Alfred Montessori School

Parent Handbook

2019-2020 School Year



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**Mission Statement**

The mission of the Alfred Montessori School is to create a loving and nurturing environment where the children "learn, grow and become" their own productive beings. The school also strives to be flexible regarding our families' needs while having a positive impact on our community.

**The parent handbook is issued prior to the beginning of the academic year and it includes important information about our philosophy, goals, and policies. The parent(s)/guardian(s) must sign the form on the last page indicating understanding and agreement to abide by the contents. A copy of the signed form is kept with the student's file. Please save this handbook for reference as needed throughout the year.**

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**Section 1: General School Information**

Dear Parents,

We welcome you and your family to the Alfred Montessori School! We look forward to your presence in our school community.

AMS was founded in 1983 by two Alfred University professors who wanted to create a rich educational pre-school program for their own young children. Since its inception, the school has provided a strong foundation of learning and care for our community’s children. When you chose AMS, you chose to invest in your child’s education and development.

The success of any Montessori School, but especially AMS, is very dependent on parents' involvement. We are a non-profit organization, and the school’s operation relies on family and community support. We encourage you to become involved with your child's classroom, supporting the educational and social experiences, along with sharing in the joys and satisfactions in his/her own learning. Plan to attend parent-teacher conferences, fund-raising activities, and other events planned throughout the school year. We have always maintained an open door policy and invite you to come to observe your child often. You will discover much more about what your child is learning by observing.

The Board of Directors is always available to discuss your involvement in the school (our names and phone numbers are included below). Board meetings are held monthly and your attendance is always welcome. Please contact the director or any board member with questions/suggestions. We are glad you have chosen to be a part of the Alfred Montessori School, and we will all work together to ensure your child's success.

Sincerely,

*The AMS Board of Directors*

*Heather Zimbler-DeLorenzo, President (heatherzd@gmail.com)*

*Lily Wolf, Vice President (lilyrwolf@gmail.com)*

*Kara Amore, Secretary (kara.amore@gmail.com)*

*Earl Johnson, Treasurer (johnsonearl33@yahoo.com)*

*Linda Belle (lindabelle747@gmail.com)*

*Jerel Johnson (jereljohnson@gmail.com)*

*Ann Rossington (a.c.rossington@gmail.com)*

*Sarah Rynearson (*[*srynearson82@gmail.com*](mailto:srynearson82@gmail.com)*)*

# Program Description

# The Alfred Montessori School seeks to meet the needs of children and parents who live and work in Alfred and the surrounding areas by providing excellent Infant, Toddler, Pre-School, and School Age programs. Centrally located near both Alfred University and Alfred State College, the Alfred Montessori School is an independently operated, non-profit organization. An active Board of Directors composed of parents, professionals and community members provide support and supervision to the school. All parents are welcome and encouraged to participate in all aspects of AMS life. The Alfred Montessori School has an absolute charter from the NYS Department of Education and is a licensed facility by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS).

**Licensing Agency:**

Office of Children & Family Services

Division of Child Care Services

Buffalo Regional Office

295 Main Street, Room 545

Buffalo, NY 14203

Tel: (716)847.3828

Licensor: Patrick Louis (716) 847.3796

To access NYS regulations, go to: <http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/daycare_regulations.asp>

These regulations are also available in the school foyer.

Child Care Complaint Line: Toll free at 1-800-732-5207

# History of the Montessori Approach

The Montessori approach to education takes its name from Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator (1870-1952). Dr. Maria Montessori developed her educational philosophy as a result of her observations of the way children naturally learn. Dr. Maria Montessori's first class consisted of 50-60 children, ages 3-6, most of whom suffered from malnutrition and were shy and fearful since they lived in the slums of Florence, Italy. Montessori found that the children needed very little persuading to do everyday tasks, puzzles or other interesting activities which directed their energy away from destructive behaviors. She described the ages from three to six as a particularly sensitive time during which young children are especially attuned to acquiring knowledge from and about their environment. To enrich their experience, Dr. Maria Montessori developed a "prepared environment" of child sized furniture and material in order to adapt to the surroundings to the child's natural size and behavior. This helped the children to feel relaxed and comfortable which created a will to learn. Through this interaction and experience, the children developed an extraordinarily high level of intellectual and social ability at young ages.

##### Maria Montessori expanded her study of the young child, and gradually refined her approach to all child development areas through her experience and research in countries as diverse as Spain and India until the time of her death in 1952. The Montessori Method is now being successfully implemented with children in nearly every country of the world. There was a significant influence in the United States in the early 1960's and today there are more than 3,000 Montessori programs in this country. The Montessori Method is applied most frequently in pre-school and elementary education grade levels but is very effective in the high school setting as well. Montessori education has no religious affiliation, is not a therapy, nor is it an approach useful only with certain categories of children. In addition, Montessori techniques can be used successfully with all children regardless of whether they are gifted, have learning disabilities or other special needs.

## The Montessori Philosophy

Dr. Montessori developed her educational philosophy as a result of observations and discoveries she made of the ways in which children learn. She found that they learn in distinctly different ways at different stages of development. She formulated an educational program to meet the particular needs of the child at whatever stage of development, to help him/her reach his/her fullest potential.

Dr. Montessori preferred not to call this a "method," but an "approach" to life. She said, "What I have done is merely to study the child, to take and express what he has given me." She believed that no one is educated by another- he must do it himself, and thus, the goal of early childhood education should be to cultivate the child's own natural desire and ability to learn and to protect the essential nature of the child.

