

# PARENT HANDBOOK

2020-2021



MONTESSORI SCHOOL



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Website: [www.anchoragemontessorischool.org](http://www.anchoragemontessorischool.org)

Office Hours of Operation:	7:30 am-4:00 pm Mon – Fri
Half Day Sessions:	8:15-11:15am / 12:15-3:15p m
Full Day Toddler Sessions:	7:30 am to 4:00 pm
Full Day Primary Sessions:	7:30 am to 3:30 pm
Elementary Session:	8:30am to 3:15 pm
Before Care	7:30 am to 8:30 am
After Care	3:15 pm to 4:00 pm

School will be closed for all major holidays and during Thanksgiving, Winter, and Spring Breaks following those of the Anchorage School District.

Rick Toymil, *Executive Director*

Voicemail is available after hours. To allow teachers to focus their attention on students, messages for teachers are left with office staff or voicemail during school hours. Teachers return calls as soon as possible and may provide an e-mail address for additional parent communication.

Parents and families will be notified regarding any changes in this information and policies. This may be in writing and/or via electronic means.

### **Our Mission**

***The mission of Anchorage Montessori School is to make Montessori education a dynamic and positive influence in the lives of children, families and our community.***

The following principles support this mission:

- We believe in the dignity of children and in their inherent right to our protection, assistance, and guidance in fulfilling their potential
- We are committed to the Montessori philosophy and trust the Montessori approach to education
- We wish to support parents' efforts to raise capable, joyful, confident children without undue stress or financial hardship and without abdication of their parental responsibilities
- We are willing to share our lives with children and to grow and learn alongside them
- We are dedicated to the well-being, integrity and development of the larger Montessori community
- It is our most fervent desire to help bring about a peaceful world in which every person's contribution is cherished and in which all barriers to understanding and acceptance have been removed.

## **Our History**

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Anchorage Montessori School (AMS) opened in September 1977 under the direction of Betsey Howard. In 1978, the School became affiliated with the American Montessori Society. In 2003, we moved into our permanent home here on Northwood Drive.

AMS is an Alaska non-profit corporation governed by an 11-member Board of Directors. Administrative responsibility rests with the Executive Director. We are a community of parents and educators dedicated to the Montessori philosophy and the children of Alaska.

### **Collection of the Most Common Policies to Remember**

- Core Work Sessions: Drop off and pick up times are one of the most important times for your child during the day. Your child will need to be at school as soon as the class is open for successful socialization. Tardiness to class will be noted and if it becomes an issue that interrupts the class regularly, we will reevaluate your child's placement as part of our school community. Please call in advance for scheduled events (i.e. doctor's appointments) so the teachers may plan accordingly.
- Children with green mucus running from their noses are considered ill.
- A child given a fever reducer before school still has a fever and is considered ill.
- Parent Orientation is required for all parents, even returning families.
- No parking in the fire lane. Children in vehicles must be attended. Remember – **TURN OFF YOUR ENGINE!**
- Play yards are not available until after 6:00 pm Monday through Friday.
- Full Day programs are 12 months long.
- Children must be signed in before dropping off and signed out before picking up by people noted on the child's emergency cards. I.D. is required.
- Primary children must be potty-trained before school starts. Pull-ups are not allowed in the 3 to 6-year-old classrooms.
- Billing is 30 days in advance.
- Children must have a current physical and immunizations to stay enrolled in our program.
- If Anchorage School District closes due to weather, we are closed too. If ASD announces a delayed opening, we will be open for our regular hours.
- It is best to say goodbye in the hallway at the door and allow your child to walk into class independently. If assistance is required, a teacher or assistant will guide the child. Quick and confident goodbyes are the cornerstone of a successful day for our younger friends.



## **The Philosophy**

Dr. Maria Montessori's system of education is both a philosophy of child growth and a rationale for guiding such growth. This system is based on the child's developmental need for freedom with limits and uses a carefully prepared environment. The prepared environment guarantees exposure to materials and experiences through which the child develops intelligence, as well as, physical and psychological abilities. The Montessori method is designed to take full advantage of the unique ability of young children to develop their own capabilities through self-motivation. We stress the need for trust in the child's potential for self-development, the role of the teacher as a patient observer and sensitive guide, and the prepared environment featuring organized work in an atmosphere of responsible freedom.

The work in a Montessori prepared environment is ordered and sequenced by difficulty, teaching only one new concept at a time, and is, to a large extent, self-correcting. Each child's space is defined by a table or work rug that allow the child the freedom to invite others to join in or the option of working alone. Because many children of different ages are working individually with the materials there is no need for competition. It is common for older children to aid younger children, reinforcing their own self-esteem, as well as, their understanding of the concept or skill involved. Younger children look up to their senior classmates and learn much from them indirectly through observation. Each child relates primarily to his or her own work and individual progress is not measured through comparison to the achievements of others.



**AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY**  
education that transforms lives

The American Montessori Society represents a collective voice for Montessori accredited teachers, schools, administrators, parents, and supporters in the United States. Affiliated schools are required to meet many criteria. Affiliation guarantees a high quality of education and the assurance that teachers are appropriately certified in Montessori training.

Anchorage Montessori School is an affiliate school of the American Montessori Society. Our affiliation is a statement of our professional commitment to Montessori education. We honor the premise that setting and maintaining high standards of Montessori teacher training and environmental design results in a healthy, supportive educational program and a strong beginning for your child.

As an affiliate of the American Montessori Society, we hold an American Montessori Society membership to benefit every family enrolled at AMS. The membership provides our families with *Montessori Life*, a quarterly publication of the American Montessori Society. This magazine contains articles on a variety of subjects related to Montessori education. By using this magazine and other educational resources, you will gain a greater understanding of your child's development, behavior, and needs. With this knowledge, you can work in conjunction with your child's teacher to bring the Montessori philosophy into your home, thus strengthening your child's independence, love of learning, and a strong sense of self-respect for others and the world.

## **Our Program**

Anchorage Montessori School offers a child-oriented and multi-aged approach to learning grounded in the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori. This method emphasizes independence, self-motivation, and the development of intellectual, physical, and social abilities. When practiced authentically, Montessori education meets or exceeds standards established by the Alaska Department of Education.

***Currently, we serve students 19 months – 12 years by offering the following classes in a multi-aged classroom setting:***

- Toddler (19 months – 3 years)
- Primary (3 years – 6 years)
- Elementary I (6 years – 9 years)
- Elementary II (9 years – 12 years)

For a more detailed description of our programs, please reference the “Program Description” section found in the Programs link on the Anchorage Montessori School website:

<http://www.anchoragemontessorischool.org/classrooms/>

## **ENROLLMENT**

All families interested in becoming a part of the AMS community will need to complete the following steps to achieve enrollment for their child(ren). In some cases, steps may be combined to eliminate the need for multiple visits.

- INQUIRY – Call or stop by to ask about our program and schedule a tour.
- TOUR – Schedule a visit to tour our school with one of our Program Directors.
- APPLICATION/WAITING POOL – Turn in your application with applicable fees. If immediate placement is not available, you may join our waiting pool.
- ACCEPTANCE – Offer of placement followed by payment of the necessary deposits/tuition to secure enrollment. Registration document and health requirements must be met prior to attendance.
- PLEASE NOTE – Observations and child visits may be requested.

### **Important Parent Enrollment Communication Timeline**

When a spot is offered the parent or guardian must respond within 48 hours to accept placement. After accepting a placement an enrollment packet will be prepared. Parent or guardian must respond within 72 hours. After the enrollment packet is picked up the parent or guardian must return it within 5 days.

### **Enrollment Policy – Half Day and Full Day Programs**

Enrollment admission is based on several factors. Priority is given to children currently enrolled at AMS, to siblings of children currently enrolled, and to children with previous American Montessori Society or AMI (Association Montessori Internationale) school experience. We maintain a waiting pool and encourage families to apply well in advance of the desired enrollment date. Parents are encouraged to ask about enrollment possibilities, to reaffirm their interest, and to update their application and contact information periodically. In many cases, we cannot predict with certainty when an opening will occur, and when an opening becomes available we request a prompt decision. Upon offer of placement, a family has 48 hours to respond. The Program Director and the Executive Director determine class placement.

