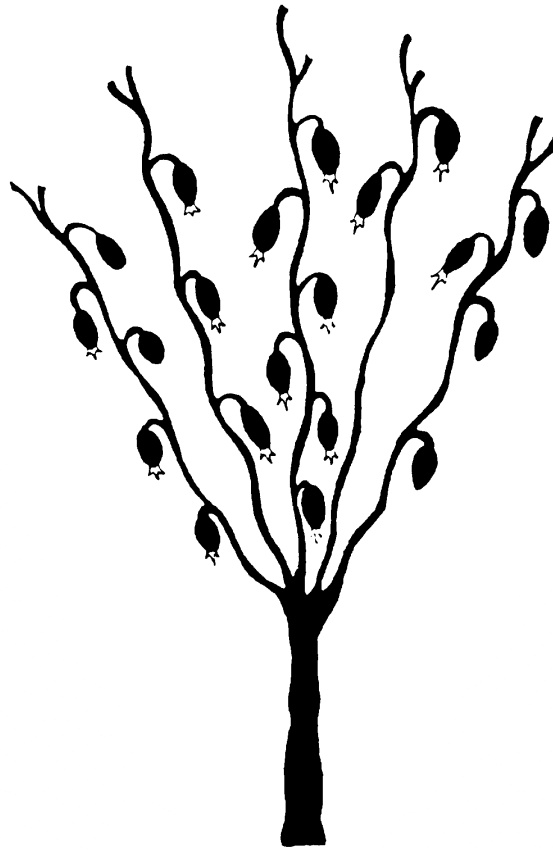


Brush Creek Montessori School Community Handbook



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1569 Brush Creek Rd, Santa Rosa, CA

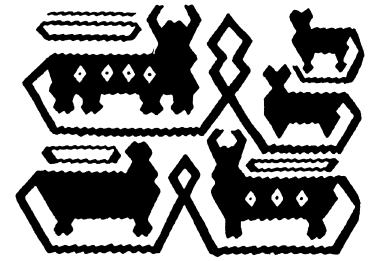
Phone 539-7980 Fax 539-7549

www.bcmontessori.com

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

The academic calendar is published prior to the beginning of each school year and includes open and close dates, holidays, and seasonal breaks. The BCMS calendar follows the calendar of one of the Santa Rosa Schools.

Each September students and families are invited to attend the Open House, held the Monday before Labor Day. Classrooms are open from 9 to 11 am. A visit from new students is intended to add to their comfort level on the first day of class.



MENOMINEE

Special events, field trips, and other dates of general interest are added to the calendar as soon as they become available. BCMS acknowledges all religious and cultural holidays. Parents wishing to share a specific religious or cultural event should notify the child's teacher in advance. Arrangements will be made to present the religious or cultural event for all the children.

Each school day begins at 9 AM for Amber and Eucalyptus Classrooms, 8:30 AM for Amber-Toddlers, Redwood, Sequoia and Corktree Classrooms. The morning is valuable working and learning time for each child and consistency and timeliness are necessary for an optimal academic experience.

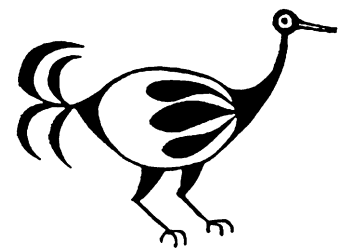
Children may arrive as early as 8:15AM (Redwood, Sequoia, Corktree & Amber-Toddlers); 8:45 AM (Eucalyptus & Amber); without being subject to daycare charges. If your child must arrive late for school, please notify the office.

The morning Primary School program ends at 11:30 (Redwood & Amber-Toddlers); 12:00 (Amber). Students enrolled in the half-day program must be picked up by 11:45 AM (Redwood & Amber-Toddlers); 12:15 PM (Amber). No daycare is available after the morning program. The full-day program ends promptly at 2:30 PM (Redwood, Sequoia & Corktree) and 3:00 PM (Amber, Eucalyptus). Daycare charges begin at 2:45 PM and 3:15 PM respectively.

