

Marin Montessori Parent Handbook

2022-2023

Updated 8.31.22

This *MMS Parent Handbook*, formerly known as the “Blue Book,” is an important source of general information about school life and procedures. We hope it provides the guidance you need. We encourage you to reach out to the appropriate Crew members with any remaining questions.

It is important to note that this handbook only highlights MMS policies and is not a compilation of all policies.

The handbook is also posted on the MMS website and may be updated from time to time during the school year.

Please note that this handbook is not intended to be a contract, and the terms of your student enrollment with the school are set forth in the enrollment agreement signed by you.

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2022-23 Major Dates

While our intention is to keep true to his calendar, please note that these dates are subject to change. Please check the calendars available on ParentSquare and our website for updates.

OPENING OF SCHOOL PHASE-IN PLANS

- Toddler
 - August 25 and 26: Intake calls
 - August 29: Toddler orientation/deck visits
 - August 30: Toddler phase-in begins in groups.
- Primary
 - August 25 and 26: Primary home visits (No ASC)
 - August 29: Primary orientation visits (No ASC)
 - August 30 and 31: New Primary children orientation short mornings (No ASC)
 - September 1: First full day for all Primary students (No ASC)
 - September 6: ASC begins for Primary students
- Elementary
 - August 29: Elementary orientation visits (No ASC)
 - August 30: First day for Elementary 3rd and 6th years (No ASC)
 - August 31: First day for Elementary 2nd and 5th years (No ASC)
 - September 1: First day for Elementary 1st and 4th (all Elementary students present)
 - September 6: ASC begins for Elementary students
- Junior High
 - August 29: Junior High Intake Conferences
 - August 30: First day for Junior High 9th years
 - August 31: First day for Junior High 8th years
 - September 1: First day for Junior High 7th years (all Junior High students present)

SEPTEMBER

- 5: Labor Day (No School)
- 7-9: Junior High Odyssey Trip
- 8: Junior High Parent Potluck
- 16: Primary Minimum Day (ASC available)
- 17: Coastal Cleanup (Parents' Association event)
- 20: Junior High Back to School Night
- 22: Corte Madera Back to School Night and PA Parent Welcome Back to School Social
- 29: Upper El Digital Health Parent Ed

OCTOBER

- 6: Junior High Digital Health Parent Ed
- 7: Parent Teacher Conferences (Both Toddler Classes/Primary/Elementary) (No School. Limited ASC Available. Junior High in Session)
- 10: In-service Day (No School. No ASC available)
- 10: Song Sparrow Parent Teacher Conference

- 11-14: Junior High Fall Trip
- 11: Parent Teacher Conferences (Both Toddler Classes/Primary/Elementary) (No School. Limited ASC Available. Junior High In Session)
- 17: Toddler Parent Ed – Making Connections: Montessori In The Home
- 20: Junior High Parent Teacher Conferences (No School for Junior High)
- 21: Parent Teacher Conferences (Sandpiper/Primary/Elementary/Junior High Parent) (No School All Levels. Limited ASC Available)
- 24: Photo Day for Junior High – Individual and Group Shots
- 24-28: Upper Elementary and Junior High Digital Health with MaxwellEd
- 25: Photo Day for Toddler, Primary, and Elementary – Individual Shots
- 29: Parents' Association's Fall Family Festival at Corte Madera

NOVEMBER

- 3: Junior High Admissions Open House
- 5: Corte Madera Campus Admissions Open House
- 10: Primary Parent Ed
- 15: Giving Tuesday
- 15: Elementary Parent Ed
- 16: Virtual Grandparent and Special Friend Day (Coffee with Sam)
- 18: Primary, Elementary, & Junior High Grandparent/Special Friend Day (Minimum Day for Primary. ASC Available)
- 21-25: Thanksgiving Break

DECEMBER

- 9: Upper Elementary Play
- 15: Minimum Day for Toddler
- 16: Minimum Day Primary, Elementary, Junior High (No Primary ASC)
- 19- January 2: Winter Break

JANUARY

- 2: In-service Day (No School. No ASC for families or Crew)
- 16: Martin Luther King Jr. Day (No School. No ASC)
- 27: Minimum Day Primary (ASC available)

FEBRUARY

- 17: In-service Day (No School. No ASC)
- 20-24: Mid-Winter Break (No School)

MARCH

- 3: Parent-Teacher conferences Toddler, Primary, Elementary (No School. Limited ASC Available. Junior High in Session)
- 6: In-service day (No School. No ASC)
- 7: Parent-Teacher conferences Toddler, Primary, Elementary (No School. Limited ASC Available. Junior High in Session)
- 16: Junior High Parent-Teacher Conferences (No School Junior High)

- 17: Toddler/Primary/Elementary/Junior High Parent-Teacher Conferences (Limited ASC Available)

APRIL

- 3-7: Spring Break
- 17-21: **TENTATIVE** Junior High Spring Trip
- 17: Toddler Parent Ed
- 20: Primary Parent Ed

MAY

- 6: Parents' Association Spring Fling at Junior High
- 8-12: **TENTATIVE** Full Cycle Hawai'i Trip for Peace Studies
- 18: New Parent/Stepping Up Parent Orientation Corte Madera
- 29: Memorial Day (No School. No ASC)

JUNE

- 7: Last day for Toddler (Minimum Day for Toddler) and Last day for Junior High
 - Junior High Graduation
- 8: Last day of school for Primary and Elementary
 - End-of-Year Celebration & 6th Year Speeches

Welcome

We arrive at the beginning of the 2022-23 school year with a joy, optimism, and resolve that result from the resilience and adaptability that our community has demonstrated throughout the last two years of a global pandemic. While we, of course, don't know what the future holds, we *do* know what our community is able to do in times of uncertainty; we rally around each other, take care of one another, and commit ourselves wholeheartedly to our North Star: safe, in-person learning.

As our charge remains the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual well-being of our community, this handbook operationalizes that commitment. Please refer to it regularly. If we need to modify any policy or protocol due to changing circumstances, we will communicate through our website and ParentSquare.

As we launch the new school year, I want to start with gratitude for our families, our Crew, our students, and the trust you, our parents, place in us. Here's to a healthy and exciting year.

– Sam Shapiro, Head of School

MARIN MONTESSORI SCHOOL (MMS) was established in 1963 as the first Montessori school in Marin County. Parental support and participation, along with longevity of the faculty, have been cornerstones of our success.

Mission Statement

“Education for Life”

The mission of Marin Montessori School, in adherence to the principles of the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) as envisioned by Dr. Maria Montessori, is to nurture the development of each child in our diverse community to his or her fullest potential – an independent, responsible, compassionate, learned individual who thinks critically and realizes clearly his or her role in the world. Thus, our mission is to provide education for life.

Vision Statement

Marin Montessori School is a private, non-profit, AMI accredited school serving the diverse needs of children from toddler age through adolescence. The school is a community of families, faculty, staff, administration, and a board of trustees. Collectively, we nurture the development of each child to his or her fullest potential – intellectually, physically, socially, creatively, emotionally, and spiritually. Therefore, we strive to provide more than an academic education alone; our goal is to provide education for life.

We accomplish this by preparing a stimulating classroom with beautiful manipulative materials where our children, with the guidance of our specially trained faculty, follow their

natural tendencies to master skills. We are dedicated to maintaining a warm, nurturing, joyful environment where each child:

- Receives a quality education that supports his or her individual development;
- Has the freedom to choose, balanced by the responsibility to be productive;
- Learns according to their personal learning styles and timelines;
- Can reach their academic potential without grade level limits; and
- Enjoys beautiful, orderly, harmonious surroundings.

This program fosters self-motivation, self-discipline, compassion, independence, critical thinking, social and personal responsibility, and respect for others and the environment. It is our vision that our children gain a strong sense of self and realize a life-long satisfaction and joy in learning, working, and exploring life. We believe this will enable our children to contribute happily and productively their unique talents to the world.

Faculty, administration, and parents have come together to write and support the mission and vision of Marin Montessori School. We are committed to:

- Professional excellence in support of AMI principles;
- Community and partnership among faculty, staff, families, and alumni of MMS;
- Beautiful, functional, safe indoor and outdoor facilities meeting the needs of all members of the school community;
- Diversity and a culture of belonging to enhance the educational and social experience; and
- Financial integrity while keeping tuition affordable.

Our dedication to AMI principles and our partnership among the school, families, and broader community makes Marin Montessori one of the finest Toddler, Primary, Elementary, and Junior High schools. We intend to remain a model of excellence as we continue to provide education for life.

Marin Montessori Diversity, Equity, And Belonging Statement

Marin Montessori School is founded on confidence in the potential of each child and adolescent to learn and flourish. It is our core belief that for students to flourish, ours must be a community of belonging—one in which each person is known, valued, and warmly included. Recognizing, too, that we are preparing students for an interdependent, globalized world, MMS builds a vibrant school community in which we learn to expand our horizons by viewing the world through the lenses of a wide variety of outlooks and backgrounds. At MMS, students and families from all walks of life are welcomed, included, and honored.

A three-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee, Dr. Maria Montessori envisioned a world in which all children and adolescents are given the guidance, resources, and environments they need to learn, reach their potentials, and become positive contributors to the world. Diversity, equity, and belonging work requires ongoing investigation and dedicated effort, and it is in this same spirit and aspiration that MMS continues today in the twenty-first century.

Montessori Philosophy

The Montessori method is a child-centered educational method based on the child development theories originated by Italian educator Maria Montessori (1870-1952) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Dr. Montessori observed that childhood is the time when children are exploring the world and gathering impressions that are the foundation of all later learning. It is the most formative time of their lives. To best aid their development, Dr. Montessori developed age-appropriate materials and activities designed to meet the needs of children throughout specific phases of development. Some of the specific needs observed by Dr. Montessori include:

- The need for an ordered, loving environment;
- The need to do things for and by themselves;
- The need for respect as capable, independent workers;
- The need for their intelligence to be honored in the materials they use;
- The need for a purposeful end to their work;
- The need for a group of peers in which they can contribute.

An AMI Montessori classroom offers the opportunity to meet these needs.

Our goal is to help your children develop:

- Independence through purposeful tasks;
- Initiative through intelligent free choice of activities;
- Age-appropriate maturity through being a member of a mixed-age group;
- Self-confidence achieved through accomplishment in activities that challenge their capabilities;
- Self-esteem from being a part of a loving atmosphere;
- Social awareness through participating in a group setting;
- Comprehensive academic skills through use of the unique Montessori didactic materials;
- A sense of responsibility and its relationship with freedom through caring for themselves and their environment;
- Discipline through movement activities that absorb them in their work;
- Self-esteem.

Association Montessori Internationale (AMI)

Marin Montessori School is recognized by the Association Montessori Internationale, headquartered in Amsterdam, Holland. AMI was founded in 1929 by Dr. Maria Montessori to protect the integrity of her work. AMI has remained the authority on Montessori education and practice. AMI/USA is the lead affiliate of AMI in the United States.

AMI recognition indicates that our school performs according to the highest standards of the Montessori philosophy, receives regular consultations from qualified AMI consultants, and is staffed by qualified AMI teachers.

AMI/USA's website, www.amiusa.org, is an excellent resource for parents and families, especially when considered in connection with MMS's own website: www.marinmontessori.org. Other Montessori websites of interest include: www.montessoriguide.org; www.aidtolife.org (ages 0-3); www.maria-montessori.com.

A recognized not-for-profit organization, MMS is also accredited by the California Association of Independent Schools, which ensures we employ the highest standards of school governance and operational practices.

The Educational Program

Dr. Maria Montessori observed that the transformation of children from birth to adulthood occurs through a series of developmental planes. These transformations relate to the child's physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects of development. At each level of our Montessori program, the implementation of the Montessori principles changes in scope and manner to embrace the child's changing characteristics, needs, and interests at each plane of development.

We educate the whole child, enabling our students to reach their full potential intellectually, socially, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Lessons and experiences from previous years become the foundation for new lessons and experiences. Children who complete this progression from the Toddler level through Junior High receive the full benefit of an authentic Montessori education.