**Important Note about Extended Day:** The Extended Day program is just that, an extension of the school day for those third-year Primary students who participate in a multi-graded morning class and then the afternoon with like aged students (5 and 6-year-old) in an enriched academic classroom. Some call this Montessori in the Kindergarten

year. As with all Primary and Elementary Programs, Extended Day classrooms are 5-day programs. Anchorage Montessori School does not consider ½ Day Extended Day requests and/or enrollments.

### **Enrollment Policy – Elementary Program**

When an opening becomes available, the prospective elementary student will be invited for an interview and review of his or her previous work. Acceptance into the Elementary Program is based on several factors. Priority is given to children currently enrolled at AMS and to children with at least two years American Montessori Society or AMI school experience.

### **Enrollment Policy – Students with Special Needs**

Children with special needs are admitted on an individual basis provided Anchorage Montessori School can meet the needs of the child. An IEP must be supplied and discussed in detail with the Program Director, Executive Director, and classroom teacher.

Although Montessori education has proven successful in serving children with learning differences, the staff and directors are unable to diagnose a child or guarantee their success. A child with diagnosed special needs may be admitted based on our ability to serve them at a developmentally appropriate level in balanced classroom community.

Should it be determined that we are not able to serve the child based on the requirements presented in the IEP and on observations of the child in the teacher interview, it is in the child's best interest, and is our responsibility, to recommend the family seek a program which can provide for the child effectively.

### **Re-Enrollment**

Enrollment at AMS is viewed as a commitment to completing the cycle of learning at a child's designated level (2yrs for Toddler, 3yrs for Primary/Elementary). Families will receive a placement intent form during February and March for the next school year. Once placement is confirmed by parent, a re-enrollment packet is prepared.

**Please Note:** At the time of returning your Placement Intent form a \$500 Placement Security Fee is due. This fee is then applied as a credit to your September tuition payment. The Placement Intent Form will have a deadline date for both its return and the potential changing of your decision. This decision date is generally two weeks after the Intent Form return date. Any changes in decision or withdrawal after that date will result in the forfeiture of the Placement Security Fee.

In order to secure you child's spot in the upcoming year, all account balances must be current. Placement will not be held for any child with a delinquent account balance. A child may re-apply once the account balance is resolved.

*If a child is enrolled in a full day program tuition is due for all 12 months. There will be no "holding" of classroom placements over the summer months without the payment of tuition for those months. If a family is planning on taking the summer months off then they are advised to enroll in a school year (10 month) program.*

*If a family with a child in a full day program decides to take the summer off and not desire to pay the tuition they may withdraw their child by following the Withdrawal Policy. They are then free to reapply for admission with a new application and associated fees. The child will be placed on the Waiting List and enrolled a classroom as space becomes available.*

## **Change of Enrollment**

It is possible to submit a Change of Enrollment Form. These forms are available at the Front Office. Please note that these requests are honored by order of submission as space becomes available in the requested program. Anchorage Montessori School will strive to honor these change requests, though at the time of submission no guarantees are offered or implied. Please note: The first Change of Enrollment will be accommodated as space availability allows. The second request will be charged a \$25 administrative fee. The third request will be charged a \$50 administrative fee. These fees will only be charged if the change of enrollment is accommodated.

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Anchorage Montessori School prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, physical handicap, marital status, parenthood, pregnancy, or age.

## **Registration**

Prior to your child's first day in the classroom, the following must be completed and received by the office:

- An *Application for Admission* and payment of \$50 application fee.
- A signed *Deposit Agreement* and payment for \$150 refundable tuition deposit.
- A signed *Tuition Payment Schedule* and first payment (tuition and annual Registration and Program fees).
- A completed *Child Information* form.
- A physical exam report completed in the past 12 months and a record of required immunizations or signed exemption form. Immunizations are required by the State of Alaska and must be current.
- A completed *Emergency Child Record* card. This card must be updated and signed by two times during the school year, August and February.
- A signed *Parental Agreement, Parental Service Agreement, and Internet Agreement (Elementary only)*.

No child is admitted without the physician's physical exam and current shot record listing dates of all immunizations. Both will be kept in the child's file at the school. Immunization exemptions are allowed for medical or religious reasons. Exemption forms can be obtained from the State Public Health Office. A physician must sign medical exemptions; religious exemptions are signed by the parent or guardian and must be notarized yearly. Personal or philosophical exemptions are not accepted.

The current immunization requirements as required by the State of Alaska can be found at the State of Alaska Department of Epidemiology web site: <http://www.epi.alaska.gov/id/immune.stm> or by calling the Alaska Immunization Program office at (907) 269-8000 or 1-888-430-4321.

## **TUITION PAYMENT & FEES**

The Full Day Toddler and School Day Primary classes are 12-month programs. Tuition is billed June through May. The Half Day Toddler, Half Day Primary, Extended Day (3<sup>rd</sup> year), and Elementary programs are 10-month programs scheduled similar to the Anchorage School District. Tuition is billed August through May. Tuition is based on the yearly amount of the selected program and is divided into equal monthly amounts. The first month's tuition and fees are paid at the time of enrollment. Payment of tuition is required when the student is ill or on vacation and there is no pro-rated tuition for holidays, in-service days or winter and spring breaks. Please see the current Tuition Schedule available in the school office and online at:

<http://www.anchoragemontessorischool.org/prospective-parents/tuition/>

## **Making Payments**

Tuition is billed 30 days in advance. Other miscellaneous fees are such as drop-in before care, after care or late pick-up, are billed monthly and are due by the end of the month in which they are billed. Any account with an outstanding balance after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month following the due date will be assessed a \$10 late payment charge.

AMS accepts payments in cash (in person only), check, or electronically via an authorization to withdraw funds from your bank account (see front desk for enrollment form). Please be sure to obtain a receipt from the front desk at the time of payment. All major credit cards are also accepted (fees do apply). You may pay in person at the front desk or online at the AMS website.

## **Registration Fee**

There is an annual non-refundable \$50 Registration Fee at the time of enrollment/re-enrollment.

## **Program Fee**

There is an annual Program Fee of \$125 per student that is used for snacks, materials, and classroom events.

## **Refundable Tuition Deposit**

Each newly enrolled student pays a one-time deposit of \$150. This ensures your child's placement at AMS. The deposit is refundable under the following conditions:

1. Your child graduates from AMS.
2. Your child is withdrawn from AMS according to the *AMS Withdrawal Policy* with 30 days written notice prior to withdrawal. Specifics of the AMS Withdrawal Policy can be found below.
3. All financial obligations have been met.

## **Discounts**

AMS offers a sibling discount on tuition for families with multiple children enrolled in school. The discount(s) is applied in descending order by the age of the student: No discount for the first student, 5% discount for the second student, 10% discount for the third student, 15% discount for the fourth student and beyond.

## **Financial Policy**

We encourage you to become familiar with the Tuition Payment Schedule.

A fee of \$25 will be charged for NSF checks. If there is a second NSF occurrence, all future payments must be made via cash or money order.

The signed *Tuition Payment Agreement* indicates responsibility for making timely payments of all fees and tuition. If timely payment cannot be made, a written appeal must be filed with and approved by the Executive Director within 30 days of the due date. A signed payment arrangement must be executed and filed with the Accounts Receivable office.

Any account 30 days delinquent where the above requirements are not met will result in immediate financial probation of the student and they will not be allowed back in school until communication and payment arrangements can be established. Any financial probation not resolved within 10 days will be understood as forfeiture of the child's placement, deposit, and fees.

Any balance that exceeds 90 days is subject to placement with an outside collection agency. Once placed with an outside agency, all negotiations must be conducted with said agency. Should legal action be required, all parties agree to have the matter conducted within the Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska.

## WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Students are enrolled for the duration of the academic year; therefore, tuition is billed from the date of enrollment to the end of the academic year.

If for any reason you wish to withdraw your child from AMS, we require a written notice 30 days prior to withdrawal from school. The *Withdrawal Form* serves this purpose and is available at the front desk. This form must be completed, signed, and turned into the office 30 days in advance of the child's last attendance day to be in compliance with the AMS Withdrawal Policy.

*Due to the need for clear and verifiable communication, phone calls and/or other verbal notification will not suffice as documentation of a pending withdrawal. A hard copy or scanned electronic image of the signed form needs to be received by the office.*

- If withdrawing prior to March 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year, tuition for the remainder of the year is refundable provided written notice of withdrawal is received by office staff at least 30 days prior to date of withdrawal. Without 30 days written notice, one month of tuition will be forfeited.
- If withdrawing after enrollment paperwork and payment is submitted at the time of registration and/or the start of the school year (June 1<sup>st</sup>), the first month's tuition, registration fee, and deposit are forfeited.
- If withdrawing after March 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year, tuition is due for the remainder of the school year.

Anchorage Montessori School reserves the right to remove a student for: (A) delinquency in tuition and fees, (B) the inability of the child or parent to adjust to the School's program or (C) breach of the discipline policies of the School. The Executive Director, without prior approval of the Board, has the right to require any parent to withdraw their child from the School if he or she feels it would be in the best interests of the School. If a student is removed at the discretion of the Executive Director, the tuition and deposit are refundable provided all the other financial obligations have been met.

## Volunteerism

Anchorage Montessori School relies on the involvement and generosity of its parent body, as well as, the Board of Directors, staff, and general community. Student tuition and available grants for education fund only part of the costs of operating AMS programs. Accordingly, parents, staff, and Board Members are invited to participate in community, educational, and fundraising events throughout the year. We encourage all parents to support and participate in these efforts, and to share their, expertise, materials, and/or skills to enrich the resources available to AMS children. **Parents will provide a minimum of 10 hours of service to the school each school year (see *Service Agreement form*).** This is an hourly commitment per family, and can be fulfilled in many ways, including participation in fundraising activities, building and groups maintenance, recycling, teacher and classroom support, school promotion, and committee membership. A list of service preferences and options will be provided by Administration.

We appreciate every parent's commitment and contribution, and hope that service hours will provide every member of the AMS community an opportunity to participate directly in their child's educational experience. Hours are tracked and recorded by you by logging your hours in the *Parent Volunteer Log* binder located in the front office. Please let the front office staff know if you need help recording your hours. **Families who do not complete their 10 hours will be charged at a rate of \$20 per hour.**

## Parental Observations

AMS strongly urges parents to observe their child's classroom a minimum of twice annually. Feel free to arrange an observation with your child's teacher. On the day of the observation, please sign in with the front desk and you will be provided with observation guidelines prior to proceeding to the classroom. An observation is not an opportunity for participation in the class. Participation visits include Parent/Child night, Feast Days, Celebration of Life, etc., and may be found on the school calendar or requested by your child's teacher.

# OPERATION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

## Check In/Out Policy

Classes begin promptly at scheduled times outlined in the Sample Daily Schedules (later in this handbook) in all programs. Work cycles start promptly.

Students arriving to school 30 minutes or more after this time will need to be checked in at the front desk and signed in on the class roster at the classroom door.

Students will enter their classrooms independently to reduce disruptions to the classroom environment. A teacher or assistant will help the student if required.

If a child needs to leave early during their school day parents will need to check them out at the front desk and member of the office staff will collect the child from the classroom and escort them to the parent. Parents may accompany the staff member to the door but should not enter to reduce disruptions of the classroom environment.

## Sign In/Out & Correspondence

There will be a clipboard with a sign-in sheet at your child's classroom door; **be sure to sign your child in and out each day.**

## Pick-Up Policy

It is very important to pick up your child on time as it instills confidence and security in the child. Timely pick-up allows the staff to have the clean-up and planning time necessary to provide a quality education.

### Late Fees to be billed as follows for Primary and Elementary late pick-ups:

#### **AM class pick-up after 11:20 am:**

- \$20 for the first five minutes past pick-up time
  - \$2 per minute thereafter (per child)

#### **PM class pick-up after 3:20 pm:**

- Child will be placed in After Care and you will be charged the \$25 drop-in fee.

#### **After Care pick-up after 4:05 pm:**

- \$20 for the first five minutes past pick-up time
  - \$2 per minute thereafter (per child)

**If PRIMARY Full and Extended Day students are not picked up by 3:20 pm, they will be placed in After Care and charged the \$25 Drop-In fee. PLEASE NOTE: This policy does not apply to Toddler students.**

### Toddler late pickup:

- \$20 for the first five minutes past pick-up time
  - \$2 per minute thereafter (per child)

Your child's teacher will have a form for you to sign indicating the time of pick up and amount due. This amount will be billed to your account. **The building closes at 4:00.** Staff members will prepare children in the After-Care programs for departure beginning at 3:45 pm. If you would like to talk with staff, please choose a time other than pick-up.

## **Weather Closures**

In the event of heavy snowfall or other unexpected events (earthquake, volcanic eruption, wind storm), Anchorage Montessori School will follow the closure guidelines used by the Anchorage School District (ASD). If ASD is closed, we will be closed. If ASD calls for late arrival, we WILL BE OPEN. In this event, we advise parents to use cautionary discretion when deciding to travel. Parents will receive a message announcing closure.

## **Pandemic Policy**

A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. A flu pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges that people have little or no immunity to and for which there may be no vaccine. The disease spreads easily person-to-person and causes serious illness. It can sweep across the country and around the world very quickly. It is hard to predict when the next flu pandemic will occur or how bad it will be. Many studies have demonstrated that school children are responsible for most of the disease transmission. They have a high attack rate of influenza infection because they have limited pre-existing immunity and once infected, transmit influenza viruses to many others even before they themselves have recognizable symptoms.

In the event that the CDC or WHO identifies the presence of a potential pandemic virus (such as Human Avian influenza A, SARS, H1N1 Swine Flu, Ebola, Zika), Anchorage Montessori School will monitor CDC and local government recommendations, as well as, guidance from the medical community in order to ensure the safety and well-being of our school community. Anchorage Montessori School will adhere to all mandates including school closures and safe operating procedures. Such closures may be deemed necessary even if there are no confirmed cases in our school or local community.

In addition, Anchorage Montessori School will undertake the following practices:

- Any child who has returned, or whose immediate family member has returned, from a trip to an area for which the local, state, and/or national governments have travel advisories due to a pandemic situation, or any child who has an immediate family member who has been infected, will be excluded from school for a minimum of 72 hours (or the incubation period for the virus as defined by the local, state, and/or national governments).
- Any child with a suspected or confirmed case of the disease will be excluded from school until they have been asymptomatic for a minimum of 72 hours (or as long as is deemed appropriate by the local, state, and or/national health departments) without the aid of medication. The case will be reported to local authorities who will oversee the child's re-entry.
- Anchorage Montessori School will notify parents and staff of any confirmed or suspected cases.
- Anchorage Montessori School will comply with all state or local health department guidelines regarding school closures, cleaning and sanitization practices, safe practices (increased hand washing, face coverings as appropriate, physical distancing, smaller group sizes, alternative schedules, temperature checks, and increased disinfecting protocols), reopening, and re-entry of students after infection with the disease.
- Anchorage Montessori School will utilize email, Constant Contact, and text messaging as the primary methods of communicating school closures and other information. In the event of an extended closure, we

encourage parents and teachers to utilize email to keep in touch. In addition, every effort will be made to engage students and families in a combination of work pick up and remote learning platforms.

