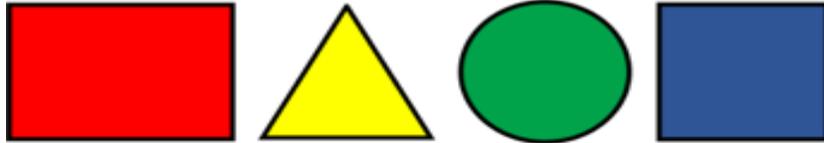


The Montessori School of Corpus Christi
Where kids love to learn!



The Montessori School of C.C.

2019-2020 Parent Handbook

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**www.montessorischoolofcorpuschristi.org (Website)
montessoriofcc1985@gmail.com (Email)**

**Monday- Friday
7:30-5:30
Year Round**

Serving ages Birth thru Six Years

Table of Contents

- Mission/Values/Vision..... 4
- General Information4
 - Montessori Philosophy.....4
 - Maria Montessori’s Rules.....5
 - Montessori in the Home.....5
 - Parent Involvement.....5
 - Volunteer Hours.....6
 - Board of Trustees.....6
 - Staff.....6
 - Admission Procedures.....6
 - Religion Position Statement.....7
 - Licensing.....7
 - Non Profit.....7
 - Fund Raising.....7
- Curriculum.....8
 - Montessori Classroom.....8
 - Enrichment.....8
- Financial Information.....8
 - Tuition.....8
 - Before & After Care.....8
 - Schedule Changes8
 - Lunch, Snack, and Milk.....9
- General Policies & Procedures.....9
 - Accidents.....9
 - Address Changes.....9
 - Adjustment Period.....9
 - Staff Hired By Parents10
 - Animals.....10
 - Arrival & Departure.....10
 - Attendance.....10
 - Tardiness10
 - Birthday Celebration.....11
 - Closures.....11
 - Daily Schedule.....11
 - MSCC Peaceful Resolution.....11
 - Discipline and Guidance.....12
 - Behavior.....12
 - Problem Identification.....13
 - Biting.....13
 - Procedures for Concerns & Questions.....14
 - Dress Code.....14
 - Field Trips.....15
 - Gang- Free Zone15
 - Safety Drills.....15

Health Checks.....	16
Health Requirements.....	16
Testing.....	16
Immunization Requirements.....	17
Illness.....	17
Medication.....	17
Medical Emergencies.....	17
Essential Oils.....	18
Infant.....	18
Blanket Requirements.....	18
Lunches from Home.....	18
Observations.....	18
Parent-Teacher Conferences.....	19
Personal Items.....	19
Other Personal Items.....	19
Playground.....	19
Product Safety.....	19
Release of Children.....	19
Room Parents.....	20
Student Progress.....	20
Social Media Policy.....	20
Termination.....	20
Toilet Training.....	20
Water Activities.....	21
Weather Policy	21
Withdrawal.....	21
Grievance Policy.....	21
• <u>Suggested Reading</u>	22
Handbook Signature Form.....	22

(To be returned after reviewing the handbook)

MISSION

The mission of the Montessori School of Corpus Christi is to provide a unique, high quality Montessori education that gives children a solid foundation in academics, independence, social skills and self-discipline while instilling in children a desire and love of learning, self, and the environment.

VALUES

In accomplishing our mission, we:

- Value each child's language, intellectual, social, emotional, physical and creative development;
- Value the dignity of each child, parent and staff member;
- Are guided by respect for self, for others and for the environment;
- Affirm the joy of doing one's best;
- Enable the success of each person by providing a professional, caring and nurturing school;
- Provide an environment in which children develop their talents in a cooperative atmosphere;
- Value communication that is open, honest, and kind.

VISION

We envision a school in which children love to learn, staff is open to professional growth and parents are closely involved. With a variety of experiences and backgrounds that parents contribute, they are a valued resource. We see the parents, staff and board members modeling the very behavior they teach: cooperation, courtesy and respect. We see a school in which communication is open, honest and kind and where all participants are working to their best. Our vision is that of a school that grows in enrollment because of parents' enthusiastic support.

We see a school in which children are proud of their surroundings and take good care of them. We see them using natural materials, gardening, taking care of animals and working happily at their academic endeavors. We see a place where creativity flourishes and the spark of curiosity flames into all kinds of academic projects. We see children learning a second language naturally, and appreciating the diversity of thought and the richness of their first language.

We see a school that is so essential that children enjoy being here, and many stay on into their Kindergarten year. We envision a school with a reputation of being the ideal place for gifted students. We also see a school where those who thought they were average will find an expression for their own talents and discover that they, too, are gifted in some area.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Montessori Philosophy

The Montessori School of Corpus Christi wholeheartedly subscribes to the Montessori method. The Montessori method is the name given to a very special philosophy for the education of children formulated by Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952), the famous Italian physician and educator. Dr. Montessori observed that small children possess a tremendous capacity for learning from the world around them. To capitalize on this inborn enthusiasm for discovery found in young children, Dr. Montessori began developing a special learning environment more than 70 years ago. The method she

established has been further developed by professional Montessorians throughout the world, and the success of the approach has been noted for more than half a century.

Maria Montessori's Rules

Listed below are Dr. Montessori's rules for the treatment of the child by adults in the school.