A complete Montessori education fosters:

- A love of learning;
- A solid educational foundation;
- Independence;
- Self-motivation and self-discipline;
- Leadership and responsibility;
- Compassion, consideration, and courtesy;
- Creative and critical thinking.

The authentic Montessori educational curriculum presented at Marin Montessori School includes the Toddler, Primary, Elementary, and Junior High levels. These levels span the first three planes of development as identified by Dr. Montessori from 1½ years to 15 years.

All levels are based on carefully applied Montessori principles. The Toddler and Primary levels are designed to prepare the young child for the Elementary level, continuing into Marin Montessori's unique Junior High experience.

Toddler Level (18 months to 2.6 years old)

The Toddler level allows the young child to enjoy a Montessori experience in a small group setting. The children have an opportunity to explore and experiment in an environment that has been carefully prepared to meet the unique needs of this age. As the children work together in the classroom, they are gently guided in a manner that enhances their innate sense of independence, order, and love of learning. Social skills are developed as children become active members of a loving community through real, purposeful experiences. By supporting and collaborating with their families, toddlers grow and become increasingly self-sufficient and independent.

The full-day program for toddlers includes a morning work period, snack time, outdoor time, and community lunch, followed by a much-needed nap. When children wake up, they again engage with their classroom environment where they can choose individual work or engage in small group activities. All toddlers enrolled in the full-day program attend Monday through Thursday until 2:40 pm.

Primary Level (2 years 8 months to 6 years old)

Our Primary prepared classroom environments are designed to offer strong learning experiences tailored to meet the developmental needs of young children ages two years and eight months through six years old. Children stay in the same class for three to four years depending on their age when they begin the program. Children are considered in their kindergarten year when they are five years old by September 1 of that school year.

That kindergarten year is referred to as the “the final year in Primary.” Once children complete the full Primary cycle, they step up to the Elementary level. This three to four year age span is unique and beneficial to the children in many ways. Within this mixed-age group, children develop at their own pace. There is a deep sense of caring and respect for one another and independence is fostered and responsibility for their learning and their classroom environment is developed.

Each Primary classroom includes areas for practical life, sensorial exercises, mathematics, and language development. Lessons are also given in history, geometry, biology, geology, and geography, art, music, and literature. Interdisciplinary work is fostered to ensure engagement with all disciplines and to enhance learning outcomes.

The Full-Day Primary is a continuation of the morning activities. The children work independently and in small groups with the classroom materials. They also receive individual and small group lessons.

Each year in Primary, children develop new skills and explore new lessons in novel ways. They experience a sequence of activities that prepares them for their next level of learning. **The best possible outcomes are linked to completing the full Primary cycle.**

Your child's guide will advise you on your child's progress and will inform you when they are ready to advance to our Elementary program.

In their culminating year, children are the leaders in the classroom community. They serve as responsible role models of classroom norms. This culminating year is a year of consolidation and mastery of knowledge and creative development. Completing the full Primary cycle benefits each individual child's development as well as the entire classroom community. Enrollment in our Primary program requires a planned commitment to complete the full Primary cycle, which is three to four years.

All children enrolled in Full-Day Primary attend class Monday-Friday, until 2:50 pm. In order for your child to receive the full benefit of Full-Day Primary and to ensure continuity for all the children in the classroom community, we ask that you only schedule extracurricular enrichment classes after the school day is completed.

Children are automatically enrolled for Full-Day Primary once they turn five years old. Our full-day program is limited to 24 children in each classroom.

Elementary Level (6 to 12 years old)

In the Primary level, your child built a solid foundation of skills that can now be used to extend to the almost limitless horizons of the Elementary class. Elementary-age children look at the world in a different way. Their focus of interest shifts from the "what" of the younger child to the "how" and "why" of the wonders of the universe. The prime tool for this exploration is the imagination assisted by reason. These factors, combined with the literacy and numeracy developed in the Primary level, form the springboard for the in-depth research and experimentation that now hold such an interest for the Elementary child.

In our **Lower Elementary (6-9 year olds)** and **Upper Elementary (9-12 year olds)** classrooms, introductory lessons are cosmic in scope and impressionistic in nature. The avenues of geography, history, mathematics, geometry, biology, and language proceed from the "vision of the whole." Music, art, and drama are integral elements of the environment. The children are encouraged and guided to creative expression.

The children tend to work in groups that they establish themselves. Collaborative projects are common, each member contributing within his or her own capabilities. In addition, the individual continues to build skills in reading, writing, and mathematics with the guidance of the teacher.

Junior High Level (12 to 15 years old)

In this hands-on learning environment, the relevance of a program that is challenging and stimulating emerges. The nature of work on the land provides purposeful occupations as students create and problem-solve in the areas of environmental science, economic sustainability, biology, history, and communication. These activities challenge the adolescent

to recognize connections between theory and practice. The learning process becomes more about interpretation, analysis, and synthesis of information (higher level thinking).

Students balance their days with a blend of theoretical and practical work. Students work through an anthropological approach to history and science as they explore human survival on the land, the rise of agricultural economies around the world, and the results of the advent of technology. Habitat restoration, organic farming, community building, microeconomics, and ecologically responsible resource development are the project themes of the adolescent curriculum. Through internship, service, and real work in a community context, MMS students grow in independence and prepare themselves for high school and for life as global citizens.

At each level of MMS's curriculum, the goals of its authentic Montessori education are the same: to aid in the development of a person who is independent, responsible, compassionate, and able to make intelligent decisions based on thoughtful examination of choices.

If you have any questions about Montessori theory or practice, please first be in touch with your child's guide. If you have additional questions or concerns please reach out via email to your appropriate Level Director to schedule a meeting.

Key Policies

Equal Educational Opportunity

Marin Montessori School admits students of any race, color, religion, sexual orientation, or national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or national ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, scholarship programs, athletic and other school-administered programs.

Accommodations for Students and Their Families with Disabilities

Marin Montessori School is committed to providing equal educational opportunities to students with disabilities. Families who seek accommodations for their children should contact the Level Director. In order for the school to evaluate the request for accommodation, the family requesting accommodation may be required to provide information from a health care provider concerning the need for accommodation. Such information will be kept confidential. Each accommodation request will be handled on a case-by-case basis, and the school will engage in an interactive process with the family in order to identify appropriate accommodations. While the school hopes to be able to make accommodations for all of its students and applicants, the school will not make accommodations that would impose an undue hardship on the school or fundamentally alter the nature of the school's educational program.

The School will also strive to provide accommodations to allow parents or guardians with disabilities to participate in their student's education. Parents or guardians who need accommodations to attend conferences, communicate with the school, or to otherwise access the school's services and programs should contact the Level Director.

Policy Against Harassment and Discrimination Involving Students

It is Marin Montessori School's policy to provide an academic environment that is free from all forms of discrimination or harassment. The school prohibits sexual harassment as well as discrimination and harassment based on a student's race, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or disability. The school will not tolerate harassing or discriminatory treatment of students by other students, their family members, the school's employees or contractors. Additionally, the school forbids retaliation against any individual who reports an incident of harassment.

Prohibited harassment includes the following behavior:

- Verbal conduct (whether in person or transmitted electronically) such as name-calling, derogatory jokes, slurs, or comments to or about a student;
- Visual displays and written communication, such as derogatory posters, photography, cartoons, drawings, gestures, or email or text messages;
- Physical conduct including assault, unwanted touching, intentionally blocking normal movement or interfering with work; and
- Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report harassment.

Because behavior away from school may have a significant impact on the school environment, this policy applies to all interactions involving students, whether or not occurring during school or school functions or on campus, if

- The conduct has a negative impact upon the school performance of the student who is subject to harassment;
- Such conduct adversely affects the educational environment including creating an educational environment that is intimidating, hostile, or offensive;
- Such conduct affects the services, honors, programs, or activities available to any student at the school.

A student who violates this policy may be subject to discipline which may include a range of actions including counseling, verbal warnings, suspension, or expulsion.

Complaints of violations of this policy should be reported to the Head of School and Level Director. The School will conduct an appropriate investigation of complaints and take all appropriate steps to remedy any harassment or discrimination in violation of this policy. In some cases, the School may be required by law to report harassing conduct to law enforcement or child protective agencies.

Policy Against Bullying

The development of conflict resolution skills and compassion is central to Marin Montessori's mission, and therefore, bullying is not tolerated.

Bullying is different from conflict. Conflict is an inevitable part of life, and we embrace moments of conflict as opportunities to learn valuable life skills and develop resiliency. Conflict can occur when a student perceives another student as being an obstacle to what they want or value.

Given that the children at Marin Montessori are between the ages of 18 months and 15 years, it is important to recognize that our youngest children are in the process of developing social skills. They may try on different behaviors and use words whose meanings they do not fully understand. If students are in conflict but are not bullying, MMS is committed to helping these students resolve conflicts, learn from them, and move on. It is the responsibility of parents and guardians too to guide these children in appropriate ways to interact with others.

Bullying is specific and defined as follows: Bullying is unaddressed behavior that is the systematic, purposeful, and chronic infliction of physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more of our students. MMS is committed to preventing and protecting our students from bullying.

Bullying causes pain and stress to students and is never justified or excusable as "just teasing" or "just playing." When a student stands by doing nothing, or laughs or posts comments online when others bully, that student is participating in bullying.

Bullying has no place at MMS or between MMS students at any time. This policy applies to all interactions between MMS students, whether in person or through electronic communications and whether or not occurring during school or school functions or on campus.

If Marin Montessori concludes that a student engaged in bullying, MMS will respond to the bullying as a serious offense, and serious disciplinary consequences will be assigned.

Behavior Policies

Each program has specific behavior policies:

- [Toddler & Primary](#)
- [Lower Elementary](#)
- [Upper Elementary](#)
- [Junior High](#)

Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect

All MMS employees who in their professional capacity, or within the scope of their employment, know of or observe a person under the age of 18 years whom they know or reasonably suspect has been the victim of child abuse or neglect must report the suspected incident to the Marin Children and Family Services Emergency Response or the police department. The identity of the reporter and the reports they make are confidential and are only disclosed as required by law.

Employee/Student Relations

The school encourages close, warm relationships between students and school employees. At the same time, it is important that each employee's conduct is at all times professional. Employees must maintain appropriate boundaries between themselves and students to ensure that they avoid even the perception of inappropriate conduct. Some activities may seem innocent from an employee's perspective but can be perceived as flirtation or sexual insinuation from the perspective of a student or parent. The objective of this policy is not to restrain positive relationships between employees and students, but to prevent relationships that could lead to, or may be perceived as, sexual misconduct. Employees must ensure that they do not cross the boundaries of a professional relationship.

Below is a list of examples of conduct that may involve inappropriate crossing of the boundaries of the professional relationship:

- Giving gifts to an individual student that are of a personal or intimate nature;
- Unnecessary physical contact with a student in either a public or private situation;
- Intentionally being alone with a student on campus or away from the school without parent or supervisor permission;
- Making or participating in sexually inappropriate comments;
- Sexual jokes, stories, or jokes/comments with sexual innuendo;
- Seeking emotional involvement with a student for an employee's benefit;
- Discussing an employee's own personal troubles or intimate issues with a student;
- Becoming involved with a student so that a reasonable person may suspect inappropriate behavior;
- Inappropriate use of social media with or about students;
- Excessive attention toward a particular student;
- Using personal email, texts, or social media to communicate with students rather than using school email and communication systems;
- Sending communications to students of a personal nature not about school activities; or
- Failing to keep parents informed when a significant issue develops about a student.

Parents and guardians who have concerns about the interaction between any employee and a student should contact the Head of School. The school prohibits retaliation against anyone who reports concerns about compliance with this policy.

Campus Grace and Courtesy

What do we mean by grace and courtesy? In a word: harmony. Grace is harmony between mind and body. Courtesy is the harmony between oneself and others. Grace and courtesy are natural expressions of a community, and when they are implemented and modeled by all members of the community, a harmonious environment is created that promotes the welfare of all.

Communication

Our Communications Tools

Marin Montessori communicates frequently with families, faculty, and staff through a variety of channels that serve both programmatic and community needs.

