



# Brush Creek

## Montessori School

established 1973 [www.bcmontessori.org](http://www.bcmontessori.org)

1569 Brush Creek Rd, Santa Rosa, CA

Phone 539-7980 Fax 539-7549

[www.bcmontessori.com](http://www.bcmontessori.com)

# Community Handbook

# Vision and Mission Statements

## OUR VISION

The attainment of peace, through preparation of the child.

## OUR MISSION

To assist children to become caring, responsible,  
Independent world citizens,  
through an inviting and prepared environment  
that recognizes and nurtures the individual  
essence and integrity of the child.

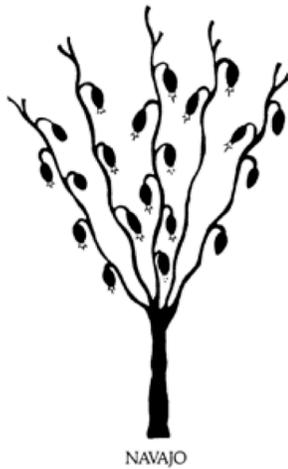
## PRINCIPLES NECESSARY TO MEET OUR MISSION

The entire Brush Creek Montessori community of students, parents, teachers, staff and administration are to be committed to the following principles for the mission of the school to be achieved.

1. Nurture a child's love of learning in an environment of acceptance, understanding and mutual respect.
2. Embrace the fundamental principles of Montessori education and its curriculum to create stimulating and innovative multi-aged learning atmosphere.
3. Provide an academic curriculum that emphasizes experiential learning, critical thinking and problem solving skills.
4. Develop a sense of community within the school among children, faculty and parents based on mutual respect, appreciation of individual differences, open communication and partnership in the educational process.
5. Foster independence, creativity, self-direction and personal responsibility and provide opportunities for exploration sparked by intellectual curiosity.
6. Seek and welcome families of all cultures, ethnic origins, family constellations and economic backgrounds and encourage the active sharing of customs, perspectives and heritages.
7. Provide experiences that lead to social skills and healthy emotional development.
8. Enrich the Montessori curriculum through enhanced opportunities with music, art, drama, foreign languages, field trips, and community resources.
9. Attract and maintain professional Montessori educators who are compassionate, intelligent adults that respect and share the joy of working with children, and who are committed to the mission of BCMS.
10. Perpetuate a Board of Directors who, individually and collectively, are committed to the vision and mission of BCMS and understand their role in the school community.
11. Sustain clear and timely lines of communication among the Board of Directors, administration, faculty, staff, parents, volunteers and the community.
12. Maintain a safe, carefully planned physical environment that is child-centered, stimulating, attractive, warm, and includes the natural outdoor environment as an integral part of the educational process.

*"To stimulate life... and then leave it free to develop and unfold. That is the first task of the educator."* -Maria Montessori

# Montessori Education



Montessori is an innovative, child-centered approach to education, developed a century ago by a woman ahead of her time.

Working with institutionalized and inner-city youngsters, Dr. Maria Montessori was struck by how avidly the children absorbed knowledge from their surroundings. Given developmentally appropriate materials and the freedom to follow their interests, they joyfully taught themselves.

The goal of Montessori education is to foster a child's natural inclination to learn. Montessori teachers guide rather than instruct, linking each student with activities that meet his interests, needs, and developmental level. The classroom is designed to allow movement and collaboration, as it also promotes concentration and a sense of order.

Unique learning materials beckon from accessible shelves, inviting small hands to take on new challenges, one concept or skill at a time.

## BENEFITS OF MONTESSORI

Montessori education offers our children opportunities to develop their potential as they step out into the world as engaged, competent, responsible, and respectful citizens with an understanding and appreciation that learning is for life.

Each child is valued as a unique individual. Montessori education recognizes that children learn in different ways, and accommodates all learning styles. Students are also free to learn at their own pace, each advancing through the curriculum as he is ready, guided by the teacher and an individualized learning plan.

Beginning at an early age, Montessori students develop order, coordination, concentration, and independence. Classroom design, materials, and daily routines support the individual's emerging "self-regulation" (ability to educate one's self, and to think about what one is learning), toddlers through adolescents.

Students are part of a close, caring community. The multi-age classroom—typically spanning 3 years—re-creates a family structure. Older students enjoy stature as mentors and role models; younger children feel supported and gain confidence about the challenges ahead. Teachers model respect, loving kindness, and a belief in peaceful conflict resolution.

