. The lottery process fills vacancies.

For students in the lottery, preference will be given in the following situations and order:

1. Siblings will be given preference if a space is available in a particular grade. Siblings of in-district students will be accepted first, followed by siblings of out-of-district students. If a sibling space is offered, and accepted, and later declined by the parent, or the student is withdrawn, the student is no longer considered a sibling for future years.
2. Staff member children will be given preference not to exceed 10% of the population of the school, with in-district accepted first, followed by those out-of-district.
3. Students new to the school with previous experience in a Montessori educational program will be given preference for grades 1st – 6th, with in-district accepted first, followed by those out of district.
4. Students who do not meet any of the above criteria will be accepted based on space availability in a particular grade level with in-district students being accepted first and out-of-district students being accepted second.

Clarification of Program: DCSM's educational program begins at the 3 year old level. Once students are in the program, following state mandates, the students have the right to continue in DCSM until the last grade offered by the school. DCSM's Primary program, including 3 year olds, 4 year olds, and Kindergarteners, is tuition based, with Kindergarten partially state funded. In order to ensure access to our public education programs, DCSM is committed to offering a minimum of five (5) scholarships annually to its Primary program based on Free and Reduced lunch qualifications. That is, a child whose family qualifies for Free Lunch is eligible for a Full Scholarship, or a child whose family qualifies for a

Reduced Lunch is eligible for a Partial (50%) Scholarship. Children will have to qualify on an annual basis for scholarships.

CHILD CARE PROGRAM ADMISSION

Vacancies in our Child Care programs are filled via the following plan:

1. Staff with children at our school are given the first right to vacancies.
2. Families currently using our child-care programs are given the second right to vacancies for the new school year.
3. Families with students currently enrolled at DCSM are given the third right to vacancies for the new school year.
4. Finally, as new families are contacted about vacancies to our school (via the Lottery Program), they will be offered space in our Child Care programs on a first come, first served basis.
5. After the initial offerings, parents who decide they are interested in enrolling in one of our Child Care Programs may apply at any time. All applications will be considered in the order in which we receive them.

COMMITMENT

We hope that you, the parents, have evaluated the needs for your child, and in selecting our school are prepared to make a commitment for at least three years, as the stability of our classrooms is very important to each and every child.

NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

Once you enroll your child at our school, at the Kindergarten or higher grade levels, we become your assigned school. Your child will be able to enroll in their neighborhood school when changing levels (when entering the first year of Elementary, Middle*, and High School) without any special processes. To enter a Middle School which begins at 6th grade, you must enroll your child prior to January the year before they are to attend. If your child attends elementary school (K - 6) here, DCSM is your neighborhood Elementary school.

OPEN ENROLLMENT – DISTRICT POLICY

Applications and information can be found online at the district's Website at www.dcsdk12.org.

SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Kindergarten through 6th

We are able to serve the needs of special needs students with an entire Special Education team available. Services will be provided to all students who are eligible. We do not have the staff to meet the needs of children with severe disabilities.

Preschool

Although we make every effort to accommodate children with disabilities, we are not able to provide necessary services to children with special needs.

We are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

You must display your child's name card when picking up your child. You will be provided 4 name cards for free at the beginning of the school year or upon your child's enrollment. Additional name cards may be requested by contacting the office at 303.387.5625 – there is a \$5 fee for 2 additional cards.

Not permitted on our property (even in our parking lot): Dogs, Smoking, Drugs or Alcohol

Always turn right out of our parking lot during these arrival and dismissal hours.

ARRIVAL (8:10AM-8:30AM)

Students are not allowed on campus prior to 8:10 am, unless they are enrolled in Before Care. They are NOT allowed to wait in the vestibule unsupervised. **Students are allowed into the classroom beginning at 8:15.** Your child will be late if they arrive at school after 8:30; however they will not receive a tardy slip until 8:35.

We have 470 students who all need to be dropped off in a 20 minute period. As soon as you enter our parking lot, cease your cell phone conversations, ensure your children are prepared to exit your vehicle, and say your goodbyes. This way your child can quickly exit your vehicle and enter our school. Please do not continue any conversation with your child once they have exited your vehicle.

Our staff must come into the school to begin teaching at 8:30. If you arrive after 8:30, you must park, and walk your child into the building. Then check them in at the office.

All Preschoolers

- Arrival begins no earlier than 8:10 and ends at 8:30
- If you have a preschool student, please follow this drop off procedure for all children in your vehicle, regardless of their age.
- Have your barcode Name Cards ready to hand to our staff member (you'll receive these on your first day of school)
- Preschool parents follow the blue "P" Line (on the left) all the way to the Stop sign (on your left) with the blue "P Stop" painted on the driveway.
- **NEW** – the first cars to arrive should remain stopped at the stop sign until directed by a staff member to pull forward at 8:10am.
- You will continue to be directed forward to the Southwest doors when space is available.
- Remain in your car, the primary staff will scan your barcodes, and will help your child out of the car and direct them into the building.

Kindergarteners – 6th graders:

- Arrival begins no earlier than 8:10 and ends at 8:30
- Follow the Yellow "E" line around our parking lot to the southeast doors. You'll stay to your right and hug the curb near the school. Stop at the Yellow "E Stop" painted on the driveway (near our Southeast doors).
- When Kindergarten and elementary students arrive, they enter through the East front door and walk to their classrooms.

- Children should exit the car as soon as you are at the sidewalk anywhere alongside our building.
- Please wait in line and you will soon be directed out of the parking lot after you drop off your children.
- If you need to come into the school for any reason, **even if it's just for a minute**, please park your car in a designated parking space and check in at the office.

BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Only students who are enrolled in Before (7:00am-8:15am) and After (3:20pm – 6:00pm) School Care may utilize these programs. We do not allow “drop-ins” to any of our Child Care Programs.

CARPOOLING / PLAY DATES

We are so glad many of our families choose to carpool with others, but parents should know the names of the other family members who may pick up their children. You should also know the home, work and cell phone numbers of your carpool families, and always be sure to let the office staff know who you carpool with. If your child is bringing a friend home from school or if your child is going home with a friend, be sure to send a note to school to let the teacher know that you give your permission. Also, be sure all parents involved exchange phone numbers – remember to get any information you might need if there is an emergency. Due to Federal regulations we are unable to give you any phone numbers not published in the school directory.

DELAYED START / SCHOOL CLOSURES DUE TO WEATHER

Because of Colorado's unpredictable weather, The District has adopted storm emergency procedures. DCSM has chosen to follow The District weather procedures. School closures are announced over most local radio and television stations, on the district website and the district hot line. Note: we are NOT “Castle Rock Montessori.”