- [ParentSquare](#)
 - This tool allows teachers and administrators to communicate directly with families in one searchable and secure place. ParentSquare is where families find the dynamic school calendar, photos, and announcements from teachers, and more. Even better, families can choose how and how often they receive information.
 - We also use ParentSquare as our emergency broadcast tool.
- [BigSIS](#)
 - This website is our enrollment tool as well as the source of truth for all student and family information. Families use BigSIS to fill out forms, add emergency contacts and authorized pick-ups, pay bills, change addresses, and more.
 - It is essential that families update their contact information through BigSIS so that we can communicate effectively.
- Thursday Bulletins
 - Each Thursday afternoon, families receive a newsletter filled with updates, announcements, and reminders. It's essential reading for MMS families.
 - We send it through ParentSquare where we also archive previous editions.

- Social Media Channels
 - MMS uses [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Vimeo](#) based on these principles:
 - We see social media channels as storytelling tools with extraordinary power as well as undeniable downsides.
 - We want to share MMS with the world while also protecting the sanctity of the Montessori experience and the privacy of the children in our care.
 - We will use social media deliberately and more cautiously than other organizations. We do so on purpose and with children, childhood, and the future in mind.
- The MMS Website
 - While this website largely helps families in the community learn more about MMS, we also use it to house important information for current families.
 - We encourage families to bookmark the [Parents section](#) of the site where we often post updates.

Addressing Programmatic Questions or Concerns

If at any time you have a question or concern about any aspect of your child's educational program, please follow the steps below, in order:

1) Meet with your Guide

MMS encourages open and direct communication between faculty and parents. The guide works closely with your child and is the most qualified person to answer your concerns directly. Please schedule a meeting immediately if you have any questions or concerns. It is important for all concerned that you meet with the guide right away to work together toward a solution.

2) Meet with the Guide and the appropriate Level Director

If you need additional support or have further questions after meeting with your child's guide, please communicate your concerns to the appropriate Level Director. The Level Director will arrange a meeting with all concerned parties and will work toward an acceptable solution.

3) Meet with the Guide, the appropriate Level Director, and the Head of School

If you and the Guide and the Level Director do not arrive at an acceptable solution, any party may request a meeting with the Head of School. The Head of School will meet with all parties and will attempt to resolve the situation. The decision of the Head of School is final.

Parent-Generated Classroom Communications

We ask that all official classroom communications parents wish to circulate be reviewed first by the guide and then by the appropriate level director and finally by the Director of Communications and Story before distribution. Please contact the Director of Communications and Story, **Terry Dubow** (tdubow@marinmontessori.org) with any questions or requests.

Phone Calls/Messages

If you have an **urgent** need to contact your Guide during the day, please call the Office (415.924.5388). The Office Manager will relay the message, as guides are giving their full attention to children in their care. They have access to messages only outside of classroom time.

Any **non-urgent** messages are best sent by email or ParentSquare message. Please use the contact information provided by your guide regarding the best way to reach them.

It is important that you keep your child's guide (and the ASC staff if your child attends ASC) informed of any changes in the home situation that might affect your child. This allows them to best meet your child's needs.

In the case of an emergency or crisis in your family, please inform your guide immediately. It is also important to convey anything that comes up in conversation with your child that causes concern. Please inform us of these matters. Your privacy, and that of your child, will be respected.

Parent Directory

The Parent Directory is accessible on the [BigSIS Parent Portal](#) to MMS parents, guardians, and staff. Parents are encouraged to make edits or updates to their contact information online through the Parent Directory in BigSIS.

Use of information in the Parent Directory, in whole or in part, for any purpose other than personal, non-business communications is strictly prohibited without specific written approval from the Head of School. Further, MMS strictly prohibits sharing this proprietary information, including any future updates, with anyone outside the MMS community for any reason.

BigSIS: How To Instructions for Commonly Asked Questions

How to Update Personal Account Information, Change Your BigSIS Password, Update/Remove Payment Methods:

1. Log into your [Parent Portal](#).
2. Go to the "My Account" tab.

3. This is where to update your physical address(es), email address(es), phone number(s), BigSIS password, and payment methods.

How to Add an Authorized Pick-up and/or Emergency Contact:

1. Log into your [Parent Portal](#).
2. Go to the "Parents" tab and select the "Children" sub-tab.
3. Click "View" next to your child's name (or double click on child's name).
4. Click the green "+ New Contact" button.
5. Select whether the new contact can pick up that child only or other children in the same household.
6. Enter information for the new contact and be sure to indicate if this new contact "can pick up" as well as "is/is not an emergency contact." (Ignore the "Order" box).
7. Click the green "Save & Back" button at the top when finished to save your changes.
8. Repeat for each child, if applicable.

How to Edit, Designate, or Undesignate an Existing Contact as an Authorized Pick-up and/or Emergency Contact:

1. Log into your [Parent Portal](#).
2. Go to the "Parents" tab and select the "Children" sub-tab.
3. Click "View" next to your child's name (or double click on child's name).
4. Go to the "Other Contacts" sub-tab.
5. Under "Additional Contacts," double click on contact name to edit contact / designate as Emergency Contact / designate as Can Pick Up. (Ignore "Order" box).
6. Click the green "Save & Back" button at the top when finished to save your changes.
7. Repeat for each child, if applicable.

How to Delete an Additional Contact:

1. Log into your [Parent Portal](#).
2. Go to the "Parents" tab and select the "Children" sub-tab.
3. Click "View" next to your child's name (or double click on child's name).
4. Go to the "Other Contacts" sub-tab.
5. Under "Additional Contacts," single click on the contact you want to delete.
6. Click on the red "Remove Contact" button located on the top of the page.

How to Delete a Permanent Contact:

1. Please email registrar@marinmontessori.org to delete Permanent Contacts only. Please refer to "How to Delete an Additional Contact" above for deleting additional contacts.

How to Sign Up for ASC and BAC:

1. Log into your [Parent Portal](#).
2. Go to the "Extended Care" tab.
3. In the "Participants" sub-tab, select your child's name for the correct ASC/BAC session and click "View Signups."
4. On the next page, make your ASC/BAC selection(s).

How to Opt Out / Cancel an ASC or BAC Session:

1. Log into your [Parent Portal](#).
2. Go to the "Extended Care" tab.
3. In the "Participants" sub-tab, select your child's name for the correct ASC/BAC session and click "View Signups."
4. On the next page in the Session Calendar, click on the day(s) you wish to cancel and select "Opt Out."

How to Add or Update Allergies, Health Conditions, and Medications:

1. Log into your [Parent Portal](#).
2. Go to the "Parents" tab.
3. Click "View" next to your child's name (or double click on child's name).
4. Select the "Health Info" sub-tab.
5. Click "Edit Info."
6. Select the "Allergies and Health Conditions" sub-tab to add or update.
7. Click the green "Save & Back" button at the top when finished to save your changes.

How to Access the School Directory:

1. Log into your [Parent Portal](#).
2. Go to the "Parents" tab.
3. Select the "School Directory" sub-tab.
4. Use the yellow "Filters" button to filter by Program, Cohort/Classroom, Program Group, Role.
5. BigSIS is looking into adding a top directory tab to replace going to the "Parents" tab.

Contacts

The Board of Trustees

Our Board of Trustees offers a wide range of expertise and shares a deep commitment to MMS, its vision and mission as a school. The primary function of the Board is to develop and maintain a firm foundation for the advancement of Marin Montessori's mission. Other key charges include:

- Supporting the creation and communication of a school vision that inspires a diverse Montessori community;
- Providing long-term strategic planning and direction;
- Identifying and retaining an outstanding Head of School;
- Approving the annual budget and monitoring financial management;
- Defining governance processes and overseeing compliance;
- Inspiring a culture of philanthropy and actively supporting the school's fundraising efforts;

- Collaborating with the Head of School on major initiatives such as campus expansion and capital campaigns.

For more information about Marin Montessori's Board of Trustees, please visit our [website](#).

Marin Montessori School Board of Trustees 2022-2023

- Carla Rummo, Chair
- Aliyya Shelley Mattos, Vice Chair
- Pia DeLeon, Secretary
- Syl Yip, Treasurer
- Doug Aley
- Stella Beale
- Rajkumari Neogy
- Frannie Pope-Hohman
- Nick Stiritz
- Thea Thompson
- Jamie Whittington

Parents' Association Executive Committee 2022-2023

The Parents' Association coordinates volunteer work, fundraising, and special events that serve to develop and promote community within MMS families and into the greater community, as well. MMS has a very active and supportive Parents' Association, which is run by an executive committee of energetic parents in concert with the Head of School. Membership in the Parents' Association is automatic with the signing of the Enrollment Agreement.

The goal of the Parents' Association is to create an effective group of dedicated people working together with a sense of unity to provide the best possible environment for each family and each child within the MMS community.

For an updated list of the 2022-23 Executive Committee, please refer to [the MMS website](#).

Marin Montessori Faculty, Assistants, and Support Staff 2022-2023

Toddler

Song Sparrow

- Gloria Pastor, *Guide* | gpastor@marinmontessori.org
- Assistant TBD

Sandpiper

- Alyssa Conklin-Moore, *Guide* | aconklin-moore@marinmontessori.org
- Assistant TBD

Toddler, Support

- Maria Diaz | mdiaz@marinmontessori.org

Primary

Great Blue Heron

- Cheryl Chretien, *Guide* | cchretien@marinmontessori.org
- Susan Lloyd, *Assistant* | slloyd@marinmontessori.org

Quail

- Colleen McAree, *Guide* | cmcaree@marinmontessori.org
- Veronica Archer, *Assistant* | varcher@marinmontessori.org

Mourning Dove

- Roshini Fernando, *Guide* | rfernando@marinmontessori.org
- Heidi Newell, *Assistant* | hnewell@marinmontessori.org

Pelican

- Melissa Lari, *Guide* | mlari@marinmontessori.org
- Aarti Jesrani Ubhi, *Assistant* | aubhi@marinmontessori.org

Additional Primary Faculty and Specialists

- Emily Brockman, *Director of Learning Services* | ebrockman@marinmontessori.org
- Talia Carter, *Reading Specialist* | tcarter@marinmontessori.org
- Susan Larson, *Primary Support Assistant* | slarson@marinmontessori.org
- Shellie Occhipinti, *Garden Teacher* | socchipinti@marinmontessori.org
- Tasmin Pessa, *Primary ASC Coordinator* | tpessa@marinmontessori.org
- Elaine "Alon" Shahbaz, *Resource & Primary Support* | eshahbaz@marinmontessori.org
- Madeleine Smyth, *Primary ASC Assistant* | msmyth@marinmontessori.org
- Kathy Winkler, *Movement Specialist* | kwinkler@marinmontessori.org

Upper Elementary

Great White Egret

- Diego Salinas, *Guide* | dsalinas@marinmontessori.org
- Kathy Kennedy, *Assistant* | kkennedy@marinmontessori.org

Belted Kingfisher

- Denise Dodge, *Guide* | ddodge@marinmontessori.org

Lower Elementary

Chickadee

- Jamie Stone, *Guide* | jstone@marinmontessori.org
- Adeline Shrout-Fray, *Assistant* | ashrout@marinmontessori.org

Burrowing Owl

- Anna Mitchell, *Guide* | amitchell@marinmontessori.org
- Chelsea Coxon, *Assistant* | ccoxon@marinmontessori.org

Additional Elementary Faculty and Specialists

- Ashley Anderson, *Elementary Fifth Faculty* | aanderson@marinmontessori.org

- Emily Brockman, *Director of Learning Services* | ebrockman@marinmontessori.org
- Talia Carter, *Reading Specialist* | tcarter@marinmontessori.org
- Paula Reyes, *Spanish Resource Specialist* | preyes@marinmontessori.org
- Samuel Ruff, *Elementary After School Care Assistant* | sruff@marinmontessori.org
- Matt Stratton, *Elementary Movement and After School Care Coordinator* | mstratton@marinmontessori.org