- Anchorage Montessori School reserves the right to close the school at any time that such action is deemed appropriate to minimize the transmission of disease. Tuition that has been collected will not be refunded for closures related to a pandemic. This is to preserve the integrity and longevity of the program and retain essential staff. Such closures may be deemed appropriate even if there are not any confirmed cases of the disease in the school.
- Additionally, at the discretion of the Executive Director and Board of Directors, a closure may be deemed appropriate even though local school district or other local authorities have not undertaken similar action or issued a similar recommendation in order to minimize the transmission of the disease.
- At times, primarily due to weather or widespread health-related challenges, often accompanied by official directives from governmental agencies, Anchorage Montessori School must close its programs until danger is passed or the governmental directives are lifted. When this occurs, Anchorage Montessori School will implement home learning protocols appropriate for every level of its learning programs so that students can continue to progress through school. Consequently, Anchorage Montessori School will not refund tuition already paid when its programs are closed due to these circumstances and families will be individually contacted regarding subsequent tuition payments.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

Emergency evacuation drills are performed monthly at Anchorage Montessori School. In case of fire or any major emergency requiring evacuation of the building, the child will be taken to:

1. **Northwood Elementary** – located directly behind Anchorage Montessori School – 4807 Northwood Drive, (907) 472-6800
2. **Spenard Recreation Center** – 2020 West 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue, (907) 343-6160

Parents will be called to pick up their children as soon as possible. A high-level emergency message will be sent to every family.

### **Liability**

The School carries insurance against property damage, bodily injury, and liability to the extent required by the Municipality of Anchorage. In addition, the School carries student accident insurance.

### **Licensing**

Anchorage Montessori School's Toddler, Primary, Before and After Care, and Summer Recreation programs are fully licensed and regularly inspected by the Municipality of Anchorage, Department of Health and Human Services Child/Adult Care Office. This agency supervises, monitors, and investigates complaints involving childcare centers. Any questions concerning the licensing procedure and any suspected violations may be directed to the Executive Director or to the Child/Adult Care Office located at 825 "L" Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, phone number (907) 343-4758.

Our licensed capacity is 154 students. We offer classes for children from 19 months through sixth grade.

### **Teacher to Child Ratios**

AMS adheres to a 6:1 ratio of children to adults in the toddler classes (19 months to 36 months) as required by the municipal code. AMS adheres to a 10:1 ratio in the primary classes (36 months through 5 years), as required by the municipal code. Each toddler and primary class has a lead teacher and at least one teacher assistant. At the Elementary level, AMS policy is to assign an assistant to a class with 15 or more students.

### **Supervision of Students**

Children are supervised at all times including when sleeping. Caregivers are in the same room as and within sight or sound of children. Caregivers know the whereabouts of children in their care at all times. A caregiver in a napping room is able to summon assistance as needed without leaving the room.

### **Substitutes**

When a staff member is absent, another staff member or someone from our substitute list covers his or her position for that time. Substitutes must have the same employment paperwork on file as regular employees. All parents are welcome to become substitutes. Applications are available at the front desk.

### **Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the building or on school property.

### **Weapons**

Weapons of any kind are not permitted in the school or on the school grounds.

### **Confidentiality**

We maintain confidentiality of records and information pertaining to each individual child and his or her parents. Access to records is by staff working directly with the child, his or her family, and the Municipality of Anchorage's Child care Licensing Office carrying out the license study and monitoring activities. Information will not be released unless parental permission is granted a signed Release of Information form and/or as required by law.

Please Note: In situations involving custody circumstances, visitation rights, etc. we ask that any court orders, judgements, and/or directives be provided to the office for filing in the child's confidential record. This assists the office staff and child's teacher regarding student pick-up, records release, etc. The information is only shared on a need-to-know basis.

### **Child Abuse Reporting**

State of Alaska Statutes and Anchorage Child Care Center Codes require that all licensed childcare providers report all incidents of suspected or actual abuse and/or neglect of children regardless of whether they occur in or are related to the facility. This facility is therefore obligated by law to report such incidents within 24 hours to the Office of Children's Services Child Protection Office:  
(907) 269-4000.

Centers are required to notify the Municipal Child/Adult Care Licensing Office regarding incidents alleging a child was abused or neglected when the center is responsible for the child. The number for the Municipal Child/Adult Care Licensing Office is (907) 343-3758.

## **HEALTH & WELLNESS**

### **Illness or Injury**

During infancy and the primary years, children average 7 or 8 colds a year. During the school age years, they average 5 or 6 colds a year. Please keep this in mind during the first few months of school.

To safeguard the health of everyone at Anchorage Montessori School, we ask that you help us by checking your child before leaving home for school and by keeping them home when they are ill. One contagious child at school can infect all the others, as well as, the classroom staff. Remember also that an illness in the school is transmitted back to

all home and families. Your child's daily health inspection is a service you provide to protect the health of all AMS families and staff. Precautions help limit the spread of contagious disease.

Please keep your child at home on the days that they show one or more of the following symptoms and **not** bring them back to school until they have been **symptom free for 24 hours**:

1. Oral or auxiliary temperature of 100 degrees or above within the last 24 hours (temperatures reduced with Tylenol are still fevers);
2. Any vomiting or diarrhea in the past 24 hours
3. Excessive nasal discharge; pink or red eyes with discharge; a cold which interferes with full participation in school activities, including going outdoors
4. Persistent cough or sore throat
5. Difficult or rapid breathing
6. Fussy, cranky or generally not themselves (often a symptom of oncoming illness)
7. Yellow skin or eyes
8. Skin related problems
9. Infected, untreated cold sores, skin patches or lesions;
10. Severe itching of body or scalp
11. Skin rashes, excluding normal diaper rash, lasting more than one day
12. Swollen joints
13. Enlarged lymph nodes
14. Stiff neck
15. Blood or pus from ear, skin, urine or stool
16. Pain or discomfort particularly in joints, ear or abdomen
17. Loss of appetite characterized by refusing solids
18. Symptoms that indicate any of the following disease: Chicken Pox, Impetigo, Lice\*\*, Scabies, and Strep Throat
19. Reportable communicable diseases: Bacterial Meningitis, Diphtheria, Giardiasis, Mumps, German Measles (Rubella), Hepatitis A, Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Shigellosis, Hemophilus Influenza, Salmonellosis, Tuberculosis, Measles, Meningococcal Infection.

Staff members do a well-child check on each student every day. Parents will be asked to take sick children home.

Children who have been diagnosed with any of the above reportable communicable diseases may return to the school only when documentation from a licensed physician states that they have been evaluated and present no risk to other children. We will notify parents of all occurrences of, or exposure to, communicable diseases at the School (i.e.: pink eye, influenza, items noted in #19).

Children who have symptoms of illness may be admitted to or remain at school only when there is written documentation from a licensed physician stating that the child has been examined and the return to school poses no serious health risk to the child or other children.

In the event a child becomes ill or injured at school, the child will remain in the office and parent, legal guardian or an emergency contact will be called to take the child home. In cases when the illness, symptoms or injury is such that delay in treatment is deemed unwise, the Executive Director (or designee) will obtain medical treatment at the hospital indicated on the child's emergency card or call for an ambulance. A second member of the staff will notify the parent or guardian of the emergency.

*\*\*Lice are easily spread and very difficult to completely get rid of unless there is due diligence for initial treatment and follow-up. The tenaciousness of these creatures and the close contact we have at our school*

*has lead us to incorporate a **no-nits policy**. This means if nits are found on a student, then that student will be sent home and may only return when they are nit free. The intention is to ensure the eradication of the infestation while minimizing the time students are away from school.*

*The contraction of head lice has nothing to do with socio-economic status or cleanliness. They are widespread and have been around for centuries.*

*Research points to the manual combing of hair to ensure the removal of both live lice and their eggs (nits). There are many of these combing products on the market.*

## **Medications**

**Prescription:** Medications will not be administered to students in Half Day programs except in a medical emergency, such as seizure medication or epi-pen. A designated AMS staff member will administer medications to Full Day and Elementary students provided the following Anchorage Municipal childcare regulations are followed:

- AMS is prohibited from giving any medicine to a child unless the parent provides those medicines.
- AMS must have the parent's written permission for each individual dose of prescription medication given to a child.
- Prescription medicine must be in the original container and have a current pharmacy prescription label with the doctor's name, child's name, specific period of time that the drug is to be administered, and dosage.
- Unused medication will be returned to the parent when the medication is no longer needed or before each school break.