Montessori students enjoy freedom within limits. Working within parameters set by their teachers, students are active participants in deciding what their focus of learning will be. Montessorians understand that internal satisfaction drives the child's curiosity and interest and results in joyous learning that is sustainable over a lifetime.

Students are supported in becoming active seekers of knowledge. Teachers provide environments where students have the freedom and the tools to pursue answers to their own questions.

Self-correction and self-assessment are an integral part of the Montessori classroom approach. As they mature, students learn to look critically at their work, and become adept at recognizing, correcting, and learning from their errors.

Given the freedom and support to question, to probe deeply, and to make connections, Montessori students become confident, enthusiastic, self-directed learners. They are able to think critically, work collaboratively, and act boldly—a skill set for the 21st century.

# BRUSH CREEK COMMUNITY

## Welcome to the Brush Creek Montessori community!

We share the same goal for your child's full development. Brush Creek Montessori School exists solely to provide a Montessori environment that inspires children to reach their potential through meaningful work. We cannot accomplish this on our own. It takes all of us, working together as a community.

Dr. Montessori said, "The parent is the first teacher of the child." She could have added, "And the school is the second." Your child is only with us a limited number of hours during the week. During that time he or she will have a continuing opportunity to learn how to learn and to learn how to build on the knowledge acquired. At the same time, your child will learn to work with others, to mentor, to resolve social and intellectual conflicts objectively and fairly, and to make decisions based on reason. At Brush Creek, we do not prepare our students for tests; we prepare them for life.

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.

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. Extra-curricular staff members are selected on the basis of experience with children, respect for the individual child, and regard for the Montessori philosophy.

### Faculty Promise

*We are professional people working together to provide a warm, loving, and nurturing environment for our students.*

*We understand that we have a significant impact on our students' ability to learn, grow, create, develop, and relate peacefully and respectfully to other people and to the natural world. We share a vision of both inner and global peace. We work to achieve that peace through our own daily experiences, and we are committed to being role models of kindness, courtesy, and respect for our students. We will endeavor to instill in our students and parents a reverence for the Earth and all living things. We will teach our students to be stewards of the environment based upon our responsibility to take care of the Earth and its ecosystems. We commit to educate the child more "fully": intellectually, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and physically.*



HAIDA

# DAY to DAY

## 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.

Students and Families are invited to attend our Back to School Night, held the Tuesday after the first day of school.

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.

### DAILY SCHEDULE

The morning is valuable working and learning time for each child and consistency and timeliness are necessary for an optimal academic experience. If your child must arrive late for school, please bring your child to the office.

<b>Redwood</b>	7:30	to	9:00	Morning Care
	8:45	to	9:00	Drop Off Grace Period
	9:00	to	12:00	Morning Worktime
	12:00	to	12:15	Half Day Pick Up
	12:00	to	1:15	Lunch & Afternoon Play
	1:15	to	3:00	Afternoon Worktime
	3:00	to	3:15	Pick Up Grace Period
	3:00	to	5:30	After Care
<b>Amber &amp; Saplings</b>	7:30	to	8:30	Morning Care
	8:15	to	8:30	Drop Off Grace Period
	8:30	to	11:30	Morning Worktime
	11:30	to	11:45	Half Day Pick Up
	11:45	to	1:00	Lunch & Afternoon Play
	1:00	to	2:30	Afternoon Work Period
	2:30	to	2:45	Pick Up Grace Period
	2:30	to	5:30	After Care
<b>Eucalyptus &amp; Sequoia</b>	7:30	to	9:00	Morning Care
	8:45	to	9:00	Drop Off Grace Period
	9:00	to	12:00	Morning Worktime
	12:00	to	1:00	Lunch
	3:00	to	3:15	Pick Up Grace Period
	3:00	to	5:30	After Care

*"Do not tell them how to do it. Show them how to do it and do not say a word. If you tell them, they will watch your lips move. If you show them, they will want to do it themselves."*

*- Maria Montessori*

## ARRIVAL

### PRIMARY:

In keeping with Montessori Philosophy, based upon the understanding that children are driven to work towards functional independence, please allow your child to enter as independently as possible.

Please accompany them to the gate where they will be greeted by a teacher, and say goodbye, allowing your child to enter the schoolyard and classroom area on their own. A quick hug and kiss makes this transition easiest for your child, along with your assurance that you will return at the expected time.

On rainy days you may walk your child to the classroom.

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.

### ELEMENTARY:

In keeping with Montessori Philosophy, based upon the understanding that children are driven to work towards functional independence, please allow your child to enter as independently as possible.