Junior High

- Alison Canter, *Faculty* | acanter@marinmontessori.org
- Jessie DeJonghe, *Faculty* | jdejonghe@marinmontessori.org
- Gary Holsen, *Faculty* | gholsen@marinmontessori.org
- Liesbeth Koning, *Faculty* | lkoning@marinmontessori.org
- William Lawrence, *Specialist* | wlawrence@marinmontessori.org
- Minnie McBride, *Faculty* | mmcbride@marinmontessori.org
- Caitlin Mohan, *Specialist* | cmohan@marinmontessori.org
- Paula Reyes, *Specialist* | preyes@marinmontessori.org
- Kate Stout, *Farm Manager* | kstout@marinmontessori.org
- Aaron Tigerino, *Faculty* | atigerino@marinmontessori.org

Marin Montessori Administration 2022-2023

- Head of School | [Sam Shapiro](#) (X 117)
- Assistant Head of School | [Carolyn Woolf](#) (X 120)
- Director of Education, Toddler and Primary | [Siri Panday](#) (X 103)
- Site Director, Toddler and Primary | [Deirdre Thomas](#) (X 321)
- Director of Education for Elementary | [Minnie Wales](#) (X 325)
- Junior High Director | [Bill Sneed](#) (X 323)
- Junior High Assistant Administrator | [Robin Stallard](#) (X 341)
- Director of Admissions | [Leslie Cohen Kastner](#) (X 104)
- Director of Communications and Story | [Terry Dubow](#) (X 102)
- Director of Finance | [Karl Reichstetter](#) (X 133)
- Director of Operations | [Tabitha Gaffney](#) (X 105)
- Assistant Director of Development | [Shree Starkman](#) (x 331)
- Registrar and Database Manager | [Jeannie Chan](#) (x 119)
- Office Manager for Corte Madera Campus & Acting Director of Operations | [Tara Acree](#) (415.924.5388)
- Administrative Assistant | [Jennifer Murphy](#) (X 328)
- Receptionist | [Lisa Campos](#) (415.924.5388)
- Facilities Manager | [Gabriel Ramirez](#) (X 123)
- Transportation Coordinator | [Carol Finnegan](#) (X 342)

General Contact Information

Our Office is staffed Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. You may call the School Office to leave a message for any staff member.

- Office Phone | 415.924.5388
- Junior High Campus | 415.462.0566
- Out-of-State Emergency HOTLINE | 503.222.1197
- Voice Mail System | 415.924.5388

Parent Responsibilities

Parent Partnership

A positive, collaborative, constructive working relationship between MMS and a child's family is essential to the fulfillment of MMS's educational purpose. If the Head of School determines that the actions or inactions of a family prevent a positive and constructive working relationship with MMS or determines that the family is not acting in accordance with the mission, philosophy, or policies of MMS, the Head of School will address this with the family and reserves the right to take any actions necessary to resolve the situation, up to and including terminating the current enrollment contract or not offering the family a re-enrollment contract. We anticipate that all interactions between Crew and families will be professional, kind, and gracious. We hold ourselves to a high standard for social interactions and expect the same in return for our Crew.

Back-to-School Night

Engaging heartily in parent education is the best way to support your child's experience at MMS. Thus, we strongly encourage all parents to attend this launch of our parent education program for the year. It is an informative event held in the evenings on **September 20, 2022 for the Junior High and on September 22, 2022 for the Corte Madera campus**. This is your chance to get an overview of the year and to meet with your child's teacher to discuss specifics of that particular classroom.

Parent Education Series

Parent Education events are thoughtfully and carefully planned and prepared to support your child and your journey as a Montessori parent. Your participation in these events will net increased understanding and appreciation for the amazing learning opportunities your child experiences each day.

The home is the first and very important learning environment for a child. Participation in education events will allow you to tap into valuable resources, techniques, and ways to collaborate with and support your child's learning. When home and school are aligned, learning takes off in all spaces. We all know that children are always learning, so make sure to

come out and find out more so that your child gets the most out of their Montessori education. Parent Education events will be updated on the school calendar and posted on ParentSquare.

Resources for Further Reading

We've seen that families who take the time to learn more and tap into a Montessori approach to supporting their child's natural and healthy development enjoy the experience. We encourage you to start small and see how you can increasingly incorporate elements of the Montessori approach to being with your child.

A few favorite titles include:

Toddler:

- *The Montessori Toddler: A Parent's Guide to Raising a Curious and Responsible Human Being* by Simone Davies
- *Diaper Free Before Three: The Healthier Way to Toilet Train and Help Your Child Out of Diapers Sooner* by Dr. Jill Lekovic

Primary:

- *Montessori Learning in the 21st Century: A Guide for Parents and Teachers* by Shannon Helfrich

Elementary:

- *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius* by Angeline Stoll Lillard
- *Montessori Today* by Paula Polk Lillard
- *Positive Discipline* by Jane Nelson

Junior High:

- *Surviving Your Child's Adolescence* by Carl Pickhardt
- *Getting to Calm* by Laura S. Kastner and Jennifer Wyatt

Observation

A key Montessori technique is observation. As guides and administrators, we often take in the wonder of our classroom spaces and the beauty of children collaborating with each other by enjoying an informal observation. You are invited to enjoy this opportunity too! You will be seated with a view of the classroom community. You are invited to take notes about what you see. Look for age-appropriate independence, focus, concentration, and engagement with developmentally appropriate learning opportunities. You will see beauty, natural materials, order, and children in various stages of development across social, emotional, and academic areas.

After your observation please reach out with any questions. Your child's guide is excited to address any questions you may have.

Parents of Toddlers and New Primary

New Toddlers and new Primary children need time to settle in and connect and establish some independence in their classroom prior to your observations. Observations begin in **December** for Toddler parents and **January** for parents of new Primary students.

Parents of Returning Primary and Elementary

Observations begin when the class community has settled into the new school year. For children returning to Primary and Elementary adult observations begin in October.

Parents are encouraged to observe at least once during the school year. If there are two parents in one household, observations are scheduled on separate occasions to promote the best experience for your child.

Parents will receive an invitation via ParentSquare to sign up on the online calendar early in the fall. If for any reason you need to cancel an observation, please remove your name from the schedule so that another parent can take that slot. Because space is limited at this time, please only sign up for two visits to allow all families access to observation times. One in fall/winter and one in spring is ideal.

Parents of Junior High Students

Because of the developmental characteristics of adolescents, observations are not an option at this level. For a snapshot of the school day, parents can sign up to participate in parent-prepared lunches.

Parent-Guide Conferences for Toddler, Primary, and Elementary

Communication between home and school is extremely important and to the benefit of your child. Toddler, Primary, and Elementary conferences take place twice a year.

To attend carefully to each family, we set aside three days for fall conferences and three days for spring conferences. Guides have a demanding schedule, so please do your best to attend conferences on one of these three days. Guides have difficulty scheduling additional conferences outside of the dates and times specified due to other school and family commitments and responsibilities, so be sure to sign up early if you need a specific time or have more than one child.

When the scheduling period begins, we will alert you via ParentSquare. Select the conference day and time that works best for you.

Parent-Teacher Conferences for Junior High

Conferences take place three times a year, including the Intake Conferences held at the beginning of the school year. Fall conferences are held over two days in October, and Spring conferences are held over two days in March.

Volunteer Opportunities

MMS relies on parent volunteers to support our school in many ways.

- Participate in Parents' Association committees;
- Event volunteers to set up and clean up;
- Handy folks to take on small grounds projects;
- Vacation class animal and plant care;
- Gardening helpers for classroom garden support;
- Have a special talent or ability? Let us know and we will reach out with opportunities to share that skill;
- For Primary: Offer a craft or art opportunity. Share a song, perform an instrument, dance, demonstrate a skill, share a tradition, or provide a cultural presentation about your family's heritage for your child's class. To set up a class visit please reach out to your child's guide.

Volunteer support benefits our school community and efforts are always greatly appreciated.

For more information regarding current volunteer opportunities, please contact Lily Harrington, PA President at lilyfinkharrington@gmail.com.

Arrival and Departure

Toddler, Primary, Elementary Schedule

- 7:30 am drop off for morning ASC.
- 7:55-8:05 am -- Toddler drop off.
 - Note that it is better to arrive before 7:55 am and wait.
 - If arriving after 8:00 am, you are likely to get mixed in with Primary families and can experience a delay of ten to twenty minutes.
 - Please pull into the parking lot as early as 7:45 am as usual.
 - Staff will receive your child at 7:55 am
- 7:55-8:05 am -- Lower Elementary drop off.
- 8:00 am -- Elementary students with Primary siblings drop off.
- 8:10-8:20 am – Upper Elementary drop-off
 - The drop-off circle gate opens at 7:45 am. You are encouraged to enter and queue in the bulb if there is space.

- It is very helpful if Elementary students arrive before 8:05 am; arriving after mixes Elementary with Primary families and increases car congestion.
- 8:00 am -- Junior High students catching the van.
- 8:05 am -- Primary children with Elementary siblings.
- 8:05-8:15 am -- Primary children in Mourning Dove and Quail.
- 8:15-8:25 am -- Primary children in Pelican and Great Blue Heron.
- 11:20 am – Half-day Toddler pickup.
- 11:30 am – Half-day Primary sibling of half-day Toddler pick up.
- 11:40 am – Half-day Primary pick up.
- 2:40 pm – Full-day Toddler pickup.
- 2:45 pm – Full-day Primary with full-day Toddler or Elementary sibling pick up at the Primary gate.
- 2:50 pm – Full-day Mourning Dove and Quail pick up.
- 2:55 pm – Lower Elementary pick up.*
- 3:00 pm – Full-day Pelican and Great Blue Heron pick up.
- 3:10 pm – Upper Elementary pickup and Lower Elementary children with Upper Elementary siblings (in ASC 2:55 to 3:10).*

* Elementary with Primary siblings should be picked up at the Primary gate at the time their sibling gets picked up.

Junior High Drop Off

- **Students may not be dropped off prior to 7:30 am** as the schoolhouse is locked and no adults are present.
- Regular drop off is between 8:10– 8:25 am. Students should arrive by 8:25 am to be on time for the morning meeting, which begins promptly at 8:30 am.
- Before School Care is offered from 7:30 – 8:10 am for an annual fee. Please reach out to the Junior High Assistant Administrator if you would like to coordinate this.
- Students should be dropped off and picked up at the steps of the St. Vincent's Church

Junior High Pick Up

- Students riding the MMS vans will depart the St. Vincent's campus between 3:15-3:20 pm.
- In an effort to offer more flexibility to families, students may be picked up as late as 4:00 pm, at no charge. However, after 3:45 pm, we will return to the schoolhouse, and parents must come to the schoolhouse to retrieve their child.
- Due to faculty scheduling needs and commutes, families will be charged \$10 for every five minutes after 4:00 pm.

Corte Madera Car Line Procedures

Since the fall of 2021, Robin Drive has been under construction and will remain off limits for the foreseeable future. As a result, we anticipate backups, so we are asking for your promptness, patience, and understanding.

Always follow the procedures listed below. Please communicate this information to nannies, grandparents, or other caregivers or services that are dropping off/picking up your child.

- For the safety of all children and adults, always enter the parking lot where it is marked with an enter arrow.
- Keep the striped area at the entrance to the parking lot clear at all times to avoid blocking cars from entering or exiting the Elementary “turnaround” circle.
- If the car lines are full, please wait on Paradise Drive until there is room to pull into the parking lot without blocking the striped entrance area. For potentially the next three years, Robin Drive will be inaccessible for carline queuing due to construction.
- If you see long car lines in the parking lot as you approach the school, check to see if there are cars waiting on Paradise Drive.
- If cars are lined up on Paradise Drive, please line up behind them, even if there appears to be room in the car lines; it is frustrating to parents who have been patiently waiting to have cars pull into the parking lot in front of them.
- Form a single line on Paradise Drive on the shoulder of the road so that non-MMS cars may safely pass. Do not pull around a car in front of you.
- Once you are in a lane in the car line, we ask that you do NOT change lanes unless directed to do so by the car line administrator.
- Do not move into the loading/unloading zone until you are specifically directed to do so by the car line administrator.
- For safety reasons please insist that children remain seated, with their seatbelt on, until the car is stopped in the loading and unloading area. Please ensure that your child does not lean out of the car window, stand up through the sunroof, or sit on your lap to “drive” the car.
- Please turn off your engine whenever you are stopped in the loading/unloading zone in the Toddler and Primary carline.
- Use your car card at morning drop off to help staff identify your children. It helps to make the line move faster. If you are in need of another car card, please email frontdesk@marinmontessori.org.
- Please spend time saying goodbye to your children and organizing their items for school before it is your turn to unload. Be sure your child is fully dressed, and put away any food before pulling into the unloading zone.
- Children are encouraged to learn to fasten and unfasten their own seat belts.
- The loading and unloading area is a “no cell phone zone.” Please do not talk on your cell phone while your car is in motion or while your children are being loaded or unloaded from the car; for safety’s sake and in order to properly greet or send off your child, your full attention is required at that time.