Young children, she discovered, have a unique aptitude for learning not found again at any other period of life. Montessori identified this quality as the "absorbent mind." The young child literally absorbs information from his or her surroundings. During certain periods in this phase of development s/he is more easily able to absorb specific types of learning. Dr. Montessori referred to these as the "sensitive periods." Acquiring information in this way is a natural and delightful activity for the young child who employs all his senses to investigate his interesting surroundings.

Since the child retains the ability to learn by absorbing until s/he is almost seven years old, Dr. Montessori reasoned that a classroom where s/he could handle the materials that would demonstrate basic educational information could enrich his or her experience. Montessori designed just this kind of classroom, and she called it the "prepared environment." In this environment everything is scaled to the child's size; the material is attractive, didactic, and presented in an orderly manner. The materials cover the areas of practical life (care of the person and the environment); sensory awareness; language; mathematics, and cultural subjects (art, music, geography, history and science). In the classroom the environment is the real teacher; the child, the central focus.

The task of the Montessori teaching staff is:

* To awaken children’s spirit and imagination.
* To encourage their normal desire for independence and high sense of self esteem.
* To help them develop kindness, courtesy and self discipline that will allow them to become full members of society.
* To help children learn how to observe, question, and explore ideas independently.
* Having created a spirit of joyful learning, to help children master the skills and knowledge of their society.

Within the prepared environment children of different ages and abilities work at his/her own rate, never under pressure to compete with other classmates. Children refer to their activities as "work." They speak of their "work" with pride, equating it to their parents’ work.

The program is designed to help the child to develop concentration, coordination, inner discipline, and good working habits. As the child grows to self-discipline, s/he is allowed greater and greater freedom to move about the environment and work with whatever materials s/he chooses, provided they are appropriate to the child's developmental level and that they are used in a constructive way.

The children in a Montessori classroom learn by doing; they pursue their tasks independently either in a group or alone. The Montessori Teaching Staff acts as a guide and a stimulus to their never-ending curiosity. Montessori materials are designed to be self-correcting, which encourages independent problem solving and eliminates the correctional, disciplinary role of the traditional teacher. Montessori Teaching Staff and students are fast friends with a healthy respect for one another.

Montessori believed that a child who is allowed to develop his or her personality freely and independently, who is encouraged to investigate and try new things would grow to be a far more responsible and creative adult than one who is heavily suppressed and disciplined. Her philosophy is not to be confused with over-permissiveness. There is an order in a Montessori classroom that works to the advantage of everyone. Children quickly learn that if they care for their environment and their fellow human beings, they themselves will have a richer variety of experiences. They learn that freedom is precious, but to retain it we must assume certain responsibilities.

The Montessori environment is a highly social one in which the children are continually interacting with and caring for each other. They are proud of their environment because they are directly involved with caring for it and contributing to it. There is a great deal of material available to them concerning plants and animals throughout the world. Artists and musicians are represented through reproductions and recordings of their works, and children enter the world of the arts through participation in arts and crafts and musical activities. The Montessori environment is designed to be a total environment, representing the child's world. It is hoped that each child will achieve a feeling of self-confidence, enthusiasm and responsibility about his/her world, and a sense of satisfaction about him/herself.

**Montessori Goals Summarized**

The primary goals of the Montessori Method are:

1. To promote the growth of a positive self-image in each child and satisfaction about him/herself, which is the key to the development of a person's full potential.
2. To promote feelings of enthusiasm and responsibility about one's world.
3. To create an awareness of one's own feelings and sensitivity to the feelings of others.
4. To encourage the natural desire, ability, self-discipline, and independence inherent in learning.
5. To ensure mastery of the basic skills required to pursue knowledge.
6. To teach physical coordination and control.
7. To develop the ability to concentrate and to attend to details.
8. To develop a sense of order.

**AMS Classrooms**

# Infant/Older Infant Classrooms

Our infant program is designed for children 6 weeks to 12 months old. This program is designed to provide the loving care and gentle stimulation that an infant needs to grow and develop their potential. Flexible scheduling allows each child to eat, sleep, or play according to their own natural timetable. After his or her 1st birthday the child will begin to prepare for the transition to the waddler room. The waddler room is designed for active babies ages 12 – 24 months. At their own pace they will begin to have meals in a group at the table and take a group nap after lunch.

# Toddler Classroom

In the Toddler Program, children use hands-on materials. They are given opportunities to begin building the foundations of social skills; including manners, self-care, and social cooperation, while building independence and self-confidence. Group circle incorporates stories, songs, and sharing, while also helping children learn core concepts like letters, numbers, shapes, and colors.

# Preschool Classroom

# Our Preschool program, for children aged 3-5, has been the Alfred Montessori’s flagship program since 1983. Teachers act as facilitators, stimulating interest in the child-centered learning environment. An emphasis on order and completion balances their freedom of choice, resulting in a calm, yet active atmosphere. Children continue to develop their independence and become academically and socially prepared for full-time kindergarten.

**The School Age Program**

We provide quality after school care for children in Kindergarten through 5th grade. Our school age program is open after school when AACS is in operation from 3:30-5:30pm. During mid-winter break (Tues.-Fri., February 18-21) and spring break (Mon.-Thurs., April 6-9), we will be open full days for school age children. Children are welcomed into a warm and caring atmosphere where they are allowed freedom within reasonable limits. Daily activities include snack, homework assistance, crafts, reading time, and outdoor play on the playground.

