CREEKSIDE
MONTESSORI

Welcome Students and Parents,

The Student/Family Handbook has been compiled to provide the families of our students with basic information concerning policies, practices, and procedures of Creekside Montessori School. We hope that you will find the booklet useful in providing answers to some of the questions you may have about our school. This handbook, in conjunction with the school website, is designed to serve as your source of information to explain various school policies. It is important that parents understand the expectations our school has for each student/family. Student success is made possible by the combined efforts of the home and the school partnering together. Our student achievements will clearly demonstrate the fact that our parents are involved in the lives of their children, supporting their growth, keeping the lines of communication open with teachers, and positively supporting the school. It is our hope that we can work together to provide the best learning environment for your child. Everyone at Creekside Montessori School looks forward to the opportunity to serve your family.

Thank you for your support as we learn together!

My very best,

Margaret Williams
Founder and Director

About Us

Creekside Montessori: Joyful Learning Community Is a school established by parents and educators to meet the needs of growing population of students who do not thrive in the traditional education system. We believe that learning should be a natural joyful experience. It is our hope that every child that deserves this experience can be a part of our school.

Mission Statement

Creekside Montessori is here to work with families to create a peaceful community of diverse, respectful, self-motivated and independent learners who seek out and joyfully embrace academic and social opportunities.

Core Values

1. The school respects the infinite worth and dignity of each child.

2. Peaceful values contribute to students' ethical awareness to promote kindness and respect as our norm of behavior.

3. Academic programs challenge students by emphasizing the pursuit of individual excellence and inspiring delight in lifelong learning.

4. Fine arts and languages enhance the academic program and encourage creative and analytical thinking.

5. The school encourages cooperative partnerships among the student, family, and staff.

6. Students impact the world around them through community outreach and service to others.

Organization

Creekside Montessori is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. It receives revenues from tuition, fees, and donations. The organization is organized exclusively for purposes subsequent to section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Montessori Education

At Creekside Montessori the Teacher's goal is to guide the development and competency of the individual child by serving as the facilitator for learning. The guide is the child's link to the environment, someone who gives a lesson and steps back to allow the child to work, while observing and directing each child forward to the next appropriate material and key educational experience.

Our classroom offers a wide variety of Montessori materials, current educational supplies, and handmade materials. Children operate within a balanced structure of freedoms and responsibilities, free to follow their inspirations with work that stimulates and satisfies their inner motivations, while remaining responsible for tackling challenging and difficult work head-on. This balanced structure of freedoms and responsibilities is created and maintained through the ongoing observations, inspiration and redirection of the classroom Guide. The Montessori curriculum is organized as a continuum with one step building precisely on the previous one. The concept of mixed ages promotes an atmosphere of cooperation, teamwork, and peer teaching. The design of the materials and the structure of the tasks lead children to the development of self-discipline.

Outcomes of a Montessori Education

a. **Independence**

The social and physical organization of the Montessori prepared environment as well as the guiding actions of the teacher promote individual independence. Each child develops independence through a balance of freedoms and responsibilities. These include self-selection of opportunities for constructive work, care of environment, and care of self and others in the community. With the support of a meticulously prepared environment and the consistent nurturing guidance of the teachers, this balance of freedoms and responsibilities leads to the development of concentration, inner discipline, internalization of the learning and learning strategies, and metacognition (thinking about thinking).

b. **Confidence and Competence**

Confidence is built upon success. A Montessori environment creates many occasions for success. In the spiraling framework of the Montessori curriculum each educational experience builds towards another. Each lesson and activity prepares the child for more complex learning to come, providing greater chances of success for the child throughout his experience. Confidence and perceived competence are also built upon mistakes made. The teacher's respect for each child's efforts and the realization that each child constructs his or her own intelligence create a supportive learning culture where it is also safe to fail. Mistakes and difficulties are seen as valuable stepping stones to the development of perseverance, self-perceived competence, (I can do that.), and, ultimately, individual confidence. A child growing in success is growing in confidence.

c. Autonomy & Collaboration

Grace and courtesy in the classroom contribute to the students' understanding of each individual's desire to work alone or with others. In a Montessori setting children are able to hone their collaboration, cooperation, and negotiation skills in working through choices of work partners. Children develop from the earliest ages the vocabulary and skills needed to accept or decline inclusion in others' work with equanimity, ask for and accept help graciously, and resolve conflicts peacefully and respectfully.