- To keep the car line moving as quickly as possible, we ask you to keep in mind that pick up and drop off are not the times to communicate with staff members.
- A staff person will come by with a tablet to mark your child's attendance in Transparent Classroom.
- A Carline Director or Classroom Assistant will do a verbal wellness check to confirm that your child is well and symptom-free before removing your child from the car. If your child is sick, has symptoms or has not been symptom-free for 24-hours, please keep them home. If you need extra time to load or unload, an administrator will direct you to a designated parking spot in the carline to allow room for cars to go by.
- When picking up your toddler or primary children at the gate, please be sure they are physically under your control as you are walking to your car. As this is a busy parking lot with moving vehicles, it is essential that children are not allowed to run or walk independently to cars and that anyone picking up your children follows these guidelines.
- After dropping off or picking up your child, do not turn on your engine or move your car to leave until the car line administrator has told you that it is safe to do so, even if it appears safe to you. Children you cannot see will often pass behind or on the side of your vehicle.
- Children should be dropped off and picked up at the gate only when your car is in the loading/unloading zone.
- Do not park on Paradise Drive and walk your child across the street.
- During morning drop off and afternoon pick up, please do not park or enter the MCDS parking lot. We have a strong relationship with MCDS and we want to honor their space.

The importance of prompt arrival **cannot** be overemphasized. Children enjoy the opportunity to greet their guide and peers before lessons begin. Please work on being as punctual as possible.

Children who enter the classroom late miss their morning greeting and may have to wait until their guide and assistant are free to greet them. It is harder for them to enter their class community when the fun has already begun. Please try your best to be on time and guide your child in developing the healthy habit of punctuality.

Toddler and Primary-Specific Carline Protocols

- Toddler and Primary cars turn to the left upon entering the parking lot and continue up the driveway to form two parallel lines.
- Seven cars will be unloaded at a time, four from the lane closest to the gate and three from the other lane, so please stay behind the white line until waved forward.
- Once in the unloading zone, remain in your car, and a classroom assistant will come to receive your child(ren).

Elementary-Specific Carline Protocols

- Elementary cars should turn to the right and pull around to the white line to drop off children in the “turnaround.”
- It is the Elementary child’s responsibility to go directly to class.
- **Do not drop off your Elementary child if the parking lot gates are closed.**
- Do not leave your car unattended unless you are parked in a designated parking space.
- All Elementary cars must stop at the stop sign before exiting the “turnaround.”
- Watch for cross-traffic of entering vehicles!

Late Arrivals

If for any reason you are late arriving at school, please adhere to the following procedure:

- **Toddler/Primary:** Please call the Front Office (415.924.5388) from the primary gate to sign in, and a member of the front office will escort your child from the primary gate to the classroom.
- **Elementary:** Please call the Front Office (415.924.5388) from the elementary gate, and we will alert the classroom to meet you at your car.
- **Junior High:** Email the Junior High Assistant Administrator (rstallard@marinmontessori.org) to notify and arrange.

For the safety and security of your child, it is essential that you do not allow your child to walk alone into class without checking in at the Office.

Children who are late are unaccounted for unless they have been checked in at the Office.

This is a major concern in the case of an emergency, and **the school cannot be held responsible if this procedure is not followed.**

Late Arrivals Due to Appointments

If possible, please schedule appointments outside of school hours. If this is not an option, please notify your child's teacher via email and the Front Office in advance.

Pick-Up Procedure

At the Corte Madera campus:

- For the safety of all children and adults, always enter the parking lot where it is marked with an enter arrow.
- Elementary cars arriving to pick up ONLY elementary students should turn to the right and pull around to the white line to pick up children in the “turnaround.”
- Remain in the car, and your student(s) will be brought to your car by the Elementary staff. All Elementary cars must stop at the stop sign before exiting the “turnaround.”

- Watch for cross-traffic of entering vehicles! If the Elementary traffic circle is full, please queue on Paradise Drive until there is room in the circle.
- Those who are picking up both Elementary and students from another level (Primary or Toddler) turn to the left upon entering the parking lot and continue up the driveway to form two parallel lines .
- If the car lines are full, please queue on Paradise Drive until there is room in the car line.
- Toddler and Primary cars turn to the left upon entering the parking lot and continue up the driveway to form two parallel lines .
- Once in the loading zone, a carline director will bring an iPad to your window so that you can sign your child/ren out in Transparent Classroom.

Early Pick Up

In order to preserve the continuity and benefits of your child's experience in the Montessori classroom environment, all appointments and after school classes (e.g., music, ballet, swimming, karate, etc.) must be scheduled *after* school hours. It interrupts the learning of ALL students when children are dismissed early. It is an additional task for the very busy office team to dismiss children early. It takes them away from their pressing daily tasks. Please be mindful of this and work to minimize this as much as possible.

Please consult with your child's guide if there is a need to schedule on-going support services such as speech and language therapy, tutoring, occupational therapy, etc. Please request times outside of instructional hours so that you get the most out of your child's Montessori educational experience.

In the event of an occasional unavoidable early departure, we ask that you email the teacher and Front Office (frontdesk@marinmontessori.org) in the morning.

When you arrive to pick up your child, please follow these procedures:

- **Toddler/Primary:** Please call the Front Office from the Primary gate to sign out and the Office Manager will escort your child from the classroom to your car.
- **Elementary:** Please call the Front Office, and we will alert the classroom to release your child to meet you at your car.
- **Junior High:** Email the Junior High Assistant Administrator to notify and arrange.

Late Pick Up

- Please note that late pick up is a significant burden on teachers and staff, so we ask that you make every effort to pick up your children promptly.
- **Toddler:** Toddler children who are not picked up on time will be invited to wait in the classroom with classroom staff. Please call the Front Office (415.924.5388) to arrange for the safe release of your child.
- **Primary:** Primary children who are not picked up on time will be escorted to Primary ASC. Please sign out your child with the ASC staff before leaving.

- **Elementary:** Elementary children who are not picked up on time will be escorted to Elementary ASC. Please sign out your child with the ASC staff before leaving.
- **Junior High:** For late pick-ups (after 3:45 pm), parents must come to the front office to retrieve their Junior High student.

Minimum Days

On Minimum Days, drop-off times are unchanged. Unless otherwise noted on the school calendar, pick-up times are as follows:

- 11:00 am: Song Sparrow
- 11:15 am: Sandpiper
- 11:30 am: Mourning Dove and Quail
- 11:45 am: Pelican, Great Blue Heron and Junior High
- 12:00 pm: Lower Elementary
- 12:15 pm: Upper Elementary

Sign In/Sign Out Procedure for Toddlers and Primary

If your child is in the Toddler or Primary level, **always** take the time to sign the child in and out **using your full first and last name legibly written** (per State licensing regulations). You will be asked to sign in/sign out in the car lines during the established drop-off and pick-up times during the day. In the case of a late drop off or early pick up, please call the front office (415.924.5388) and a staff member will come to assist.

If your Primary child attends a Bayside Afternoon Class, you must sign out your child with the BAC teacher. Students attending ASC must be signed out in the ASC classroom.

If your student is to be picked up by someone other than a person regularly scheduled, you must add them as an authorized contact using the BigSIS Parent Portal, no later than 2:00 pm. Instructions on how to add contacts are located in the [Parent Directory](#) section of this Handbook.

Release of Your Child

If someone other than your child's parent or guardian is picking up your child, that person's name must be listed in the *Emergency Contacts and/or Authorized Pick Up* section of your child's online registration form.

Please update the list of people authorized to pick up your child in the BigSIS Parent Portal whenever a change occurs. Instructions on how to add contacts are located in the [Parent Directory](#) section of this Handbook.

THE SCHOOL WILL NOT RELEASE YOUR CHILD TO ANYONE EXCEPT YOU OR THOSE NAMED AS EMERGENCY CONTACTS AND/OR AUTHORIZED PICK UPS ON YOUR CHILD'S REGISTRATION FORM even though they may be known to our faculty and staff.

Absence and Tardy Policy

Regular attendance is essential if children are to receive the full benefit of their Montessori education. Your child must be present to learn. It is very disruptive to learning when children are routinely absent. If a student accrues nine absences, or three tardies, a meeting with the family and Level Director will be scheduled to brainstorm solutions.

Absence Due to Illness

In order to attend school, your child must be well. Well rested, well fed and without fever, vomiting, or other signs of illness for 24 hours without medication. Your cooperation with this policy allows other children and crew to stay well.

If your Toddler, Primary, or Elementary child is absent for any reason, **please call the Office before 7:45 am.** Messages may be left by calling 415.924.5388 X 5 or requesting extension 303 or email the front office (frontdesk@marinmontessori.org).

Please provide the following information:

- Child's name
- Teacher
- Daytime phone number where you can be reached
- Date of absence
- Reason for absence

For the Junior High, please call the office or email the Junior High Assistant Administrator (rstallard@marinmontessori.org) with the same information.

Note: If your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, it is essential that you notify the Office right away and email Health & Safety (healthandsafety@marinmontessori.org). Please see the section on *Notifications of Communicable Diseases* for details.

Vacations during School Time

We strongly discourage parents from scheduling vacations when school is in session. It is especially important that children attend both the first and last weeks of school because these are times for orientation and closure. For young children, extended or frequent absences are confusing and re-entry can be upsetting. Children miss out on valuable lessons and have to reorient themselves to the classroom. If you must leave for any reason, it is very important that you send in a written note. This allows the guide to assist your child in completing any work in progress before leaving.

MMS Transportation

The MMS fleet of passenger vehicles provides our school community with regular daily campus shuttles and transportation for activities during the school day.

- MMS provides daily transportation to and from school from set locations for Junior High students. This is a fee-based service, and space is limited.
- Families are asked to select a preferred pick-up spot at the start of the year. If the preference changes later in the year, please contact Transportation Coordinator [Carol Finnegan](#). Requested changes are not guaranteed.
- MMS will not be providing a van service between San Francisco and the Corte Madera campus for the 2022-23 school year.

The Director of Operations oversees the Transportation Department, and the Transportation Coordinator is responsible for day-to-day transportation logistics, van scheduling, and vehicle maintenance. MMS drivers are employees of the school and undergo vehicle safety and CPR training administered by MMS and outside contractors. Each driver must have a clean driving record and undergo Live Scan fingerprinting and background review as required by the California Department of Justice.

Carpools

MMS strongly encourages all families to consider carpooling in an effort to reduce neighborhood traffic and protect the environment, shorten the time it takes to drop off and pick up your child, and have all the children and staff in class on time. This is the best way to shorten our morning car line!

To make organizing a carpool easier to coordinate, you may access the Parent Directory on BigSIS.

If you arrange a carpool with other parents, **they must be listed in the *Authorized Pickups* section of your child's registration form and in the [BigSIS portal](#).**

Please keep us informed of any additions or changes. Anyone picking up your child who is not familiar to the staff will be asked to show identification. Your child will not be released to anyone whose name is not listed in the *Emergency Contacts and/or Authorized Pickups* section without written authorization.

Please let your carpool driver know if there is a change in your child's regular schedule so the driver knows he/she is not responsible for your child that day.

Health and Safety

Covid Protocols

Marin Montessori School has created a Supplement to the Parent Handbook to highlight policies and procedures associated with Covid. For ease of reference, we will refer to this

document as the Supplement. The MMS administration and teachers are committed to providing a quality program to our students that is safe, child-friendly, and in-person. This Supplement is in place to minimize the spread of Covid and to ensure the safety of children, staff, and families.