Students arriving after 8:30AM (Redwood, Sequoia & Corktree) and 9:00AM (Amber and Eucalyptus) must check in at the office. A staff member will take them to the classroom. Consistent tardiness will result in a scheduled meeting with the Parents, Teachers and Head or Assistant Head of School.

Admissions

The first step in the admission process is a parental classroom observation and school tour. Next, the child is invited to visit the class into which he/she would enroll. Finally, the enrollment contract is completed and applicable fees are paid. All completed applications are processed in the order received and without regard to race, color, creed or sex. After a class is filled, additional applicants have the option of being placed on a waiting list. Waiting list preference is given to siblings of current students and families committed to the full Primary and Elementary School programs.



SANTO DOMINGO

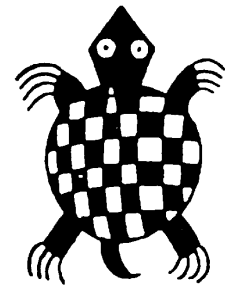
Admission to the Primary School is limited to children ages two through six. BCMS makes every effort to balance the two Primary School classrooms with regard to age and sex and to maintain teacher continuity for each student. For these reasons, the school cannot guarantee that

requests for a specific classroom/teacher will be granted, but will attempt to accommodate parental requests whenever possible.

The Lower and Upper Elementary classes are for children ages six to nine and nine to twelve, respectively. Middle School consists of students in the 7th and 8th grades. Students enrolling at the Elementary levels without previous Montessori experience are encouraged to attend the Summer Program prior to their first Elementary year. This experience will expose the child to the Montessori method, allow him/her to get to know some of the students and staff, and become a member of the Brush Creek Community.

ATTENDANCE AND ILLNESS

Students are expected to attend school daily. Regular attendance is extremely important to develop continuity within the Montessori environment. Continuity is not possible if students attend class on a sporadic basis. Parents should contact the office if a child will be absent and give the cause for the absence. If a child contracts a communicable disease, such as Strep throat, chicken pox, or measles, parents should contact the school immediately so that the school community can be notified.



If a child becomes ill at school, he/she is isolated from the rest of the students and a parent is notified and expected to pick up the child. If a parent cannot be reached, the school contacts another adult on the child's Emergency Identification form. In case of serious illness or injury, the school calls 911 for emergency treatment and/or transport to an emergency healthcare facility.

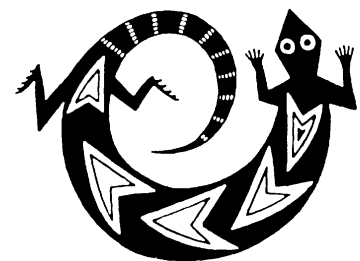
A child who arrives at school ill *cannot* be accepted into the classroom. Symptoms include, but are not limited to, diarrhea, fever, listlessness, rash, severe discomfort, and vomiting. Children who have been ill often return to school with medications that need to be administered to them by the staff. Medication cannot be given without a doctor's prescription and a parental consent form, with instructions concerning time and dosage of prescribed medicine. This is a matter of State law. Parents should hand-deliver their child's medication and instructions to a member of the staff.

Because operational costs remain constant whether or not your child is in attendance, it is impossible to provide any reduction in tuition due to illness, vacation, or general absenteeism.

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION

The Montessori philosophy is to lead the child to cooperative behavior. BCMS encourages membership in a productive, loving, caring classroom and community. Staff members are involved in assisting the child to grow emotionally as well as academically. When there is a change in a child's routine, his/her behavior is likely to change. Teachers and staff can be more sensitive to your child's needs if events that may affect behavior, such as visiting relatives or out-of-town trips by the parents, are communicated to the school.

BCMS makes every effort to teach the lessons necessary to enable the child to reach peaceful conclusions to adversarial situations. Peacemaking is a very successful part of the curriculum. A Peace Table exists in every classroom and students are prepared to solve problems in a mutually agreeable manner. While rare, it is sometimes necessary for a child who does not seek positive



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resolution of a conflict to be removed from the Peace Table in order to protect the safety of the other children.

Physical discipline and corporal punishment are not permitted at BCMS. Instead, logical consequences are used to achieve behavior modification. Creative problem solving and attentive listening are used to achieve conflict resolution. Parents are notified of the method of discipline taken for each moderate or serious behavior incident.