The Weather Hotline number:

Dial 303-387-7669 (SNOW)

The district website is:

www.dscdk12.org

We are in the Douglas County School District - Rock Canyon Feeder Area

If a “Delayed Start” is announced, DCSM will begin at 10:00am and arrival will begin at 9:40am. These changes will be announced on TV and radio, as well as the hotline. Parents are encouraged to make emergency plans with their children in the event of a modified starting or ending time. Before school care will begin at 8:30am. Only students who are enrolled in our Before and After Care programs may use these programs. After Care, after school events, and field trips will be canceled on early dismissal days AND when the District cancels after school activities in our area.

** Any time The District cancels After School Activities in our area; our After School Care program will also be cancelled.

For details on the District policy refer to:

<https://www.dscdk12.org/schoolsafetyandsecurity/weatherclosureinformation/index.htm>

DISMISSAL - PRESCHOOL (11:30AM – 11:45AM)

- Follow the Yellow “E” line around our parking lot to the southwest doors. You’ll stay to your right and hug the curb near the school. **NEW** - Stop at the Yellow “E Stop” painted on the driveway (near our Southeast doors), and wait to be scanned and directed forward by a staff member.
- Have your barcode Name Cards ready to hand to our staff member (you’ll receive these on your first day of school)

- We must have written permission for adults other than parents/legal guardians to pick up Preschool students. If you haven't obtained a barcode for this other adult, they will need to walk into the school, show their photo ID, in order to pick up your child.
- Pickup begins at 11:30 and ends at 11:45
- The staff will bring your child to your car and will scan your barcodes.
- As soon as your child is in the vehicle, please pull forward to allow them to fasten their seat belt. Our staff is not permitted to buckle children into their car seats. Pulling forward allows us to assist other parents more quickly.
- **Do you walk to school or to the building to pick up your child?** In order to keep our dismissal orderly and safe, we have established these procedures:
 - If you drive to school, ensure you are parked in a legal parking space and are not blocking any others in our lot. Do not park in Fire Lanes, do not double-park.
 - Bring your barcode, photo ID and come in to the office and sign your child out.
 - You will wait in the lobby and once the dismissal process has begun, we will page your child. Your child will be escorted to the lobby by a staff member..

DISMISSAL - (3:20PM – 3:40PM)

Preschoolers in Extended Day Care and Kindergarteners

- Primary parents follow the blue "P" Line all the way to the Stop sign (on your left) with the blue "P Stop" painted on the driveway. You will be directed forward to the Southwest doors when space is available.
- **NEW** – the first cars to arrive should remain stopped at the stop sign until directed by a staff member to pull forward at 3:20am.
- Have your barcode Name Cards (preschoolers) ready to hand to our staff member (you'll receive these on your first day of school). Have student name cards visible in your front or passenger side window for other students.
- You will continue to be directed forward to the Southwest doors when space is available.
- Remain in your car, the primary staff will scan your barcodes, and will help your child out of the car and direct them into the building.
- We must have written permission for adults other than parents/legal guardians to pick up Preschool students. If you haven't obtained a barcode for this other adult, they will need to walk into the school, show their photo ID, in order to pick up your child.
- As soon as your child is in the vehicle, please pull forward to allow them to fasten their seat belt. Our staff is not permitted to buckle children into their car seats. Pulling forward allows us to assist other parents more quickly.
- If you have a preschool or Kindergarten student, please follow this pick up procedure for all children in your vehicle, regardless of their age. Older children will be waiting for you near their younger siblings.

Elementary – 1st-6th Graders

- The children are dismissed at 3:20 from the Southeast doors. They will line up to wait for their cars to arrive at the sidewalk area.
- Display your name card so it is visible through your front windshield or passenger side window.

- **Possession of a child's name card constitutes your permission to pick up your child.** If you have given written permission for another adult to pick up your child, but did not give them a name card, they must come into the office with their photo ID to pick up your child.
- After picking up your child, please wait for the line to move forward and exit the parking lot

DO'S AND DON'TS OF ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

- Please stay in your car!! ~ Our staff will help your Preschoolers in and out of the car.
- Pull up snugly to the car in front! We need to get cars off the street and onto the school site.
- DO NOT turn left out of our parking lot during the busy arrival and dismissal times ~ If you need to go east on Castle Pines Parkway, turn right just before the Walgreens – that road loops around to Lagae where you will have a traffic signal to get onto eastbound Castle Pines Parkway. If you're returning to the Highlands Ranch area, head west to Monarch then north to Quebec.
- Be ready when it's your turn.
- Find a Carpool! It's a great stress reliever!
- Please Be Patient!!! Please understand that we are a commuter school, and the Arrival/Dismissal procedure is a part of the package. It will take about 1 month for all the families to settle into the routine and things will be much improved!
- DO - Show respect and patience to each other and the staff present as you are modeling this behavior to the children.
- DO - Remember that these procedures have been designed to maintain a safe environment for students at all times.
- DO - Take pleasure in the time you spend with your child on the way to and from school. Use this time wisely to your family's benefit.
- DO – Use crosswalks and sidewalks when walking and wait to be directed to cross..
- DO NOT - Ask your children to cross over any lane of traffic to get into or out of your car
- DO – Park only in a designated, marked parking space if you need to leave your car for any reason (even if it is "just for a minute"). Most of our driveway is designated as a Fire Lane – there are signs marking these areas – you might be ticketed if you park in any Fire Lane.
- DO NOT - Ask your children to enter or exit from driver's side.
- DO NOT drop off or pick up students at the island in our parking lot.

EARLY DISMISSAL

If you need to pick up a child early from school you will come into the office and sign the student out. We cannot call ahead to dismiss students, so please plan ahead and arrive early enough to pick up your child. As a matter of courtesy, you should leave a voicemail for their teacher. If you are picking up your child early, please do so before 11:15 AM for preschool and 3:00 PM for elementary. After this time, it is difficult due to dismissal procedures.

LATE PICKUP FEES

There is a \$1.00 per student fee for each minute a student is left at the school after 11:45 (for Preschoolers) or after 3:45 (for Kindergarteners through 6th graders). This fee is charged REGARDLESS of the reason for late pick up. We will call

parents first, then emergency contacts if necessary. If a child is not picked up within 1 hour after dismissal time we are required to call the Sheriff's Department.

LEAVING OUR CAMPUS - (3:20PM – 3:40PM)

If your child is walking, riding their bike, or by any other means **leaving our parking area on their own**, we must have permission from you to allow them to do so. This includes leaving our parking area to meet your car elsewhere. Please send in a note to the effect of the note below, and be sure to date and sign the note. A new note is required each school year. Please understand that we will send your child home regardless of the weather conditions outside.

Sample note:

I / We give our permission for our child, Lance Armstrong to ride his bike home or walk home each day after school is dismissed. We understand that Lance will ride his bike home or walk home regardless of the weather outside. This permission is given for the remainder of the school year.