# Montessori Materials & Activities

The materials in the classroom can be divided into five main areas. Activity with these materials involves physical and mental action, linking body and mind.

1. **Practical Life Exercises** such as pouring, grating, polishing, sorting, washing, buttoning, etc. help the child learn to function in his own environment, and are preliminary to more advanced learning. The child develops an attention to details, a lengthened span of concentration and muscular control and coordination through the successful completion of these basic exercises.

2. **Sensorial Activities** are designed to isolate and sharpen each of the five senses. Grading and comparing sounds, sizes, colors, textures and shapes help organize the impressions a child receives. The materials have a built-in control of error so the child can correct his own mistakes. Sensorial materials are sequential and provide a foundation for mathematics and language.

3. **Language Materials** are presented individually to take advantage of the greatest interest on the part of the child. Children are taught the sound and formation of the letters kinesthetically through the use of sandpaper letters and similar materials. Word building activities of increasing difficulty are done over a long period of time. Reading follows naturally.

4. **Mathematical Concepts** are presented through extensive use of concrete materials. The child's sensorial training enables him to identify and differentiate the idea of quantity that is built into the Montessori materials. The child gains the conception of numbers and their application on arithmetical operations.

5. **Geography, history, botany, biology, music and grammar** are introduced through the use of concrete materials.

6. **Enrichment activities** are offered when available. Volunteers among parents and community members may provide special interest units.

In addition to activities involving the materials described above, the full Montessori day includes a morning and afternoon snack and lunch time. Students will also participate in circle time, rest time, and individual/group activity periods. These include art and craft projects, special interest units, music, games, and outdoor activities. Unless the weather conditions are unsafe for children to be outside, all classrooms will go outside every day. The children may also go on field trips during the school year. Parents must sign a permission slip before any child is allowed to participate in a field trip.

**Montessori Classroom Guidelines**

The word "rule" often seems negative because it usually includes a lot of "don'ts" and connotes authority. However, within the Montessori framework, ground rules have evolved from a much more positive base. Dr. Maria Montessori believed that “education centers upon the care of the living being...the total person including the biological and social.” Education is a natural process which develops spontaneously. It is acquired by experiences in which the child acts on his environment. The guidelines or "ground rules" have evolved to provide a balance of rights and responsibilities. Without them, there would be confusion and disorder. They are ways of saying to the child, "I know you can and expect you will." The adult is there only to see that the limits are respected; the limits themselves are not within the adult, but within the situation.

**Rights of the Child**

a. To program his/her own day (during the work period) and choose his/her own friends to work with.

b. To work alone if desired.

c. To repeat an activity as many times as needed or desired.

d. To observe others in an activity (with their permission) without participating.

e. To ask for and receive help from an adult.

f. Not to join a group activity if s/he prefers.

**Responsibilities of the Child**

a. To respect the rights of others.

b. To respect the environment.

c. To complete the work cycle of the activities s/he has chosen (including project storage for completion at a later date).

**Role of the Adult**

a. To respect the child.

b. To prepare the environment.

c. To act as an appropriate model.

d. To observe the child at work.

e. To reinforce the guidelines.

f. To intervene if the child is disturbing, dangerous or destructive to him/herself or others.

Children move their bodies slowly and quietly, using "quiet voices”. Children walk around someone's work (denoted by a mat or rug) and walk when moving anywhere through the building. Children ask to join someone's work and move away when another child prefers to work alone. Children return the materials to the shelf from which the work has been taken before choosing another activity.

We view the roles of the teacher and the parent as complementary, and may consult with you to determine optimal approaches for working with your child. Our goal is to communicate with you in an open and honest way.

**Section 2: Program Guidelines**

**Staff**

The full-time staff consists of OCFS (Office of Children and Family Services)-approved, qualified teachers and classroom assistants. Interns and work-study students participate through Alfred University and Alfred State College and are screened, trained, and supervised.

**Admission Criteria**

* Our school admits children of any race, creed, religion, nationality or ethnic origin.
* Children ages 3-5 years are eligible to enroll in the Preschool classroom. Children ages 18-24 months are eligible to enroll in the Toddler classroom. Children 6 weeks to 18 months are eligible to enroll in our Infant/Upper Infant classrooms.
* Parents are required to fill out all required paperwork prior to their child/children attending AMS, including an application form, tuition agreement, authorization to remove child form, emergency medical release form, topical/photo release form, and napping agreement.
* Each infant, toddler and preschool parent must furnish the school with a written statement signed by a health care provider stating that the child is able to participate in child day care and currently appears to be free from contagious or communicable diseases. Such documentation must also state that the child has received age-appropriate immunizations in accordance with New York State Public Health Law.
* Each parent must sign the Parent Handbook receipt.

# Trial Period for Acceptance into Classrooms/Programs

All students new to the program are accepted on a 90 day trial basis. The purpose of the 90 day trial period is to ensure that this is an appropriate program for your child. For instance, many Montessori materials contain small parts and a child who is not developmentally ready may put these objects in his/her mouth. After alerting the parents of this problem, and if no progress is made with the child's actions, it is at the director’s discretion to withdraw the child from the program. Other instances of developmental readiness may pose a problem for the child's safety and will be dealt with on an individual basis with the Montessori teaching staff.

