

# **PARENT HANDBOOK**

**2025-2026**



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## **School Contact Information**

Address: 5001 Northwood Drive, Anchorage, AK 99517  
Phone: (907) 276-2240  
Fax: (907) 258-3552  
Email: [admin.support@anchoragemontessorischool.org](mailto:admin.support@anchoragemontessorischool.org)  
Website: [www.anchoragemontessorischool.org](http://www.anchoragemontessorischool.org)



<b>Office Hours of Operation:</b>	7:30 am-4:30 pm Monday - Friday
Half Day Sessions:	8:15-11:15am / 12:15-3:15p
Full Day Toddler Sessions:	8:00 am to 4:00 pm
Full Day Primary Sessions:	8:30 am to 3:15 pm
Elementary Session:	8:30am to 3:15 pm
Before Care	7:30 am to 8:30 am
After Care	3:15 pm to 4:30 pm

*\*School will be closed for all major holidays and during Thanksgiving, Winter, and Spring Breaks, as well as on Parent Teacher Conference Days and In-Service Days. Please see the AMS calendar on page 2 for a complete list.*

*\*\*Anchorage Montessori School is licensed for 156 children.*

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.

# 2025-2026 AMS School Calendar



## **Our Mission**

Anchorage Montessori School is dedicated to providing a holistic education that empowers children to approach learning with a curious mindset through the values and principles of the Montessori philosophy. We respect the inherent dignity of each child, promoting independence and responsibility to themselves and the community so that together we may create a more peaceful world.

## **Our Vision**

A school community that is thriving, accessible and inclusive, which inspires students to be compassionate, empathetic leaders who view the world with a global perspective. At AMS we dream big for a better future for all.



## **Our History**

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. In 2025, Anchorage Montessori School received full accreditation status from both American Montessori Society and Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges.

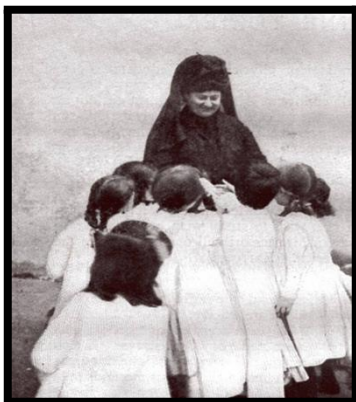
AMS is an Alaska non-profit corporation governed by a Board of Directors. Administrative responsibility rests with the Executive Director. We are a community of parents and educators dedicated to the Montessori philosophy and the children of Alaska.



## Collection of the Most Common Policies to Remember

- Montessori Work Periods: 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 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.
- 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.
- Children must have a current physical completed in the state of Alaska and immunizations to stay enrolled in our program.
- We often, but not always, follow ASD weather closures. If AMS is closed due to weather, families will receive both a text and an email before 6am. Weather closures are necessary when staff cannot safely make it to work. It is not always possible to "make up" for weather closures as we operate 12 months a year, for 9 hours a day.
- It is best to say goodbye expediently 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.

## Montessori 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.



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 Programs**

Anchorage Montessori School offers a child-oriented and mixed-age 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 mixed-aged classroom settings:***

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

### **Age Requirements and Program Transitions**

#### **Toddler Program Entry**

Children must be 19 months old to enter the Toddler program.

#### **Toddler Program Scheduling**

Children in the half-day Toddler program may choose 2, 3, or 5-day attendance options during their first year. In the second year of the Toddler program, all children will transition to the 5-day option to provide better routine and consistency in their development.

#### **Toddler to Primary Transition**

Children who turn 3 years old after October 31st will remain in the Toddler program for the remainder of the school year. Children with birthdays on or before October 31st will move to the Primary program if space is available.

#### **Kindergarten Year Activities**

Children who turn 5 years old before September 1st are considered to be in their "kindergarten year" and will be eligible to participate in kindergarten pull-out classes. Children who turn 5 during the school year do not join these specialized classes but are provided with other developmentally appropriate activities in the classroom, particularly if they no longer require rest time during the day.

#### **Primary Program Age Limit**

Any child who turns 6 years old before September 1st will no longer be eligible for the Primary program and must transition to Elementary. Our Lower Elementary classrooms are designed to accommodate children at various developmental levels, and maintaining enrollment capacity in Primary ensures availability for families on our extensive waitlist.

## **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 or call to ask about our program and get the most current enrollment information.
- 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 documentation 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 24 hours to accept placement. After accepting a placement an enrollment packet will be prepared. After the enrollment packet is given to the family by email, a parent or guardian must return it within 5 days.