Signed _____ Dated: _____

ASBESTOS

DCSM is an asbestos free school. However, to comply with State and Federal regulations, we have an Asbestos Abatement Management Plan available for review at the office.

ATTENDANCE

Our school maintains attendance on The District attendance database. This constitutes a legal register of attendance. When your child is absent for any reason, call the attendance line at 303-387-5627 within 24 hours of your child's absence. Our attendance line is a voice messaging system; you may call at any time of the day or night to leave us a message. **If we do not receive a phone call from you, we will notify you of your child's absence the day your child is absent.** You select the method of our notice by clicking "Change Contact Info" in the left column on the Parent Portal. If you do not call us within 24 hours of your child's absence, your child's attendance will reflect an unexcused absence.

Please note that **Colorado State Law limits absences to less than 4 unexcused absences in one month and less than 10 unexcused absences per school year.** Disciplinary actions and illnesses are considered excused absences. Please take this into account when planning family vacations during the school year, as they are unexcused absences. Excessive absences, exceeding Colorado State Law, limits our students' ability to be successful and therefore may result in disciplinary action.

TARDINESS

Your child will be considered Tardy if they arrive at school at or after 8:35 am. They must be brought into the school office and be signed in on the Late Arrival Sheet by the person bringing them to school. Students may not sign themselves in or out. A Tardy will be considered unexcused if an adult does not sign them in.

Habitual Tardiness, **more than 10 tardies in a school year**, may result in disciplinary action, as this provides a consistent interruption to our classroom environments, limiting our ability to be successful with all of our students.

If you know your child will be tardy ahead of time (for a Doctor or Dental appointment, for example) please call the attendance line at 303-387-5627 and be sure to let us know if your child will be having a school lunch so that we may add them in our lunch count for the day.

If inclement weather causes us to delay taking attendance, we will post this information on our sign – if your child is K-6, they can walk into school unaccompanied by an adult.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

BIRTHDAYS

Each teacher will let you know how birthday celebrations will take place in their class. Please always call your child's teacher to set up a date and time for your celebration. Teachers will let you know what their classroom policies are. Please note that it is our policy that students participate in only the Birthday celebrations of the students within their own classroom; i.e. friends and/or siblings from other classrooms are not entitled to participate in a Birthday celebration of their friends or siblings from another classroom.

BIRTHDAYS PARTY INVITATIONS

Invitations to birthday parties and other parties cannot be sent home to children via Friday Folders. Each year we publish and distribute a School Directory which parents may use to obtain the address of students at our school. The Directory is usually distributed by the end of September. Our teachers and staff are prohibited from distributing invitations for you. Thank you for your understanding.

CELL PHONES

Student cell phone usage is not allowed at school except when previously approved in writing by the Head of School. If it is necessary for your student to have a cell phone with them at school, then they will need to have it in their backpack turned off during the entirety of the school day. Students found in possession of their cell phone during the school day will:

1st Offense – Have phone taken by the staff, provided to their teacher, and returned to the student with a warning at the conclusion of the school day.

2nd Offense – Have the phone taken by the staff, provided to the Head of School, and returned to the student after parental notification.

3rd Offense (and all subsequent offenses) – Have the phone taken by the staff, provided to the Head of School, and returned to the parent.

ELECTRONICS: PDA'S, IPODS, MP3 PLAYERS, ELECTRONIC GAMES, DVD PLAYERS, ETC.

Electronics (including, but not limited to those listed above) are prohibited at our school and in our childcare program. All of these things can be enjoyed after school at home. They are all a distraction from the real point of why children are at a school—which is to learn.

FRIENDS OR SIBLINGS ATTENDING EVENTS IN OTHER CLASSROOMS

Students should participate with their classmates for all classroom education, celebrations, and other events, including field trips. For no reason should students be attending celebrations or events in other classrooms which their class (in its entirety) is not attending. Please attend each class' celebrations or events and allow the independent classroom educational experience to be the priority for all of our students.

GRADUATION / MOVING UP CELEBRATIONS

If your child is a Kg, 3rd, or 6th grade student there will be a celebration at the end of the school year. Please contact your child's teacher for the exact date and details. Usually these celebrations take place during the last week(s) of school. Please note that it is our policy that students participate in only the Graduation celebration of the students within their own classroom; i.e. friends and/or siblings from other classrooms are not entitled to participate in a Graduation celebration of their friends or siblings from another classroom.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

DCSM and its' staff are not responsible for personal items including money brought to school from home. Please make sure your child does not bring money or expensive / sentimental personal items. In general, toys are not allowed at school. Children may bring rubber balls, soccer balls, footballs, sponge type balls, jacks, for use at recess; however, these items must be labeled, and must be shared with other children.

RECESS AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

COLD WEATHER: Please make sure your children come to school with appropriate clothing for the weather outside. This includes coats, gloves, hats, and snow boots as well as a pair of inside shoes for your child to wear in the classroom on snowy days.

If there is an average of 2" or more of snow on the ground, and children want to play in the snow, they must wear snow boots. If it is snowing, children must remain indoors. Children may NEVER throw snow, snowballs, ice, etc. (including dismissal.) Children without snow boots may play on the concrete and blacktop if they have been cleared of snow. If the temperature (with the wind chill) is 20° or below, children cannot go outside.

We will have an indoor dismissal if there is: Precipitation in the air; the temperature is 20° or below; there is a tornado watch or warning. Dismissal may be halted if there is any visible lightning.

WARM WEATHER: You may wish to apply sunscreen and/or insect repellent to your child before dropping them off at school. Please see the Health section of this handbook for details.

EXCESSIVELY HOT OR INCLEMENT WEATHER: If it is raining, thunder or lightening are present/threatening, warmer than 95° or colder than 20° outside the children will remain within the building and will engage in various activities of learning and play.

SHARING DAYS

Sharing is very important to children. Each teacher will inform you as to how sharing will take place in their classroom. **The children may not bring toys to school at any time** (except as noted under "Personal Belongings" above.)

SPECIALS

Teaching multiple ages of students in the same classroom is part of the Montessori philosophy. However, our Specials Classrooms (Technology, PE, Music and Art) are not Montessori classrooms. In an attempt to create an environment where our Specials programs can blossom, and in attempt to increase our students' peer group size, we at DCSM have designed single-age Specials classrooms. Students from the same classroom will attend specials at the same time; however, each grade will attend a different class. i.e. 1st graders from your class will attend Art with 1st graders from another class, and at the same time 2nd graders from your class will attend PE in the same manner and 3rd graders will attend Technology class with other 3rd graders.