Minor misbehavior includes general disruption that interferes with the orderly educational process in the classroom, on campus, or during off-campus school activities. Examples include minor hitting, taking someone's belongings, persistent disruption of classroom activities, breaking materials, persistent disrespect of a classmate or teacher. The consequence of minor misbehavior may include one or more of the following:

- Verbal redirection with reminder of expectation or rules;
- Problem solving/peacemaking skills with all parties involved;
- Repair or clean-up of damage; and/or
- Time out to rethink and rejoin the activity/group when ready.

Moderate misbehaviors are those that create potentially harmful/unsafe situations and include Bullying, willful defiance, temper tantrums, and other out-of-control behaviors. If the above logical consequences are unsuccessful, the child is removed from the classroom and taken to the office to speak with the Head of School. The Head of School may determine that the child is not yet able to return to the classroom and contact the parent to pick up the child. It is also at the discretion of the Head of School to determine whether the child should be allowed to return to school if the situation continues over a period of time and has not been resolved.

Serious misbehavior is an action that results in personal injury (physical or psychological) or purposeful property destruction. The consequence of serious misbehavior is that the child is removed immediately from the situation and brought to a time-out space where he/she may calm down. A conference with involved parents, children, and staff is scheduled within 24 hours of an event of this magnitude. The offending student may be sent home for the day at the discretion of the Head of School. If the child misbehaves repeatedly (more than two incidents), he/she may be suspended or expelled upon review by Teacher, Staff and Head of School.

Appeals to the decision of the Head of School are made to the Fairness Committee. This committee is made up of a school faculty member, a member of the Board of Directors, and an outside party such as a school administrator, psychologist (paid by parent), or other representative agreeable to all concerned. All parties involved are given an opportunity to present their position. Decisions of the Fairness Committee are final. (Please see Conferences and Grievances for further information.)

BIRTHDAYS

Each primary child's birthday is celebrated with an acknowledgement of his/her milestones from birth to the present. Please send one photograph for each year of your child's life, including one for newborn. If the child wishes to share something with his/her classmates, he/she may donate a book for the classroom bookshelf and it will be read at the Birthday Circle. Check with your child's teacher before bringing treats such as cookies and cupcakes to share. Invitations to private celebrations should include the entire class or should be mailed directly from home.

Parents of Elementary children should check with their child's teacher as to the appropriate celebration for their child's birthday.



BRUSH CREEK COMMUNITY

BCMS uses the Montessori philosophy to guide its students toward academic, social, and emotional success. Teachers depend on parents for information about the home environment and to gain perspective on the whole child. Parents also support their children's academic, social, and emotional growth through their encouragement and assistance. Parents lend a hand by serving on committees that organize social and fundraising events and that build community. (See Community Building Days, below.)

The Head of School, Head and Assistant Teachers, daycare and office staff members are all dedicated individuals. The Head of School is responsible for student and staff recruitment and retention and day-to-day operations. Our Head Teachers hold bachelor's degrees, are Montessori-certified, and have more than 50 combined years of Montessori teaching experience. Assistant teachers are also Montessori-certified. Daycare staff members are selected on the basis of experience with children, respect for the individual child, and regard for the Montessori philosophy.

Candidates for the Board of Directors are recruited from the BCMS community and the larger community and are elected by sitting Board members. Directors volunteer their time, energy, and expertise without compensation. Regular Board meetings are held at 3:15 PM on the second Tuesday of each month. Under the BCMS bylaws the Board of Directors holds ultimate responsibility for oversight and operation of the school. Board meetings are open to the public, and public comment is invited as time permits. (See Conferences and Grievances, below.) Confidential matters (see policy) are not discussed *or entertained* at public meetings. Executive sessions are additional Board meetings or extensions of regular meetings in which confidential matters are discussed. Executive sessions are held in private and decisions made during these sessions are announced and/or included in the minutes of the regular meeting only if doing so does not breach any confidence.

