



Élan Vital Montessori School
Parent Handbook
2022-2023

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ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

HISTORY OF ÉLAN VITAL MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Élan Vital Montessori School was founded in 2006 by a dedicated group of families with a passion and desire to build a quality Montessori school.

Élan Vital Montessori School abides by a truth in advertising policy that all communications are accurate and truthful to the best of our ability. Élan Vital is committed to providing future and current students, faculty, staff, and members of the community with concise information regarding all aspects of their involvement with the school.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Élan Vital Montessori School is to create and sustain an optimum Montessori educational environment to enable each child to realize his or her richest potential for learning and to become an independent, self-motivated, and contributing member of the world community. It is our aim to instill respect and responsibility for humankind, the environment, and ourselves.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

The School Directors handle daily school administration and finances. This includes managing school operations, parent contact, and financial administration.

The Directors are responsible for setting policy, website maintenance, newsletters, event coordination, and long range planning.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT (Please note: This may change due to COVID restrictions)

A parent-run school depends upon the support of the parents in order to function. Parental involvement is a necessity; without the time and resources provided by parents, Élan Vital Montessori would never have been founded and would not exist today. The children at Élan Vital Montessori benefit in immeasurable ways from seeing their parents take an active role in supporting their school. By their involvement, active parents underscore the importance of education and the value of each and every child.

There are many ways to volunteer. For example, parents have painted, landscaped, made classroom materials, listened to children read, volunteered at events and assisted with recruiting. In addition, parents can support fund-raising activities. Teachers will provide options as well, throughout the year. Parents are welcome to contact the School Administration to learn more about service opportunities.

HOME VISITS

Teachers are happy to visit the homes of students in order to assist with better integrating Montessori principles into the child's home life, including aspects such as meal times, naptime, and setting up a play area. Parents are encouraged to contact the school to schedule such a visit. However, while teachers may visit students in their homes for these aforementioned purposes, it is against school policy for teachers to provide babysitting or tutoring services for students at Élan Vital Montessori.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If any Faculty/Administrator is contacted by a Parent/Guardian regarding a grievance, the faculty/ Administrator shall provide such Parent/Guardian with the Grievance Procedure and shall direct such Parent/Guardian to the initial step which may be taken in an attempt to resolve such matter.

Any Faculty/ Administrator contacted regarding such matter shall keep any and all information confidential and shall disclose such information only in response to an investigation conducted by the School Administration, or a Grievance Committee appointed by the Administrators, or in response to a proper request made during legal proceedings regarding such matter.

1. The complainant should schedule a first conference, as soon as possible, with the School Director. If a specific incident has given rise to the problem, this first conference should be scheduled as close to the date of the event as possible.
2. If this first conference with the School Director fails to resolve the problem, an official complaint should be submitted to the School Director, in writing using the Grievance Form (Appendix A) within fifteen (15) working days following the first conference. The grievance form requires the complainant to describe in detail the problem and steps that have been taken to resolve it. Upon receipt, the School Director shall date the grievance form and return a dated copy to the complainant.
3. The School Director shall begin an investigation into the problem. The School Director shall have ten (10) working days to complete the investigation. Upon completion of the investigation the School Director shall meet with the complainant and inform him/her of the results of the investigation and what remedy the School Director thinks is appropriate. This meeting is the second conference. The School Director shall also provide an answer to the grievance in writing at or prior to the second conference. If the complainant is not satisfied with the School Director's investigation or suggested remedy, he/she may appeal to the Director or President of the Board by submitting a written complaint, on the form provided in this Handbook, within ten (10) business days following the second conference. Upon receipt, the Director or President of the Board shall date the grievance form and return a dated copy to the complainant.
4. If a problem is brought to the Director, a Grievance Committee appointed by the Administrator shall conduct their own investigation into the complaint and shall respond in writing to the grievance within thirty (30) working days. The Grievance Committee shall consist of three members, including at least one member of the Administration and

one member of the teaching staff. Any decision made by the Grievance Committee shall be final and binding.

In order to preserve the integrity of this internal procedure, no faculty/staff member is to take any matter to any other person without first taking the appropriate steps laid out in the grievance procedure.

Any conferences between faculty/staff members and Administrators, or other parents/guardians who are not directly involved concerning a grievance, which take place outside of the internal grievance procedure, are highly inappropriate and inconsistent with our goal of maintaining the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of employment information.

While we acknowledge parental responsibility and welcome positive involvement, Élan Vital Montessori School reserves the right to deny student admission or discontinue enrollment in the event that a parent exhibits behavior that is discourteous, scandalous, rumor driven, disruptive, threatening, hostile, or divisive. In such a case, the decision of the Directors regarding the suitability for continued enrollment or acceptance in the school would be final.