Please accompany them to the front walkway entrance and say your goodbyes.



## COMMUNICATION:

In order to maintain your child's dignity, we will refrain from discussing their particulars in the presence of other families, nor will we be discussing behavior or any other specific issues in front of the child. Please speak with your teacher directly to set up a meeting to discuss any issues.

## LATE ARRIVAL

The morning is valuable work and learning time for each child and consistency and timeliness are necessary for an optimal academic experience. It is imperative that all children are present on time, so that the group can settle in a timely manner. It is not only your own child who may be affected by arriving late, but also the community as a whole. Please make every effort to arrive on time.

If your child must arrive late, please bring your child to the office where a staff member will escort your child to the classroom to help make it as seamless as possible for the other children. When you do arrive, please remind your child that their friends are already working, and ask them to enter quietly. As always, adults are asked not to enter the classroom upon arrival. Consistent tardiness will result in a scheduled meeting with the Parents, Teachers and/or Head of School

## PICK UP

In an attempt to avoid unneeded congestion in our parking lot, we appreciate your assistance in departing in a timely manner. Once your child has been signed out, you are responsible for looking after them. If you would like your children to stay and play after school, we advise they stay for after care.

## MORNING & AFTER CARE

Extended daycare at \$10/hr. (\$5 per half hour) 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 5:30pm. Parents are expected to pick up their child/ren on time. Failure to do so will result in a \$5 per minute late fee at mid day pick up and after 5:30 PM. Daycare is not available on school holidays or over seasonal breaks unless otherwise notified. Any time before or after the scheduled school day (i.e. before 9am or after 3pm for Amber, Eucalyptus, and Sequoia classrooms, or before 8:30 and after 2:30 for Saplings and Redwood Classrooms) is considered childcare hours, though there is a 15 minute Grace Period extended to all families to ensure a smooth and safe transition to and from the school environment. Childcare is charged in ½ hour increments beginning before or after the scheduled school day.

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.

No aftercare is available after the morning program. Morning program children staying beyond the 15-minute grace period will be charged \$5 per minute. Children picked up after 5:30 pm will be charged \$5 per minute.

## ATTENDANCE

### PRIMARY

Each individual child is important to the whole group. Each moment of the group's life is important to the individual members. For this reason, we ask that your child attend school regularly. If your child will be absent, please let us know. If there is some compelling reason for your child to be absent for an extended period of time, please consult with the teacher. When a child of this age level is absent, it may be difficult for her to reconnect and resume her self-development and self-education.

The absorbent mind and the sensitive periods that characterize this stage of development require a predictable flow of days, a predictable sequence of events within those days, and a predictable response to the urges and drives that so strongly direct development. For this reason Brush Creek Montessori School provides a 5-day-per-week program, even in the infant and toddler community. We ask that you make every effort to avoid absences if at all possible.

Parents should contact the office if a child will be absent and give the cause for the absence.



### ELEMENTARY

For the children to self-develop and self-educate, they must be present. Be sure your child only misses school when absolutely necessary.

When a child is absent, the group is incomplete, and the role played by the absent child leaves a gap. If a child is absent often, the other children may feel they cannot count on that person. They may be inclined to select as work partners other children upon whom they can count to be present. A child who is perceived in this manner may feel disengaged and out of step with his/her community. His/Her learning and development can be affected. For all of these reasons, we ask that you avoid absences when at all possible.

At this age social activity and interaction are critical for the coming adult to understand the function of society and collaborative effort. Since the classes are inquiry based, when a student misses class, he/she also misses the opportunity to learn from other students and to share opinions and ideas. Likewise, the other students come to view the often-absent student as an outsider, one they cannot depend upon for work or community efforts.

Parents should contact the office if a child will be absent and give the cause for the absence.

**All parents should notify the office if your child is absent for any reason. Please call the Brush Creek office: 539-7980**

**For your child's health and safety and to comply with regulations, Brush Creek keeps a record of absences.**

# ILLNESS

## FEVER

If your child is sent home with a fever or develops a fever at home, the child may not return to school until he/she is fever free, without medication, for 24 hours.

## ACCIDENTS

Faculty members at Brush Montessori School are child-CPR and first-aid certified. Parents/ caregivers or persons specified as emergency contacts will be notified in case of an accident. In case of serious injury or sudden illness, 911 will be called first, followed immediately by a call to the parents or caregivers.

## MEDICATION

Brush Creek prefers not to administer medication. However, if parents are unable to give medications before or after school, medications will be administered if the below requirements are satisfied.