T.V. AND VIDEO VIEWING

TV and Video viewing is not a common activity in a Montessori School. They will however be used in support of educational lessons and on special occasions. Also, in the After School Program, they typically show age appropriate movies on Fridays. If you do not want your child participating in these activities, please notify their teacher in writing at the beginning of each school year.

CONCERNS AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

ADDRESSING PARENTAL CONCERNS

DCSM teaching staff, its administration and parents all want the best for all our children/students. Each individual student, family, teacher, classroom, has a unique set of interests, abilities, strengths, weaknesses, etc. which have an effect on the solving or addressing of problems, concerns or issues. Due to this, each resolution or plan will be highly specific to the given circumstances, and therefore, communication to the greater community does not serve the best interests of all our students. For these reasons, plans, problems, resolutions, issues or concerns, are expected to remain CONFIDENTIAL between parents, administration, and teaching staff.

BOARD AND GOVERNANCE CONCERNS

Everyone in the school and the general public have a right to access the DCSM Board of Directors (BOD) to address issues involving the school's charter, BOD policies, grievances, governance issues or to simply offer new ideas and suggestions. You may access the BOD in writing by addressing a letter to the DCSM Board Chairperson who will share the letter with all Board members. You may also appear personally at a regular monthly BOD meeting to speak during the "Public Comment" session of the DCSM Board agenda. Your participation and input are welcomed, please read the policy around "Public Comment", GP-12, under Board of Directors Documents on the DCSM website to ensure your topic, and format, conforms to DCSM policy. Dates of Board meetings can be obtained from the office staff, they are posted on the main entrance doors, or you may check for the dates on the school website: www.dcsmontessori.org

BOARD AND GOVERNANCE GRIEVANCE PROCESS

<i>Type of Grievance</i>	<i>1st Level</i>	<i>2nd Level</i>	<i>3rd Level</i>
DCSM Board of Directors	Formal Written Grievance to Board of Directors	Appeal to the DCSM Board or subcommittee action (second time in front of DCSM Board)	Contact The District area Administrator

*Formal written grievance, and its pertinent information regarding the issue(s), must be provided to the Chairperson of the DCSM Board of Directors (BOD) one week, or seven (7) days, prior to the BOD meeting.

CHILD CARE CONCERNS

If you have complaints about the child care program please talk with our Child Care Director by calling 303.387.5667. If your issue is not resolved, report your concerns to the Head of School or you may contact the Department of Human Services at (303) 688-4825 any time.

CLASSROOM / SCHOOL CONCERNS

The following procedure will be followed to ensure proper communication channels between students, teachers, parents and administration when an issue arises:

1. Contact the Lead Teacher and set up an appointment for a conference. Discuss the issue(s) with the teacher and a collective plan of action will be made. A timeline of two, four or six weeks, should be established, where a follow-up conference, or communication, is to be scheduled to assess the success of the plan.
2. If the issue between parents and the teacher(s) continues, then make an appointment with the Head of School to discuss the issue and create a plan of action. A timeline of two, four or six weeks, should be established, where a follow-up conference, or communication, is to be scheduled to assess the success of the plan.
3. The Head of School will schedule a meeting between teacher and parents in attempt to mitigate the issue collaboratively.
4. If the concern is not involving a teacher, but is a concern at the school level, please talk to the office staff or Head of School to seek resolution, or provide input.
5. If all steps have been faithfully followed, including consultation with the Head of School, and the concern is not resolved, then you may file a formal written grievance with the Head of School, which may result in a formal plan of action, or be redirected to the DCS Montessori Board of Directors (BOD).
6. If following step 5 the concern has not been mitigated, then you may file a formal written grievance with the Montessori Board of Directors (BOD) to explain the issues. The parents will be contacted by the BOD, and then may need to present the issue before the BOD at a regularly scheduled monthly meeting. Please note that the BOD must be in receipt of the written formal grievance at least seven (7) days prior to a regularly scheduled monthly meeting, or the matter will not be reviewed until the following month's regularly scheduled meeting of the BOD.

Please feel free to make an appointment with the teacher, staff member or the Head of School at any time. It is the policy of the staff to facilitate the highest degree of cooperation between parents and teachers, please do not let an issue approach crisis proportions before you act. Please, keep the lines of communication open at all times.

GRIEVANCE PROCESS CLASSROOM / STAFF/SCHOOL CONCERNS

<i>Type of Grievance</i>	<i>1st Level</i>	<i>2nd Level</i>	<i>3rd Level</i>	<i>4th Level</i>	<i>5th Level</i>
Classroom related Grievance	Classroom teacher	Head of School	Teacher, Head of School, and Grievant mutual meeting.	Formal Written Grievance to the Head of School	Formal Written Grievance to Board of Directors
Other Staff related Grievance	Head of School	Staff, Head of School, and Grievant mutual meeting.	Formal Written Grievance to the Head of School	Formal Written Grievance to Board of Directors	
Head of School, or school-wide issue(s), Grievance (if a parent or staff member has a grievance with the Head of School, or a school-wide issue)	Head of School	Formal Written Grievance to the Head of School	Formal Written Grievance to Board of Directors		

*Formal written grievance, and its pertinent information regarding the issue(s), must be provided to the Chairperson of the DCSM Board of Directors (BOD) one week, or seven (7) days, prior to the BOD meeting.

CONTACTING US

OFFICE

The office staff will be happy to help you with your questions and concerns. If they are unable to do so, they can put you in touch with those who can.

Please do not call the office and ask them to pass messages to your children regarding ride arrangements. Please help us by making arrangements BEFORE dropping your children off at school. Be sure your child knows who will be picking them up each day.

TEACHERS

Because teachers are busy with the students – we ask that you [email or call](#) your teacher's voicemail number and you may leave a message for them. Please keep in mind that our staff has many responsibilities before and after school; but as soon as the staff member can, they will respond to your communication. Internal procedure is to return phone calls within 24 hours and emails within 48 hours of receipt.

DRESS CODE / GROOMING

ALL STUDENTS

Acceptable appearance reflecting good taste and judgment is the key to determining what children should wear to school. To help develop the child's independence, all clothing should be easy for them to manipulate. Children are expected to wear clothing suited for both study and recess. For health and safety reasons, shoes are to be worn at all times. Hats or dark sunglasses are not to be worn inside the building without permission from an administrator. Clothing, jewelry, or any item carried by or worn by students supporting the use or endorsement of liquor, violence, tobacco, or drugs is not allowed. (See section on Student Rights & Responsibilities and Code of Conduct and Discipline).

Wearing apparel that interferes with or endangers the student while he/she is participating in classroom or other school-sponsored activities is prohibited. The decision as to the safety or unsuitability of the clothing is at the discretion of the teacher with appeal to the HOS...