c. **Intrinsic Motivation**

The Montessori guide knows that each child possesses the natural desire to know and the "work" is "its own reward" in a Montessori environment. External rewards such as gold stars, stickers, or "smile"

stamps and other forms of praise undermine the child's development of intrinsic motivation and are not present in a Montessori environment. Instead, the Montessori curriculum and materials stimulate each child's natural curiosity and promote engaged exploration and discovery. The child's freedom to choose his or her work (within limits) nurtures individual initiative and personal responsibility. And, the guide's focus on acknowledging the elements of the child's work, e.g. their effort, their approach, etc., encourages the child's concentration and effort on the process of learning not just the end products.

d. **Social Responsibility**

Independent and autonomous persons are always a part of a group and must attain independence and autonomy through participation in group activity. Children in Montessori classes are "free" within the carefully crafted, mutually agreed upon limits of the group. These limits are articulated in the course of the school experience through clearly defined class agreements which are modeled by the guide and the children. The physical organization of the classroom contributes to the successful conformance to the class agreements by all members of the classroom community. Social responsibility develops from the child's willful adherence to and enforcement of these agreements. Children in a Montessori environment attain independence and autonomy and, at the same time, develop social responsibility.

e. **Academic Preparation**

In Montessori education, children learn to learn by doing. Academic preparation is achieved by nurturing each child's natural curiosity into a life-long love of learning. The spiraling nature of the Montessori curriculum, one experience building toward successively complex experiences, scaffolds learning for the child. Through the use of the Montessori didactic materials the child achieves first perceptual and then cognitive understanding of concepts. The interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum allows the child to make connections between disciplines, leading to deeper understanding and application of skills and knowledge. As an active participant in his or her education, each becomes the builder of meaningful knowledge helping her or him learn how to learn.

f. Spiritual Awareness/Cosmic Education

Dr. Montessori's distinctive notion of the child as a "spiritual embryo" emphasized her key principle that the growing human being is not simply a biological or psychological entity, but a spiritual energy seeking expression within the physical and cultural world. The Montessori curriculum develops in children the awareness of the ecology of existence that gives every living thing a meaningful function in the larger system and encourages each child to make his or her own unique contribution to the world.

h. Global Citizenship

From the earliest experiences of negotiating and adjusting one's behavior with other students through the study of people of various cultures, Montessori education guides children to move far beyond the family and school, towards global citizenship. Personal responsibility is configured for the child in successively broader terms to include an awareness of the importance of stewardship of the planet. Children acquire civic virtue and an understanding of the natural world and of the necessity to cherish it, respect it, sustain it, and to live harmoniously within it.

ADMISSIONS & ENROLLMENT

Admissions Policy

Creekside Montessori is committed to bringing young people together from a broad spectrum of ethnic, national, socio-economic and religious backgrounds. We welcome diversity and encourage our students to broaden their perspective of the world through friendships, mutual respect, and understanding.

Applications are considered on an individual basis. Our goal is to ensure that our school will be able to offer the applicant the best possible learning environment to meet his/her specific needs. We are committed to helping families make the best match between family, student and school by striving to ensure that the goals and values of each student and family are in alignment with our school.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Creekside Montessori School admits students of any race, color, religion, family structure, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, family structure, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Enrollment Contract

At the time of enrollment, parents sign a legally binding contract agreeing to pay tuition for the full school year. The enrollment fee is non-refundable. Several payment plans are available. Refer to your contract for details

Withdrawal Policy

Creekside Montessori School reserves the right to require a parent to withdraw a child from the school if it is the opinion of the School that either the child or the parents are not adhering to the policies of the school or if the School determines that withdrawal is in the best interest of the child or the school.

Programs

Morning Session

Parents of three and four year olds may choose to enroll their child in a morning session from 8:30am-12:00pm

Full Day

Parents of k-8 children will have the option to enroll their child into our full day program from 8:30am-3:00pm providing the child is emotionally/socially ready for a full day.