In addition to this trial period, if the director and the teaching staff are concerned with a child’s safety or developmental readiness at any point throughout the school year, a conference will be set up with the child’s family. During this conference, the parents and teachers will discuss the concerns and work on a supportive plan for this child. If no progress is made after this conference, the director/teaching staff will meet with the parents again and determine if other plans need to be made or if the program is no longer appropriate for the child.

#### Arrival and Departure Procedures

**Morning Arrival**: The Montessori school day begins at 9 a.m. Supplemental care is available between the hours of 7:30- 9:00 a.m. (see Program Hours, Tuition & Fees page for appropriate charges) prior to the start of the school day. Make sure to complete the infant/toddler/preschool gram provided by the classroom teachers each morning. Try not to prolong drop-off time with your child, so that he/she is able to quickly adjust to the classroom space and make connections with teachers and other students.

**Afternoon Departure**: The Montessori school day ends at 3:00 p.m. Supplemental childcare is available between the hours of 3:00 and 5:30 p.m. It is imperative that you sign your child out with a teacher when you are leaving, so we always have an accurate record of attendance. State law requires that we maintain a list of names of persons to whom your child may be released. Please list their names and addresses on the Authorization to Remove Child form, which will be kept on file.

**Sign-In/Out**: Children must be signed in upon arrival and out each time they leave the classroom with someone other than the teacher(s). A sign-in sheet is located in each classroom near the door. We are legally required to have accurate information per our NYS licensing. Classroom teachers will have the sign-in/out sheet with them if they are anywhere other than the classroom (e.g., playground or on a walk).

**Infant/Older Infant classrooms**: If you do not sign your child in or out for the day, you will be charged an additional $10 fee for the day.

**Toddler/Preschool classrooms:** If you do not sign your child in or out for the day, you will be charged the maximum daycare hours (4 hours total) for that day.

If you anticipate the inability to pick up your child by 5:30 p.m. (e.g.: snowstorm or other emergency), please call the school. In the event that the school is not notified, a staff member will wait with your child at the school for 30 minutes while trying to telephone parents/guardians and emergency contacts. If no one can be reached by telephone, the staff member will notify the police and Child Protective Services. The staff member will contact the director if the director is not onsite, and the staff member or director will stay with the child at school until the child is picked up by the police or CPS.

**Schedule Changes:** Upon enrollment, parents will denote expected pick up and drop off times. Staffing and coverage are based on those commitments. If a schedule needs to change, please notify the director as soon as possible. **Even changes as small as a drop-off fifteen minutes early or a pick-up half-hour late can affect staffing schedules and classroom ratios**.

**Home-School Communication**

We want every AMS child and family to have a positive learning experience. It is extremely important that we create open lines of communication between home and school.

Communication between AMS and home is essential to both parents and teachers for greater understanding of the child and his/her development in the Montessori environment. We welcome your involvement, your questions, comments, suggestions, and we want you to join us as full partners in your child's educational experience.

Our guidelines for home-school communication include the following:

# Observations

Parents are encouraged to make classroom observations, especially before participation in parent/teacher conferences, so that there is a basis for discussion with the teacher. It is through direct observation of your child that you gain an understanding of the Montessori approach to education. We sincerely hope that if you have any questions about the program, you will take time to observe a full cycle or work activity and then discuss any concern with us. Both scheduled and drop-in observations are encouraged.

Parents and other observers are requested to comply with the following procedures:

1. Guests are asked to observe the class routine quietly. Comments and questions are encouraged and will be discussed following the observation period.
2. A meeting between the parents and director and/or lead teacher can follow the observation, when convenient, to discuss any questions or comments and their child's progress.

One of the basic values at the Alfred Montessori School is to emphasize cooperative, rather than competitive, behavior. We try to encourage the children's academic and social growth in noncompetitive ways as well. Rather than expect the children to measure up to some artificial grade level, we hope to help them develop their skills and abilities on a continuum, a steady pattern of growth. We do not want to compare them to what others in their grade or age group "should" be doing. We do want them to achieve at their own best level.

Parents are concerned, of course, about their child's progress and want to know how she/he is "doing". The very best way to answer that is to come visit the school and watch your child at work and play. We suggest that you do this at least once each semester. The observation then forms the basis for the conference with your child's teacher.

**Protocol for Classroom Concerns**

If you have a question or concern about your child’s experience at AMS, please immediately contact that classroom’s lead teacher to schedule a conference. The lead teacher has the most current knowledge of all aspects of the classroom and its procedures, and he/she will be best equipped to fully address any parent questions. If the concern involves another staff member, the lead teacher will schedule a meeting with the parent and the other staff.

If the issue remains unresolved after the meeting(s) with the lead teacher, the parent can contact the director. The director will forward the matter to the Board of Directors, if necessary.

If the issue is urgent, and the lead teacher is unavailable, contact the director. If both the lead teacher and director are unavailable, ask a staff member to phone the director.

# Parent-Teacher Conferences for Toddlers and Preschoolers

A formal parent-teacher conference is set up twice each semester. Additional conferences may be set up at the request of the teacher or parents.

To supplement parent-teacher conferences, the director will have regular office hours, which will be posted by the front office window each semester. You may phone or visit during this time.

**Newsletters**

Parents will receive a monthly newsletter including important dates, school functions, classroom activities, and other important items of interest to you and your child.

**Student Folders and Cubbies**

Every student will have a folder and/or a cubby where information will be shared with the student’s family. Please check your child’s folder/cubby every day to ensure that you are staying up-to-date with school activities, fundraising events, and classroom celebrations. Your invoice for each month will also be put in your child’s folder/cubby at the beginning of each month.