Students are not permitted to wear clothing which exposes their midriff. We also do not permit clothing which reveals undergarments (i.e. loose fitting pants which expose undergarments, or tops that show bra straps).

Children will need to have proper footwear to participate in PE class and play sports on the playing field (the playing field is principally an Upper Elementary concern). Kindergarteners through sixth graders have PE weekly. Sandals, flip-flops, clogs, girls dress shoes with heels, cowboy boots and the like will not be permitted at PE class or on the playing field.

Students may bring extra shoes for the days they have PE and playing field sports or they may leave them in their cubbies or back packs.

We strongly encourage students to wear shoes that will allow safe movement while on the playground as well. Children enjoy running and climbing during recess.

Our Colorado weather does not ensure that afternoons will be as warm as mornings. Students should come to school prepared to go out to recess, even in inclement weather. A pair of shoes should be sent with your child on days he/she comes to school in boots.

PRIMARY STUDENTS

Each primary child needs to bring an extra set of clothing to school to keep here in case of emergency. If your child is in our Extended Day Care program, we will need a second set of clothing for use there. These should be sent in a plastic zip locked bag with the child's name clearly marked. Please replace these clothes promptly when used and when seasons change. Primary students are discouraged from wearing attire that is fantasy theme related.

DRUG / ALCOHOL USE POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes that the use, possession, distribution, or sale of alcohol and legal or illicit drugs, including anabolic steroids, constitutes a hazard to students and is prohibited in all The District schools, on all school grounds and district property, at any school-sanctioned activities, when students are being transported in vehicles dispatched by the District, or at any time or in any place where the student's conduct interferes with or obstructs the educational program or operations of the school district or of the health, safety or welfare of students or employees. Compliance with the standards of conduct set forth in this policy is mandatory for all students. A violation shall subject a student to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion and referral for prosecution. First offense of this policy will result in a school suspension and parents will be involved in determining procedures for prevention of further offenses. Second violation of the drug/alcohol use policy will result in a recommendation for expulsion from school. Disciplinary sanctions may include the completion of an approved drug or alcohol abuse rehabilitation program. (See section on Student Rights & Responsibilities and Code of Conduct and Discipline).

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

FIRE

The children practice fire drills multiple times throughout the school year. For practice purposes, we will test this at different times each month. The child care rooms have a specific place where they will meet outside the building and take attendance. Evacuation plans are posted in the classrooms.

TORNADOS

When the school has been alerted to a possible tornado the children will be brought to a safe area and asked to get down on the ground and cover their heads. The school will conduct annual tornado drills.

WEATHER EMERGENCIES

Because of Colorado's unpredictable weather, The District has adopted storm emergency procedures. DCSM has chosen to follow The District weather procedures. Please refer to the [Delayed Start / School Closures due to weather](#) section of this handbook.

FIELD TRIPS

During the course of the school year, the children will have an opportunity to go on field trips away from the school. They will be taking walking excursions as well as other trips involving transportation away from school. Transportation will include personal vehicles as well as The District buses. You will be sent a permission slip at least 10 days prior to the field trip, which you must fill out and sign and return to school by the deadline stated on the form.

Students may take walking field trips that are short in distance from the school – if you do not want your child to participate in these field trips, please notify your child's teacher in writing at the beginning of the school year.

Late Arrival/Class on Field Trip: If your child's class has departed for their class field trip, your child will remain at school with another class within their age group. You may take your child to the location of the field trip, but you must help your child locate and check in with their teacher before you leave the field trip location.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

ABSENCES AND VACATIONS

Regular tuition is charged for all absences, including illness, bad weather days and unexpected school closures. The school does not allow financial credit for vacations taken during the academic year.

CHANGES IN ENROLLMENT

A request to change a child's program must be in written form and approved by the Head of School. Thirty days notice is required, this includes withdrawing the enrollment of your child.. Tuition is required during this thirty day period.

CLASS SUPPLY FEES & FIELD TRIP FEES

Every year, parents are asked to pay a classroom supply fee. This fee helps offset the cost of student supplies and materials in your child's classroom and also covers the cost of field trips for those students in Lower and Upper Elementary. Should you qualify for the District Free and Reduced Lunch program, please provide our office with a copy of your approval letter and these fees will be waived / reduced.

Parent Handbook

PAYMENTS

Payments are due on or before the 1st of the month. A late payment fee of \$25.00 will be charged after the 8th of the month, each month payment is late. An insufficient funds fee of \$20.00 will be charged for all checks returned by the bank. At this time we do not accept credit cards as a method of payment for tuition, field trips, or fees.

PRORATING

All tuition is prorated for children who enroll after the beginning of the school year based on the start date of enrollment. Students who enroll after January 1st for the current school year will be charged 50% of the class and registration fee.

TUITION AND CHILD CARE FEES

The tuition for the primary program and/or the before and after school program is an annual fee for the academic school year according to the school calendar. For the convenience of the parents, several payment plans are available. Please note that if your tuition or child care fees are more than 2 months past due, your child may be withdrawn from enrollment at our school. If applicable, we will fill the vacancy with the first child on our waitlist. If there is no waitlist, the entire arrears amount must be paid before your child can be re-enrolled. We reserve the right to demand payment in full for the entire academic school year for any reason at any time.

WITHDRAWALS

If a child needs to be withdrawn during the school year, a 30-day written notice is required. Tuition, if applicable, is required during the 30-day period. We also require parents to complete a Student Withdrawal Form (available in the office). There are no refunds issued for students who withdraw on or after April 15th.

Child Care Withdrawals- A request to change a child's program must be in written form. A two-week notice is required. Tuition is required during this two-week period.

HEALTH

ACCIDENTS/INJURIES

For a minor injury, an injury report will be completed and the necessary first aid treatment will be applied (Bandage, ice, TLC, etc.). Please note that in accordance with state regulations, we are not able to dispense any first aid ointments, creams, lotions, etc... If the injury appears that it may require medical attention, we will contact you immediately, or your emergency contact, if you cannot be reached.

FOOD ALLERGY POLICY AT OUR SCHOOL

It is of utmost importance that we are informed upon enrollment of any allergies your child may have.

- By law, no foods can be excluded from the classrooms. However, parents can be notified if there is a child with a severe or life threatening allergy in the classroom and can be strongly discouraged from sending that product with their child. If there is a severe or Life Threatening Allergy in the class and a child brings an allergen product in his/her lunch, the child must be allowed to eat it. However, he/she will sit at a designated allergen table. This will allow a controlled environment for cleaning.
- Because of the frequency of peanut/tree nut allergies at our school, all children who have consumed peanuts/tree nuts at school will be required to thoroughly wash their hands when they are finished.