- Never touch a child unless invited by him in some form or another.
- Never speak ill of him/her in their presence or in their absence.
- Concentrate on developing and strengthening what is good in him. Take meticulous and constant care of the environment. Teach proper use of things and show the places where they are kept.
- The adult is to be active when helping the child to establish a relationship with the environment, and remain outwardly passive but inwardly active when this relationship has been established.
- The adult must always be ready to answer the call of the child who stands in need of him and always listen and respond to the child who appeals to him.
- The adult must respect the child who makes a mistake without correcting directly. But he must stop any misuses of the environment and any action which endangers the child or other members of the community.
- The adult must respect the child who takes a rest or watches others working and not disturb her; neither call her nor force her to other forms of activity.
- The adult must help those who are in search of activity without finding it.
- The adult must, therefore, be untiring in repeating presentations to the child who refused them earlier, in teaching the child who has not yet learned, in helping the child who needs it, to overcome imperfections. She must do this by animating the environment with care, with purposive restraint and silence, with mild words and loving presence. She must make her presence felt to the child who searches, and hide from the child who has found it
- The adult must always treat the child with the best of manners and in general offer him the best he has in himself and at his disposal.

Montessori in the Home

The Montessori Philosophy can easily be encouraged and reinforced in the home. Parent education is essential in developing consistency between home and school. (See page 25 for a list of recommended reading material).

Parent Involvement

Parent Involvement is very important for both your children and the school. Children do not always see or appreciate your efforts to pay tuition. However, when your children see you volunteer your time and energy to the school, they do see how important their education and care is to you. Opportunities for involvement include Workdays, Room Parents, Fund Raising, Board Membership and others. Please contact your Room Parent with any ideas or projects you think will enhance the school.

We have an open door policy, however, to keep our campus safe, we ask that you stop in the office to let us know you're here before observing or helping out in a classroom. All parents are always welcome and may visit at their convenience as long as it is not distracting to the child/children in the classroom.

There are copies of the minimum standards for child-care centers kept in the office. A copy of the MSCC's most recent licensing inspections report, how to contact the local licensing office, the PRS child

abuse hotline, and the PRS Website is located on both bulletin boards outside of the Management Offices

Volunteer Hours

Families are required to complete 6 volunteer hour per family, per school year. These hours can be completed by attending Parent Workdays, volunteering at events like the Friendship Feast or Evening Under the Stars or being a Room Parent.

We strongly encourage families to participate in school activities to complete their volunteer, but we understand this isn't always possible. If you're not able to complete your 6 volunteer hours, hours can be purchased for \$10 per hour.

Board of Trustees

MSCC is governed by a Board of Trustees made up of parents and community members. Duties of the board include fiscal responsibility, public relations, fund raising, and leading the school in fulfilling its mission. Members serve for a three-year term. Interested individuals, that have been a parent on MSCC for at least 1 school year, are invited to submit a board member candidate profile. The Board of Trustees meets every month. All meetings will be held at 5:30. All meetings will be held the third Tuesday of each month unless otherwise noted. Board Members are as follows:

President: Michael Perez
Vice-President: Allison Rodriguez
Secretary:
Treasurer: Michael Anderson
Parent Liaison:
At Large: Mark Hendrix

Staff

The MSCC staff includes administrators, administrative assistant(s), lead teachers and teacher assistants. The Executive Director & Assistant Director comprise the Management Team that work together with the Board to provide the best possible Montessori education for your child. The Montessorian in each classroom is trained in the Montessori philosophy. Training and continuing education are offered to teachers and assistants throughout the year. MSCC requires all staff to attend and to participate in various trainings.

Admission Procedure

Before admission, parents and children will have visited and observed a classroom. Acceptance consideration will be given to qualified applicants despite race, religion, or creed. Children are placed in an appropriate level based on their readiness as observed by trained staff. It is important to let us know what your needs are ahead of time, so that we can try and accommodate you while still running a quality child development school. If management feels that MSCC and its staff cannot meet the needs of your child at anytime, MSCC reserves the right to terminate the relationship between you, your child, and the school.

Prior to the child's admission to the school, the parent must complete the Tuition Agreement. All parents of children receiving services MUST have completed and signed the agreement. Policies on the

agreement will be enforced, as will those listed in this handbook. We request that parents read both documents carefully and ask the Administrator about policies which may not be understood.

Upon admission, but prior to the child's first day of school, the following must be completed and returned to the school office:

- Application
- Tuition Agreement
- Payment of Fees
- Copy of immunization records, which must be current
- Doctor Health Statement
- Emergency and release information

Religion Position Statement

The Montessori School of Corpus Christi is a non-parochial school. We are not affiliated with any religious belief. We only rent the Sanctuary to Third Coast Church. We believe that it is the sole right and responsibility of parents to educate their children about religion. While we do not advocate any particular religion, we are tolerant of all religions.

Licensing

The Texas Health and Human Services gives MSCC authority to operate. The City and County Health & Fire Departments also inspect us regularly to ensure that we meet all requirements necessary for the safety of our children. Our inspection reports are available for public viewing at all times. See tuition schedule for hours of operation, which are governed by our current license. There are copies of the minimum standards for child-care centers kept in the office. A copy of MSCC's most recent licensing inspection report, how to contact the local licensing office, the PRS child abuse hotline, and the PRS Website is located on the hallway bulletin board.