### **Enrollment Policy**

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 24 hours to respond. The Program Director and the Executive Director determine class placement.

### **Waitlist Policy**

Anchorage Montessori School maintains a waitlist for children who would like to be enrolled in the program. Families are added to the waitlist upon submission of a completed online application.

### **Waitlist Priority and Selection**

While applications are generally considered in the order received, priority is given to siblings of current or former students. Additionally, enrollment decisions may consider classroom composition factors including age and gender balance to maintain optimal learning dynamics in each classroom environment.

## **Waitlist Status and Communication**

Families may call at any time to check their position on the waitlist. If a family declines an offered spot, they may choose to remain on the waitlist and will be repositioned based on the date of their continued interest.

## **Classroom Placement**

### **Placement Decision Process**

Classroom placements are made by the administration and teaching staff based on careful consideration of multiple factors that support the optimal learning environment for all students. These decisions prioritize the needs of the entire classroom community and are made to create balanced, thriving learning environments.

Placement considerations include but are not limited to:

- Age and developmental distribution within each classroom
- Learning styles and academic readiness
- Social and emotional development
- Gender balance
- Overall classroom dynamics and community needs

### **Parent Requests**

While we understand that families may have preferences regarding classroom placement, teacher selection, or social groupings, placement decisions are made solely by the school administration and teaching staff. Parent requests for specific placements will not be accommodated, as these decisions must prioritize the needs of the entire learning community. Our commitment is to provide the same high-quality Montessori education in every classroom, with each teaching team bringing their unique strengths to the learning environment.

### **Classroom Stability**

Children remain in their assigned classroom throughout their enrollment in each program level (Toddler, Primary, or Elementary). Classroom changes are not made except in extraordinary circumstances where such a change would serve the best interests of the child and classroom community, as determined by the administration in consultation with teaching staff.

We are confident that our placement decisions, made with careful consideration of each child's needs within the context of the whole community, provide the best possible learning environment for all students.

## **Toilet Training**

Toddler teachers work with children to help them become toilet trained. Before moving from the toddler program to the primary program, children should meet the following definition of toilet trained:

Children are required to be toilet trained as part of entering the preschool classroom. This is due to: the higher ratio of children to staff and absence of licensed diaper changing areas/staff. In our experience most children can be

independent in their toileting at this age, though we understand there may be some regression involved with entering a new environment.

A child is considered toilet trained by Anchorage Montessori if they meet the following criteria:

- Independently initiates going to the toilet for most occurrences
- Either alerts an adult or independently changes after urinating in their clothing
- Pushes down pants and underwear without assistance
- Is willing and able to wipe with toilet paper
- Able to redress themselves and/or change clothes with minimal assistance

For children on the cusp of meeting most of this criteria by their start date or aging out of a toddler classroom, provisional classroom enrollment will be determined at the preschool teachers' discretion and may require a mutually agreed upon trial period.

## **Bathroom Policy**

Toddler and Primary classrooms each have their own private bathroom facility available for student use during the school day. Elementary students sign out of their classroom to use the restroom facilities located near the front desk.

Any student who prefers additional privacy may request to use one of the school's private bathroom facilities. Students can make this request by speaking with their teacher or front desk staff, and these requests will be accommodated.

## **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' experience in a Montessori school.

## **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 within our educational framework and classroom community.

## **Early Identification and Assessment Requirements**

**For families continuing from our Toddler and Primary programs to Elementary:** When school staff observe developmental concerns or potential learning differences during a child's time in our early childhood programs, families are strongly encouraged to pursue professional assessment and intervention services. If school staff recommend evaluation or support services and families decline to pursue these recommendations, continued enrollment in subsequent programs (Primary to Elementary, or in cases where safety concerns or one-on-one supervision needs cannot be sustainably met, within early childhood programs) may not be offered. This policy ensures that children receive appropriate early intervention support and that families demonstrate collaborative partnership in addressing their child's developmental needs.

**For all students with identified special needs:** Current documentation must be provided and discussed in detail with the Program Director, Executive Director, and classroom teacher prior to enrollment. This includes:

- Current IEP, 504 Plan, or comprehensive psychological/educational evaluation
- Any therapeutic service reports or recommendations
- Medical documentation if applicable

## **Educational Philosophy and Limitations**

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 within a balanced classroom community.