All medication requires specific written authorization from the child's physician, parent, or guardian. The written authorization must contain all of the following information:

- Child's name
- Name and prescription number of medication
- Specific instructions including dosage, possible side effects, and dates medication is to be given
- Reason for the medication
- Parent or guardian's signature

**\*\*\* All prescription medications must be in the original pharmaceutical container with the child's name on it.**

**A child who arrives at school ill *cannot* be accepted into the classroom. 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.**

**Brush Creek will not allow a student to remain at school if they develop any of the symptoms listed below. A parent will be called if a child has:**

- A fever. A fever is defined as having a temperature of 100.4 degrees F or higher, regardless of how it is taken
- Any excessive discharge from nose or ears
- Diarrhea—runny, watery, or bloody stools

- Vomiting
- Unidentified rash or rash with a fever
- Sore throat with fever
- Swollen glands with fever
- Severe coughing

- Eye discharge—thick mucus (yellow, green or white) or pus draining from eye or pink eye

- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Any other symptoms of contagious/infectious illness

- The child is irritable, continually crying, or requiring more attention than faculty can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other students in the classroom, or does not appear well enough to participate comfortably in activities as usual.

## PROCEDURES FOR NOTIFICATION

If a child has demonstrated symptoms requiring removal from a classroom and the parent takes the child to a healthcare provider and is advised that the child is not infectious, the child may return to school accompanied with a physician's note stating that the child is not infectious. However, the classroom teacher will make the final decision about whether a child meets or does not meet the exclusion criteria for participation and the child's need for care relative to the staff's ability to provide normal classroom function.

Parents and faculty may disagree about whether a child meets or does not meet the exclusion criteria. If the parents and the faculty member disagree and the reason for exclusion relates to the child's inability to participate or the faculty's inability to meet the needs of the child without compromising the safety and care of the other students, the teacher is entitled to make the decision of exclusion and cannot be forced by the parent to accept responsibility for the care of an ill or extremely tired child.

## **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 resolution of a conflict to be removed from the classroom in order to protect the well being 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 cleanup 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.)

## **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 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.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

If your child wishes to do so, we would love to celebrate their birthday with them! In the Montessori Primary classroom, this traditionally consists of a short ritual where we light a candle (representing the sun), and have the birthday child walk around the 'sun' carrying a small globe. As the earth goes around the sun once each year, we sing a short song and share a photograph of the child at each age (birth, one, two, and so on...).

Each primary child's birthday is celebrated with an acknowledgement of his/her milestones from birth to the present. Please bring a photograph near birth, and one for each year after that including one representing the child's new age.

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 about bringing a special snack to share with the class.

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.

Summer Birthdays will be celebrated on the last day of school with a Pizza and Ice Cream party.

## **Cell Phone & Electronics Policy**

Cellphones, ipads and all electronic devices are not permitted at school. So as not to disturb the class, please leave these items at home. If for some reason your child requires a cell phone, or some other device, the item/s should be turned in to the front office upon arrival at school in the morning, not stored in their backpack/lunch. They will be returned at the end of the day.

## **TOYS & 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.

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.

## **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.

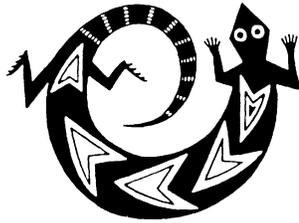
## **DRESS CODE**

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.



MIMBRES

### NUTRITION

We follow a very strict code on nutrition. We require our lunches and snacks to be healthy. This means checking labels and ingredients to insure that highly processed foods, including sugars are not the main ingredient in any foods brought to school. **Processed sugar should not be listed in the first four ingredients of any packaged food in lunches or snacks.** Overall, sugar should not exceed 8 grams per serving. We find the children focus for longer periods when they have a balanced, nutritious snack and lunch.

### SNACK

Each Primary Classroom has a snack sign up sheet at their sign-in kiosk. Each family is required to bring snack 1-2 times monthly. If you choose not to participate in snack you can make a \$10 monthly contribution.

### LUNCH- MONTESSORI STYLE

Prepare lunches the evening before, with the children if at all possible. They'll relish the opportunity to undertake an important role in caring for themselves in this way (and you'll appreciate one less item on your morning agenda). Giving children a chance to choose respects their food preferences and suits their eagerness to participate in family life.