The Texas Health and Human Services

- Address: 5155 Flynn Pkwy, Suite #451
- CPS intake Line: 1-800-252-5400
- Local Phone: 361-878-3451
- PRS website: www.txchildcaresearch.org
- MSCC website: www.montessorischoolofcorpuschristi.org

Non-Profit Status

MSCC is a Section 5018(3) non-profit organization under the Internal Revenue Code (IRC). Thus, only with Board approval may someone represent the school in any legal, financial, or public action, including lobbying. Most donations to MSCC are tax deductible.

Fund Raising

MSCC is a non-profit organization (IRC Section 5018 (3)). In an effort to keep tuition as low as possible, we rely on fundraising. Every parent has an opportunity to help either by direct monetary donations, or by participating in a variety of fundraising events. Most donations to MSCC are tax deductible.

CURRICULUM

Montessori Classroom

MSCC adheres to the curriculum designed by Dr. Maria Montessori. The foundations for this curriculum begin early, when the child enters a room that has been carefully prepared. This prepared environment entices and encourages a sense of order, respect for self and others, and inner discipline. Grace and courtesy, along with a peaceful negotiation of differences, are taught and practiced at all times. The materials in the curriculum are designed to fulfill the child's curiosity and address the appropriate level of readiness.

The Montessori Curriculum begins in a global view, becoming more specific with time. Dr. Montessori designed materials for children to learn by experiencing, refining all their senses, and observing real phenomena, thus stimulating their senses of wonder and joy in learning as they grow in coordination and self-confidence.

In addition to our Infant and Toddler program, MSCC offers a Primary Program for ages 3-6. The curriculum is designed in a three-year block that has advantages in both academic and social development.

For a more complete understanding of the curriculum, various books and journals are available. A Suggested Reading List can be found at the end of this handbook.

Enrichment

An appreciation for fine arts is woven into all aspects of curriculum. In addition, lessons are offered at MSCC in Physical Education, Gardening, Art, Music and Science. Reverse Field trips and guest speakers are encouraged and round out the children's experiences.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Tuition

MSCC Tuition is completed through FACTS management. There is a \$45/yr set-up fee per family. Families will have the option of choosing a due date of either the 1st or 15th of the month. Facts will attempt to pull money from the attached account 3 times before you incur a \$25.00 late fee. Please do not send payments to the school. All charges are due each month despite absences or holidays. A child will be dropped from enrollment if the account remains delinquent after the 3rd attempt to withdraw funds from the account. Tuition Agreements are available in the office.

Before and After Care

MSCC offers before and after school hours. Licensing requires that children arrive and leave within the designated before and after care hours. A child who is dropped off or picked up before/after the agreed hours will be charged a heavy fine.

Schedule Changes

Approved schedule changes require an amended tuition agreement 30 days prior to the start date of the amended schedule. Change In Schedule forms can be found in the main office. Each child is allowed one

schedule change per year, free of charge. After the first change, a fee of \$10 will be assessed for each additional schedule change request.

Lunch, Snack, and Milk

We currently offer catered lunches one day a week. All meals meet standard nutritional requirements mandated by the Health Department. Milk and juice are also provided. Lunches are ordered no later than 10:00a.m. Thursday morning. **No late orders or cancellations will be accepted.** When you send a lunch from home, it should also meet standard nutritional requirements. In the spirit of education, we strive for the whole child to be aware of what we ingest as being essential. Children are encouraged to eat healthy, balanced meals and snacks. Junk food is not appropriate. Soft drinks, candy, chocolate of any form, gummies, fruit rollups, chips of any kind (baked or not) are not allowed at MSCC. No child will be denied a lunch. Therefore, if a child arrives at school without a lunch, we will provide the child with a supplemental lunch but only on an emergency basis.

Parents of bottle fed children and those still unable to eat table food must provide the necessary food and formula in sufficient quantities for the entire day. Only labeled bottles with the child's name will be accepted. The infant room is equipped with a refrigerator and a microwave so formula and food can be safely stored and heated.

General Policies and Procedures

Accidents

If a child is injured at school, you will receive verbal notice on the day of the accident about what happened and the care given to your child. You will receive written confirmation no later than the day following the accident. If a child visits a doctor or hospital following an accident at school, MSCC is required to forward information to Texas Health and Human Services regarding the accident and the follow-up medical attention. Texas Health and Human Services will sometimes choose to call the parents at home to visit with you. They also visit the school and speak to the staff member reporting the accident and, depending on the child's age and verbal skills, with the child. They want to ensure that accidents that happen in our facility are handled properly.

Address Changes

Students who move during the school year must report their new address and/or telephone number to the office as soon as possible. Name changes pertaining to parents or students should also be reported immediately.

Adjustment Period

MSCC should be an exciting experience for your child; however, it can initially be a difficult transition. Whatever the personality of your child; however eager he/she may seem to be for the new experience, there will be a moment when she/he suddenly realized that her/his parent will not be there with him/her.

Parents too, often feel anxious about the separation. These feelings of apprehension are normal. If the child is having difficulty, you can help by NOT sneaking away. Instead, tell the child you are leaving and will be back to pick him/her up at the end of the day, and say good-bye quickly and unhesitatingly, without looking back.