COMMUNITY SERVICE DAYS

In order to create a working community, the school organizes two Community Service Days each year during the fall and spring months. These events are usually scheduled on a Saturday from 9 am to 3 pm and are an all-day effort to beautify and improve the BCMS campus. Projects include planting gardens, setting walkways, building kiosks, and mending fences. The school requests that each family contribute a minimum of 25 community-service hours per child (35 total for two or more children enrolled), working together to create and maintain a better learning environment for the children.

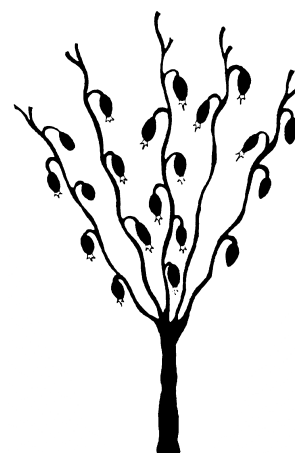
Parents that cannot spend time on these Saturdays may choose to help with various projects during the school week or at their convenience. Check with your child's teacher or the office for opportunities that fit your schedule and interests. If physical participation is not an option, families may choose to contribute \$500 annually toward materials for Community Service projects.

CONFERENCES AND GRIEVANCES

Parent-teacher conferences are held in the Fall and Spring of each school year to discuss each child's academic and social progress. Parents may contact the office at any time to arrange additional conference appointments with their child's teacher. BCMS discourages impromptu



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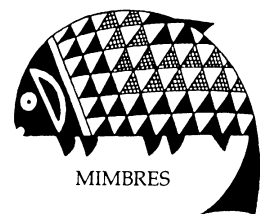
discussions regarding specific concerns. The child is best served by thoughtful and private communication between/among prepared parties bringing specific information and equipped to reach a satisfactory solution to a problem. Should conferences between parent and teacher fail to resolve an issue, the parent should call the office to schedule an appointment with the Head of School.



Parents with concerns regarding general policies or decisions should direct a letter to the Board of Directors. The President of the Board will acknowledge receipt of the letter and forward it to the appropriate Board member/committee. The parent may be contacted for further discussion or clarification and may be invited to attend one or more committee or Board meetings to participate in the resolution of his/her concern. The Board will notify the parent as to the final resolution of the matter.

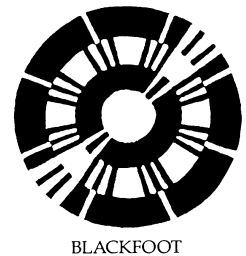
CONFIDENTIALITY

BCMS is proud of all its current and former students and exuberantly extols their collective virtues. Specific academic, developmental, financial, medical, and other personal information regarding *any individual* student or family is held in confidence by the school and discussed only in private with those Board members, school employees, and/or contractors with a need to know. Whenever possible and appropriate, such discussions do not identify the student/family by name.



The Personnel and Scholarship Committees are comprised of Board members and the Head of School only, so that confidential information on students and their families and on employees is not disclosed inappropriately.

BCMS is also proud of its current and former Board members, school employees, and contractors and makes their credentials available to families of current and prospective students. Employee evaluations and disciplinary actions, financial, medical, and other personal information about Board members, school employees and/or contractors are held in confidence by the school and discussed only in private with those Board members, school employees, and/or contractors with a need to know.



CONTRACTORS

Independent contractors may be engaged by the school to perform professional or skilled services not available from BCMS employees or volunteers. A potential contractor must hold a current business license and provide copies of a total of three 1099 forms from the previous two tax years to show receipt of non-employee compensation from other clients.

Parents of current students may be engaged as independent contractors if and only if they meet the above criteria. In these situations, tuition payments to the school and payments by the school to the contractor-parent are not commingled, but are kept separate and distinct.

A 1099 form is issued each January for payments made to each contractor during the previous year, as required by law.

DAYCARE

Extended daycare at \$10/hr is offered for the safety of the students and as a service to working parents. Daycare begins at 7:30AM on



school days and ends promptly at 4 :30PM. Parents are expected to pick up their child(ren) on time. Failure to do so will result in a \$1 per minute late fee at mid day pick up and a \$5/min late fee after 4:30 PM. Daycare is not available on school holidays or over seasonal breaks unless otherwise notified.