When the family schedule makes the children's participation unrealistic, pack lunch with a young child's sensitive taste buds and small tummy in mind. Provide a variety of single foods rather than an adult-sized sandwich and an entire piece of fruit. The same sandwich ingredients in individual containers are more likely to be eaten. Consider portion size -- few young children can manage a whole apple in one sitting!

Small, separate portions let children combine foods in different ways. For example, a few crackers, a dab of peanut butter, a few cheese slices, and a few apple slices offer children several tasty combinations from which to choose at mealtime.

Children love simple dips for their veggies and soft spreads that give their hands plenty to do. Plain yogurt or cottage cheese are nutritious dip "starters." Peanut butter, egg salad, tuna salad, and cream cheese are easy spreads.

Healthy foods are a hallmark of Montessori philosophy. Dr. Montessori was one of the first educators to recognize the connection between nutrition and the developing brain.

*"Collectively, we must continue to take a serious interest in the child's 'inner prepared environment,' the nutritional playing field we can't see but whose impact can surely be measured through observation and investigation."*

*-Children's nutritionist and Montessorian, Jan Katzen-Luchenta*

PROTEIN	CARBOHYDRATES	VEGETABLES	SWEETS
Turkey or Chicken	Whole Grain Breads	Carrots	Bananas
Tofu	Pasta	Celery	Apples
Ham	Pita Bread	Cucumber	Pears
Fish	Potato – Mashed or Baked	Avocado	Plums
Tuna	Tortillas- Flour or Corn	Broccoli	Grapes
Eggs	Crackers	Cauliflower	Berries
Cheese	Pretzels	Bell Peppers	Oranges
Cream Cheese		Snap Peas	Melon
Ricotta Cheese	Cooked Grains:	Tomatoes	Dried Fruit
Soy Cheese	Rice	Salad Greens	Apple Sauce (Sugar Free)
Yogurt	Corn	Edamame	
Peanut Butter	Barley		
Hummus	Orzo		
Beans and Brown Rice	Quinoa		
Nuts	Cous Cous		

## WASTE FREE

At BCMS we would like to instill a commitment to stewardship of the earth and we strive to be as green a campus as possible. We plant gardens to educate the children on how food is produced, we use water wisely and we compost, reduce, re-use and recycle anything we can. In that vein, **BCMS has a no-trash policy.**

This means that all food packed in lunch bags/boxes should be in re-usable and washable containers and all pre-packaged juices, milks, crackers and bars will be prohibited.

Waste free lunch kits, bento boxes, thermoses, and tight fitting reusable containers are easily found at local shops and online stores due to the growing waste free trend. Bulk food bins at most grocery stores have a variety of healthy snacks that do not require needless packaging. The children will compost un-eaten food and rinse out containers before bringing them home. Plastic utensils will not be provided.

We thank you for implementing this policy...when the Primary classrooms committed to no-trash lunch two years ago; we saw an immediate improvement with a cleaner playground and in environmental stewardship on the part of the children and families.

**Lets extend it to the entire school!**

## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

As Americans we have come to depend on the many convenience products that are available to us, and nowhere is this more evident than in the school lunchroom. Most parents pack lunch items in single-use plastic bags, aluminum foil, or wax paper, or they purchase single-serving items that come in their own disposable package. Admittedly, these products are extremely convenient, but what is the environmental cost to a country that relies so heavily on them? Landfills are full and overflowing. Incinerators pump contaminants into the air. Communities are battling over who will accept the nation's trash. We all enjoy these conveniences, but few of us are willing to allow new landfills and incinerators to be built in our own backyards.

Much of the trash we generate comes from the packaging on the food we buy, and lunch foods are no exception. In fact, it has been estimated that on average a school-age child using a disposable lunch generates 67 pounds of waste per school year. That equates to 18,760 pounds of lunch waste for just one average-size elementary school.

**Packing waste-free lunches benefits you and your community.**

**REDUCE: Cut down on packaging and food waste by purchasing fresh produce and bulk bin items.**

**REUSE: Pack lunches in reusable containers.**

**RECYCLE: Use recycle bins instead of tossing recyclables in the trash.**

**RESPOND: Take action and support nutritious, waste-free meals. Make a difference for yourself; make a difference in your community.**



**One child's disposable lunch generates an average of 67 pounds of waste each school year.**

## **DONATIONS**

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.

## **FUNDRAISING**

Brush Creek Montessori School puts on several fundraisers each year to raise funds for scholarships, classroom materials, field trips, and more. We appreciate your involvement, support, and participation in these events.