Staff Hired By Parents

We strongly discourage our employees from making independent childcare arrangements with families at the school. However, in the event that you enter into an agreement with an MSCC employee to babysit for your family, it must be done away from the school and with the full knowledge and understanding that the sitter enters into such an agreement as a private citizen and not as an MSCC employee. We cannot be held responsible for our employees away from our school, outside of their working hours. We will not be held liable for their actions or omissions when not on our property.

Animals

We will notify parents in writing when animals are or will be present on campus. We will ensure that caregivers and children practice good hygiene and hand washing after handling or coming in to contact with an animal and items used by an animal, such as water bowls, food bowls, and cages.

Arrival and Departure

It is imperative that children arrive at school on time to avoid disruptions in the classroom. Arrival and departure times are listed on your Tuition Agreement. Late departures incur heavy fines because ratios may be affected. We are not licensed to have children on campus before 7:30 or after 5:30. MSCC requests that all children be in the classroom by 8:30 a.m. Circle time is an important part of the child's day. All parents are expected to pick up their child at the time indicated on their tuition agreement. MSCC requires that you personally escort him/her to a classroom where you entrust him/her to an adult's care.

Attendance

Absence and lateness records must be maintained on all students at MSCC. Being consistently late or excessively absent from school adversely affects the child's progress and integration in the class. We ask that you notify MSCC by telephone, email or Class Dojo if your child will be absent for the day. The phone number at the school is 361-883-9306. The email address is montessoriofcc1985@gmail.com. There is no refund for absences. Children absent from the program two weeks without advanced notice and without tuition payment will be dropped from the program. Their space will be given to a child on the waiting list. They will be re-admitted if space is available and the account is brought current.

Tardiness

In the primary class, many lessons, announcements, and preparations for the day are presented at the beginning of class. When children arrive late, they miss out on key information. Also, a late arrival disrupts the class. If you must be late, please allow the child to enter the room quietly and alone, to allow the other children to maintain their concentration.

Birthday Celebration

We invite each child to celebrate his/her birthday in a very special way at MSCC! We will set aside a time for this Celebration of Life. If a child has a summer birthday, and they are not here for our summer program, we can celebrate in early August or late May.

The format for each child's history is as follows:

As the child walks with the globe around the sun in the middle of the circle, the parent(s) read a statement giving the child's history for each year. Your child will symbolically traverse around the sun for each year of his/her life. The teacher will guide you and your child through the process.

Include your own special moments and the personality of your child. A few sentences about the highlights of each year are sufficient. If you would like to enhance your story with photographs, we suggest one or two photos for each year. The children are encouraged to leave the pictures to share during the week, as classmates can not all get close enough to see the photos during the narrative. If you choose to leave the photos in the classroom for a few days, we strongly suggest you place them on a poster board to be displayed in the classroom.

Parents are also invited to provide a nutritious snack for the celebration. Ideas: fruits, cheeses, vegetable trays with dip, or muffins. If you can, please include your child in the food preparation. Please remember to avoid chocolate (including cupcakes) or cake. When bringing in outside food, please be aware of any food allergies in your child's class.

Closures

Should an emergency arise weather related or another situation that would compromise the safety of our students, MSCC will be closed. For pertinent information, the Executive Director will post on Class Dojo and in the private Facebook group. Unfortunately, when unforeseen circumstances occur that may cause closure to the school (i.e. power outage), we are unable to credit tuition as school continues to incur expenses.

Daily Schedule

Each classroom has a daily schedule posted inside the door that reflects a typical day in your child's routine. The schedules are designed for each group based on age and development levels. Schedules alternate between large and small group activities, noisy and quiet experiences, and provide adequate resting, eating and outdoor play. Children will go outside each day except in rainy weather.

Daily notes are provided to parents in the Infant and Toddler classrooms with information on the types of food the child ate, the amount of time the child slept, and their diaper or potty information for the day

MSCC Peaceful Resolution Policy

In the interest of providing the children at MSCC with skills for life, the teachers and staff use what we call peaceful conflict resolution to help the children learn to solve problems that invariably occur in daily interaction with each other. The peaceful resolution policy is unusual in that it is basically a one-liner that applies school wide, including the children.

When a teacher observes that children are not able to resolve a problem, or a child comes to a teacher telling on another child, the response is Have you spoken with _____ (the source of the problem) about the problem? We not only help them find the right words to convey their feelings and concern to each other, we also model that same behavior. Children learn best that which they see and hear, and are great imitators!

All messages convey feelings and give actual information that is sometimes all one needs to obtain desired responses. For example:

- I don't like being poked....
- That hurts!.....
- It hurts my feelings when.....
- I am using that now. You can have it next, when I am finished....
- That is mine, and I worry that it will be broken or lost. Please put it back.
- I didn't understand what you meant....
- Please explain it another way.....

Discipline and Guidance

Discipline must be: Individualized and consistent for each child, appropriate to the child's level of understanding, and directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements that are age appropriate
- Redirecting behavior using positive statement and offering alternative activities to engage in.
- Logical consequences which are related, respectful and reasonable consequences of specific misbehavior

There must not be harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats for corporal punishment
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training
- Pinching, shaking, or biting a child
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriate periods of time for the child's age

In our estimation, the goal of all guidance is to help children develop self-control and self-direction as they become happy, fully functioning individuals who can make decisions.