- Parents with children who have Life Threatening Food Allergies should be encouraged to send their own snacks to school.
- NOTE: DCSM is not a Peanut-Free Environment, however there are several students attending that have Life Threatening Allergies to nuts/tree nuts.

GENERAL HEALTH

You have the opportunity to help create a healthy environment at our school. On occasion we witness children with symptoms of illnesses being sent to school. This may endanger the ill student, their fellow students, and their teachers. Here are some suggestions you should follow to help maintain a healthy school environment.

Please be aware of the signs and symptoms of illness:

◆	Decreased activity	◆	Cough
◆	Tired appearance	◆	Skin eruptions
◆	Irritable behavior	◆	Rashes
◆	Sleepy	◆	Nausea / vomiting / diarrhea
◆	Sore throat or swollen glands	◆	Abdominal pain
◆	Runny nose	◆	Fever

You can help:

- Check your child's health before you leave home.
- **Please keep your children home when they are ill .**
- Call our attendance line at 303-387-5627 when keeping your children home (you can call and leave us a message 24 hours a day).
- Pre-arrange with relatives or friends to take care of your children when they are sick if you are unable to stay home with them.
- Give the school office accurate and updated phone numbers so we can contact you easily.
- Should your child go to the doctor, and is allowed to return to school, please provide the school with pertinent information.

Also, if your child comes to school with a skin condition or non-contagious illness that is being treated, please let your child's teacher know. A number of children are sent to the health room for various ailments, and often we find that the parents already know about the problem.

Please note: A doctor's note is required to excuse your child from Physical Education class.

HEALTH RECORDS REQUIREMENTS

Elementary (grade 1-6) – We require proof that students are current on state required immunizations.

Primary (Pre 3-K) AND all elementary students enrolled in the Child Care Program - For state licensing requirements, a Health record and current Immunization card (these are two separate forms) are required to be kept current and on record at DCSM. The health record must be updated annually until your child reaches the age of 6 years old. After age 6, forms must be updated every 3 years. We ask that these forms be turned in at the beginning of the school year in order for us to keep your child's records current. Failure to have these in could result in removal from the Preschool and/or Child Care programs.

MEDICATION

No medication, including over-the-counter and homeopathic medication, can be administered without a school medication form completed and signed by both the parent and the doctor. All medications must be in their original containers. The medication form is available in the school office. Children are never allowed to carry over-the-counter medication or prescribed medication with them. **Never send medicine and/or vitamins to school in your child's backpack. All medicines (even over-the-counter medicine) must be brought to the office by an adult and kept in a locked drawer in the health room.** Medication forms are available at the school office and on our website (www.dcsmontessori.org). Parents are always permitted to come to school to give their child medicine – we'll call your child to the office, at which time you can administer their dosage, and send them back to class. We are in compliance with the Nurse Practice Act.

SENDING A CHILD HOME

This child is being sent home today from school due to illness. Determination for sending students home is made using "Guidelines for Determining Student Attendance", developed by Health Services. For our Primary students we also follow state childcare regulations.

If any of the conditions below are observed at school, parents will be contacted and the child must be removed from school for 24 hours or more. For some of the conditions below, the child can return to school earlier with a note from a health care practitioner. Please talk with our Health Assistant regarding specific details.

- Skin eruption / rash*
- Nausea / vomiting / diarrhea – No Loose stools or vomiting for 24 hours
- Severe abdominal pain
- Fever of 100° or higher – Must be fever free for 24 hours without medication
- Lethargy, tired appearance
- Irritable behavior
- Sore throat / swollen glands*
- Runny nose / cough
- Eye drainage / redness*

SUNSCREEN

For students at school 4 hours or less: No sunscreen will be applied at school. Please apply sunscreen in the morning prior to your child arriving at school.

For students at school more than 4 hours: If re-application is necessary, the following is our policy: *Extended Care* Preschoolers and Kindergarteners must have a signed permission form and you will need to provide the sunscreen (clearly labeled with your child's name, in the original container). *Children over 4 years of age will apply sunscreen to themselves under direct supervision of a staff member. A staff member will apply sunscreen to 3 year olds who are at school more than 4 hours.* Sunscreen cannot be applied to any broken skin or if a skin reaction has been observed. Any skin reaction observed by staff will be reported promptly to the parent / guardian.

1st graders through 6th graders may bring their sunscreen to school with them and may apply it themselves. Sunscreen must be in the original container and labeled with your child's name. No written permission is required for 1st through 6th graders, unless your child participates in our Before or After School Care programs.

Students are not permitted to share their sunscreen with others.

LOST AND FOUND

All items found on school property will be placed on our Lost and Found rack. We strongly encourage students and parents to check the Lost and Found items frequently. We purge the Lost and Found completely twice each year: Once on the first day of Winter Break; and the second time will be after the last day of school. All items will be donated to charity.

LUNCHES AND SNACKS

Children may bring a non-perishable lunch and drink from home. We stress nutrition and care of our environment at school. Cake, candy, soft drinks and Twinkie-like desserts are strongly discouraged. **We are unable to microwave or refrigerate the children's lunches. Please pack accordingly with a hot thermos or blue ice packs.**

Parents of primary children will be assigned to provide a healthy morning snack for their child's class. Elementary children may bring a morning snack in their lunch boxes if desired.

Children enrolled in the Extended Day program are required to bring lunch. Please avoid sending food for your child that contains peanut butter or any peanut products. We will have children enrolled who are highly allergic to peanut and peanut butter. Please do not provide candy, sugary juices, soda, or other sugary foods in your child's lunch in the Extended Day Program.

We will provide a snack to those children who are enrolled in our After Care program. We will provide a monthly snack calendar that will show what your child will be offered. If you would like your child to have something different, please feel free to provide your child with a snack. However, please do not send in any peanut products, candy, or sugary foods.

If a child forgets their lunch, and you deliver one to school, we will keep it in the office until the child arrives to retrieve it.

PURCHASING SCHOOL LUNCHES

We offer a hot lunch option for Kindergarten through 6th grade students. Lunch choices consist of a single hot entrée, a double hot entrée*, a single yogurt entrée, a double yogurt entrée* or one of each entrée. All meals offer the choice of salad and fruit and milk is available with all entrées. Your child can also order milk only. *Parents must complete an authorization form for their children to purchase double entrees. Please visit our website, click "Documents", then "Lunch Menus" to download the form.

Your child will pay for lunches from their account. Each child automatically has an account – you just need to make a deposit to that account (think of a debit card...). Simply write a check, payable to DCSM – be sure to write Lunch in the "memo" portion of your check, along with your child's name. Your phone number must also be on your check. If you have more than one child at this school, you may pay with one check, but be sure to specify what dollar amount goes into which accounts. Or you can pay with cash or online with a credit card into your account. Then your child can simply buy lunch until their account is empty. You will receive notice that your child's account is getting low. To check on your child's account at any time during the school year, please call the School Kitchen. All accounts must be paid in full at all times.