As the pandemic situation continues to evolve, the changes outlined in this Supplement will remain the "new normal." These guidelines are based on the best available public health data at this time, and the practical realities of managing a child care program; as new data and practices emerge, the policies may be updated. The goal of MMS is to meet and exceed the standards whenever possible.

Please refer to the most recent version of the 2022-2023 Covid Supplement in the Parents' section of the [MMS website](#).

Allergies

Food allergies affect approximately 5-8 percent of students. Eight foods cause 90 percent of all food allergic reactions. These foods include peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, wheat, soy, fish, and shellfish. Exposure to a particular food the student is allergic to may cause anaphylaxis, a medical emergency. Avoidance of the food allergen is our most effective tool of prevention of severe allergic reactions.

Due to the significant number of students at all levels of our program who have severe peanut allergies, **we ask that you refrain from sending peanuts, peanut butter, and other peanut products to school in your child's lunch and snacks.**

In addition, please do not provide classroom snacks that contain peanut products. **Your child's class may also be required to extend food exclusions to other allergens in order to ensure a child's safety.** We thank you for your understanding and support.

If your child has allergies, be sure to note them in the Medical Information section of the registration form in the annual online Registration Packet.

Use of EpiPens for Allergic Reactions

The MMS faculty and staff have been trained in identifying a child or adult experiencing an anaphylactic reaction and how to administer an EpiPen. The procedure is as follows:

- Based on the determination of the MMS staff, when signs of anaphylactic reaction are present, an EpiPen will be administered and a 911 call will be made.
- The child's parents will be contacted.
- The child will be transported via ambulance to the hospital.
- The family will inform the school of the child's progress, and the child will return to school when the medical officials deem it safe to do so.

Medical Examination

Children may not be admitted to the school unless all medical forms, including the *Report of Health Examination for School Entry* (Kindergarten through Ninth Grade) and the *State of California Physician's Report* (Toddler/Primary), are complete and on file in the School Office prior to the child's attendance.

These forms are provided to new families at the time they enroll at MMS and are due along with all other registration materials. If this is not possible, please notify the School Office **in writing** of the date of your child's health exam appointment and when you will be able to submit the form(s) to the school.

For the health and well-being of your child and the classroom community, these forms must be completed and turned in to the School Office before the first day of class.

Immunizations

In accordance with state law, MMS requires that all students provide current proof of immunization status prior to the start of school (new students) or when requested by MMS. Students will not be allowed to attend school without this documentation on file.

For more information, please visit the Shots for Schools website (www.shotsforschools.org).

Illness

Please **DO NOT** bring your child to school if they have a continually runny nose, fever, unusual rash, "pink eye," or sore throat.

We request that you keep your child home an additional 24 hours after treatment has begun for pink eye and after the end of a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea.

In order to prevent the spread of illnesses and ensure appropriate care for ill children, we will contact you and ask you to pick up your child as soon as possible if your child exhibits any symptoms of the above conditions. If we are unable to contact you or you are not able to pick up your child on short notice, we will contact the person(s) listed in the *Authorized Emergency Contacts and Authorized Pickups* section of the registration form to pick up a child who is ill.

Because children tend to spread germs easily, we ask all parents to cooperate with the illness policy in order to minimize illness at MMS for both children and adults.

Notifications of Communicable Diseases

Please call the Front Office if your child or a sibling has contracted a communicable disease so we can work with you to minimize the spread of the disease and inform other families of possible exposure. If notification of other families is appropriate, the Office will distribute a

school-wide email notice listing date of exposure, classroom in which the initial exposure occurred, signs and symptoms of the disease, incubation period, period of communicability, and method of transmission.

Administering Medication

If medication needs to be administered at school, please:

- Complete a [Medication Administration form](#) for **each** medication.
- Put medication and completed Administration form in a gallon sized Ziploc bag and deliver it to the Registrar's office. Please do **not** deliver directly to the classroom or send in your child's lunchbox or backpack.
- Please note:
 - All over-the-counter medications must be in original packaging.
 - All prescription medications must be in the original container provided by the pharmacy, clearly labeled with your child's name and dosage instructions.
- Provide a SEPARATE, THREE-DAY SUPPLY of medication(s) that your child takes on a regular basis, to be used in case of a disaster. ***This supply must include any medication(s) your child takes during non-school hours as well.***
 - PLEASE DELIVER TO THE REGISTRAR'S OFFICE PRIOR TO THE START OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.
 - Please include a [Medication Administration form](#) with each medication.
- If your child attends ASC or BAC throughout the year, please provide an additional set of medications to the Registrar's Office for our use in our after-school programs.

For Toddler through Elementary:

- **No medication of any kind**, including aspirin, will be administered without a prior written directive from a doctor **and** a signed parental consent.
- Therefore, a [Medication Administration](#) form must be completed before we can give medication to your child.

For the Junior High:

- **ONLY the over-the-counter medications parents give permission for in the yearly online registration packet** will be administered at school without parent directive if asked for by your adolescent.
- No other medication will be administered without a prior written directive from a doctor **and** a signed parental consent.
- Therefore, a [Medication Administration form](#) must be completed before we can give medication to your child.
- If your child is regularly taking medicine for an ongoing health problem, even if the medication is only taken at home, please notify the school and identify the medicine being taken, the current amount taken, and the name of the doctor who prescribed it.

Accidents

Minor accidents occurring during school hours receive the prompt and careful attention of staff members. A *Child Injury Report* is completed and a copy is given to the parents. In the event of a more serious accident, the family is notified at once and arrangements are made for the child to be taken home or to their physician. Parents are strongly urged to inform the school of any change of parent or physician telephone number during the year. Please be alert to phone calls from school and promptly return a call from school to ensure the best possible care for your child.

Emergencies

In the case of an emergency, paramedics will be called, and if appropriate, the child will be taken to the nearest emergency room.

Clothing and Supplies

Clothing Guidelines for the Primary and Toddler Levels

- Children work and play actively and need to feel comfortable at school; therefore, we ask that all children come to school dressed for the day and ready for all types of activities.
- Choose clothing that fosters independence and that they can manage entirely by themselves; this is especially important for our youngest children as they learn to use the bathroom
- Dress in comfortable, washable, nonrestrictive casual clothing.
- Dressing in layers is helpful due to the changing weather patterns by the Bay.
- For rainy days, children wear rain boots, raincoats, and rain hats because we go outside nearly every day regardless of the weather.
- Rubber-soled closed toe shoes allow for safe, active participation in gross motor activities. Please save shoes that light up or make noise for home as well as Crocs, party shoes, cowboy boots, clogs, flip flops, or other backless shoes as well as dress shoes as they are unsafe for use on our play areas for young children.
- To keep our young classroom communities commercial free, we ask that all trademarked character wear be kept at home. Please send your child to school in plain clothing (shoes, slippers, jackets, shirts, hats, etc.), and select commercial-free lunch boxes and daypacks too. All commercial characters, for example, Dora, Barbie, Skulls, Pirates, Spiderman, Batman, etc. are to be kept at home. This requirement is out of respect for your child's class as a reality-based space and allows families to decide if they want their child exposed to these characters or not. We appreciate your understanding.
- Please keep animal headbands at home too.

Napping Supplies for Primary Level

Children who require an afternoon nap will bring in:

- One king-size pillow case (to store their nap items);
- One standard crib sheet (fits snugly on our sleeping mats);
- One small blanket (polar fleece);
- One crib-sized pillow if your child is age 3 and above.

All children must have their own bedding that is stored separately in a king-size pillowcase. Please make sure all nap items are clearly marked with your child's name and that you take all bedding home at the end of the week to be laundered. Please return the clean bedding each Monday.

Clothing Guidelines for the Elementary Level

Elementary children should wear comfortable clothing that will allow for active work and play without restricting their movements. Students are expected to dress appropriately for school and school activities. Clothing should fit and be functional for both the classroom environment and for outdoors. Very short skirts and shorts, revealing blouses, undershirts, and visible underwear are not permitted.

Clothing Guidelines for the Junior High

Students are expected to dress appropriately for school and school activities; clothing should fit, be clean, and be functional for the various aspects of MMS community life, community work, and all school functions. All students are encouraged to keep a set of work clothes in their lockers. These clothes can be used if ever a student wants to wear a set of clothes to get dirty in during outside activities. All students must have a pair of boots/outdoor shoes to wear outside during all outdoor work and activities. Long pants are encouraged for work on the farm.

Change of Clothing

Any Primary or Toddler child whose clothing becomes wet or soiled for any reason will be offered clean, dry clothes to change into from their personal extra clothing supply. In order to keep their personal clothing supply adequately stocked, we ask that their clothes be laundered and a new set returned. Please make sure that your child has enough spare sets of clothing at school.

Labeling

- **Please mark all clothing with your child's name**, especially outer garments (e.g., jackets, sweaters, hats, boots, slippers, gloves, etc.).
- Label lunch boxes and day packs.

- Car seats being left for a trip must be clearly marked on the bottom with your child's full name.

Lost and Found

All items left at school at the Corte Madera campus are put in the Lost and Found located just inside the front gates on the Primary and Elementary sides of campus. Items left at the Junior High campus are placed in the Lost and Found in the Office. Please check the Lost and Found if you are missing any articles of clothing as we periodically donate all unclaimed items to a charitable organization.

Personal Belongings

Children enjoy bringing things to share (e.g., books, shells, an interesting leaf, rock, picture, insect). Items of special class interest and educational value are always welcomed. If your child has something to share, please label the item or its container so that it can be safely returned to you.

PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO BRING TOYS, MONEY, OR JEWELRY TO SCHOOL. Key chains, whistles, and other toys attached to a backpack are cumbersome and distracting. Let your children know that if they leave their special toy in the car, it will be safe until they return from school.

Students attending school on the Corte Madera campus are not allowed to bring cell phones on campus except under special circumstances when requested in writing by the parent and approved by the teacher. Junior High students may bring cellphones to school, but phones must be turned off and kept in the student's locker.

MMS Spirit Wear

MMS partners with Tek Tailor to offer high quality and attractive family-friendly MMS Spirit Wear, including rain gear, warm fleeces, cozy sweats and tees, vests, caps, and more. All items feature our MMS logo and are available in toddler, little kids, big kids, and adult sizes. You can purchase MMS Spirit Wear directly from our vendor [here](#).

Nutrition

The information below pertains mainly to the Corte Madera campus. Junior High families should refer to the Junior High Community Handbook for specifics about nutrition, snacks, and community-prepared lunches.

Breakfast

Breakfast is your child's most important meal. Please see that all children have an adequate morning meal so that they can be at their best. It is ideal for this to be enjoyed at home so that your child makes the most of their school time. Please note that because of allergies we ask that children arrive at school with their meals completed and hands clean.

Snack

A healthy snack is available for Toddler and Primary children each morning. We offer balanced nutritious snacks that include fruits, vegetables, protein, and carbohydrates. Each class tailors their snack to meet the preferences and needs of the group. Allergens are always avoided so please let us know what your child's needs are.

Elementary children may pack a snack along with their lunch.

If you have extra fruit or vegetables from your garden, please think of us. It is always a special treat to have a snack fresh from someone's garden. Please contact the teacher before sending a snack for the whole class.

Lunch

Parents are encouraged to provide a healthy, well-balanced lunch for their child in resealable containers that are easy to open and close. So that you know how your child is eating we will send back all uneaten food. Keep in mind that even small containers of yogurt are often too much for younger children to eat and have to be put into the garbage. A very small amount in a reusable container that can be returned home creates less waste.

Please invite and involve your child in preparing lunch for school, and later, in cleaning out the lunch container at home. This extends the Montessori classroom experience by allowing your child to make choices, assume responsibility, and develop independence.

Please avoid sending in:

- Lunchables
- Go-GURT, drinkable yogurts
- Juice boxes
- Candy
- Gum
- Carbonated beverages
- Desserts high in refined sugars (such as Jell-O or sprinkle yogurt)
- Pop-top or snack-pack cans are discouraged due to the sharp-edged lids.