## **Admission Decision Process**

Should it be determined that we are not able to serve the child based on the requirements presented in their documentation and on observations of the child during the enrollment process, 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 more effectively.

**Our commitment to partnership:** We believe that early identification and intervention, combined with strong family-school collaboration, provides the best outcomes for all children. This policy reflects our dedication to supporting each child's individual development while maintaining the integrity of our educational program.

## **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 at the end of February for the next school year. Intent forms are due before the end of Spring Break. Once placement is confirmed by parent, a re-enrollment packet is prepared and sent via the Facts Parent Portal.

**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 your 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 on the website and at the front desk. 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 Agreement* and first payment (tuition and annual Registration and Program fees).
- A completed *Child Information* form.
- A physical exam report completed within the state of Alaska 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 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:

<https://www.anchoragemontessorischool.org/admissions/tuition-fees.cfm>

### **Making Payments**

Tuition is billed on the school tuition information system and is due according to the payment plan each family chooses. 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. A one time \$20 late fee is assessed by FACTS tuition management after a third failed attempt at payment. No additional late fees are assessed by AMS.

AMS accepts payments online via the family portal, in cash (in person only), check. 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 using the family portal.

### **Registration Fee**

There is an annual non-refundable \$75 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**

**Sibling:** 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 on the student information system and to stop by or reach out if you have any questions.

Our tuition management system, FACTS, charges a fee of \$30 for non-sufficient funds on your payment method. The system will try to charge the payment method up to three times, each time resulting in a new \$30 charge. If you are having trouble making payments we strongly encourage you to contact the office before the payment due date to avoid these charges.

The signed *Tuition Payment Agreement* indicates responsibility for making timely payments of all fees and tuition. If timely payment cannot be made, it is essential to speak with the executive director as soon as possible to make a payment plan.

Any account 30 days delinquent 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 and also in fillable format on the AMS website-. 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, program 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.

## **Parent Volunteer Requirement**

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.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Volunteer hours are tracked and recorded by parents by logging your FACTS family portal. From your Facts family portal dashboard, navigate to "Family Home" and you will see "Service Hours" located in the middle of the page. This is where you can track and log your volunteer hours. Hours are NOT tracked by the front desk and must be logged by the due date or charges will occur. Please let the front office staff know if you need help

**Families who do not complete their 10 hours will be charged at a rate of \$20 per hour.**

## **Parent Observations**

AMS strongly urges parents to observe their child's classroom a minimum of twice annually. Contact your child's teacher to arrange an observation. 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.

Please note that Observations are generally not done in the first weeks of school as new children settle into the classroom. Observations are a chance for parents to understand more about what the child's work in the classroom looks like and not an opportunity to interact with the children. If you are interested in participating in a class event with the children, talk to the teacher about doing a craft or story time, or other opportunities throughout the year.

## Attendance

On time and regular attendance at school is essential for children to get the most out of their time at AMS. Please let teachers know if your family will be away for an extended amount of time. Families who do not send their children to school for more than one month and do not contact the school to inform them of extenuating circumstances, may be withdrawn from school to be able to accommodate those on the waiting list.

## Dress Code

At Anchorage Montessori School, we believe that appropriate dress supports our learning environment and helps all children feel comfortable and focused on their education. To maintain this environment, **costumes are not allowed at school** unless it is a special day that has been announced in advance by teachers or administration.

This includes all types of costumes such as Halloween outfits, character costumes like superheroes or princesses, fantasy outfits, or any clothing designed primarily for dress-up or pretend play. Additionally, **costume-adjacent items are highly discouraged** as they can be disruptive to our classroom communities. These items include things like capes, masks, tiaras, costume jewelry, character-themed clothing with large graphics, face paint, temporary tattoos, or other accessories that encourage fantasy-play during learning time.

Our Montessori environment thrives when children can focus on their work without distractions, and when all students feel included and comfortable regardless of what they're wearing. Costumes and costume-like items can create disruptions, safety concerns, and distract from their important work.

We do celebrate special occasions throughout the year when costumes and themed dress are welcomed and encouraged. Teachers and administration will always provide advance notice through our regular communication channels when these special dress-up days are planned, such as cultural celebrations, book character days, or holiday events.

If you have questions about whether a specific item of clothing is appropriate for school, please feel free to contact your classroom teacher for guidance. We appreciate your partnership in maintaining our focused learning environment.