Our school district provides free/reduced lunches to students experiencing financial hardships. Application forms for Free & Reduced lunches should be posted to our website by mid-July—and we will have copies here at the school for you as well. Students who qualify for free or reduced lunches may also qualify to have fees and tuition for primary students reduced or waived.

PARKING

Our parking is limited at school. There are times when our parking lot fills up – during the first three weeks of school, when there are events in classrooms, and when there are field trips. Please do not park in Fire Lanes, in our Handicapped spaces (unless you may legally do so), and do not park where you will block in other vehicles. We also have one reserved space in the front of our school which is auctioned off each year. This is a great fundraiser for our school, and only the winning family is permitted to park there. Cars that are parked blocking other vehicles will be towed at the owner's expense. You may be ticketed if you park illegally in our parking lot.

REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

We feel it is very important to keep parents informed of their child's progress in school. The major components of our progress reporting system are as follows:

FRIDAY FOLDERS

Folders will be sent home each week. This folder may contain children's work and information for parents. It is critical for the folder to be returned. This is the main communication link between parents and school. Please read the information in the folders and be sure to return the folder right away. You may send in payments, forms, correspondence, etc. in the Folders.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parents Conferences are scheduled twice a year. The conference days are listed on your calendar. Students do not attend parent-teacher conferences (unless requested by the teacher).

PROGRESS REPORTS

Kindergarteners and Elementary students are graded on the Trimester (three report cards per school year), including all Specials. Parents will be notified via email when they may view and print their children's report cards on the Parent Portal. We do not send home hard copies.

SAFE2TELL

Safe2tell, a spin off of Crime Stoppers, is a program designed for kids and the issues they face today. It is a proactive, non-threatening way for students, teachers, parents, or anyone to anonymously report any threatening behavior that endangers you, your friends, your family, or your community. Simply call 877-542-7233 or visit www.safe2tell.org.

SAFETY

LOST CHILD

Should a child become lost or leave the school without our knowledge or permission, the following steps will be taken:

- Report to the Office and do an immediate search of all areas of the school. If on a field trip, one teacher will retrace the steps of the group while another authorized adult stays with the class.
- Phone the parent (guardian) or the emergency contacts (should we not be able to contact the parent/guardian), and alert them to the situation and circumstances surrounding the situation.
- Phone the police if parent/guardian or emergency contacts cannot be reached.

REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE

Any staff member of the School who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions which could reasonably result in abuse or neglect, shall immediately report to the Department of Human Services or the local law enforcement agency.

Any parent suspecting Child Abuse has occurred must notify the Department of Human Services at (303) 688-4825 or local law enforcement.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES & CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

The complete version of the [District Student Rights and Responsibilities & Code of Conduct and Discipline](#) (DSRR) is available online. Our office will also have a copy should you want a paper version.

1. Kindergarten through 6th : Strict adherence to the standards set forth in the DSRR will be maintained at DCSM. For our internal references see 3) below.
2. Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten, and Child Care Programs : Partnerships will be fostered with parents to resolve issues regarding behavior; however, we reserve the right to terminate enrollment of students for any reason without notice.
3. **Discipline and Bullying Prevention Guidelines:** DCSM accepts and follows the policies and regulations in the DSSR. In adapting this document to our school, the following guidelines have been outlined to streamline our internal procedures:
 - i. All acts of Physical Aggression and those deemed Bullying are to be reported to the Head of School for disciplinary action, intervention planning, or other appropriate actions.
 - ii. Classroom Disruptions and/or Inappropriate Playground Behavior:
 1. 1ST Offense – Redirection and Discussion
 - a. Parent Notification here is at the discretion of the teacher depending on the situation.
 2. 2nd Offense – Redirection, Discussion, and Stop & Think Sheet (Elementary) w/ minor consequence. [*“Minor consequences” – missing a single, or part of, a recess, exclusion from a classroom activity, restriction of a classroom privileges, written apology letter, etc.*]
 - a. Parent Notification here is at the discretion of the teacher depending on the situation.
 3. 3rd Offense – Redirection, Discussion, Stop & Think Sheet (Elementary) w/ significant consequences.
 - a. Parent Notification here is the expectation.
 - b. The teacher may opt to write a behavior plan for the student. These will be sent home on a regular basis.
 4. 4th Offense – Redirection, Discussion, Stop & Think Sheet (Elementary), meeting with Head of School (HOS), and significant consequences. [*“Significant consequences” – missing multiple days of recess, exclusion from desired specials (if appropriate), exclusion from celebrations, field trips, assemblies, lunchtime isolation, written formal essay or research project related to offense as appropriate. [Potential Suspension or eventual Expulsion if necessary]*]

- a. Parent Notification here is the expectation by both classroom teacher and HOS.
 - b. Possible Student Assistance Team (SAT) meeting to discuss child's Response To Intervention (RTI), with likely development of intervention strategies to support improvement student behavior and decision making.
5. 5th Offense or more – Teacher Discussion, meeting with Head of School, and significant consequences (In and Out of school suspension possible)
- a. Parent Meeting with Head of School (w/ Teaching staff as is appropriate to situation)
 - b. Possible Student Assistance Team (SAT) meeting to discuss child's Response To Intervention (RTI), with likely development of intervention strategies to support improvement student behavior and decision making.

**Classroom Management is the responsibility of the individual classroom teacher, and all classroom discipline is subject to the individual interpretation of events and best practices in accordance with their own classroom and students. Classroom management of Discipline will vary, and their interpretation of what constitutes an "Offense", is subject to individual teacher interpretation. In the event the behavior is more extreme, the Head of School is available to consult with teachers as needed, and we may initiate procedures at varying points in the progression above depending upon the situation.*

4. **Bullying Prevention:** It is the policy of DCSM to NOT tolerate bullying. The DCSM Board of Directors enacted a policy on bullying during the 2010-11 school year. Basic tenants of our Bullying Policy are: 1) To promote the positive behavior expectations we have in our COUGARS student expectations (**C**ompassion, **O**wnership, **U**nity, **G**enerosity, **A**chievement, **R**espect, **S**uccess), 2) Provide students with Bullying Prevention Education, 3) Provide all staff with Bullying Prevention Education, and 4) To discipline offenders appropriately, while empowering victims of bullying.

STUDENT RECORDS

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

Parents of our students and eligible students themselves have the right to...

- Inspect and review the student's education records
- Seek amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights
- Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the Act and Sec. 99.31 authorize disclosure without consent.
- File with the Department of Education a complaint under Secs. 99.63 and 99.64 concerning alleged failures by the educational agency or institution to comply with the requirements of the Act and this part.