# Items from Home for School

**Food**

**Older Infants, toddlers and preschoolers** should bring a nutritious lunch from home, including beverage, in a lunch box or bag labeled with the child's name. **Please include an ice pack, as refrigeration of the lunches is not possible.** Lunches should include your version of: meat or meat alternative, vegetable and/or fruit (2), enriched bread, a simple dessert, and a drink. It is definitely okay to send leftovers for your child, but do not send anything that needs to be prepared beyond 20-30 seconds in the microwave. Please do not pack candy.

Children have morning and afternoon snacks supplied by the school. The four week snack menu is posted in the school. If you have any questions about the snacks provided, please speak with one of your child’s teachers.

The children enjoy celebrating their birthdays by sharing treats brought from home. You may ask the teacher what treats are appropriate to bring. Please be sensitive to other children’s possible allergies when you bring a sharing treat to the classroom. Several holidays are celebrated with items provided by parents. Sign-up sheets will be provided for these occasions.

For children in the **infant room**, parents should pre-make and label bottles and/or solids with the child’s first and last name. Bottles will be refrigerated for storage and heated upon serving. Children will be provided morning and afternoon snacks (depending on their age, diet and eating schedule), but parents should provide their child’s lunch. Parent may provide additional snacks as well.

**\*Room-based peanut policy\***

The infant room is peanut-free. If a child in a classroom has a peanut allergy, said classroom will be closed to peanuts. Families will be notified of changes.

**Clothing**

Because many activities are done on the floor, play clothes are appropriate. We suggest slacks for both genders, and sneakers or oxfords. We try to go outside every day, so please send outdoor clothing for the daily weather conditions. Clothing that the children can put on and fasten by themselves should be selected as much as possible to foster independence.

Each child should have a minimum of one complete outfit in his/her cubby (shirt, slacks, underwear and socks) labeled with the child's name to prevent possible loss. A drawstring bag or knapsack should be provided to hold your child's change of clothing. This change of clothing is to be used in case of an accident and should be replaced seasonally and as-needed.

In warm weather, please do not send your child to AMS wearing clogs or flip-flops, as these are hazardous for outdoor activities. Sunscreen, hats or sunglasses are suggested during warmer weather.

In winter, children will need both shoes and warm boots, and outside clothes, including heavy jackets, hats or hoods, mittens, scarves and snow pants.

**For those enrolled in the toddler and infant classrooms,** the following supplies also need to be provided: diapers or pull-ups, wet wipes, diaper rash ointment, and 3 changes of clothes.

**Bedding**

All students will need to bring a crib sheet and blanket for rest time at the start of each week. These items will be kept at school for the week and sent home on Friday to be washed.

**Program Hours, Tuition, Billing, Etc.**

**Program Hours**

School is open from 7:30am to 5:30pm every day. We will open the doors at 7:30am, and all children need to be picked up by 5:30pm.

**Tuition**

The tuition for each classroom is set based on a full year of attendance from September through June. Families are given the option of paying the full year of tuition at the beginning of the school year, for a 5% reduction in cost. Otherwise, families will be billed on a monthly basis, with bills being due on the 10th of each month. Keep in mind that while school is not in session every day of every month, the yearly tuition charge is divided equally from September through June. **The full yearly tuition is required for all students, even if a student does not attend the entire school year.** Since we are a non-profit organization, we operate on an incredibly tight budget and our financial planning/staffing is based on the yearly tuition of each student. **Tuition adjustments will ONLY be made in case of disability/extended illness, a move beyond 75 miles from Alfred, or the Director’s determination of an unsatisfactory adjustment of a child to the school. If a family experiences extenuating circumstances not listed above, they can contact the Board of Directors.**

**Billing**

The due date for the monthly tuition payment plan is the 10th of the month, for current month’s attendance. For example: September first, billing is sent out and payment is due by September 10th for September tuition. The payment due date for Before and After School Program charges is also the 10th of each month for services previously used. These charges are reflected on your monthly statement and must be paid with your tuition payment.

**Fees**

**Registration:** A one-time registration fee is charged at the beginning of the school year for each child and/or family. The registration fee is non-refundable.

**Additional Childcare Hours:** For students in the toddler and preschool classrooms, the tuition covers the hours from 9am-3pm. Additional childcare time is offered from 7:30am-9:00am and 3:00pm-5:30pm at an hourly rate.

**PayPal Fees:** Unfortunately, we are not in the financial position to pay the fees for processing PayPal payments. Therefore, if you pay via PayPal, there will be a remaining balance on your next statement for the PayPal fee.

**Late Payment:** If tuition payment is made after the 10th of the month, a late fee of $25 will be assessed.

**Returned Check:** $25 fee will be assessed.

**Policy on Attendance/Rescheduling**  
Due to the school’s fixed cost structure, missed days due to reasons such as student illness, school closings, inclement weather cancellations, or family vacations cannot be credited, reimbursed, or rescheduled. Please inform the director or the lead teacher if your child will miss class for a scheduled reason.

**Past due accounts**

All past due accounts will receive a written courtesy reminder in the child’s mailbox during the last week of each month.

If your account is 30 days past due:

1. You will receive an email/phone call from the director to discuss your outstanding balance and plans for payment;
2. If no payment or written/signed payment plan within 1 week of the email/phone call, you will receive another email/phone call from the director and the board will be notified;
3. If payment has not been made within 60 days, and no payment plan has been set up with the director, the family will be notified that the child will be un-enrolled from AMS as of a particular date.
4. The board of directors reserves the right to send outstanding bills to collections.