During the day and at lunch the children will drink water from their own cups.

In keeping with the MMS recycling policy, we ask that you assist us in protecting our environment by consciously choosing packaging that is recyclable. Wax paper bags for

sandwiches are better than plastic, food can be put in reusable containers, and metal cans may be recycled. **All packaging should be manageable by your child.**

Due to the significant number of students at all levels of our program who have severe peanut allergies, we ask that you refrain from sending peanuts, peanut butter, and other peanut products to school in your child's lunch and snacks. In addition, please do not provide classroom snacks that contain peanut products. Your child's classroom may have other allergen exclusions and you will be notified at the beginning of the year if that is the case.

Celebrations and Excursions

Birthday Celebrations

Children like to share this special day with their classmates. Birthday celebrations allow each child the joy of sharing some of life's more exciting and meaningful moments. Please consult with your child's teacher regarding the scheduling and the details of this special event. Children often choose to bring a special gift to the class; a special book, a beautiful small vase, or a carefully chosen plant is always appreciated.

Toddlers: In the Toddler class, we ask that you prepare a timeline with your child, including a brief biography and a photograph of the child as a newborn, at six months, at one year, at eighteen months, and at two years. This is an introduction to the concept of time and history.

You may also include a special snack for the birthday celebration. PLEASE AVOID CAKES, CUPCAKES, and FOODS WITH HIGH SUGAR CONTENT. Some suggestions for healthy, nutritious birthday snacks are seasonal fruit, cheese and crackers, cheese and fruit, fruit kabobs, fruit breads (banana bread, cranberry bread, panettone), and muffins. Portions should be small. Please check with your child's teacher to find out the number of portions needed or if there are any ingredient restrictions due to allergies.

Primary: In the Primary classes, we ask that you prepare a timeline with your child, including a brief biography and one photograph for each year of the child's life. This is an introduction to the concept of time and history. The Primary child will also ceremonially carry our globe of the earth around the sun (a candle) once for each year of the child's life.

You may also include a special snack for the birthday celebration. PLEASE AVOID CAKES, CUPCAKES, and FOODS WITH HIGH SUGAR CONTENT. Some suggestions for healthy, nutritious birthday snacks are seasonal fruit, cheese and crackers, cheese and fruit, fruit kabobs, fruit breads (banana bread, cranberry bread, panettone), muffins, and carrot cake. Portions should be small. Please check with your child's teacher to

find out the number of portions needed or if there are any ingredient restrictions due to allergies.

Elementary: The birthday celebration procedure is structured to accommodate the number of children and the summer birthdays. The children plan one group birthday celebration each month.

Holiday Celebrations

The children plan holiday celebrations with the guidance of the teacher. Discussion and preparations for the celebration often begin two to three weeks before the actual celebration. First a plan is made with the teacher, and then the teacher helps the children implement the plan. Holiday celebrations may include the following: history of the holiday, art activities, plays, songs, poems, cooking projects, and games. Parents are notified ahead of time if there are any preparations that may need their assistance.

Celebrations may differ among the classrooms. Celebrations may also differ from year to year within a particular class. All children are invited to participate in their classroom celebration. Not all children may choose to be involved in the preparations and/or celebration because of different cultural backgrounds, family experiences, interests, developmental needs, and skills. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher about any of their family's traditional holiday celebrations.

Halloween

Please note: In keeping with the Montessori philosophy, only send costumes for Primary that are reality-based. Please avoid costumes with masks and weapons as these may be scary for some children and potentially unsafe in our community setting.

Gifting Guidelines

We ask that there be no classroom-wide or school-wide collections of money for the purchasing of gifts for teachers and Crew. Gift giving is left to individuals as they desire. Please note that the total monetary value of a gift cannot exceed \$100. The best gifts are thoughtful cards of appreciation.

Ring Mountain Hikes (Primary)

The older children in the Primary level periodically go for a hike on Ring Mountain. A faculty member always leads these walks. A *Ring Mountain Hike Permission* form (included in the annual online Registration Packet) signed by the parent must be on file in the Front Office in order for your child to participate in this local hike.

Going Out Excursions (Elementary) and Field Studies (Junior High)

Going Out excursions and Field Studies are, respectively, an important part of the Elementary and Junior High curriculum and are a natural part of the student's day.

In the Elementary, these can be spontaneous outings, which may include a trip to the library or to shop for items necessary to complete a project, or they can be outings planned in advance by students, such as a trip to a museum to study a subject in depth. A staff member drives students for Going Out excursions, and the Front Office is notified prior to the outing.

Junior High Field Studies are planned or spontaneous outings typically connected to and designed to enrich the content of a course. These might include a trip to a museum, a historical site, or a site for PE. Students are usually driven by a Junior High faculty member or MMS van driver, and the Junior High Office is notified prior to the outing.

In the event that a staff member is not accompanying the students, parents will be notified of the date, destination of the trip, and which adults will be responsible for the children.

In the registration process, all Elementary and Junior High parents are asked to sign a *Going Out or Field Study Permission* form. Primary parents are asked to sign a *Ring Mountain permission form*.

Field Trips (Primary, Elementary, and Junior High)

The oldest children in the Primary level, who are at least five years old, and the Elementary and Junior High students periodically go on field trips related to an area of interest. A field trip differs from a going out excursion or a field study in that it is planned in advance by the adult in the classroom. A staff member always leads these field trips.

The MMS fleet of vehicles provides the Primary, Elementary, and Junior High with transportation for daytime field trips, as well as select overnight and multiple-day class trips. School-issued safety vests or child safety seats are required for those Primary and Lower Elementary level children who are between 5 and 8 years of age or under 4 feet 9 inches tall. Children must be at least 5 years old to participate in Primary field trips.

On the day of the field trip, if you are choosing not to use the school-issued safety vests, a child safety seat clearly labeled on the bottom with your child's full name must be left at the entry gate at morning drop off. MMS drivers will install the child safety seats into the vans before departure. Parents can retrieve their child's car seat at afternoon pick up.

Class Trips (Elementary and Junior High)

Class trips are overnight trips for Elementary and Junior High students. Trips are organized by faculty and usually require hired transportation and overnight accommodations. Trips vary in length from one night to ten days in the Junior High. **Class trips are paid for by the student's family through BigSIS.** Payment plans are available for most trips, and often some tuition assistance is available. The annual registration packet includes destinations, costs, and payment options. Any parent invited to be a chaperone must submit to a Live Scan fingerprint test prior to participating on the trip.

Student Accident Insurance

The school carries a Student Accident insurance policy, which provides coverage for your child during school hours and on all class trips, field trips, and Going Out excursions. This insurance policy is secondary to any coverage you may already carry. If you do not have medical insurance for your child, Student Accident insurance will be primary.

Additional School Care and Bayside Afternoon Classes

Additional School Care (ASC) follows basic Montessori principles in terms of encouraging children to help and teach one another, to follow projects through to completion, to create their own activities, and to care for their environment.

With some restrictions, parents can choose to have their children participate in ASC through Full-year Package ASC, Reserved ASC, or Drop-in ASC.

Full-Year Package ASC

If you need daily childcare before school (Toddler and Primary) and/or after school until 6:00 pm (Primary and Elementary) for the entire school year, you will benefit from electing Full-Year Package ASC when you sign your Enrollment Agreement. The annual fee for Before School Care is \$1,900 for Toddlers and Primary. There is no fee for Elementary. After School Care is \$6,200 per student for both Primary and Elementary.

Reserved ASC

The Reserved ASC program allows families to reserve space at least two weeks in advance for the specific days that you need. Children who are registered in this way will be guaranteed space on a first-come, first-served basis.

Note: Reserved ASC in the mornings is not available for Toddler and Primary students.

Sign-Up: You can sign up at least two weeks in advance in the Extended Care tab of the [Parent Portal](#). If you do not sign up in the Parent Portal at least two weeks in advance, Drop-In ASC will be your only option.

Billing: Afternoon care is billed in ½ hour increments based on the check-out time. The fee is \$16.00 an hour.

Cancellation Policy: Use the [Parent Portal](#) to cancel or change your Reserved ASC signup. You must cancel at least two weeks in advance or there will be a \$48 cancellation fee.

Drop-In ASC

We are pleased to be able to offer a Drop-In option for the ASC program (\$20 an hour in ½ hour increments) for those full-day Primary and Elementary families who need occasional care.

Note: Drop-In ASC in the mornings is not available for Toddler and Primary students.

Primary children who would like to attend ASC in the morning must sign up through the Full-Year Package ASC program.

Sign-Up: If you need Afternoon Drop-In care, you can sign up in the Extended Care tab of the [Parent Portal](#). You must sign up by 2:00 pm for Primary and 2:15 pm for Elementary on the day Drop-in Afternoon care is needed.

Primary and Elementary children must be pre-registered for Afternoon Drop-In ASC by going to the Extended Care tab of the [Parent Portal](#).

Cancellation Policy: Use the [Parent Portal](#) to cancel or change your Drop-in ASC sign up. You must cancel by 2:00 pm for Primary and 2:15 pm for Elementary or there will be a \$60 cancellation fee. Please note that the Front Office and Registrar are unable to make cancellations after these deadline times. Please call Matt Stratton in ASC (415.924.5388 #6) for assistance.

Toddler

ASC is available before school from 7:30 am to the start of class. Toddler students who need care prior to school must be registered **in advance** via a Full-Year Package ASC program. *We are not able to accommodate Morning Drop-In for Toddler students.*

Please park in the parking lot and call the front desk (415.924.5388).

There is no afternoon ASC for Toddlers.

Primary

ASC is available for Primary students before school from 7:30 am to the start of class and after school from 3:00–6:00 pm. This is a long day for the children, so please pick them up on time. For Morning ASC, children go to their classrooms. They may help the classroom assistant and teacher prepare the classroom environment, or they may become engaged in an activity of their choice.

Primary students who need care prior to school must be registered in advance via a Full-Year Package ASC program. We are not able to accommodate Morning Drop-In for Primary students.

Please park in the parking lot and call the front desk (415.924.5388).

The afternoon ASC program for Full-Day Primary children is in the Song Sparrow classroom. Our Primary ASC program echoes the Montessori day, while allowing for different kinds of activities that families would typically do at home together after a long day at school.

Children find a variety of art and interesting projects awaiting them and will often work on activities together. Additionally, they engage in various construction activities, cooperative board games, and outdoor free play on a daily basis.

Elementary

ASC is available for Elementary students before school from 7:30 am to the start of class and after school from 3:15–6:00 pm.

For Morning ASC, Elementary students go to the Hummingbird classroom. Elementary students who need care prior to school may drop in on the morning that care is needed. (There is no charge and no pre-registration is required).

The home base for the afternoon ASC program for Elementary children is the Hummingbird classroom. The students are offered a variety of games, arts and crafts, cooking projects, and other activities (both indoor and out).

Junior High

Morning ASC is available for Junior High students from 7:30 – 8:10 am at an annual fee of \$1,000. Guardians should reach out to the Director of Finance to make arrangements. Students are expected to read a book or work quietly on their homework, while remaining downstairs in the dining hall area. We also offer Drop-In ASC for Junior High students at \$20/hour. Space may be limited. Register by going to the Extended Care tab of the [Parent Portal](#).

In an effort to offer more flexibility to families, students may be picked up as late as 4:00 pm at no charge. However, if late pick ups become excessive, MMS may charge families \$10 for every five minutes after 4:00 pm. For any pick-up after 3:45 pm, guardians should collect their Junior High student from the schoolhouse.

Parent Conference and Minimum Day ASC

For an additional fee, Primary and Elementary ASC is available during parent conferences and on some minimum days. Cost is \$16/hour **and** must be reserved at least five days in advance in the Extended Care tab on the [Parent Portal](#). We also offer Drop-In ASC at \$20/hour and encourage families to sign up early, as space may be limited.

Full-year package ASC students are automatically covered for minimum days and parent conference days, so no special arrangements are required for those students on those days;

however, it is essential that these families reserve their spot to confirm attendance or opt out in the Extended Care tab on the BigSIS [Parent Portal](#).