Authorization forms are available in the office. Medications will be stored in the refrigerator if necessary or in a cabinet in a covered container. An individual daily log is kept of medication given to each child at the school.

**Over the Counter Medications:** Over the counter medications may be administered by the AMS with written permission from the parent.

- Medication must be kept in the original container and labeled with the child's name, name of the medication, dosage, expiration date, and directions for administration.
- Over the counter medication must be administered as specified on the manufacturer's label for the dose, duration or method of administration unless written instructions are provided by a physician.
- Unused medication will be returned to the parent when the medication is no longer needed or before each school break.
- Parents will notify the school immediately if the medication is changed.

Authorization forms are available in the office.

Emergency medication will be kept in the School Office.

**Topical Products:** The Department of Health and Human Services, one of our licensing agencies, interprets the following items as preventatives rather than medications: Sunscreens, Insect Repellents, Diaper Ointment, Hydrogen Peroxide, Neosporin, Calamine Lotion, Baking Soda, and Meat Tenderizer.

Parents control the use of preventatives due to personal preference and possible allergic reactions. If you wish the staff to use any of the above preventatives, the item must be provided from home and labeled with the child's name. You must sign a topical form indicating, "As needed" under the section related to dosage. Please note that AMS will use Equate Sport Sunscreen 50SPF and Off Insect Repellent unless otherwise directed by the parent.

Authorization forms are available in the office.

**\*\*PLEASE REMEMBER!\*\* We are a peanut free facility.**

**THIS INCLUDES TREE NUTS IN A CLASSROOM WHERE A KNOWN STUDENT ALLERGY EXISTS.**

Many parents like to bring items to share with their child's class. For us to maintain compliance with regulations, please do not bring the following:

- Any kind of eggs or anything containing mayonnaise
- Milk products which spoil easily (puddings, cream, whipped cream toppings)
- Meat, poultry, fish, shellfish
- Foods on which children could easily choke (nuts, popcorn)
- Home-grown fruits and vegetables and home-canned foods
- Beverages labeled "Fruit Drinks", always choose 100% juice
- Grocery store muffins (their first ingredient is sugar)
- Fruit roll-ups, cookies, candy, pastries, and other items which contain added sugar

**AMS requirements for lunch:**

- Simple lunch boxes that the children can open and close are necessary for the child to have a successful lunch experience.
- All lunch and/or snack boxes/bags must be labeled with the child's name and date.
- To help reduce the amount of waste produced at lunch we strongly encourage parents to provide food portions in reusable plastic containers. Pre-packaged food is discouraged. A microwave is available to heat up food as necessary.
- Drinking glasses are provided for all fluids. AMS supplies milk, and water is always available. We encourage parents to send fluids in a thermos to help reduce lunchtime waste.
- All food not eaten at lunch will be sent home so the parent has an accurate account of how much the child has eaten.

**Snack Requirements**

AMS provides snack during AM and PM work sessions, as well as After Care, according to the health regulations and requirements established by the Municipality of Anchorage Department of Health & Human Services. Snacks may include fresh fruit, vegetables, dried fruits, crackers, milk, granola bars, raisins.

### **Transportation**

The School does not provide transportation. We strongly encourage carpooling.

Parents of Primary and Toddler students are responsible for bringing their child to the classroom door at the scheduled arrival time and for picking up the child at the classroom door, playground or other designated location for scheduled events at the dismissal time. If someone else is picking up your child, **please notify the school in writing when possible**. We will not release a child to any person without your written authorization.

### **Arrival, Departure, and Driving Etiquette**

- The only entrance to the school parking lot is the only exit: **all driving areas are one-way only**.
- Please use the first available parking spot and follow the designated one-way pattern to maintain a smooth traffic flow.
- Remember our school is located in a residential area – observe all speed limits and signage.
- **Do not park in the fire lane**.
- Elementary pickup and drop-off is done in front of the building. The driver may remain in the vehicle at the curb. Vehicles must be attended. **DO NOT** idle your engine while waiting.
- Toddler & Primary parents are expected to enter the building or playground are to drop-off or pickup their children.
- **DO NOT** leave children unattended in your vehicle.
- Exhaust fumes are poisonous – turn your engines off while parked in our lot.

**\*\*Drop off should occur at the door of your child's classroom. Lessons in independence begin here and continue throughout your child's day. Thank you for your support!\*\***

### **Conferences and Communication with the School**

Parent/teacher conferences will be held twice during the school year. Please see the school calendar for specific dates. Parents will sign up for individual appointments with the teachers. Conferences are a great way to keep up with the progression of your child's development and education.

The better we understand your child, the better we can work with them. Emails, phone calls, and notes are encouraged. For this reason, we ask you to inform us of any changes in the child's life that might affect classroom behavior such as: medication (including antibiotics or increased vitamin doses), ear infections, upcoming vacations or houseguests, death of a family member, friend or pet, change in parent's work schedule, marital status, custody arrangement, etc.

### **Grievances or Complaints**

Parents, guardians, or members of the public are encouraged to resolve issues of concern at the appropriate level. An incident in the classroom would generally be resolved by discussion with the teacher. Failure to resolve the issue at this level requires consultation with the Program Director and then the Executive Director. If the Executive

Director does not resolve the issue then the aggrieved party can submit the complaint in writing to the Board of Directors. Educational issues involving more than one class may be addressed to the Program Director first, then to the Executive Director if further action is necessary.

Administrative concerns may be addressed to the Office Manager or Executive Director. Any issues of concern directed to the inappropriate person/group will be redirected to the appropriate level in the grievance process to ensure successful conflict resolution.

### **Parent Education Programs**

Montessori education calls for a commitment on the part of the parent(s) to understand the developmental process of the child. The administrators and faculty of Anchorage Montessori School consider parents an integral part of the school community. We recognize that parents are the primary teachers of their children. When parents and the school work in partnership the benefits for the child are multiplied. Parent education workshops are held at the school throughout the year and include background in Montessori theory, materials, and parenting techniques. The workshops also provide a forum in which parents can discuss their views and experiences with other parents who have similar goals for their children. Workshops will be announced in the class newsletters or by special notification. Parent Education events are listed on the school calendar.

### **Discipline**

Our goal at AMS is to help the child attain inner discipline. We believe this is achieved through active, spontaneous interaction in a prepared environment, guided by an aware adult. Redirection, and as needed, removal from activities are the principal tools used on the journey toward inner discipline. If a child is removed from activities more than two times in one day, the teacher may choose to contact a parent and have the child taken home. In situations where a child is taken home for a partial day multiple times (up to three occurrences) the teachers and parents are encouraged to informally discuss the situation and possible ways to avoid recurrence.

In more serious circumstances, Anchorage Montessori School reserves the right to formally dismiss a student when such action is deemed to be in the best interest of the school. If dismissal is proposed, recommended or contemplated, the Executive Director, Program Director, and the teacher(s) will promptly request a meeting with the parents to discuss the situation prior to implementing the dismissal. The decision will be made by the Executive Director in consultation with the child's support team. In cases of dismissal, the family will be given the opportunity to voluntarily withdraw if appropriate.

Anchorage Montessori School's policy is that corporal punishment does not promote the goal of inner discipline. Accordingly, corporal punishment by any adult is not allowed in the building or on school property at any time. All adults present at the School or who participate in School activities are expected to be respectful of children. The revised Behavior Policy is also linked to the Parents section of the school website and can be downloaded as needed. Here it is in its entirety:

#### **Core Philosophy:**

Discipline at Anchorage Montessori School (AMS) is based on a positive attitude toward children, awareness of the developmental psychology of children, and the unique ability to view and address each child's needs as an individual. Students are taught that AMS is a peaceful school based upon mutual respect and care for the community. Teachers model appropriate behaviors, and teach students problem-solving skills and conflict resolution strategies. The goal is to help children arrive at inner discipline through concentrated work, and the child is assisted in developing the skills necessary to control his/her own actions to develop self-discipline. Natural and/or logical consequences are used as a means of helping the child to develop inner limits. Teachers explain the reasons for limits or rules to be sure children understand the need for them, and strive to create an environment to promote learning, where children feel safe and secure.