Behavior

MSCC was conceived and established to provide the optimum learning conditions for all students. It is imperative that each student takes full responsibility for his/her own behavior and to respect the rights of classmates.

The Teacher will bring unacceptable behavior to the attention of the student in the classroom. Repeated offenses will result in removal from the classroom. A student will not be allowed to disrupt the classroom continuously. When the seriousness or frequency of the infraction suggests a need for other measures, the following serves as a guide in relating consequences to various degrees of offenses. In cases not precisely defined herein, the Board of Trustees takes such actions as judged appropriate. Repetitive incidents of

misbehavior will require a parent/teacher conference. Teacher/parent communication is critical when dealing with consistent misbehavior. MSCC requires that if a child hurts another child, an incident report will be sent to parents of both children announcing the incident.

- Willful and disorderly behavior or deliberate violation of school rules or policies will result in parental notification and/or meeting with student, parents and faculty together.
- Serious behavior problems, disrespectful action or speech, willful destruction or defacing of property, or any form of physical violence can result in up to 3 days suspension, plus compensation for any property damage. Additional days of suspension may be deemed necessary with board approval.
- Sever insubordination, chronic repetition of offenses cited above, or repeated failure to observe rules or policies may result in expulsion.

A student or parent has the right to appeal recommendation for expulsion or removal to an alternative setting. If a student or parent does not agree with the determination made by the Executive Director, a hearing before the Board of Trustees may be requested.

Problem Identification

Every effort will be made to identify learning and/or discipline problems early. The lead staff must be advised of existing problems when the child registers. The teacher will cooperate with parents to clarify/resolve new or existing problems. Recommendations for outside professional help may be deemed necessary. The best interest of the child is of primary consideration always.

Biting

Commonly, biting is seen in children between 13 and 30 months of age. It is not a sign that the child, the parents, or the school has failed. However, it is an indicator that the child, the parents, and the school must work to provide the child alternative coping techniques. MSCC's goal is to help each child develop self-discipline by redirecting the child to a more appropriate use of energy.

Incidents of biting can be stressful for both the students and the parents involved. It is important to understand that, frequently, biting occurs when a child is frustrated and is unable to express his or her needs adequately. A child may be biting to get attention, to relieve teething discomfort, or for oral exploration.

There are clearly defined steps one can take to help a child learn how to stop biting. MSCC staff will work with the family to learn tools and new habits to alter the coping behavior. While MSCC strives to keep all children safe and secure, biting does happen. Our response to biting will be to care for and help the child that is bitten and to help the biter to stop the behavior, as well as to examine the setting around the biting incident.

Repetitive incidents of biting will require a parent/teacher conference. Teacher/parent communication is critical when dealing with consistent biting behavior. MSCC requires that if a child bites another child, an incident report will be sent to parents of both biter and bitee announcing the incident. If the bite breaks the skin, both biter and bitee's parents will be called by MSCC staff. The bite will be washed thoroughly with soap and water to prevent infection.

MSCC staff will report all bites to the Executive Director. MSCC reserves the right to recommend dismissal of any child when the school believes that his/her placement is not in the best interest of that child, another child, or the school environment.

Toddlers will occasionally go through periods of biting behavior. This can be attributed to several normal developmental processes. While we strive to keep all children safe and secure, toddler biting is expected. We will employ redirection, natural and logical consequences if necessary. It may be necessary to conference with parents to develop a combined strategy if the behavior persists. We reserve the right to recommend dismissal should it become necessary for the protection of the others in the environment.

Procedures for Concerns or Questions

- If you have any concerns regarding your child please speak directly to your child's teacher and try to resolve the problem together. We encourage team work between parents and staff.
- If you are not satisfied with the way your concern was handled, please schedule a time to meet with the Executive Director and she will be glad to arrange a conference with you.
- After working with the Executive Director and matters are not resolved, the matter may be taken to the Board of Trustees who will meet with you to listen to your concern then you may contact the following
 - Texas Health and Human Services- Childcare Licensing
 - Address: 5155 Flynn Pkwy, Suite #451
 - Local Phone #: 361-878-3451
 - Licensing website: www.txchildcaresearch.org
 - MSCC website: www.montessorischoolofcorpuschristi.org

We take pride in our work with young children. At MSCC "children come first" however, we are not perfect. We try very hard to abide by the Minimum Standards, but if you see us breaking a rule, please notify the Executive Director immediately.

All observations of suspicions of child abuse or neglect will be immediately reported to the child protective services agency no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The Executive Director will follow the direction of the child protective agency regarding completion of written reports. If the parent of the child is suspected of abuse, the Executive Director will follow the guidance of the child protective agency regarding notification of the parent.

Accused staff may be suspended or given leave without pay pending investigation of child abuse infractions. Such caregivers may also be removed from the classroom and given a job that does not require interaction with children. Parents of suspected abused children will be notified. Parents of other children in the program will be contacted if caregiver is suspected of abuse. Caregivers found guilty of child abuse will be summarily dismissed or relieved of their duties.