PHONE CALLS AND MESSAGES

Élan Vital Montessori acknowledges that clear, timely, and effective communication between parents, staff, and teachers is essential. Parents can call the school at any time to schedule a visit or come to the school during office hours any time there is a concern. Staff and teachers return calls as soon as possible. Be aware that teachers are responsible for children all of the school day and cannot easily get away to return your call immediately. They will, however, return your call at their earliest possible convenience. Parents should call the School Director at any time to address issues promptly when concerns exist. Concerns regarding Extended Care issues should also be directed to the School Director. We encourage you to communicate regularly with us, so we may work together to best meet the needs of the students. **If the school phone is not answered please leave a voicemail. The voicemail is checked periodically throughout the day.**

As always, if your child must be absent from school and/or in Extended Care, please notify the school office by voicemail, email or in writing by 8:30 am. The school office will notify the teacher.

NEWSLETTERS

Parents will receive newsletters by email, Remind App, or on the Facebook pages to remain updated on classroom, school events, important school updates, and general information.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Élan Vital Montessori is open Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. with Administrative Office hours of 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. **Again, if you are attempting to call the school, please leave a voicemail if we do not answer.** Extended Care is available from 3:30 pm until 5:30 pm daily.

ENROLLMENT AND TUITION

The enrollment process at Élan Vital Montessori follows the following procedure, which is designed to best equip prospective families and Élan Vital teachers with the information necessary to determine a prospective student's fit within the school.

- Prospective families should contact Élan Vital Montessori to schedule an appointment to tour the school.
- Following the tour, prospective families are invited to submit an application and an application fee.
- The prospective student is invited to return for a visit-in, in which the prospective student participates with the other students in the activities of the school day.
- The application is reviewed by teachers and director of Élan Vital Montessori, an admission decision is made, and notification of acceptance may be sent to prospective parents.
- Upon accepting an offer of admission, prospective parents must complete registration papers and submit a **non-refundable** registration fee. **Please note: The enrollment process is not complete until the School receives the completed registration forms and the non-refundable fee.**

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment at Élan Vital Montessori requires a family commitment for the academic year. As we are a school environment and not a day care facility, we do not offer limited enrollment for short periods of time (by month or by week). This allows our classes to remain consistent and for the class to grow as a group academically. All enrolled families are expected to maintain their commitment for the entire school year. Reenrollment is held each January for the following school year program.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Élan Vital Montessori does not discriminate in enrollment, hiring practices, or in the care of children based on race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, or religion.

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Élan Vital Montessori is not affiliated with any religious organization.

REQUIRED ADMISSION FORMS

Upon your decision to enroll your student at Élan Vital Montessori, you will be asked to complete the following forms. Completion of these signed forms is required prior to your child's first day of attendance:

- Tuition Contract
- Enrollment/ Health Packet
- Immunization Records
- Copy or Social Security Card
- Copy of Birth Certificate

Your child's records are not shared unless you sign a release stating that Élan Vital has permission to share the information with another school. While we strive to have open communication between members of teaching teams and the administration, information about children is not shared with a person who has no legitimate need for knowing. When initiating a conversation, you may state that the matter is to be kept confidential within the teaching team and administration. Consultants or educational diagnosticians requesting teacher evaluations will be mailed or emailed directly to the person requesting information.

TUITION RATES AND SCHOOL FEES

Your tuition rate will be verified at the time of student admission and is documented on the registration form. School and extended day hours are calculated into tuition rates beginning each school year in August. Tuition rates are revised each December for the next new school year. Please direct all payment questions to the school Director.

PAYMENT PLANS

Parents are required to pay for the time their child/children are scheduled to be in school and/or Extended Care. Payment is required for reserved space regardless of attendance. Payment is due in advance and payment must be received prior to service. Payment plans are selected at the time of registration.

MONTHLY PAYMENT OPTION

Tuition is due on the 1st or 15th of every month for services of that month. All families are expected to keep their accounts current. Tuition payment will not be accepted in the School office but shall be made through the TUIO site on a monthly basis or by automated bank draft.

HOLIDAYS, VACATIONS, SCHOOL BREAKS AND CLOSURES

Fees are not reduced during months that have holidays. Our rates include allowances for all holidays, including winter and spring break.

You will be required to pay 100% of your regular rate while you are on vacation. Your class placement and enrollment are continuous while you are on vacation.

These breaks are outlined on the school calendar yearly. Consult this year's calendar for specific dates. Our School Program is closed during these dates. School breaks are calculated into the tuition cost and no tuition credit or discount is given for these dates.

We are doing everything we can to avoid school closures due to illnesses. In conjunction with the Department of Education and Louisiana Department of Health, Elan Vital is doing everything we can with group sizes, pods within classrooms, sanitation schedules and frequent student and staff screenings to avoid school closures. In the event of a school closure, payment schedules will remain.

Payment Penalties

- You will be billed \$1.00 per minute for the first late pickup from school after 3:15 p.m. or Extended Care after 5:30 p.m. within 30 days. The second late pickup will be billed at the rate of \$2.00 per minute. Late pickups commencing with the third occurrence must be addressed directly with the School Director.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

On the date that the school's designee signs the enrollment contract, the parents or legal guardian becomes responsible for the full tuition for the academic school year, as liquidated damages, even if the student never actually attends the school, the student withdraws, or for any other reason fails to continue attendance for the school year, unless withdrawal is requested by the school. An exit interview may also be requested.