Anchorage Montessori School encourages students to show respect for differences including but not limited to race, gender, and religion, while fostering a school environment free from all forms of bullying and intimidation whether physical, social, emotional, or verbal. The school's focus, based on Montessori pedagogy, is on preventative measures for such behaviors, by teaching children how to:

- be caring and courteous
- cooperate with others
- deal with angry feelings
- stand up for themselves without being aggressive
- respect and celebrate the unique qualities of every person
- make appropriate behavioral and academic choices

### **Disciplinary Procedure for Behaviors That Can Be Redirected: (All Programs)**

Inappropriate behaviors that can be redirected or are “teachable moments” by staff (and do not involve physical contact with another student, but can still develop into disruptive situations for the classroom community) will be addressed as follows:

1. The teacher will start by redirecting the student and helping him/her get engaged in work. The teacher will continue with this step if positive progress is being made. (At this step, verbal communication with parents is recommended.)
2. If the student is not responding positively to redirection by the teacher, the teacher will help the student find a place in the classroom to calm his/her body and observe the rest of the class. The teacher will continue with this step if positive changes are being observed. (At this step, verbal communication with parents is recommended.)
3. If the student is not responding positively to sitting alone in the classroom, the teacher will then walk the child to the office. The child will remain at the office for an appropriate amount of time based on his/her age. (Written documentation to parents required at this step.)
4. If the student reaches step 3 twice in one day, the child will be excused from school for the remainder of the day. (Written documentation to parents required at this step.)
5. If step 4 is reached for five consecutive days, the student will be excused from school until a meeting can be held between the lead teacher, the parents, and the executive director. At this time a disciplinary action plan will be presented and discussed. (Written documentation to parents required at this step.)

### **Disciplinary Procedures for Unacceptable Conduct and Aggressive Behaviors**

AMS defines unacceptable conduct as any behavior that creates unsafe conditions including, but not limited to, acts of bullying, physical violence, harassment, and illegal acts. AMS defines bullying as a series of repeated, intentionally

cruel incidents, involving the same children, in the same bully and victim roles. Bullying is a willful, conscious desire to hurt, frighten or threaten and is ongoing in nature. It can be physical and/or verbal and includes racial, religious, and sexual harassment, offensive gestures, inappropriate touching, intimidation, extortion, and social exclusion. It is behavior that is designed to hurt, injure, embarrass, upset, or cause discomfort for the other person.

### **Toddler Program:**

#### **Hitting, Kicking, and Spitting:**

1<sup>st</sup> Offense in a Day: Student will stand with a teacher. The teacher and student will discuss what was inappropriate.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense in a Day: Student will sit by himself/herself.

3<sup>rd</sup> Offense in a Day: Student will be excused from school for the remainder of the day.

#### **Biting:**

1<sup>st</sup> Offense in a Day: Parents of both students will be called.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense in a Day: Student will be excused from school for the remainder of the day.

If a maximum number of offenses is reached by a student for five consecutive school days for any of the aggressive behaviors outlined above, the student will be excused from school until a meeting can be held between the lead teacher, the parents, and the executive director. At this time a disciplinary action plan will be presented and discussed.

### **Primary Program:**

#### **Hitting, Kicking, and Spitting:**

1<sup>st</sup> Offense in a Day: Student will stand with a teacher or sit by himself/herself. The teacher will discuss appropriate conflict-resolution strategies.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense in a Day: Student will be excused from school for the remainder of the day.

#### **Biting:**

1<sup>st</sup> Offense in a Day: Parents of both students will be called.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense in a Day: Student will be excused from school for the remainder of the day.

#### **Misuse of Materials:**

1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Teacher will review appropriate use of materials in the classroom with student, and then model correct behavior.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Student will be asked to put the specific material or work away for the day.

3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: The specific material or work will be closed to the student for a week.

4<sup>th</sup> Offense: Teacher will lead a discussion with student and parents.

**Inappropriate Language: swearing, using taunting or bullying language, speaking disrespectfully to others (students and adults):**

1<sup>st</sup> Offense in a Day: Student will stand with a teacher or sit by himself/herself. The teacher and student will discuss what was inappropriate.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense in a Day: Student will be sent to the office for an appropriate amount of time based on his/her age.

3<sup>rd</sup> Offense in a Day: Student will be excused from school.

If a maximum number of offenses is reached by a student for three consecutive school days for any of the aggressive behaviors outlined above, the student will be excused from school until a meeting can be held between the lead teacher, the parents, program director, and the executive director. At this time a disciplinary action plan will be presented and discussed.

## **Elementary Program:**

### **Spitting, Hitting, Kicking, Bullying, and Pushing**

1<sup>st</sup> Offense in a Day: Appropriate conflict-resolution strategies will be discussed with the student. The student will spend the remainder of the day working at a solo work space, or a space directly next to a teacher. Written documentation required.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense in a Day: Student will be excused from school.

### **Biting:**

1<sup>st</sup> Offense in a Day: Appropriate conflict-resolution strategies will be discussed and practiced with the student. Student will be excused from school for the remainder of the day. Parents of both students will be called.

### **Inappropriate Language: swearing, using taunting or bullying language, speaking disrespectfully to others (students and adults):**

1<sup>st</sup> Offense in a Day: Student will stand with a teacher or sit by himself/herself. The teacher and student will discuss what was inappropriate.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense in a Day: Student will be sent to the office for an appropriate amount of time based on his/her age.

3<sup>rd</sup> Offense in a Day: Student will be excused from school.

### **Intentional Destruction of Materials or Possessions of Others:**

1<sup>st</sup> Offense in a Day: Student will stand with a teacher or sit by himself/herself to complete work. The teacher and student will discuss what was inappropriate. Student's family will be responsible for funding the replacement of destroyed materials in the classroom.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense in a Day: Student will be excused from school.

If a maximum number of offenses is reached by a student for two consecutive school days for any of the aggressive behaviors outlined above, the student will be excused from school until a meeting can be held between the lead

teacher, the parents, and the executive director. At this time a disciplinary action plan will be presented and discussed.

### **Disciplinary Action Plans:**

If a student has a documented history of reaching the maximum number of offenses (for either those redirected or aggressive behaviors) for five consecutive school days, it is the responsibility of the lead teacher to write and implement a disciplinary action plan and share said action plan with parents before the student returns to class. The executive or educational director must also be present at this meeting. The goal of the disciplinary action plan is to explore and document if accommodations/modifications in the current classroom environment will be enough to help the student be a positive and contributing member of the classroom community.

Disciplinary action plans will be given a four-week period of implementation. (During this period of implementation the normal behavioral consequences as outlined above will continue to be followed.) If at the conclusion of the four-week period the teacher observes positive change being made, s/he may choose to adjust the current disciplinary action plan and allow for another four-week period of implementation. If minimal or no positive change is being observed, the lead teacher, program director, and executive director will decide whether AMS is an appropriate environment for this student.

### **Field Trips, Excursions, and Safety**

Field trips and neighborhood walks are held periodically during the year. Permission for neighborhood field trips is included in the *Parental Agreement*. Signed permission slips will be required for any field trips. The cost of field trips in most cases is included in the program fees.

For walking field trips within six blocks of the school, staff must notify the Executive Director and Office of the destination prior to departure from the building. The destination must be safe for the children and age appropriate. The staff member must take a cell phone on the walk field trip. The staff member will also have the first aid backpack, including a stocked first aid kit, individual emergency medication, and emergency contact information. A note will be posted on the classroom door informing parents on the whereabouts of the class and anticipated time of return. The office will also be notified regarding the trip. All school rules apply on field trips.