Dress Code

Toddler and Primary students are required to wear **TENNIS SHOES** at all times. Children will NOT be allowed to wear clothing with Licensed Characters (i.e. Dora, Paw Patrol, Disney), boots, sandals or flip-flops. Pajamas and costumes are **not** allowed except on special occasions designated by the Executive Director. Children will often be participating in messy art projects and spending time on the playground. Please dress children in comfortable and washable play clothes which are free from complicated fasteners and which can easily be removed. Independence is easier if children wear garments they can manage themselves. In the cold months of the year, children will continue to go outside each day. Please be sure that your child has a coat, hat, and mittens available each day during the winter season. All items should be labeled with your child's name. Character passes can be earned through various contests.



Field Trips

We do not take off site field trips. We only do reverse field trips where the trip comes to us.

Gang Free Zones

As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. This new statute requires that information about gang-free zones be distributed to parents and guardians of children in care at licensed child care centers. The following are tips to assist in complying with the new law.

What is a gang-free zone?

A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The specific locations include day care centers. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of your child care center. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

How do parents know where the gang-free zone ends?

The area that falls within a gang-free zone can vary depending on the type of location. The local municipal or county engineer may produce and update maps for the purposes of prosecution. Parents may contact their local municipality or court house for information about obtaining a copy of a map if they choose to do so.

What is the purpose of gang-free zones?

Similar to the motivation behind establishing drug-free zones, the purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

What does it mean for my day care center?

A child care center must inform parents or guardians of children attending the center about the new gang-free zone designation. This means parents and guardians need to be informed that certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of your center is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

Safety Drills

- **Fire Drills-** Fire alarm will alert children and staff of a fire or potential fire. The children will be evacuated as far away from the fire as possible without crossing the street. Refer to the Fire Evacuation Plan located by the door in each classroom. The Executive Director will advise children and staff when it is safe to return to the school building.
- **Severe Weather Drill-** The weather radio located in the office will alert staff of severe weather in the area. During a severe weather drill the children and staff will evacuate to the hallway in

front of the boys and girls restrooms. Refer to the Severe Weather Plan located by the door in each classroom. The Director will advise children and staff that it is safe to return to the classrooms.

- **Active Shooter and Lock Down Drills**—These will take place every 3 months. The children will be asked to move to a corner of the classroom and remain as quiet as possible. We will inform the parents that they have taken place.
- **IN THE EVENT THAT CHILDREN ARE TRANSPORTED TO ANOTHER SAFE LOCATION, PARENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED.**

Minimum Standards Revision Notice Health Checks

We are now required to do daily health checks on each child enrolled in our school. Our staff will greet the children and do the following.

Look for:

- Breathing difficulties
- Severe cough
- Discharge from the nose or eyes
- Changes in skin cover
- Bruising or swelling
- Cuts, sores, or rashes

If the child can talk, ask questions

Give the child a hug or gently feel the child's cheek, forehead, or neck (checking to see if the child feels unusually warm or cold.)

Talk with parent/guardian to find out about changes in the child's:

- *Sleep
- *Eating/drinking
- *toilet habits
- *mood and behavior at home

We will document daily and keep it on file. Please let us know if you have any questions regarding these procedures.

Health Requirements

Health information and immunization records maintained in the office must be up to date. Allergies must be documented by a doctor's note. If your child is diagnosed with an allergy or asthma, MSCC must have an allergy plan or asthma plan on file. MSCC, along with Nueces County Health Department, will not require a TB test for children to attend school, at this time.

Testing

Hearing and vision testing are required by the state starting at the age of four. Testing will be performed by trained professionals.

Immunization Requirements

Each child enrolled or admitted to MSCC must meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the Texas Department of Health. This requirement applies to all children in care from birth through six

years of age. MSCC must be provided with a physician's statement indicating that your child is free from communicable diseases. A record of all immunizations must be provided and updated regularly.

Illness

Please notify the school if your child is ill. Your child must stay home if he/she has had a temperature over 101 F, has vomited twice, or has had diarrhea within the last 24 hours. If a child has a contagious disease, parents of children in the class must be notified so they can take preventive action or be on the lookout for symptoms.

- An ill child must not be admitted for care if one or more of the following exist:
 - The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably, in facility or facilitated activities.
 - The illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children.
 - The child has any of the following:
 - Oral or Ear temperature of 101 degrees or greater; rectal temperature 102 degrees or greater; armpit temperature 100 degrees or greater; accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness until medical evaluation indicated that the child can be included in the facility's activities
 - Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness (such as lethargy, uncontrolled breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, vomiting illness (two or more episodes in 24 hours)), rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, wheezing, behavior change, or other unusual signs until medical evaluation indicates that the child can be included in the facility's activities.
 - The child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, until medical evaluation determines that the child is no longer communicable and is able to participate in the facility's activities

Medication

The office can administer prescription and Over the Counter (OTC) medication only with the proper documentation and instruction by a physician. All requests for medicine administration must be in writing. Even OTC medications require a doctor's written instructions for child under two. (Your doctor can fax this to us at 884-9306.) All medicines must come to the office, and **never** be stored in backpacks or lunch boxes. Medication **will not** be refrigerated.