## 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)*

##### **Primary class pick-up after 3:20/3:40 pm:**

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

##### **After Care pick-up after 4:35 pm:**

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

##### **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 4:30p.m.** Staff members will prepare children in the After-Care programs for departure beginning at 4:15 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 usually, BUT NOT ALWAYS follows Anchorage School District (ASD). If AMS is closed due to road conditions or acts of nature, families will receive both a text and an email before 6am. Closures due to weather/road conditions are necessary when staff cannot safely make it to work. AMS cannot guarantee that excessive closures due to events beyond our control will be "made up" later in the year, as we have programs that run 12 months a year between 7:30am and 4:30 pm.

## **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 pandemic will occur or how bad it will be. Many studies have demonstrated that school children are responsible for most 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.

## **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 Cares, 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 156 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. While AMS does not hire parents of students 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, COVID 19

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.

## **Food Policies**

**\*\*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 is also the exit: **All driving areas are one-way only. Please follow the One-Way signs.**
- 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.**
- Vehicles must be attended. **DO NOT** idle your engine while waiting.
- Toddler & Primary parents are expected to enter the building or playground area 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.**

## **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.

## **Behavior Policy**

AMS is a respectful learning community set in a prepared and caring environment. Our goal is to provide the opportunity for inner discipline and considerate engagement of all community members. Teachers give lessons on Grace and Courtesy, model appropriate behavior and clearly communicate expectations.

AMS encourages students to show respect for differences including but not limited to race, gender, religion and sexual orientation while fostering a school environment free from all forms of bullying or intimidation. The school's focus, based on Montessori pedagogy, is on preventative measures to set children up for success. Students are expected to:

Respect themselves, others and the learning environment

Respect materials and school property

Be supportive and inclusive, celebrating the qualities of each person

AMS provides positive guidance, verbal redirection and clear limits that support individual needs. Teachers are trained to redirect gently and to show kindness, calmness and respect even when a child is making a mistake. When a child needs external guidance and has not yet developed self-control or respect for others, we take the following steps:

Verbal redirection (usually several times)

Asking the child to stay in a certain spot in the class or in close proximity of a teacher for an appropriate amount of time to spur on successful behavior

On occasion, a child may need time outside of class to reorient themselves - this can take place in the hallway with a teacher, or in the office if additional support is necessary

Excessively strong behaviors may result in the child being excused from school for the day

If a child is brought to the office, parents will be notified verbally or in writing. Children brought to the office twice in one day will be sent home. If children habitually need to leave class (more than three times total in a year), a Behavioral Plan will be crafted during a meeting with the parents, teacher, program lead and/or director. This must be scheduled within one week of the request for a meeting by the school. The Behavioral Plan will be collaboratively created, signed by all adult parties and carried out for four weeks. If little or no growth has taken place, it is incumbent upon the school to consider if a change in program (examples: moving the child from full-day to half day, withdrawing the student from before and aftercare etc.), adding additional support staff at the family's expense, or unenrolling from school is necessary.

Behaviors that are unacceptable/aggressive may result in being excused from school for the remainder of the day. AMS strives to respect the schedule of parents while also meeting the needs of children who are not able to make safe choices for themselves or others. We understand that young children developmentally cannot always comprehend the seriousness of some behaviors, but we also must make decisions based upon the safety of the whole class. These include, but are not limited to:

Biting

Toddler/primary programs will send home children after the 2nd bite for the day

Elementary students will be sent home after the 1st bite for the day

Hitting, Kicking or Spitting

Toddler/primary programs will send home children after the 2nd incident for the day

Elementary students will be sent home after the 1st incident for the day

Inappropriate language, taunting, bullying or disrespect towards peers or adults

consequences set at teacher's discretion

Parents will be called in the instance of:

Biting

Serious harm or pain occurred, or was intended

Frequency/duration of behavior

If the incident isn't serious but it would still be beneficial for the parent to know, the teacher or adult in charge will provide written documentation or a verbal comment at pick-up time. AMS is grateful to partner with parents in providing the appropriate response to maladaptive behaviors.

Children who regularly exhibit behaviors that are atypical and that do not improve with teacher support will be requested to get screened. Research has shown that early intervention for learning disabilities and neurodivergence is extremely important, and we at AMS strive to follow the science and expect full cooperation and support in a timely manner when a screening request is made. If the school is requesting a screening and the parents decline (which is their right), the school may deem itself unfit to meet the child's particular needs and unenrollment of the student may occur. AMS will only request screening if we feel it is in the **best interest** of the child and will provide invaluable information on supporting the child's individual needs.