Please contact the office at 303-387-5625 to arrange your review of your child's educational records. Should you wish to amend the records, you must submit your request to our Head of School in writing.

RELEASE OF RECORDS / INFORMATION REGARDING STUDENTS

When a child moves to another public (this includes Charter Schools) school within The District, their cumulative file will be sent automatically to the new school. To send records to other schools, parents must complete a Release of Records form which can be obtained through the office. A Release of Records form must also be completed for other requests for records and/or information including asking teachers to complete surveys, references, and other documents from other sources such as: Physicians, Athletic organizations (such as Martial Arts), Therapists, Schools outside of the public Douglas County School District schools, Attorneys, etc.

SCHOOL HOURS

During the school year, the office hours are 8:10 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday. The office is closed on all school holidays and breaks. Our Before Care and After Care Programs are also closed on all school holidays and breaks, as well as, teacher work days. If the District issues a Delayed Start (see the section on “Weather”) the hours of operation are listed below.

Program	Normal Hours	Delayed Start
Before School Care	7:00am-8:15am	8:00am – 9:15am
Preschool	8:30am – 11:30am	9:30am – 11:30am
Extended Care	11:30am - 3:20pm	11:30am – 3:20pm
Grades K – 6	8:30am – 3:20pm	9:30am – 3:20pm
After School Care	3:20pm – 6:00pm	3:20 – 6:00pm**

** Any time The District cancels After School Activities in our area, our After School Care program will also be cancelled.

VISITING THE SCHOOL

Parents are encouraged to visit the school anytime. If you would like to be in the classroom or classroom pod, we request that you schedule your visit with the teacher. If it is an unscheduled visit, the teacher may be contacted by the office first. Visitors/Parents must first sign in at the office and receive a Visitor Pass before visiting. You must wear the pass at all times while you are in the building. Please model appropriate behavior by not using your cell phone unless absolutely necessary.

CHILDREN VISITING THE SCHOOL

For children who are not enrolled at our school but wish to visit us (typically alumni) the following rules apply: 1) Pre-arrange and get approval from a teacher - that teacher will be responsible for the child during their visit. 2) Visits are limited to no more than 2 hours. 3) All visitors must sign in at the front office.

OBSERVING IN THE CLASSROOM

To observe in your child's classroom, please schedule a time with their teacher, stop in at the office to sign in and receive a copy of our Observation Guidelines, read them carefully, and after being directed to the classroom, enjoy the observation of our quality Montessori environments.

Obviously, as parents, you have the right to observe in your child's classroom by appointment. School policy asks that you refrain from observing in the first six weeks of school. Individual children and classroom communities are in the process of orientation and adaptation during this time. Returning children are getting to know their new classmates and vice versa. All children are orienting and re-orienting to their classroom routines. Classroom teachers are busy presenting new lessons to all the children in the classroom. The best time to get a true picture of the classroom dynamics is after the children have "settled in."

New parents will be contacted by the classroom teacher in regards to children's progress after their first two weeks of school. Parents can always call or email the teacher or leave a message on the teacher's voicemail if they need to be contacted. After these initial weeks of school, all parents may be asked to observe prior to the fall conferences.

Finally, observing classrooms for students in a transition year (current Kindergarteners, or 3rd graders) is a common practice prior to our April Transition/Placement process. While information about the Transition/Placement Process is provided in March and April, the scheduling of enough observations for all transitioning children's parents may be difficult. There is not enough time for every parent to observe every teacher; therefore, we place limitations on these observations. We choose the classrooms in which you will observe on a rotating basis, and we limit the number of observations to two per parent. Please consider scheduling your observations beginning in January to ensure our schedule can accommodate your needs. Contact the office to schedule these Transition observations.

VOLUNTEERING

DCSM strongly encourages parental/community member participation as research supports that it is directly linked to school-wide success. At DCSM there are many different opportunities to volunteer, such as: helping out in the classroom or chaperoning field trips, substituting as an assistant, participating in the Parent Involvement (PI) Committee, School Accountability Committee (SAC), Building & Grounds (B&G) Committee, Development Committee Middle School, Montessori Educational Foundation (MEF), or our Board of Directors (BOD), helping out in the Library or with the Office Staff, assist with scholastic book ordering, being the classroom "Room Parent" to help coordinate class activities/events /celebrations, help in communications with our Friday Folder process, or be the coveted Volunteer Coordinator. DCSM needs volunteers to be successful, so get involved!

Confidentiality

As a volunteer assisting within The District, you have been authorized by the Head of School or his/her designee to act as a school official subject to the direction and control of the school's administrators and teachers. As a school official, you may, under limited circumstances, have access to student education records in connection with your authorized duties. Student education records include all records, files, documents, and other materials that contain personally identifiable information on any student (including student grades). **What is observed, or heard, by a volunteer about students and/or staff while volunteering at DCSM will remain CONFIDENTIAL.** All volunteers are asked to sign a form stating their understanding of this, and further, that any breach of this understanding may disqualify the volunteer from continued service at DCSM or any other school within the District.

Background Check

DCSM, or the "District", may conduct a Background Check on volunteers who provide service within the school(s), that may include information concerning the character, qualifications and possible criminal history of a volunteer.

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

- Be yourself. It will take time and patience for everyone to feel comfortable.
- Call the students by name. Ask the teacher what they prefer the student call you, and introduce yourself to students.
- Be enthusiastic about what you are doing. Your interest in the activity will be conveyed to the student.
- Be a good listener. Students may share ideas about their home or school problems. Listen. Remain neutral, refrain from advising.
- Follow the directions given to you by the classroom teacher and the Head of School. DO NOT make changes in directions unless permission is given.
- Respect the confidentiality of school records, student work, and student behavior.
- Refer all discipline problems to the teacher.
- Feel free to ask questions about your responsibilities. If possible, ask questions before or after classes are done. Questions asked during a class interrupt the teachers' instructional time.
- Offer suggestions about improving or enhancing the volunteer program to the Volunteer Coordinator. Help the school to evaluate the volunteer program.
- Be flexible. The amount of time needed for the volunteer program varies.
- Be reliable. Stop at the office to sign in before going to the classroom. Advise the teacher as soon as possible when you will be delayed or unable to help on a given day.
- Be punctual. Students and staff have tight schedules, which necessitate timeliness. Arrive at the time agreed upon and depart just as promptly, it is a distraction to the classroom environment when volunteers linger after completing their task.
- Model good behavior. Dress appropriately, and please do not use your cell phone. If it absolutely necessary to use your phone, please excuse yourself from the classroom, and walk to the entry area of our school to continue your conversation.
- **Maintain confidentiality**

DISCLAIMER

Information contained in this document is current on the date it is posted / printed, and is subject to change.