**Section 3: AMS Policies**

**Transportation Policy**

Transportation to and from program is the responsibility of the parent. In the event of a field trip, we will ask parent volunteers to drive students and will provide permission slips for the event.

**Disruptive Behavior Policy**

To “discipline” literally means to educate or train. Alfred Montessori School encourages the growth of self discipline within the child. Maria Montessori believed that the only true discipline is “active” or “inner” discipline, developed by the child him/herself as s/he works at interesting tasks at home and/or school. The “joy of obedience” is developed. First, basic classroom policies, school policies and etiquette are explained to the children. Students will all be given time to learn the classroom policies/procedures and how to demonstrate expected (versus unexpected) behavior.

**Children learn best by example. The one simple rule in all Alfred Montessori School classrooms is that ONE MAY NOT DISTURB.**

When disruptive behavior occurs at Alfred Montessori School, the following procedures are enforced:

**1. Verbal redirection.** When a child first violates the behavior policy, it is assumed that s/he did not know or remember the proper way to behave. The teacher will demonstrate to the child how to behave and what to say in a particular situation.

**2. Warning & Incident report.** The second incident will result in a conversation with the child to discuss expected behavior. In addition, an incident report will be sent home to a parent/guardian.

**3. Phone call & conference.** The third incident will result in a phone call to a parent/guardian and the scheduling of a conference between the student, parent/guardian, and lead teacher. The conference will aim to determine the reason for the unexpected behavior and steps to help the student move towards expected behavior.

**4. Dismissal from Program.** When all efforts made have been exhausted to help the child change his/her behavior, and the integrity or safety of the Alfred Montessori School is compromised by such behaviors, parents will be asked to find an alternative learning/child care environment for their child.

The director may temporarily or permanently remove a child from a program if the behaviors of that child place other children, the staff, or the school in immediate danger.

The Disruptive Behavior Policy is a guideline for working with students/families and not all of these options need to be exhausted prior to dismissal from the program. The steps in a progressive discipline policy serve as general guidelines and are not mandatory.

Disruptive behaviors are evaluated according to age and include, but are not limited to:

**Minor Moderate Severe**

-Teasing -Teasing/Taunting -Inappropriate contact

-Attempt to bite -Fighting -Hitting, kicking, biting

-Pushing/Shoving -Misuse of playground -Verbal abuse, bullying

-Improper manners -Misuse of materials -Harassment

-Not following directions -Insubordination -Threats

-Disrespect -Inappropriate language -Stealing

-Defiance

-Throwing objects

-Possession of any and all dangerous objects

**Biting Policy**

The safety of all the children is our primary concern. Biting is a natural developmental stage that many children go through. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age.

In the event that biting occurs, a staff person will immediately attend to the bitten child and remove the biting child to a time-out area. Staff will wash the bite area with soap and water, and apply ice if necessary. If the bite breaks through the skin, the child’s parents will be notified and asked to take their child to a health care provider. An incident report will be completed and given to all parents involved.

AMS staff will work closely with the parents to manage & stop the biting behaviors. Following a biting incident, the student will be closely monitored to prevent further incidents. The staff will work to determine the cause of the biting. Staff will remind the child that biting is not acceptable and give praise for appropriate behaviors.

If the biting is not resolved within 2 weeks from the first incident, a conference will be requested with the student’s parents. If the biting cannot be resolved within 4 to 6 weeks, (depending on age and maturity of child), the child may be dismissed from Alfred Montessori School. The child may be re-enrolled at the start of the next semester, or after 3 months have passed, whichever is longer.

# Child Abuse Policy

All staff are required to take a course in recognition of signs of child abuse with periodic retraining as required by the Board of Directors and OCFS.

Employees of Alfred Montessori School must report any suspected incidents of child abuse or maltreatment of enrolled students to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment in the following manner:

1. School staff must report such information to the director of the program or their designee.

2. When a report of alleged abuse or maltreatment of a child or children in a day care center is being made by a mandated reporter who is a staff member of the day care center, the report must be made by a staff member who has direct knowledge of the allegation(s) of suspected abuse or maltreatment.

3. If the director of the child day care center is the person allegedly responsible for the alleged abuse or maltreatment, staff must report the alleged abuse or maltreatment directly to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment.

4. The director of the child day care center is responsible for implementing procedures which ensure the safety and protection of any child named in a report of child abuse or maltreatment involving a situation which occurs while the child is in attendance at the center. Immediately after making a report, the director or operator of the center must take such appropriate action as is necessary to ensure the health and safety of the children involved in a report and as necessary, of any other children in the center. The director must also take all reasonable steps to preserve any potential evidence of abuse or maltreatment. Insofar as possible, any action taken under this subdivision must cause as little disruption as possible to the daily routine of the children in the center.

#### Corporal Punishment Statement

Children's Bill of Rights of the American Montessori Society defines the Montessori Mission as protecting "the right of each child to have the freedom and opportunity to develop to his or her full potential". The Montessori approach cultivates a classroom order and the child's responsibility within that order as opposed to overly restrictive or suppressive forms of discipline. As such, there is no place for corporal punishment, nor is it permitted anywhere in the Montessori environment.