Drop off/Pick up Procedures

Drop off time for the morning session and full day students is 8:15am to 8:30am. Please drop your student off in front of the building where there will be a teacher to greet them. Do not drop your child off before 8:15 unless there is a teacher in the yard. Please allow students to walk-in to the classroom independently.

Pick up time for the morning session is 12:00pm -12:15pm. Please wait in front of the school and your child will be walked out to you by a teacher.

Pick-up time for full day students is 3:00pm-3:15pm. Please wait in front of the school and your child will be walked out to you by a teacher.

Late/Early Drop Off and Pick up

Children need consistency and predictability in their lives. Arriving at school on time each day can meet that need. Children who arrive late are at a disadvantage for integrating into the morning's activities. Children arriving after 8:30 a.m. will be considered late. Class BEGINS PROMPTLY AT 8:30 am. Students arriving late are disruptive to the classroom.

If you are **dropping your child off late**, please let the teacher know in advance so she can plan for the easiest transition with minimal disruption to the classroom. If you are unable to give notice about late drop off, please ask your child to enter the classroom *quietly* and check in with a teacher.

If you are **picking your child up early**, please let the teacher know in advance so she can plan for the easiest transition, with minimal disruption to the classroom. If you are unable to give notice please enter the classroom *quietly* and wait at the door until the assistant or teacher has brought your child to you.

Whether pick-up time is 12:00pm-12:15pm, or 3:00pm-3:15pm, please be on time. If you have an emergency and cannot reach the school on time, please call the school and notify a staff member immediately.

Reporting an absence

If your child is going to be absent unexpectedly from school, please call the school and leave a message. It is not mandatory to report absences; however, it is always helpful for the teacher to know the status of your child. If your child has a planned absence please notify the teacher via voice mail or other method in advance whenever possible.

SCHOOL-HOME PARTNERSHIP

The school and parents must have mutual trust and respect if they are to work together effectively for the education of the child. Maintaining this trust requires clear continuous communication between staff and parents. It involves parents understanding and applying the same pedagogical approach that the

school uses in interactions with their child. To develop this mutually supportive relationship, CMS provides opportunities for parent participation and partnership in many ways.

Communications

When you need to communicate with your child's teacher during the school day the following methods are available:

1. *Text*: Texting a teacher is best if you don't need immediate response.

2. *Call*: If you need immediate contact, call Ms. Margaret @928-614-1541

3. *Remind app:* We use the Remind app to send out announcements. We like this method because if someone replies to a group text, the reply is only seen by us and not the whole group.

Please understand that trying to communicate important information while standing at the classroom door at drop-off or pick-up time is not effective. Teachers need to focus on the children at those transition times and cannot give parents full attention or appropriate response.

A classroom newsletter will be sent home regularly via email. In addition, notes and reminders will be sent out regularly with updates and reminders about upcoming school events.

Observations

Observing your child's activities can be reassuring when your child is new to our program. After the classes have settled in at the start of the school year, parents may schedule classroom observations through Margaret Williams. Beyond that, the active involvement of parents in our program as volunteers provides them with the best opportunities to view their child with teachers and other children.

Conferences

Formal parent/teacher conferences are held two times during the year for all children, in the fall and spring. These are important points of communication about your child(ren)'s progress and vital to success in the school-home partnership. In the weeks preceding the conferences, there will be a sign-up sheet to schedule your appointment. Our parent/teacher conferences are student-led, so you will bring your student in with you and they will show you their work and progress. Please make this a special time for your child by leaving siblings with a sitter. Please refer to your school calendar for exact times for our conferences.

Work-Share

The school has a Work-Share program to encourage parent involvement. Each family is asked to contribute 15 hours (8 hours per family for single parents) of volunteer service through-out the school year. There are proposed opportunities that are announced via email/newsletters/community updates or poster/sign-up sheets throughout the year.

Volunteers & Chaperones

Creekside Montessori School depends on volunteers and chaperones to support the school in numerous ways. If you are interested in volunteering in any capacity at our school, please Contact Margaret Williams.

Room Parents

Room parents assist teachers in organizing classroom functions and recruiting assistance to support classroom endeavors. If you are interested in being a room parent for your classroom, please contact Margaret Williams.