### **Clothing and Personal Belongings**

Children's clothing should not be an obstacle to their enjoyment at school. Their clothes should allow them to run, climb, and play freely without risk of injury or concern for spills. The children need to be able to handle their clothes independently, particularly in the bathroom. During the toddler and primary years, please avoid overalls, pants with heavy snaps, and belts that the child cannot manage alone.

For safety reasons, **children must wear shoes or slippers always**. The best school shoes are sturdy sandals, tennis shoes, leather oxfords, or non-skid slippers.

Flip flops, cowboy boots, clogs, jellies, and bulky slippers are dangerous and do not allow the children to move with coordination and confidence. Excessively long shoelaces and double knots are added obstacles for the child. During boot weather the child should have a pair of slippers or shoes that stay at school (labeled with child's name).

All toddler and primary children must always have a complete change of clothing (shirt, pants, socks, underwear) available at school. Items should be in a zip-lock bag labeled with the child's name. This clothing will be kept at school in the child's cubby and should be updated and kept seasonably appropriate. Toddlers who are still in diapers must have extra diapers in addition to their change of clothes.

**All clothing (sweaters, coats, hats, mittens, shoes, boots, etc.) must be labeled with the child's name. Clothing marked clearly is more likely to be returned to you if it is misplaced.**

### Classroom Pets

The following pet animals may be in the classroom for all or part of the year: fish, gerbils, hamsters, rabbits, canaries, finches, tadpoles, caterpillars, hermit crabs, ant farm, worms, and insects (non-harmful). Children will participate in the care and occasional handling of these pets. Proper hand washing procedures will follow any handling of animals. If a child has a known allergy, the classroom teacher should be notified in writing. Families who have pets that they could bring to school for a day or longer are encouraged to discuss an arrangement with their child's teacher. The following animals are **NOT** allowed in the primary classroom: Parakeets, parrots, pigeons, turkeys, domestic fowl, water turtles, reptiles, amphibians, monkeys, skunks, and wild rodents.

### Celebration of Life

The celebration of life for a **toddler** is very concrete and simple. At circle time, lighting of a special candle and the happy birthday song takes place. The child is asked to blow out the candle while in the teacher's or parent's lap. Parents are invited to celebrate this occasion with the class but need to understand that it may be unsettling to certain children due to the extreme sense of order for toddlers. Since we teach children that school is a place for them, it is often hard for toddlers to understand why parents are in the classroom. If you feel your presence would upset your child, please talk to your child's teacher before the celebration.

In the **primary** classes, a Celebration of Life will take place at group time on each child's birthday, telling the story of their life with words and pictures. This is a very special way for a child to celebrate a birthday. Children may bring a special, **healthy treat** to share with the other members of their class. Please remember that the treat must conform to guidelines given for other snacks, please notify your child's teacher as your child's birthday approaches. This celebration is a very important time for your child, and every effort will be made to schedule a convenient time for you to participate in the classroom celebration.

### Playground Guidelines

Our playground is available for personal play after 6:00 pm and on weekends by AMS families. When supervising your child's play, the following guidelines should be followed for safety and proper care of the grounds and equipment. These are some of the same procedures used by our staff daily for supervision on the playground.

- Opening the gates is adult work, do not ask or allow a child to open a gate.
- Children shall be accompanied by an adult at all times while outside.
- Children will stay inside the fenced area unless accompanied by an adult.
- Climbing on fences is not permitted.
- Slides must be kept clean of dirt, gravel, etc.
- Children must sit down on the slides at all times – no climbing up the slide.
- Swings are for sitting on – no standing or twisting.
- Throwing stones, gravel, and snowballs is not permitted.
- Wrestling, pushing, hitting, kicking, verbal threats, and taunting are not permitted. Games which promote "weapon" play are discouraged and can lead to aggressive behavior, accident, and injury.

### Cold Weather Outdoor Play

Children must always be prepared for outdoor play. The child will spend some time outdoors each day. During cold weather, each child must have appropriate clothing for warmth and dryness. In the event of rain or extremely cold weather, the staff may choose to utilize our indoor play area. Minimum cold weather guidelines for outside play are: 10° F for Toddlers, 0° F for Primary, and -5° F for Elementary students.

**PLEASE MAKE SURE ALL OUTDOOR CLOTHING – COATS, HATS, MITTENS, BOOTS, AND PANTS – ARE CLEARLY LABELED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.**

Special requests to keep a child indoors cannot be met because classroom staff must be outside to satisfy our adult/child ratio requirements.

### **Screen Time**

Screen viewing time is prohibited for children under the age of two. For children aged two years and older screen time will be limited to no more than 1 hour in a 24-hour period.

### **A POSITIVE START: Adjustment to School for Toddler/Primary**

Starting school in a new environment can be fun and exciting for some children, and frightening for others. Before school starts, take time to talk about what it will be like. There is a moment when the child suddenly realizes that their parents are not going to be there with them. The apprehension that may accompany this realization is a very normal reaction. Prepare your child so that they are aware that you will be leaving and that you will be back at pick-up time.

Your child will take their cues from you. What may seem like over-the-top confidence and positivity to you, will give them what they need to feel at home and begin to trust the new and exciting place they have been brought to explore.

When you bring your child to school on the first day, the staff will be there to make the transition as smooth as possible. A teacher will greet the children individually at the door and show them where to keep their belongings. For several days, perhaps even two or three weeks, assurances may be necessary (“Yes, I’ll be back this afternoon to pick you up”). To help the staff and your child, please say good-bye and leave as quickly as possible. An unhappy child will settle down quickly after the parent has left. Generally, it takes a child of any age a month to really take in the various aspects of their day at school and to feel relaxed and comfortable. Should you wish to call to check on your child, please call the school at (907) 276-2240 and the staff will check with your child’s teacher and return your phone call.

After you leave, the teacher will walk with your child around the classroom, introducing the assistant and other children. Then the teacher will demonstrate the bathroom procedure, emphasizing that the child may use the bathroom whenever the need arises, and will then explain hand-washing procedures. As soon as possible, the teacher will demonstrate some work suited to the child’s ability. We believe the more quickly your child is involved in work, the more quickly they will shed their anxiety and begin adjusting to school. From the first day, we emphasize the individual work and individual responsibility.

Freedom is our goal – not our point of departure. A child gains freedom as he or she gradually learns inner-discipline and self-control. For a while, however, your child may seem totally undisciplined. This is an intermediate stage quite often seen as children get their bearings. With patience and firmness, it gradually disappears. Remember, your child is adjusting to an informal classroom where boundaries may not be as clearly defined as at home or a previous school.

Nevertheless, the boundaries and limits are present. We do not condone chaos. In general, child may not harm themselves, another person, disturb another person’s work, or misuse a piece of equipment. We believe the short-term readjustment to less teacher-directed, more self-directed activity pays off in the long run. A child who has been in this environment for a year or more shows a marked increase in ability to make decisions, and in responsibility for community and personal belongings.