**Policy On External Advertising within AMS**Applicable events, offerings, and promotional materials may be approved by the director for posting on a community bulletin board in the lobby.  This bulletin board will be the primary means of external advertisement within the school, and will serve as an unobtrusive method for communication of outside materials.  The director will use discretion in the handling of external promotional materials to be sent home via folders, based on appropriateness and frequency.

**Health & Safety Guidelines**

During the hours when children are in school, every precaution is taken to protect each child and ensure good health. We are not allowed to administer medication, but we invite you to come to the school to give medications that your child must have during school hours. When medication is given at the school, the name of the medicine, dose, and the parent giving the dose will be logged for the school records.

A list of emergency numbers is filed in the school, which contains parents’ phone numbers, addresses, and emergency contacts. Should a parent be unavailable, however, it is necessary for the school to have authorization to receive medical treatment for the child. Teachers MAY NOT administer any medication to a child.

**Contagious Disease**

Whenever a contagious disease or illness has been reported to the school, the school will notify all parents. **If a doctor has diagnosed your child as having any contagious disease or illness, you are required to call the school and inform the director of the diagnosis.**

**Injuries**

If your child sustains an injury during the school day, an injury report is filled out describing the situation that resulted in the injury, the injury itself, first aid procedures taken and the name of the adult supervisor who handled the situation. Both school personnel and parent sign this report when the child is picked up from school. Parents may request a copy of this report.

**School Insurance**

The Alfred Montessori School does not provide medical insurance for the students enrolled in the program. If a child is injured during the school day and requires medical attention, parents are responsible for payment.

**Emergency Drills**

Because it is necessary for all children and teachers to clear the building immediately in any fire, disaster, or emergency, the school will practice at least one fire drill per month. We will also be conducting two shelter-in-place drills per calendar year. Families will be informed prior to the shelter-in-place drills.

**Outdoor Activities**

Unless extreme weather conditions exist, all students will have time outside during the school day. Throughout the day, students will leave the school to take walks, visit the library, or play at the playground. A sign will be left on the door stating where the children have gone and the answering machine will be on if there is no one in the school.

# Illness Policy (created with Dr. Zahi Kassas)

To protect children and staff from exposure to infections and contagious disease, the Montessori Teaching Staff or Director will contact you to come and take your child home if your child exhibits any of these conditions during the school day:

***Key criteria for exclusion of children who are ill***

* The child is too ill to participate in program activities.
* The illness results in a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children;
* An acute change in behavior – this could include lethargy/lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, or having a quickly spreading rash;
* **Fever:**
  + Temperature above 100\*F or higher taken in the ear ANDaccompanied by behavior change or other signs and symptoms *(e.g., sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, breathing difficulty or cough).* If a child is sent home with a fever, the child needs to be fever-free (without medication) for 24 hours, unless a doctor’s note is provided, before returning to school.
* **Diarrhea:**
* Diapered children whose stool is not contained in the diaper or if the stool frequency exceeds two or more stools above normal for the child.
* Toilet-trained children if the diarrhea is causing soiled pants or clothing.
* Blood or mucous in the stools
* Confirmed medical diagnoses of Salmonella, Campylobacter, E.coli, Shigella, Rotavirus, or Norovirus infections, until cleared by the child’s health care provider to return to the program.
* **Vomiting:** more than two times in the previous 24 hours, unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by a non-infectious condition and the child remains adequately hydrated.
* **Abdominal pain** that continues for more than two hours or intermittent pain associated with fever, vomiting, or other signs or symptoms of illness.
* **Mouth sores with drooling** unless the child’s heath care provider states that the child is not infectious.
* **Active tuberculosis** until the child’s primary care provider or local health department states child is on appropriate treatment and can return.
* **Streptococcal pharyngitis** (*strep throat or other streptococcal infection)* until 24 hours after treatment has started.
* **Head lice** until after the first treatment
* **Scabies** until after first treatment has been given.
* **Chickenpox** (varicella) until all lesions have dried or crusted *(usually six days after onset of rash).*
* **Rubella** until six days after rash appears.
* **Pertussis** (whooping cough) until five days of appropriate antibiotic treatment.
* **Mumps** until five days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
* **Measles** until four days after onset of rash.
* **Hepatitis A** virus infection until the child is approved by the health care provider to return to the program.
* **Impetigo** until after 24 hrs after initiation of therapy
* **Conjunctivitis** (pink-eye) until 24 hrs after initiation of therapy
* **Rashes:** As emergent rashes can be contagious, Children with rashes will be required to see their health care providers for clearance

**Please keep your child home if s/he exhibits any of the above symptoms**. Contagious diseases often begin with symptoms of a common cold. Your child may be refused admission to the classroom or sent home during the day if the staff detects an illness. The AMS teaching staff also may request that the child stay home the entire following day, and/or request from the parent a written opinion from an appropriate health professional when the health of a child is in question. If a child is well enough to attend school, the child will be expected to participate in both indoor and outdoor activities.

If a parent fails to pick up a sick child within one hour from the time they are notified that the child needs to be taken home, a $10 an hour fee will be levied. The director reserves the right to request withdrawal of a child whose parents fail to abide by the prompt pick-up policy.

**When a Sick Child Can Return to School Guide:**

\* **Cold/flu**: Your child should be **fever free** **without fever reducers** **for 24 hours** and symptomsdown to a few sniffles or coughs.

\* **Strep Throat**: On antibiotics for at least **24 hours**.

\* **Conjunctivitis**: On antibiotics for at least **24 hours** with **no** discharge.