Late Pick-Ups

When students are picked up late from ASC, our hard-working ASC staff members are late getting home to their families. In fairness to them, please pick up by the appointed time. All primary and elementary children must be picked up **no later than 6:00 pm**. MMS may exclude a child from the ASC program for excessive late pick-ups. If you anticipate being late, please call the ASC Drop-In line by dialing the main line 415.924.5388 and pressing 6, or requesting ext. 304.

Junior high students must be picked up **no later than 4:00 pm**. If late pick ups become excessive, MMS may charge families \$10 for every five minutes after 4:00 pm.

ASC for Children Not Attending School

On a regularly scheduled school day, children will not be accepted into ASC if they did not attend class.

Bayside Afternoon Classes (BAC)

Optional after-school classes are available to Primary (four years and older by the time of the first session) and Elementary students. Offered by outside professionals and MMS faculty/staff and paid for by parents, after-school classes may include Spanish, soccer, music, science, etc. Classes are tailored to particular ages and numbers of children. Due to space restrictions we can only offer a limited number of after-school classes each semester.

You will receive an email prior to registration letting you know what day and time registration will open. Registration for BAC is done on the BigSIS [Parent Portal](#). Classes do fill up quickly, so we cannot guarantee space. If a particular class fills up before the deadline, a wait list will be started for that class, and parents will be notified if a space becomes available.

Cancellations will only be accepted up to two weeks prior to the first class. After that you will be fully obligated. If the BAC teacher and Level Director determines the class is not a good fit for your child, you will be contacted after the first class to determine if it makes sense for your child to continue. If it is best for your child to withdraw, a prorated refund for the remaining classes will be given.

In order to respect the hours and schedules of the BAC teachers we ask that you **please pick up your child on time**. Children who are not picked up on time will be escorted to ASC and parents will sign their children out there. This will be considered a Drop-In and parents will be charged accordingly. Please remember to wait in the pick-up area to sign out your Primary child with the BAC teacher. If your child attends ASC after BAC, please sign out with the ASC teacher.

[Matt Stratton](#) oversees the BAC program. Parents are encouraged to contact him with feedback, observations, and/or concerns. If there are questions regarding schedule, age, content, and/or registration, please email the [School Registrar](#).

Payments and Enrollment Matters

The Enrollment Agreement is a legally binding contract between the school and the family for matriculation at Marin Montessori School. The obligation is fixed and irrevocable. Cancellation of the agreement after the date specified in your Enrollment Agreement carries the full obligation to pay the entire school year's tuition. The MMS Financial Policies are included with the Enrollment Agreement and should be read carefully for financial details.

Re-Enrollment

January marks the beginning of the re-enrollment process for the following school year. Current students receive priority, so it is important for families interested in continuing their child's education at Marin Montessori School to complete the re-enrollment process according to the following schedule:

Mid-January: Customized Enrollment Agreement is available online for each current MMS family.

End of January: Complete and submit the Enrollment Agreement with a non-refundable registration deposit of 10 percent of tuition.

After January 31, we will begin admitting new families for the 2023-24 school year and cannot guarantee your child's place unless you have signed the Enrollment Agreement and remitted your tuition deposit. Please contact the [Director of Admissions](#) if you have further questions about your child's spot. If you have technical questions about BigSIS and the enrollment procedures, please contact the [School Registrar](#).

Tuition

Marin Montessori School offers two tuition payment plans:

Plan A - **Annual** payment for the 2023-24 academic year is due and payable on April 16, 2023.

Plan B - **Monthly** payments begin April 16, 2023 and continue through December 16, 2023.

Families who choose Plan B will be required to sign up for automatic withdrawal of payments (ACH) from their bank account.

If you need to change your payment plan or automatic withdrawal amount at any time during the school year, a written request must be submitted to the Director of Finance.

The individuals signing the Enrollment Agreement are solely responsible for payment of tuition, fees, and all incidental charges.

Fees and Charges

Fees for ASC, trips, Spirit Wear, Auction purchases, etc., are billed in the month incurred. Payments are collected as follows:

- 10 days prior to payment due date: Statement for all Student Accounts emailed to families paying tuition monthly or owing balances.
- 16th of month: Withdrawal (ACH or credit card) for tuition
- 20th of month: Withdrawal (ACH or credit card) for ASC fees, trip payments, Auction purchases, Spirit Wear, etc.

In the event that the 16th or the 20th is on a weekend, the withdrawal will be the following Monday. Any questions regarding your account should be directed to the [Director of Finance](#).

Insufficient Funds

There will be a \$30.00 service charge for all returned checks or debit failures.

Tuition Refund Plan

MMS utilizes a Tuition Refund Plan through Dewar Insurance Agency. This insurance helps to protect your child's annual tuition commitment against unforeseen withdrawals or dismissals from MMS. Coverage is required for all families except for families who enrolled with Payment Plan A (lump sum). Coverage for Payment Plan A is optional though families must opt out by clicking the box on their Enrollment Agreement. This coverage is available at the time of enrollment. The plan is described fully in the brochure that is enclosed with the Enrollment Agreement. See the [Director of Finance](#) for more information.

Tuition Assistance

The MMS Tuition Assistance (TA) Program is a partnership between the school and current and incoming families. It is a mutual commitment to stretch resources to make a MMS education possible for dedicated families.

Tuition Assistance is not meant to subsidize families so their lifestyles do not have to change in order to afford a MMS education. TA is not meant to support other education, such as a parent's graduate work, a student's future college tuition, etc.

From MMS, you can expect the following:

- Confidentiality and courtesy;
- Clarity about how award decisions are reached;
- Dedication to current families to help as we can make MMS affordable if your financial picture changes.

From TA receiving families, MMS expects the following:

- Lifestyle sacrifices (e.g., consider vacations, remodels, vehicle purchase, entertainment expenses, etc.) that demonstrate a sincere prioritization for a MMS education;
- Confidentiality about your tuition assistance award;
- Filing your Federal Tax return earlier than you might normally do.

For current families, the Tuition Assistance application process opens on November 1, 2022 and ends on December 1, 2022.

For the most up-to-date information, please refer to the [MMS website](#). Any questions regarding Tuition Assistance should be directed to the [Director of Finance](#).

Completion of the Primary Cycle

The Primary program can be three to four years in duration depending on the development of the child and includes what is generally considered the kindergarten year. The integrity of the program depends on the continuity and consistency of the classroom community throughout that period. Each and every child's completion of the final year of the Primary program is beneficial to all the children in the class, not simply to the eldest children, as they provide an important leadership role. At the end of the school year, these children step up into the first year of our Lower Elementary program.

Sibling Priority

It is our goal to support families in keeping their children together. It is our mission to offer authentic Montessori education, especially for those who seek it for their children's preschool through middle school education. Siblings of children currently attending MMS are given priority in the admissions process unless the older child does not complete the Primary program and/or will likely not complete the full MMS education through Junior High. In such cases, siblings are put in the same pool as new applicants.

Class Selection for New Students

A new student will be placed in a classroom that the school feels will be beneficial to the student and the classroom. They will remain in the same class through the completion of that level. Factors relevant to class placement include gender, age, personality, and class

dynamic. It is the general policy for the Primary level that if a child has been in one teacher's class, that child's siblings will be placed in another class.

Class Placement for Current Students Transitioning to the Next Level

It is the responsibility of the Level Directors to facilitate the process of placing students moving from one level to another. Many factors are taken into consideration in making this important decision, and our goal is to find a suitable fit for each child and to create a balanced class community. The faculty and Level Directors observe the children and the composition of the classes, looking closely at the dynamic of the children within each classroom community.

Class placement is based on the needs of each individual child and the composition of the existing class, as well as the need to balance the classes by age and gender. **A considerable amount of time is spent by the faculty and Level Directors to determine the best class placement for each child, and changes are not made once a child has been placed.**

Parents of current students who will be transitioning to the next level or who have siblings entering at a different level are **required** to attend an admissions tour for that level. You will be contacted by the Director of Admissions to sign up for the appropriate admissions session. In addition, observing in classrooms, attending Parent Education events, and consulting with your child's teacher will provide you with valuable information and insight about our whole Montessori program and how it meets the developmental needs of your child.

Dismissal of a Student from School

Marin Montessori School reserves the right to dismiss a student from the school when the Head of School, Level Director, and faculty deem it to be in the best interest of the child and the school. If dismissal is seriously contemplated, the teacher, the appropriate Level Director, and the Head of School will meet with the parents of the child to discuss the situation. The child may be required to enter into an "adjustment period" wherein the child, teacher, and parents agree to certain goals over a stipulated period of time, and a student action plan is created and signed by all. During this period, the parents are informed regularly of the child's progress and are asked to support the child in reaching the goals. If the adjustment period is not effective, the child will be dismissed. Marin Montessori School also reserves the right to dismiss a student from the school without first attempting an adjustment period.

Withdrawal of a Child from School

Parents who have decided to withdraw their child from MMS must contact the Head of School who will advise them of the withdrawal procedure.

Emergency Procedures

The MMS Emergency Plan provides a framework for the protection of students, staff, and school facilities, as well as an appropriate response by school staff to a range of emergency and disaster situations at both campuses. In the event of a widespread disaster, it is understood that available government resources will be overtaxed and may be unable to respond to all requests for assistance. Marin Montessori School, therefore, endeavors to be self-sufficient for 24 hours.

Communications

The school telephone will be used only to report emergency conditions or to request emergency assistance. **Please do not call the school.** Information will be disseminated through the out-of-state HOTLINE: 503.222.1197 and/or the ParentSquare emergency rapid notification system (see below).

Student Release and School Closure

Release of students may be advised by the local police or fire department or authorized by the Head of School whenever the conditions exist that warrant such action (e.g., severe storms, earthquakes). Students must be picked up and signed out by a parent or an authorized representative of the parent listed in the *Emergency Contact* section of the registration form in the online registration packet.

When the decision has been made to release students, parents will be notified via ParentSquare.

A few important notes:

- **The delivery of the message is only as successful as the contact information we have for you**, so please make certain that you provide us with the most current and up-to-date information, including home, work, and cell phone numbers, and primary email addresses, for both parents. If this information changes during the year, please update your information immediately through the [BigSIS Parent Portal](#) under the My Account tab.
- The Director of Operations or the Assistant Head of School will report school closure and re-opening to the Marin County Schools Emergency Update website. The address for this site is www.marinschools.org.
- Students who are not picked up will be kept at school or at a school-designated alternative shelter. Information as to the location of the shelter will be posted at the school on the parking lot information boards or may be obtained by calling the out-of-state HOTLINE number: 503. 222.1197.

Comfort Kits for Toddler and Primary Students

Prior to the start of each school year, MMS requests that families of Toddler and Primary children provide MMS with a comfort kit. The purpose of this comfort kit is to provide both physical and psychological comfort, as well as a sense of connection to your family in the event of an emergency until you can be reached and can come to safely retrieve your child. This comfort kit is stored with our disaster supplies and will be given to your child in the event of an emergency.

In the event of an emergency, we will meet all essential needs first and then we will provide your child with their comfort kit. Each Toddler and Primary child should have a labeled Ziploc bag on campus filled with items supplied by you.

Your Toddler or Primary child should have a Comfort Kit on campus by the first day of school. Comfort kits should be given to the Registrar's Office.

Emergency Supplies

Both campuses have fully stocked emergency sheds. These sheds are equipped to provide food, water, first aid supplies, and other comfort equipment that will last for a minimum of 24 hours. Staff has been trained on how to respond to many disasters, with the most important factor being keeping students and staff safe.

Questions regarding the MMS Emergency Plan or any features of the emergency sheds should be directed to the Director of Operations.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are held monthly throughout the school year to ensure a calm, well-rehearsed response to an emergency. Fire department personnel occasionally monitor these drills and make recommendations. The fire drill begins when the fire alarm sounds. All classes execute the "leave building" procedure. Classes gather at their specified assembly point, roll is taken, and all students are accounted for.

Earthquake Drills

Classes have earthquake drills throughout the school year. The standard "duck and cover" response is practiced.

Lockdown and Shelter-in-Place Drills

These drills are called "safety drills" in order to avoid alarming the students. Drills are held throughout the school year for Elementary and Junior High students only