If there is a family emergency that precludes prompt pick-up, please call the school as soon as possible. With proper notification, the school will assist in arranging for an alternate pick-up person for your child(ren) and/or waive the daycare late fee. A family emergency is an unforeseen situation that is beyond control of the family, such as an auto accident, sudden illness, or injury.

DONATION

BCMS is a not-for-profit organization. Items donated to the school should be brought to the attention of the office staff so that a receipt can be issued and the item can be properly inventoried. Please check with your tax advisor to determine what portion of your donation is tax deductible. Cash donations are 100% deductible. BCMS tax ID# is 68-0408407.

The Parent Association organizes regular fundraising activities, including the very popular *Starlight* event, an annual silent auction open to the Brush Creek Community and, by invitation, to the public.



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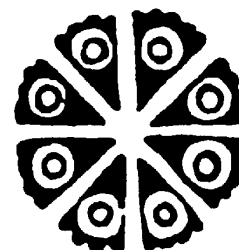
Individuality is expressed in many ways at Brush Creek Montessori, from bleached hair to zany clothing. In fact, we encourage the child's self-expression as part of the Montessori philosophy. For this reason BCMS does not require a uniform or have a rigid dress code. However, students must come to school in clothing suitable for academic and play activities and for anticipated weather conditions. Children remain indoors for the entire day only if the weather is severe.



BCMS strives to promote a safe and positive environment in every way possible. Articles of clothing and accessories that suggest violence, abusive language, or other inappropriate behaviors or concepts are not permitted. Clothing or accessories that may present a safety hazard are also not permitted. These include pants or skirts that may cause trips or falls and scarves, sleeves or jewelry that may impede normal movement or entangle the child on classroom materials, furniture or play equipment.

If a child comes to school wearing unsafe or otherwise inappropriate clothing or accessories, he/she will be taken aside to explain why the clothing or accessory is inappropriate, and asked to remove, cover, or modify the item. If an article of clothing or accessory appears to have a negative effect on behavior, he/she will be similarly counseled. If a child refuses to comply with this kind of request, a parent will be called and the child may be asked to leave school for the remainder of the day. BCMS requests and expects parental cooperation and support in this matter. Our mutual goal is to insure that the child's choice of clothing and accessories will reflect the positive, considerate, self-confident person that he/she is.

It is also important for the preschool child to wear clothing that does not promote commercial figures/objects. The child will develop their own personality without the aid of these characters. We strongly



encourage parents to dress their children in character free clothes to insure the ideal situation for their child.

MISSING PIECES

Children occasionally bring home small pieces of Montessori materials and other classroom items. Replacing these materials involves considerable difficulty and expense. Please return these materials to the classroom as soon as possible so that they may be used and enjoyed by the other students. Similarly, if parents discover a toy that the child does not own, it should be returned to the office so that it can be restored to the daycare inventory or to its private owner.

MORNING DROP-OFF (also see – “Academic Calendar”)

When dropping your child at school, please do not linger at the gate or use the parking lot to socialize with other parents and children. This behavior may send a negative message to your child: “You have something to worry about in this environment.” Your support in allowing your child to enter the classroom/play yard on their own will take them “strides” ahead in self-confidence. Each classroom has a notebook at the sign-in desk that will accommodate short messages from the parent to the teacher. Normal “drop off” will be at the Gate except for rainy days when you may need to take your child directly to and from the classroom.



MONTESSORI AT HOME

The most important thing parents can do to reinforce the Montessori philosophy at home is to encourage the child’s independence. A child can and will happily assume such responsibilities as dressing him/herself and opening doors for others. Parents are encouraged to analyze what they do for the child and what the child can do for him/herself. Allowing the child to assume small, then larger, responsibilities will open more opportunities for the child to realize independence.



YUCHI

Sometimes parents are concerned that their child “does not bring any work home.” Remember that education is a process, not a product. Be assured that each child is happily at work during the school day learning phonetic sounds, word building, addition, geometric shapes, or paper cutting. When your child does bring a paper home, offer your true interest and show your pleasure in the work without remarks, questions or criticism. Sometimes in our eagerness to express approval, we place stress on the child to perform rather than fulfill an inner directive.