Fundraisers include:

- Book Fairs
- Montessori Services
- Dine & Donates
- Spring Auction
- Bake Sales through out the year

## **PARENTS & BCMS**

Classroom parents receive 25 hours of community service. Some responsibilities are:

- Checks in with the teacher regularly
- Informs parents about events, class field trips, projects and fundraisers
- Initiates participation in events
- Helps organize school functions
- Introduces themselves to the other parents (via email, at events, at drop off/pick up)
- Advocates on behalf of class & school in the community

Each classroom has one class parent for the duties listed above. See your teacher for more details.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE EXPECTATION**

The staff of BCMS is proud of its facilities and campus and depends on the community's help to maintain and beautify it. The most effective way this is done is when the labor is spread evenly over the year. This requires the school to implement a regular maintenance schedule to ensure the campus looks its best. The school requests that each family contribute a minimum of 25 community service hours per child (35 total for two or more children enrolled).

Community service hours are achievable in many ways - volunteering for fundraisers and working in the classroom and on campus on a weekly or monthly basis to create and maintain a better learning environment for the children. A variety of jobs will be available for families to commit to for the school year. Further information and yearly sign-ups will begin at open house. The teachers and staff will monitor the progress of these jobs and will maintain a record of the time spent and the work completed.

If you find that you cannot contribute time or talent you may opt to provide a financial contribution in lieu of community service: suggested donation \$500.

## **PARENT EDUCATION NIGHTS**

Many parents have heard of Montessori, but may not know much about the philosophy or how it is implemented. The Parent Education nights are an opportunity for your family to learn more about this remarkable method of education and the woman who discovered it.

The teachers from the Primary and Elementary programs will choose topics of interest relating to Montessori and will host an interactive discussion with parents.

Examples of topics could be "The Importance of Independence", or "Conflict Resolution in the Montessori Classroom".

All parents are welcome and are strongly encouraged to attend these important informational talks. Parent nights are scheduled at the beginning of the year and will be posted on the academic calendar. Complimentary refreshments will be available.

**E-SCRIP** eScrip is a fundraising program benefiting local organizations that support children. When you register with the eScrip program and shop at participating local, regional, and national merchants, a percentage of your purchases is automatically sent to BCMS.

eScrip is a major fundraiser for BCMS, which can generate hundreds of dollars each year. The only work on your part is to register your credit, debit, and ATM cards and merchant cards (i.e. Safeway club card) that you use to shop. Once this is done, there is nothing more required on your part. A percentage of your qualifying purchases are automatically credited to the club through the eScrip program.

## ADMISSIONS

The first step in the admission process is a school tour. Next, the child may be invited to visit the class into which he/she would enroll, followed by an informal meeting with our Head of School. 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.

Admission to the Primary School is limited to children ages 18mos 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. Once the child is assigned to a classroom and it seems like a good fit, the child will be expected to remain with that teacher until the child advances to the next level of development.

## 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.

## TUITION & FEES

New enrollees pay a one-time registration fee of \$125. Tuition may be paid in full at the beginning of the school year at a 3% discount, or two full years at a 7% discount (cash or check only).

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 1<sup>st</sup> of the previous school year or upon enrollment (if after June 1<sup>st</sup>). This enrollment deposit will be applied as the tenth payment of the school year. The remaining nine payments are payable on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month from September through May of the current school year. Payments not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, the first installment is applied to that month and a notice 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 \$25 service charge for a returned check

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.**



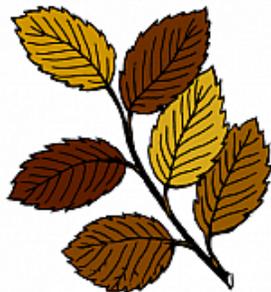
## SCHOLARSHIPS

Financial Need Scholarships (FNS) are offered to families in the spring of each year for the next school year. FNS are available only for elementary students. 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.



## ACADEMIC ADVANCEMENT

When considering a child to move to the next academic level, the Head Teacher will consult with the parents, the teacher of the next academic level and the Head of School. This process will begin when a child shows abilities and characteristics appropriate to the next level in accordance to the Montessori philosophy. These characteristics and abilities vary depending on which academic level they will move to, and are not solely determined by age. If there are questions, concerns, or disagreements regarding a change in academic level, the Head of School will ultimately determine if the child is ready.