## Daily Schedules

### **Half Day Toddler**

8:15am (12:15) Arrival  
8:15-10:00 (12:15-2:00) Work cycle, Snack and diapering  
10:00-10:45 (2:00-2:45) Gross Motor  
10:45-11:00 (2:45-3:00) Circle time  
11:00-11:15 (3:00-3:15) Outside play and dismissal

### **Half Day Primary (Morning)**

8:15 am (12:15 pm) Arrival  
8:30-10:40 am (12:15-2:25 pm) Work period  
10:40-11:00 am (2:25-2:45 pm) Clean up, circle time  
11:00-11:15 am (2:45-3:15 pm) Outdoor play  
11:15 am (3:15 pm) Outdoor play and dismissal

### **Half Day Primary (Afternoon)**

12:10pm-12:15pm Arrival  
12:15pm-2:45pm Uninterrupted Work Cycle  
2:45 pm-3:15 pm Outdoor Play/Dismissal

### **School Day Toddler**

7:30 Arrival  
8:00-10:00 Work cycle, snack and diapering  
10:00-10:15 Clean up  
10:15-10:30 group time  
10:30-11:30 Outside/Big room gross motor  
11:30-12:15 Lunch time  
12:15-12:30 Lunch clean up and diapering/ Toileting  
12:30-2:30 Nap time  
2:30-3:30 afternoon snack, diapering and work cycle  
3:30-4:00 Outside/ Big room dismissal

### **School Day Primary**

7:30-8:30 Before Care  
8:30-10:30 Work period, snack offered until 10:30  
10:30-11:00 Group  
11:00-11:30 Lunch  
11:30-12:00 Outdoor play  
12:30-12:45 Story time  
12:45-2:45 Nap time  
1:15-3:15 Work period, snack offered  
3:15-4:00 After school work and outside play

***\*\*Remember: Some Toddler and Primary Programs are year-round. If your child does not attend in the summer months, you must pay tuition to reserve his or her spot in the fall.\*\****

**Lower Elementary Schedule:**

8:30-8:45 a.m. morning drop off  
8:45-11:45 a.m. morning work cycle (uninterrupted work period including individual snack time, lessons, and independent work)  
11:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m. lunch set-up  
12:00-12:30 p.m. lunch  
12:30-1:00 p.m. recess  
1:00-2:45 p.m. afternoon work cycle (including specials: foreign language, art, music, etc.)  
2:45-3:15 p.m. classroom clean-up and dismissal

**Upper Elementary Schedule:**

8:30-8:45 a.m. morning drop off  
8:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m. morning work cycle (uninterrupted work period including individual snack time, lessons, and independent work)  
12:00-12:30 p.m. recess  
12:30-1:00 p.m. lunch  
1:00-2:45 p.m. afternoon work cycle (including specials: foreign language, art, and music)  
2:45-3:15 p.m. classroom clean-up and dismissal



## **PARENTS' GUIDE TO LICENSED CHILD CARE**

◆ **Choosing care for your child is a significant decision.**

When you entrust the care of your child to another person, you are making an important decision.

Visit, ask questions and carefully compare several programs. Licensed care includes child care and educational homes and centers. Your choice depends on what you want and need for your child.

◆ **Licensing is a key to quality child care.**

It promotes good care by setting basic standards. Before a center or home is granted a child care license, it must meet health, safety, and program requirements (see summary on back of this sheet).

A Child Care Licensing Specialist from the Municipality of Anchorage visits and inspects the facility and investigates complaints. The goal of licensing is to prevent risks to children; however, licensing cannot guarantee that a facility meets all code requirements at all times.

◆ **You as an informed parent are a key to quality child care.**

Parents are responsible for choosing and monitoring their child's care. Licensing specialists visit one to four times a year, but you visit each time you take your child. Visit unexpectedly sometimes or in the middle of the day. Keep an eye on the quality of care. What do you see when you visit? Is the environment safe? Are caregivers capable and nurturing? How many children are present? Are meals

nutritious? Are activities appropriate? Watch how your infant responds to the program and listen to what your child says. You are the person best able to decide whether child care meets your standards for safety, health, and quality.

◆ **If you have questions or concerns about your child's care.**

Discuss concerns with your caregiver. Talk to the caregiver if you observe health or safety problems or if you feel the program needs improvement. If you are still concerned, or if you believe children may be in danger or a standard is violated, contact the local

licensing office. The licensing office will investigate your complaint. Address and phone of the local licensing office:

Municipality of Anchorage  
Child Care Licensing Program  
825 L Street, 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Floor  
P. O. Box 196650  
Anchorage, AK 99519-6650  
(907) 343-4758  
Website: <http://www.muni.org/Departments/health/Services/Pages/Child.aspx>  
Recent facility inspection reports can be viewed at: <http://hhs.muni.org/childcare>

- ◆ Additional information regarding the location of child care facilities licensed by the Municipality of Anchorage can be found online at: <http://neighborhood.muni.org>

## HOW MANY CHILDREN MAY BE IN CARE?

<b>Licensed Child Care Homes</b> <i>(Including children related and unrelated to caregivers)</i>	<b>Licensed Child Care Centers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No more than 8 children total</li><li>• No more than 6 children total if only one door exit.</li><li>• No more than 3 children under 30 months</li><li>• No more than 2 non-walking children</li><li>• At least 1 adult caregiver</li><li>• No more than 5 children in nighttime care (including provider's own children) (10 PM – 6 AM)</li><li>• Children who live in the household under the age of 12 count in the total</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 9 or more children</li><li>• 1 caregiver for every 4 infants (6 weeks thru 11 months)</li><li>• 1 caregiver for every 5 toddlers (12 thru 18 months)</li><li>• 1 caregiver for every 6 toddlers (19 thru 35 months)</li><li>• 1 caregiver for every 10 children (3 thru 12 years)</li><li>• At least 2 adults on premises</li></ul>

## PARENTS

- Are responsible for selecting safe, appropriate care for their child
- Are responsible for monitoring their child's care
- Provide current emergency information and immunization records for their child
- Are encouraged to visit their child anytime the child is in care
- Receive written child care policies

## LICENSING

- Child care license is required if more than 4 children (not related to caregivers) are in care
- License must be renewed prior to expiration (annually or biennially)
- Facility (including building, staff and program) is evaluated before a license is issued and is periodically monitored thereafter
- Complaints are investigated
- Licensing files are open to public review

## CAREGIVERS

- Are required to care for children in a safe, healthy way
- May not have physical, health, mental health, or behavior problems that might be a risk to children
- May not have domestic violence or substance abuse problems that might be a risk to children
- Complete child care training each year
- Are at least 18 years of age
- Junior helpers may only assist the administrator and are under direct supervision
- Persons 16 and older have a criminal background check including submitting fingerprint cards
- Meet early childhood training requirements

## SAFETY

- Children are always supervised by an adult
- Caregivers know the whereabouts of children at all times
- Caregiver(s) with First Aid and CPR training are present
- Facility is free of hazards, inside and out
- Gates are required at accessible stairways if children under 36 months are in care.
- Medicine and poisons are stored safely
- Electrical outlets have childproof cover caps if children under age 5 are in care
- Emergency information is kept for each child and is reviewed and updated quarterly

## HEALTH

- Facility meets sanitation and safety standards
- Meals and snacks are nutritious
- Children are immunized or exemptions are on file
- Parents are notified if their child is exposed to a contagious or communicable disease
- If it chooses, a child care home may care for mildly ill children
- Seriously ill child may not be in care without a medical provider's written approval
- Drinking water is safe
- Smoking is not allowed
- Medicine is given only with parent permission
- Food preparation and handling are sanitary

## EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- Furniture and equipment are safe and durable
- Infant walkers are not allowed
- Toys are adequate and varied
- Children have storage space for their belongings
- Children under 5 years have a cot/mat/ bed and individual blanket
- Infants must sleep in a safe crib or playpen without materials that would increase the risk of suffocation

## PROGRAM

- Promotes children's healthy development
- Includes quiet and active, group and individual, indoor and outdoor activities
- Limits TV and video to children's programs and limited to no more than 1&1/2 hours in a 24 hour period
- Does not allow high-risk activities
- Requires parent permission for moderate risk activities (for example, swimming, ice skating, trips by vehicle)
- Provides a minimum of 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity for every 3 hours the child is in care between 7 am and 7pm

## BEHAVIOR & GUIDANCE

- Is positive, and never cruel, humiliating, or damaging to the child
- Sets realistic expectations and clear, consistent limits
- Is not related to eating, napping, toileting, or removing from other children for more than 10 minutes
- Does not use corporal punishment (Corporal punishment means "the infliction of bodily pain as a penalty for a disapproved behavior. It includes shaking, spanking, delivering a blow with a part of the body or an object, slapping, pinching, pulling or any other action that seeks to induce pain.")

## FIRE SAFETY

- Facility meets fire safety standards
- Emergency evacuation plan is practiced monthly and document