Parent Education

As an integral part of a successful school-home partnership, CMS offers many avenues for parent education. In addition to online resources and our parent resource library, we offer a series of events throughout the school year focused on various aspects of our program, curriculum and parenting topics. We encourage all parents to attend these helpful sessions. Please check out our website and our parent resource library for resources and see our calendar for offerings and dates of our Parent Education Series.

Parent Resources

We provide online resources on our website and hardcover resources in our parent resource library. Parents and other family members may borrow resource material (parenting literature, education, Montessori books and magazines, child development information, etc.)

CMSfund©

One of the most important ways to support the school comes from the contributions made to the CMSfund. As a non-profit educational institution Creekside Montessori receives revenues from tuition and voluntary charitable contributions. The CMSfund is our donation campaign that directly translates into the everyday experiences for our students, from providing continuous programs and facility enhancements to ongoing professional support for our teachers. The participation and support from families, staff, our Board of Directors and friends helps continue the legacy of authentic Montessori experiences for our students. All gifts are welcome and appreciated as well as tax-deductible. The CMSfund helps us accomplish our mission of creating a peaceful community of diverse, respectful, self-motivated and independent learners who seek out and joyfully embrace academic and social opportunities. To donate please go to our website www.creeksideway.com and click on the tuition tab. If you feel you would like to donate in another way that would support our schools' purpose and mission please contact Margaret Williams.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR & DISCIPLINE

Empathy and being considerate of others are adult qualities that take many years to develop. It begins in childhood and in a Montessori environment it is nurtured as children learn to respect the people and the materials in that environment. Our discipline policy emphasizes positive democratic and respectful approaches to helping children behave constructively.

1. We encourage cooperative behavior.

2. We set clear limits and expectations for behavior to ensure a safe and peaceful environment for all.

3. We model appropriate behavior for the children.

4. We modify the classroom environment to encourage cooperative behavior.

5. We listen to the children.

6. We provide consistent redirection of any inappropriate behavior towards meaningful and purposeful activity.

7. We respect the individual needs, desires, and feelings of each child.

8. We explain things to the children on their levels.

9. We remain consistent in our efforts to maintain a safe and peaceful environment for all our students. Intentional aggressive behavior toward peers or staff including kicking, fighting, biting, pinching, poking, hitting, beating, bullying, shoving, spitting, tripping, scratching, using profane language, making disruptive noises, or misusing the school's and other's property will be addressed in a compassionate direct manner. Repeated behavior that does not improve with conflict resolution techniques may result in the following:

1. The child being removed from the environment. When the child has calmed down, the teacher will have a discussion with the child about behavior and will provide encouragement and redirection.

2. The teacher contacting parents to discuss concerns and partnering with the parents to provide support for the child.

3. Ending the child's day early. If the child is acting aggressively and has broken the agreements that have been made with him/her to keep everyone emotionally and physically safe at school, the parents may be asked to come and take the child home for the rest of the day. The child will be welcomed back the next day with agreements in place to ensure everyone's safety and well-being.

4. Holding a conference with the parents, teacher/ Director of School.

5. If the behavior continues, the Director of the school will use her own discretion as to how best to support the individual child and the rest of the CMS community.

Principles of Child Management

1. Use quiet voices inside.
2. Walk inside – Run outside.
3. Use furniture for its purpose (i.e., sitting in chairs).
4. Show respect for property.
5. Work with only one set of materials at a time.
6. Replace material on the shelf as when taken.

Development of Social Conscience

1. Show respect for other people.
2. Listen without interrupting
3. Use "Please" and "Thank you".
4. Wait for everyone to be served
5. Use "Excuse me, please."
6. Thrive in an orderly enviornment.

Creekside Montessori

Student/Parent Handbook

Signature Page

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students:

Please carefully read our 2023-2024 Student/Family Handbook. After discussing the contents as a family unit, and realizing the need to abide by school policies set forth in this handbook, complete the form below and return this full page to the classroom of the oldest student no later than July 30. Consequently, to just sign this page without reading, you may be overlooking information that could prevent misunderstandings.

I/We have reviewed the Student/Parent Handbook with our child(ren) and fully affirm that our family agrees to abide by the policies and procedures set forth. Printed Name of Student(s):

Printed Name of Parent(s):

1) _____

2) _____

Parent(s) Signature:

1) _____

2) _____

Date: _____