- Any medications brought by parents for their child(ren) must:
 - Be brought to the office and administered by office staff only;
 - Be in the original container
 - Be labeled with the child's name
 - Be labeled with the date
 - Include directions to administer the medication
 - Include the name of the physician prescribing the medication

Medical Emergencies

If critical illness or injury requires immediate attention of a physician, MSCC must:

- Contact emergency medical services or take the child to the nearest emergency room
- Give the child first-aid treatment or CPR when needed
- Contact the physician identified in the child's record
- Contact the child's parent

- Ensure supervision of other children in the group

Essential Oils

MSCC encourages the use of essential oils in our classrooms. During school hours, teachers may diffuse Wild Orange and Lemon. After hours, when no children are present, On Guard may be diffused.

Infant

You have the right to breastfeed your child on campus and provide breast milk while your child is in our care.

Blanket Requirements

According to Minimum Standards any infant 12 Months and younger may not have a blanket or sleep sack with them in their crib at any time.

Lunches from Home

Lunch is a social experience and an opportunity to refine manners. It is a time to enjoy pleasant conversation and good food. At MSCC, teachers have lunch with the children.

Although some of us bring our lunches, we do not eat out of our lunch bags. Wrappings are put into the lunch bags or boxes and removed from the tables. The children enjoy learning to prepare for, serve and clear away after a meal. They learn to wait for everyone to be ready before beginning to eat. The children are encouraged to peel and pour for themselves.

Recommended lunches include nutritious soup, meat, fruit or vegetables, and breads. Please keep chips, chocolate of any kind, candy, gum, cake, pies or cookies at home to give your child at your discretion. Milk and/or water are provided. Each child is encouraged to eat only as much as his/her hunger requires. Leftovers that the child has not eaten should be packed back into the lunch box and carried home as a form of feedback for the parents. Because of this, sharing and trading lunch items is discouraged.

Please ask your child's lead teacher about any food allergies in classroom.

Observations

The Executive Director will regularly observe each class. Parents are also welcome to observe in class also. There are specific guidelines available to keep visitation from being disruptive to the class. When entering a room, please do so quietly. Make every effort to not interrupt work that is going on. Please respect the workspaces defined by rugs on the floor by walking around them. Tables and shelves are for work or eating, not for sitting. If you need to talk with the teacher, please walk over and wait for him or her to finish before he or she can acknowledge you. Please do not call across the room to a child or adult. Be a good role model of respectful behavior.

Parent- Teacher Conferences

Parents meet with teachers at regular intervals. (See Student Progress). Also, a parent-teacher conference may be initiated at any time by either the parent or the teacher. Parents are encouraged to share questions, concerns, and special interests with the teacher on a daily basis. Parent input and contributions to enrich the program are encouraged, and we request that these activities be scheduled to allow the teacher to give complete attention to the children and not interrupt classes in progress.

Conferences with the Administration are also encouraged.

Personal Items

MSCC furnishes your child with most of the supplies and materials needed for learning activities. However, each child must bring the following personal items:

- Lightweight blanket
- Nap mat
- Sufficient diapers or training pants
- Formula and food supplies
- Any special diet requirements
- Pacifiers
- Mosquito Repellant/Sunscreen
- Several changes of clothing (clothes should be labeled with your child's name)
 - Federal regulations do not allow us to sort or rinse clothing soiled with bodily fluids. Soiled clothing is sent home, bagged and labeled, to be washed.

Other Personal Items

MSCC staff cannot be responsible for personal items brought to the school and we ask that you do not let your child bring purses, toys, gum, candy, money, pets, video tapes, and jewelry. These items frequently cause distractions and disputes and are better left at home.

Objects for Show and Tell can be brought to school only if they pertain to the current unit of study. If and when Show and Tell objects are brought to school, they are only brought out during Show and Tell and then returned to the child's cubby.

Playground

We have three well-equipped playgrounds, each designed for different age groups. The staff supervises children's behavior and safe use of the playground equipment.

Product Safety

Recalls of unsafe consumer products, including children's products, are available. It is easy and free to find out. Just go to the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission web site at www.cpsc.gov or you may access the recall information at the Texas Health and Human Services website at www.dfps.state.tx.us. Recall information can be found in the blue folder located above the mailboxes in the main entry way.

Release of Children

All children are only released to the people listed on their emergency card. **For your family's safety, we do ID.** If you have planned a play date with a currently enrolled child, you must write a note or send an email, releasing the child into that parent's custody for the day. It is essential that MSCC maintain current information on the emergency contact list. Changes concerning home or work phone numbers, address, and pick up authorization need to be recorded on the school's files promptly.

MSCC must have a person to contact should a child get sick or an emergency occur. If you are having another individual pick up your child from the school, who is not on the list, MSCC will need the authority to release your child to this person in writing with your signature or via email. We will not accept notes given to the person picking up the child. MSCC will not release any child without written permission and telephone authorization will be approved once the office staff has returned a phone call to the parent verified the release of the child. Should a child be left after hours and parent or contact cannot be reached, MSCC will notify Corpus Christi Police Department one hour after 5:30 p.m. closing.

For the safety of the children, please do not leave your child alone outside the school or let him/her walk out the door without you. MSCC also asks that you turn off your ignition when walking your child into the school. Please make sure your child is delivered to their classroom.

Room Parents

Each classroom shall have at least one Room Parent. Room Parents' work with the Board of Trustees' and Parent Liaison to coordinate school-wide functions and working with his/her child's teacher to coordinate room functions. School-wide functions include the Maria Montessori Social dinner, Friendship Feast, National Montessori Week, parent workdays and fundraisers. Room functions include seasonal parties and teacher birthdays and anniversaries. Being a Room Parent does not require a large time commitment. It is a great way to meet other parents and help your child's school.