If a child expresses an interest in working on academics at home, take care to exercise a great deal of patience. Do not push or even encourage the child beyond his/her point of interest, as doing so only takes the pleasure from the experience. A child cannot be forced to have genuine interest. Interest only comes from within. Remember that the primary child is learning to read phonetically using the sounds of letters, not their names, and always using lower case letters.

When parents ask children, “What did you do today?” they frequently reply, “Nothing,” or, “I ate snack,” or, “I played outside.” The child is assimilating a great number of events, people,

surroundings and feelings each day at school. The school day is the child’s unique experience and he/she may be most willing to share it at neutral moments, not when asked directly. To express interest in the child’s school experience, you might say, “I can see you had a very busy/exciting/pleasant/challenging/tiring day at school.”

The Elementary classes do not send homework home unless the child has not completed their work for that day. It should be completed by the child at home and brought in the next day.

NONDISCRIMINATION

In accordance with the Montessori philosophy, BCMS admits children of any race, color, creed, or sex and welcomes each of its students into all academic, enrichment, and recreational activities offered. All school policies, including the Financial Need Scholarship program, are administered without regard to race, color, creed or sex.



NUTRITION

We follow a very strict code on nutrition. We require our lunches and snacks to be healthy. This may mean checking labels and ingredients on packaging to insure that highly processed foods, including sugars are not the main ingredient in any foods brought to school. In fact, processed sugar should not be listed in the first four ingredients of any packaged food in lunches or snacks. Overall, sugar should not exceed 28 grams per serving. We find the children focus for longer periods when they have a balanced, nutritious snack and lunch.

Following is a list of suggestions for a nutritious lunch at school.

<u>Protein</u>	<u>Carbohydrates</u>	<u>Vegetables</u>	<u>Sweets</u>	<u>Drinks</u>
chicken	bread	carrots	bananas	water, which we supply
turkey	bagels	celery	apples	
ham	pita bread	cucumber	pears	
eggs	potato (mashed	broccoli	plums	
cheese	or baked)	cauliflower	grapes	
cream cheese	tortillas	bell peppers	berries	
ricotta cheese	pretzels	tomatoes	mangos	
cottage cheese	rice	salad greens	papayas	
peanut butter	corn		oranges	
a few nuts	barley		melon	
soy products	orzo			
beans	pasta			
hummus				
fish				

SAFETY ON CAMPUS

To comply with licensing requirements, all students must be signed in and out each day on the sign-in/out sheet for each classroom. Parents or other authorized adults **must** sign their full name and indicate the time their child(ren) is/are dropped off and picked up. This procedure is required by law to ensure the security of each child. Failure to comply may result in a fine, which will be passed along to the responsible family.

NOTE: When signing “out,” the parent is responsible for their child/ren and should not leave them unattended on the playground. Please do not remain on the school grounds while your child plays after being signed out. If you wish your child to stay and play, please leave them for daycare.



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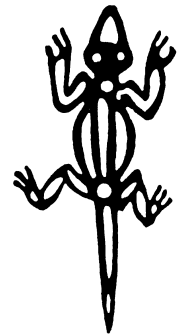
Speed limit is 5 mph on school grounds – a \$50 fine will be assessed to improve the driveway with speed bumps if necessary.

BCMS conducts a fire drill and an earthquake drill each month and a “safe place” drill twice during each school year. All teachers are trained in First Aid and CPR and have access to a manual that outlines the specific safety procedures to be followed. The school provides three days of pre-purchased food and water and a survival blanket for each child, as well as other disaster supplies. Parents are required to have an out-of-state contact number on file in the office for emergency communication purposes.

In an actual emergency, the staff stays with the children until authorized adults can pick them up and unless directed elsewhere by appropriate authorities. In this event, notification of the new location will be posted in strategic areas throughout the campus. Parents and other authorized adults must sign children out before leaving the campus or alternate location.

Scholarships

Financial Need Scholarships (FNS) are offered to families in the Spring of each year for the next school year. FNS are available only for students who are enrolled full-time. Families wishing to apply for a FNS must complete a confidential questionnaire (available in the office) and submit it with a small fee *directly* to an independent agency for evaluation. Incomplete questionnaires and those received by the independent agency after the posted cut-off date cannot be evaluated.