## 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.

## **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.

**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.

## **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.

## **María Montessori**



*María Montessori was an Italian physician, educator, and innovator, acclaimed for her educational method that builds on the way children naturally learn.*

*She opened the first Montessori school—the Casa dei Bambini, or Children’s House—in Rome on January 6, 1907. Subsequently, she traveled the world and wrote extensively about her approach to education, attracting many devotees. There are now more than 22,000 Montessori schools in at least 110 countries worldwide.*

*María Montessori was born on August 31, 1870, in the provincial town of Chiaravalle, Italy. Her father was a financial manager for a state-run industry. Her mother was raised in a family that prized education. She was well schooled and an avid reader—unusual for Italian women of that time. The same thirst for knowledge took root in young María, and she immersed herself in many fields of study before creating the educational method that bears her name.*

*Beginning in her early childhood years, María grew up in Rome, a paradise of libraries, museums, and fine schools.*

## MONTESSORI TERMINOLOGY

Dr. Maria Montessori introduced many new terms and concepts to describe how children grow and learn. Here are definitions of some widely used Montessori words and phrases.

**Absorbent mind** – From birth through approximately age 6, the young child experiences a period of intense mental activity that allows her to “absorb” learning from her environment without conscious effort, naturally and spontaneously.

**Casa dei Bambini** – In Italian, “Children’s House,” and the name of Dr. Montessori’s first school.

**Children’s House** – In many Montessori schools, this is the classroom for children ages 2.5 (or 3) to 6 years; other schools call the classroom for this age group Casa, preschool, or primary school. Some schools use this term to refer to the entire school.

**Concrete to abstract** – A logical, developmentally appropriate progression that allows the child to come to an abstract understanding of a concept by first encountering it in a concrete form, such as learning the mathematical concept of the decimal system by working with Golden Beads grouped into units, 10s, 100s, and 1,000s.

**Control of error** – Montessori materials are designed so that the child receives instant feedback as he works, allowing him to recognize, correct, and learn from his mistakes without adult assistance. Putting control of the activity in the child’s hands strengthens his self-esteem and self-motivation as well as his learning.

**Cosmic education** – Maria Montessori urged us to give elementary-level children a “vision of the universe” to help them discover how all parts of the cosmos are interconnected and interdependent. In Montessori schools, these children, ages 6 – 12, begin by learning about the universe, its galaxies, our galaxy, our solar system, and planet Earth—everything that came before their birth to make their life possible. As they develop respect for past events, they become aware of their own roles and responsibilities in the global society of today and tomorrow.

**Didactic materials** – Didactic meaning “designed or intended to teach,” these are the specially designed instructional materials—many invented by Maria Montessori—used in Montessori classrooms.

**Directress or guide** – Historically, the designation for the lead teacher in a Montessori classroom; some schools still refer to the lead teacher as “guide.” In Montessori education, the role of the instructor is to direct or guide individual children to purposeful activity based upon the instructor’s observation of each child’s readiness. The child develops his own knowledge through hands-on learning with didactic materials he chooses.

**Erdkinder** – German for “child of the earth,” this term describes a Montessori learning environment for adolescents ages 12 – 15 that connects them with nature and encourages them to form a society of their own; often designed as a working farm school.

**Grace and courtesy** – Children are formally instructed in social skills they will use throughout their lives, for example, saying “please” and “thank you,” interrupting conversations politely, requesting rather than demanding assistance, and greeting guests warmly.

**Montessori** – The term may refer to Dr. Maria Montessori, founder of the Montessori Method of education, or the method itself.

**Nido** – “Nest” in Italian, this is a Montessori environment for infants ages 2 – 14 months.

**Normalization** – A natural or “normal” developmental process marked by a love of work or activity, concentration, self-discipline, and joy in accomplishment. Dr. Montessori observed that the normalization process is characteristic of human beings at any age.

**Normalizing event** – Within the prepared environment of the Montessori classroom, children experience a normalizing event every time they complete a basic work cycle, which includes 1) choosing an activity; 2) completing the activity and returning the materials to the proper place; and 3) experiencing a sense of satisfaction.

**Planes of development** – Four distinct periods of growth, development, and learning that build on each other as children and youth progress through them: ages 0 – 6 (the period of the “absorbent mind”); 6 – 12 (the period of reasoning and abstraction); 12 – 18 (when youth construct the “social self,” developing moral values and becoming emotionally independent); and 18 – 24 years (when young adults construct an understanding of the self and seek to know their place in the world).

**Practical life** – The Montessori term that encompasses domestic work to maintain the home and classroom environment; self-care and personal hygiene; and grace and courtesy. Practical life skills are of great interest to young children and form the basis of later abstract learning.