Student Progress

Written Progress Reports are prepared twice a year in the Infant, Toddler and Primary Classes. These reports will be discussed with both parents whenever possible, during a scheduled conference time.

Social Media Policy

MSCC does not post pictures of current students on any of the school's public social media pages unless parents have signed a release form. Parents may not post pictures of MSCC students on any MSCC online outlet or on their personal social media pages. MSCC Staff are not allowed to add parents to their personal page. If a staff member is already Facebook friends with a parent prior to this current school year, that is permitted. These policies are in effect for all social media accounts (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snap Chat). MSCC staff will not be permitted to begin or reply to any social media messages. If a parent needs to get a hold of a staff member, you may call the office, send an email, send a message on Class Dojo or talk to them face-to-face. Furthermore, parents nor staff members are allowed to create any social media pages that have any ties to MSCC without the acknowledgement and approval of the Executive Director.

Termination

All students are enrolled on a three month probationary period. If at any time during the first three months, whether the parents or MSCC feel that it is in the best interest of the child or the center, withdrawal or termination may occur without notice. If a child has not been able to meet the behavioral standards of the school, he or she may be asked to leave the school. The section on behavior explains this policy more in detail.

Toilet Training

With cooperation from each parent, our programs will help toilet train children. When parents and staff agree that a child is ready for toilet training, they will discuss training methods that should be consistent between home and school.

The key to ease in toilet training is readiness. Children must be physically ready, which means they can hold on and let go at will. In addition, children must be mentally ready, which means they know what is expected. Finally, children must be emotionally ready, which means they are willing. When these three conditions exist, children are ready to start using the toilet.

Any child transitioning to or new to the Primary Program, must be 100% potty trained. This means that the child must be able to tell the teachers whether or not, he/she has to use the bathroom. If a child has more than (3) BM accidents in one week, he/she will be sent home with parent to work on this process. The child will be allowed back once the parent feels like he/she can tell the teachers when they need to use the bathroom.

Water Activities

We maintain state required ratios for water activities. Children are required to wear appropriate clothing for water activities.

Weather Policy

The MSCC weather policy for outdoor play is as follows:

55 and up	Out	Unless Wet
Between 55 and 45	Up to the Management Team	Wet, wind chill, sunny
Below 55	Stay inside	Indoor Playtime
100 and up Heat Index	Stay Inside	Indoor Playtime
100 and Below Heat Index	Up to the Management Team	

Withdrawal

A 30-day written notice is required for withdrawals. If a child withdraws from school, arrangements must be made through the office. Many fees are not refundable, as explained in the registration packet and the tuition agreement. Parents will continue to be billed if the school is not notified that the child is withdrawing. We ask that you remember we love our children so please give us time to say goodbye. Many times parents pull out with no notice; this is very upsetting to staff, as we become attached to the children.

Grievance Policy

The Management Team along with the Board has agreed that the same procedure we teach the children is indeed the best tool to air grievances and concerns with each other. If you have any questions, concerns, complaints, compliments, or comments, please go directly to the person with whom you have the concern, etc. Explain the situation as you see it and ask how the two of you can resolve the issue. If you cannot come to a satisfactory solution, then involve a third party. For example:

- Teacher sees teacher first, then the two go to Team Member to help;
- Parent sees teacher first, then both go together to ask Executive Director to help;
- Parent sees Executive Director first, and then both go together to ask board member for help, etc.

So you see, the one liner is Have you spoken with _____ about the problem?

Thank you for your cooperation in the way we solve problems at MSCC! Go directly to the source first, we can almost always avoid or at least diminish misunderstandings, rumors, gossip, and hurt feelings.

Suggested Reading List

Faber, Adele
Faber, Adele

[How to Talk so Kids Will Listen... Listen so Kids Will Talk](#)
[How to Talk so Kids Will Learn](#)

Faber, Adele	<u>Siblings Without Rivalry</u>
Futrell, Kathryn	<u>The Normalized Child</u>
Lilliard, Paula	<u>Montessori: A Modern Approach</u>
Montessori, Maria	<u>The Absorbent Mind</u>
Montessori, Maria	<u>The Formation of Man</u>
Montessori, Maria	<u>The Child in the Family</u>
Montessori, Maria	<u>Spontaneous Activity in Education</u>
Montessori, Maria	<u>To Educate the Human Potential</u>
Montessori, Maria	<u>The Secret of Childhood</u>
Montessori, Maria	<u>Education for a New World</u>
Montessori, Maria	<u>Education and Peace</u>
Montessori, Maria	<u>From Childhood to Adolescence</u>
Montessori, Maria	<u>What You Should Know About Your Child</u>
Montessori, Maria	<u>The Discovery of the Child</u>
Montessori, Mario Jr.	<u>Education for Human Development</u>
	<u>The Pink What?</u>
Standings, E.M.	<u>Maria Montessori: Her Life and Work</u>

I have received the MSCC Parent Handbook and agree to comply with the policies and guidelines therein.

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Please return this sheet to MSCC office

Updates of this handbook will be sent out as needed
Updated June 20, 2019

Please Print Child's Name (S)