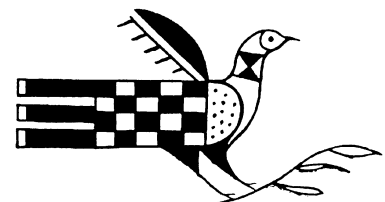
Based upon the agency's evaluations, families in financial need will be ranked *anonymously* in order of need, from greatest to least. Scholarship monies are awarded to all families that qualify, based upon this ranking. A small reserve fund will be held for emergency FNS and/or carried over to the next school year.

An emergency FNS may be granted under special circumstances and according to the procedure outlined:

- The family requesting the EFNS must have at least one child *currently attending* BCMS.
- The student's family must have experienced a catastrophe since the beginning of the current school year that severely affects its ability to meet its tuition commitments.
- The family conveys its special circumstances to the Scholarship Committee, including appropriate documentation.
- The family completes a confidential questionnaire reflecting its emergency and submits it with a small fee to the independent agency for evaluation.
- Upon receipt of the evaluation, the Scholarship Committee assembles all documents and the independent evaluation and presents the case to the Board of Directors without family ID.
- Without knowing the identity of the family, the Board makes a determination as to whether the circumstances warrant an EFNS and, if so, the amount of the EFNS.
- If necessary, funds for the EFNS are taken from the following year's scholarship fund.
- An emergency FNS may only be awarded for the remainder of the current school year. The family may apply for a FNS for the following year according to the general policy, above.

TOYS AND SHARING

Items of general classroom interest, such as books, flowers, leaves, shells, insects, etc., are always welcome for sharing. Please advise the teacher in advance if an item is likely to require special treatment, space, or time.



SANTO DOMINGO

Toys and other personal paraphernalia are not allowed at school. These items distract the child from the benefit of using the Montessori and other classroom materials provided. BCMS does not accept responsibility for any items brought from home.

TUITION AND FEES

New enrollees pay a one-time deposit fee of \$50 and a registration fee of \$100. All students pay an annual materials fee of \$500. These fees are not prorated and are non-refundable. Tuition may be paid in full at the beginning of the school year at a 3% discount or in ten installments. Students enrolled after January 1st are not offered a discount.

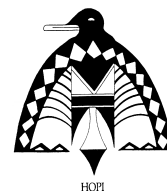


Each of the ten payments is equal to one tenth of the total yearly tuition, regardless of the number of school days that happen to fall within that month. The first of the ten payments (the enrollment deposit) is due on or before June 1st of the previous school year or upon enrollment (if after June 1st). This enrollment deposit will be applied as the tenth payment of the school year. The remaining nine payments are payable on the 1st of each month from September through May of the current school year. Payments not received by the 10th of each month are overdue and are subject to a late payment fee of \$25 for the first infraction and \$50 every time thereafter. Please write your child(ren)'s last name(s) on your payment check if different from your own.

If payment is not received by the 15th of the month, the first installment is applied to that month and a letter is sent stating that either payment in full or a written agreement for payment must be received by the fifth of the succeeding month. Failure to respond or adhere to such an agreement will result in the child's discharge from the school on the fifteenth of that month. There is a \$10 service charge for the first returned check, and a \$25 charge thereafter.

A 10% tuition discount is offered to families for the second child enrolled; a 15% tuition discount is offered for the third and subsequent children concurrently enrolled.

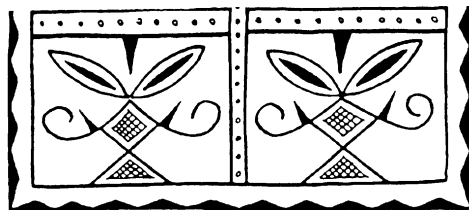
Refunds are not a policy of BCMS unless the family moves from Sonoma County and notifies the school office within 30 days prior to departure from the school.



WELCOME

We welcome you and your family into the BCMS community. All of us are committed to working with you and your child in preparing them for life.

The Board of Directors, Head of School, Teachers, and Staff of Brush Creek Montessori



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Our handbook is illustrated
with Native American artwork
in honor of those who lived on and cared for
the land now known as Sonoma County.