**Practical life activities** – Young children in Montessori classrooms learn to take care of themselves and their environment through activities such as hand washing, dusting, and mopping. These activities help toddlers and preschool-age children learn to work independently, develop concentration, and prepare for later work with reading and math; older children participate in more advanced activities.

**Prepared environment** – The teacher prepares the environment of the Montessori classroom with carefully selected, aesthetically

arranged materials that are presented sequentially to meet the developmental needs of the children using the space. Well-prepared Montessori environments contain appropriately sized furniture, a full complement of Montessori materials, and enough space to allow children to work in peace, alone or in small or large groups.

**Primary classroom** – In some Montessori schools, this is a classroom for children ages 3 – 6 years; however, the American Montessori Society uses the term Early Childhood and defines the age range as 2.5 – 6 years.

**Sensitive period** – A critical time during human development when the child is biologically ready and receptive to acquiring a specific skill or ability—such as the use of language or a sense of order—and is therefore particularly sensitive to stimuli that promote the development of that skill. A Montessori teacher prepares the environment to meet the developmental needs of each sensitive period.

**Sensorial exercises** – These activities develop and refine the 5 senses—seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling—and build a foundation for speech, writing, and math through the use of sensorial materials. The exercises also bring order to the barrage of sensorial impressions the child experiences from birth onward.

**The 3-period lesson** – A 3-step technique for presenting information to the child. In the first—the *introduction* or *naming* period—the teacher demonstrates what “this is.” (The teacher might say “This is a mountain” while pointing to it on a 3-dimensional map.) In the second—the *association* or *recognition* period—the teacher asks the child to “show” what was just identified (“Show me the mountain”). Finally, in the *recall* period, the teacher asks the child to name the object or area. Moving from new information to passive recall to active identification reinforces the child’s learning and demonstrates her mastery.

**Work** – Purposeful activity. Maria Montessori observed that children learn through purposeful activities of their own choosing; Montessori schools call all of the children’s activities “work.”



Popperfoto/Archive Photos

## **A MEMORANDUM FROM YOUR CHILD**

- Don't spoil me. I know quite well that I ought not to have all I ask for. I'm only testing you.
- Don't be afraid to be verbally firm with me. I prefer it. It lets me know where I stand.
- Don't use force with me. It teaches me that power is all that counts. I will respond more readily to being led.
- Don't be inconsistent. That confuses me and makes me try harder to get away with everything I can.
- Don't make promises. You may not be able to keep them. That will discourage my trust in you.
- Don't be too upset when I say, "I hate you." I don't mean it, but I want you to feel sorry for what you have done to me.
- Don't make me feel smaller than I am. I will make up for it by behaving like a "big shot."
- Don't do things for me that I can do for myself. It makes me feel like a baby, and I may continue to put you in my service.
- Don't let my "bad habits" get me a lot of your attention. It only encourages me to continue them.
- Don't correct me in front of people. I'll take much more notice if you talk quietly with me in private.
- Don't try to discuss my behavior in the heat of a conflict. For some reason my hearing is not very good at this time and my cooperation is even worse. It is all right to take the action required, but let's not talk about it until later.
- Don't try to preach to me. You'd be surprised how well I know what is right and wrong.
- Don't make me feel that my mistakes are sins. I have to learn to make mistakes without feeling that I am no good.
- Don't nag. If you do, I shall have to protect myself by appearing deaf.
- Don't demand explanations for my wrong behavior. I really don't know why I did it.
- Don't take my honesty too much. I am easily frightened into telling lies.
- Don't protect me from consequences. I need to learn from experience.
- Don't take too much notice of my small ailments. I may learn to enjoy poor health if it gets me much attention.
- Don't ever suggest that you are perfect or infallible. It gives me too much to live up to.
- Don't worry about the little amount of time we spend together. It is how we spend it that counts.
- Don't let my fears arouse your anxiety. Then I will become more afraid. Show me courage.
- Don't forget that I cannot thrive without lots of understanding and encouragement.
- Treat me the way you treat your friends, then I will be your friend too. Remember, I learn more from a MODEL than a critic.

## Acknowledgment of Policies in Community Handbook

By signing below, I am acknowledging the following:

I have read BCMS' Community Handbook.

I agree to all of the conditions set forth therein.

Any deviation from the Community Handbook could result in the severance of the relationship between the school and my family.

If I have questions or need clarity about any part of the Handbook, I will bring my concerns to a Head of School.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign and return to the office along with your enrollment form.