## **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, bearded dragons, chinchillas, finches, 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, unless a variance has been provided by child care licensing: 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 4:30 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.
- Parents should not enter the playground with their child until after every child has been dismissed from school.

### **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.

### **Poisonous Plants**

Plants that may be toxic will include a plant safety plan. All plants brought in the school must be identified and labeled.

## **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**



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

#### Full Day Toddler

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
2:30-4:00	afternoon snack, diapering and work cycle
4:00	Outside/ Big room dismissal
4:00-4:30	Full day toddler after care

#### Half Day Primary

Morning: 8:15	Afternoon: 12:15	Arrival
Morning: 8:30-10:40	Afternoon: 12:15-2:25	Work Cycle
Morning: 10:40-11:00	Afternoon: 2:25-2:45	Clean-up & Circle time
Morning: 11:00-11:15	Afternoon: 2:45-3:15	Outdoor Play
Morning: 11:15	Afternoon: 3:15	Dismissal

#### Full Day Primary

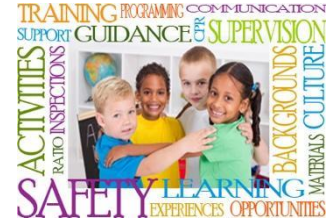
7:30-8:30	Before Care (in classroom)
8:30-11:30	Morning Work Cycle
11:30-12:15	Outdoor Play
12:15-12:45	Lunch
12:45-1:45	Cleanup/Nap/Specials (third year only)
12:45-2:45	Nap time
1:45 – 3:15	Afternoon Work Cycle
3:15-4:30	Transition/Dismissal/After Care (in classroom)

#### Lower Elementary

7:30-8:30	Before Care (in classroom)
8:30-8:45 a.m.	morning drop off
8:45-11:45	morning work cycle
11:45-12:00	lunch set-up
12:00-12:30	lunch
12:30-1:00	Outdoor play
1:00-2:45	afternoon work cycle (including specials: foreign language, art, music, etc.)
2:45-3:15	classroom clean-up and dismissal
3:15-5:00	Lower Elementary After Care

#### Upper Elementary

8:30 – 12:00	morning work cycle
12:00 – 12:30	Outdoor play
12:30 – 1:00	lunch
1:00 – 2:45	afternoon work cycle (including specials: foreign language, art, and music)
2:45-3:15	classroom clean-up and dismissal
3:15-5:00	Upper Elementary After Care



## **Municipality of Anchorage Child Care Licensing Program**

### **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 homes and centers. Your choice depends on what you want and need for your child.

#### **♦ Licensing is a key to quality child care.**

Licensing promotes good care by setting basic health and safety standards. Before a home or center is granted a child care license, it must meet minimum regulatory standards such as: health, safety, and program requirements. Child Care Licensing Specialists from the Child Care Licensing Program conducts on-site inspections at a facility to monitor regulatory compliance and to investigate reports of concern. The goal of licensing is to prevent predictable risks of harm to children; however, licensing cannot guarantee that a facility meets all requirements at all times.

#### **♦ An informed parent is a key to quality child care.**

Parents are responsible for choosing and monitoring their child's care. Licensors generally visit a minimum of twice 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 knowledgeable, nurturing, and communicating with you about your child's daily care and needs? How many children are present, are there enough caregivers? Are activities appropriate? Watch how your child responds to the program and interacts with caregivers. Listen to what your child says and pay attention to changes in their behavior. It's ultimately a parent's decision to choose a facility which meets their family's needs and their standards for health, safety, and quality.

#### **♦ What to do if you have questions or concerns about the care your child is receiving:**

First discuss with your caregiver or the facility's Administrator or Child Care Associate if you have any concerns, observe any health or safety issues, or feel the facility's program needs improvement. If you are still concerned, believe children may be in danger, or feel a licensing standard has been violated, **contact the Child Care Licensing Program at 907-343-4758** or via email at [HHSCCL@muni.org](mailto:HHSCCL@muni.org).