\* **Chicken Pox**: All lesions should be crusted over (generally 6 days after the rash breaks out).

\* **Ear infection**: As long as the child is not in pain.

\* **Parasitic infections**: As directed by the child’s physician.

\* **Vomiting/ Diarrhea**: A minimum of 24 hours after last vomiting episode, and stools should have returned to normal.

\* **Hand-Foot-Mouth disease**: When the fever has resolved.

\* **Impetigo, MRSA skin infections**: On antibiotics for at least 24 hrs

\* **Influenza / RSV infections**: when fever resolved, and symptoms quieted.

**Illnesses NOT reason for exclusion:**

* Common colds
* Ear infections
* Fifth disease
* Roseola
* Hand-Foot-Mouth disease in the absence of fever
* Cold sores
* Teething
* Non-contagious rashes (dry skin, eczema, craddle’s cap)
* Lyme disease
* Pink eyes with no discharge (allergic or part of common colds) (eye crusting after waking up is not considered a discharge).

**Immunizations**:

**No Vaccines given or Immunization record not available:**

Student may be admitted if immunizations are in process and pending availability of records

**Religious exemption**:

The state of New York no longer allows immunization exemptions for religious reasons.

**Missing vaccinations**:

Student is admitted as long as physician writes a statement explaining medical contraindication to missing vaccine

**Allergy Action Plan:**

Students with life threatening food allergies are required to provide an “Allergy Action Plan” completed and signed by the parents and health care provider.

#### School Age Program - Attendance Confirmation Procedure

1. All parents of school-aged children will provide AMS with a written schedule noting days their child will be taking the bus from Alfred-Almond Central School to AMS.

2. If a child will not be attending AMS on a scheduled day, it is the responsibility of the parent to call AMS to notify of their child’s expected absence.

3. In the event a parent neglects to notify AMS that their child will not be expected to arrive on the AACS bus, AMS staff will first contact the parents at the numbers provided and record on attendance sheet that the parents have been called. If the parents cannot be reached, the AMS Director will contact the AACS Bus Garage to verify whether the child attended school and which bus they departed on and record contact with bus garage on attendance sheet.

#### Inclement Weather Policy

The decision to close or delay opening of the Alfred Montessori School will be made by the director in consultation with the board president. Once the decision is made to delay opening or close school, the director will send a message to all families/staff via the One Call Now system. In most cases, when AACS is delayed or closed, AMS will follow suit. In the event of a school delay, AMS will open at 9am. Credit will not be given (or days rescheduled) due to school closing for inclement weather, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

**Electric Outage Policy**

When an electric outage occurs at the school, the director and board president will be in contact to determine if the school will remain open. If the decision is made to close the school, families will be notified via the One Call Now system. Upon notification the parent and/ or emergency contact will be expected to pick up your child within 2 hours. When the school is closed due to an electric outage, it will not re- open until the next school day.

**Emergency Relocation Sites**

If there is ever an emergency when our school is not safe to go back to, there are cleared relocation sites for staff and children. Our primary relocation site is the Terra Cotta Coffee House, located at 34 N. Main Street in Alfred (607-587-8800). Our secondary relocation site is Alfred University’s Powell Campus Center (607-871-2175). Our staff’s primary concern is to get the children safely to the relocation site, and then a message will go out to all families via the One Call Now system.

# Parent Involvement

# Maria Montessori believed that a child's education is enriched by parental involvement in the fabric of the school, and she saw parental involvement as an essential component of her philosophy. Parent involvement is the backbone of our school community, and there are a wide variety of volunteer opportunities with differing time commitments to encourage all parents to contribute their energy and skills. Some activities may include event planning, fundraising, attending school outings, joining the Board of Directors, or volunteering at the school. Being involved at AMS is a great way to get to know each other better, and to learn more about the school. Don’t hesitate to ask how your talents could be used within our school!

**Fundraising**

Fundraising is essential to the success and permanence of our school as we are a non-profit organization. In order to foster a relationship between AMS and the community, while raising money to support our school’s operating budget, the school organizes 2 or 3 major fundraising events per academic year. This year, we will send out an Annual Giving Letter in October, host the Montessori Marketplace in December, and host the Art Auction in March. Unlike past years, there is no requirement for families in terms of participation in these fundraising activities. However, we will ask for support from families for these events, and we hope many of you will consider volunteering your time, preparing a food item, or doing something else related to these events.

**Board of Directors**

We are a non-profit School and are run by a Board of Directors. Members of the board are parents or grandparents of children, former parents/grandparents, and community members. The members direct our operations, goals and finances. **Meetings are held at the school on the third Monday of each month at 6 pm in the School Age classroom.** If you would like to learn more about serving on the board, please contact any Board member or the Director.

**PARENT HANDBOOK RECEIPT**

I acknowledge receipt of the Alfred Montessori School’s 2019-2020 Parent Handbook. I understand that it contains information pertaining to the AMS policies and procedures. I agree that it is my responsibility to thoroughly read, to become familiar with, and abide by the contents.

Please specifically read and initial each of the following policies:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ p. 10-11 Arrival and Departure Procedures

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ p. 11 Home-School Communication

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ p. 14-16 Program Hours, Tuition, & Billing, Etc.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ p. 19 Health & Safety Guidelines

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ p. 20-22 Illness Policy

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ p. 22-22 Inclement Weather Policy

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Parent or Guardian Name (Please print) Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian Signature

**Please return signed**

**Parent Handbook Receipt to the school.**

**Thank you!**