### **CHILD-TO-CAREGIVER RATIO REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSED CHILD CARE FACILITIES**

#### **CHILD CARE HOMES**

- 1 caregiver required; must be at least 21 years of age
- No more than 5 children younger than 13 years of age, including the caregiver's own children, without fire safety approval
- No more than 8 children total younger than 13 years of age, including the caregiver's own children, with fire safety approval
- No more than 3 children under the age of 30 months

- No more than 2 children may be non-ambulatory
- No more than 5 children, including the caregiver's own children under the age of 18 years, are allowed in nighttime care between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., with fire safety approval

### **CHILD CARE CENTERS**

- Administrator and/or Child Care Associates must be at least 21 years of age
- 9 or more children in care, with fire safety approval

The number of caregivers, who are at least 18 years of age, need to meet child-to-caregiver ratios:

- 1 caregiver for every 4 young infants (birth through 11 months)
- 1 caregiver for every 5 older infants (12 months through 18 months)
- 1 caregiver for every 6 toddlers (19 months through 35 months)
- 1 caregiver for every 10 preschools children (3 to 4 year olds)
- 1 caregiver for every 10 kindergarten children (5 to 6 year olds)
- 1 caregiver for every 10 school age children (7 through 12 year olds)

See AMC 16.55.170 for allowable maximum group sizes in a center

### **CHILD CARE FACILITIES MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS TO BE LICENSED**

#### **TO BE LICENSED**

- Required to apply for a Provisional or Biennial License
- Must meet all licensing standards and requirements
- Must be in compliance with all licensing regulations
- Must allow the Child Care Licensing (CCL) program access to inspect the facility and premises to ensure licensing compliance and to investigate complaints
- All staff/household members must have valid criminal history check from the State of Alaska Background Check Program
- All caregivers must meet the licensing early child development training requirements

#### **OBTAIN FROM PARENTS**

- Child's immunization records or an approved exemption form
- Child emergency information
  - must be updated by parent when changes occur or at least semi-annually
- Permission for:
  - medication administration
  - transportation
  - field trip participation
- A plan of care for a child identified with a special need
- A behavior guidance plan for a child with a behavior issue

#### **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

- Must promote children's healthy development
- Must include quiet and active, group and individual, indoor and outdoor activities

- Must include minimum of 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity for every 3 hours in care
- Must prohibit screen time viewing including T.V., computers and hand-held devices for children under two years of age
- Must ensure screen time viewing for children two years and over is limited to 1 hour in a 24-hour period except for special occasions
- Must have a specialization approved by CCL to provide nighttime care or allow children to participate in a moderate risk activity

#### **SUPERVISION**

- Ensure children are always supervised by an adult caregiver
- Ensure children receive age appropriate supervision
- Ensure a child's whereabouts are known at all times while in care
- Ensure child-to-caregiver ratios are always met

#### **SAFETY**

- Must meet CCL and fire safety standards
- Must have an emergency evacuation plan, train staff, and document monthly evacuation drills
- Ensure water temperature is between 100 and 120 degrees Fahrenheit
- Ensure firearms and ammunition are stored properly away from children. Note: firearms and ammunition are prohibited in a child care center.
- Ensure the facility is free of hazards inside and outside
- Ensure electric outlets accessible to children under age 5, have child protective outlet covers

#### **BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE**

- Must be positive and never cruel, humiliating, or damaging to the child
- Must set realistic expectations and clear and consistent limits
- Must not be disciplined or punished related to eating, napping, or toileting
- Ensure if time-outs are used they are age appropriate and a child is never removed from other children for more than 10 minutes
- Ensure corporal punishment of children is prohibited. Note: 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, punching, pulling or any other action that seeks to induce pain.

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#### **HEALTH**

- Ensure the facility meets cleaning and sanitation standards
- Ensure meals and snacks are nutritious and follow Alaska Food Program standards
- Ensure sanitary practices are used for food preparation and handling
- Must notify parents if their child is exposed to a contagious or communicable disease
- Ensure a medical provider approves attendance before admitting a seriously ill child
- Ensure drinking water is safe
- Ensure facility is smoke free
- Ensure there is always a caregiver with CPR and first aid certification present
- Ensure medicine and toxic materials are labeled and stored safely out of reach
- Ensure medicine is only administered with parent permission
- Ensure a caregiver's own child and all children in care are treated equitably

#### **EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES**

- Ensure furniture and equipment are safe and durable
- Ensure there is an adequate and varied amount of age appropriate toys and books available for children in care
- Ensure children have storage space for their belongings
- Ensure children under age 5 have a cot/mat/bed and bedding that is clean and sanitary for resting

- Ensure infants sleep on their backs in an approved crib free from materials and blankets that could increase the risk of suffocation

## **SPACE**

- Must have indoor and outdoor space to accommodate the physical and developmental needs of children in care:
  - 35 square feet of usable indoor space per child
  - 75 square feet of usable outdoor space per child