Please contact the school office to settle all financial arrangements when withdrawing a student. Once withdrawn, Élan Vital Montessori will fill the space vacated with a new incoming student or an advancing student.

Families withdrawing from Élan Vital Montessori with the intention of avoiding payment for an extended family vacation or other personal reasons will not be re-admitted to Élan Vital Montessori, as this behavior undermines the educational process and disturbs the class structure. Élan Vital Montessori School follows an academic year from August to May. The Toddler families have a choice between this ten month option and a twelve month option, August to July.

TERMINATION OF CONTRACTS BY SCHOOL

The following are conditions that will cause school day or extended care services to be terminated:

- Continual late payments or continual late pick-ups (more than three within a one month period)
- Child behavioral problems deterring successful school experiences
- Disrespect of the school day or extended care setting, policies, and staff
- Sporadic attendance
- Consistently arriving after 8:30 am and disturbing the educational process

RECEIPTS AND TAXES

You can receive a statement at the end of the year reflecting all tuition paid through Smart Tuition. You will receive a form reporting your annual childcare expenditures for the applicable tax year. **Élan Vital Montessori's Federal Identification Number is 20-5098093.**

THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

PARENT ORIENTATION

All parents or legal guardians of incoming students are required to attend the first Parent Information Night of the school year to gain a better understanding of Montessori, the school day, school policies, and school procedures. Curriculum Nights are also offered periodically.

Phase-In

According to common Montessori practice, students will be phased-in during the first week of school. Beneficial to all children, this process entails starting the first day of classes with only a small segment of students. Additional students are added a few at a time on subsequent days until the class is complete. Phase-in allows teachers to spend important additional time on a one-to-one basis with each child during the first days at school. This allows important routines to be established and helps the child feel more comfortable with school. Parents will be notified before school begins of their child's start date.

Please do not request that your returning student be phased in early. Please plan ahead to make any necessary child-care arrangements during the phase-in week. Remember, when your child was a new student, they were given the benefit of this important additional time.

SCHOOL DAY PROGRAM

The school day program operates from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily. Students enrolled in the school day are required to attend during the entire school year. Please consult your school calendar for start and end dates of the school year.

Regular attendance at school is critically important to our program. Arriving on time is respectful to teachers, assistants, and to classmates since lessons begin at 8:30 am. Families who repeatedly arrive late or maintain sporadic attendance will be asked to reconsider their commitment to their child's education at Élan Vital Montessori.

EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM

Students enrolled in the extended care program are admitted to the program between 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. daily. At the time of registration, families are required to specify if they will be utilizing extended care. Upon arrival to pick up your child, parents are **NOT** permitted inside

the gate. You must call the school phone (225)767-6620 to announce your arrival to pick up your child.

SUMMER SESSION

Élan Vital Montessori operates on an academic year. The dates for the academic year are set each year in March which includes the toddler summer session. Consult this year's academic calendar for specific dates. All families committed in writing to the Toddler Summer Session by or on March 15th will have secured a placement. Tuition rates are not discounted in summer and no vacation credits are given. Without written confirmation, Élan Vital Montessori will consider school and extended care students not enrolled for the summer session.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

We strive to keep the atmosphere within the school and classrooms child-centered. It is disruptive to children when parents linger in or near the classroom. It is specifically for this reason that the following arrival and departure arrangements are followed:

When leaving the buildings, make sure doors are completely closed. When leaving the school grounds, always latch the gate.

Some younger children, especially those who are coming to school for the first time, may cry the first few days at drop-off. Parents should quickly, firmly, and cheerfully say good-bye at drop-off. You may remind your child that you will be back, but you should leave quickly. Children who cry on arrival will stop crying shortly after your departure. Lingering or trying to convince your child to stop crying will only exacerbate the crying and anxiety. By maintaining a positive, cheerful attitude about the separation and about school in general, and immediately leaving, you will help your child acclimate to school. Parents who are worried about the state of their children are welcome to call the office and ask the office staff to check on the child. Remember that the staff has the best interest of your child in mind. If in the rare instance a child continues to cry and display extreme anxiety, a teacher or office staff member will notify the parent.

Students can only be picked up by their parents or an authorized person specified in writing by the parent in the child's file. If a parent needs someone other than the person specified on the pickup authorization form to pick up his or her child, prior written notification must be made. Élan Vital Montessori will not release your child to any person without written parent permission. The authorized person picking up your child must have picture identification, such as a driver's license or passport. PERSONS PICKING UP STUDENTS MAY NOT BE A REGISTERED SEX OFFENDER.

If you need to pick your student up early, please contact the school office, during the office hours of 8:30 to 3:30, so we may notify the teacher of the early pick up and your child's day will be modified to allow for this change.

Any parent or authorized person who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol and arrives at school or child care to pick up a child will be asked to call someone else to accompany them home. 911 will be called if any parent or authorized person leaves school or childcare with a child while they appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

If your child is not picked up by 5:30 pm, your child's emergency contact (listed on the child's enrollment paperwork) will be notified. If we cannot reach a parent or emergency contact, the proper authorities will be called. A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged for each minute the parent/emergency contact is late and \$2.00 for the second occurrence within 30 days.

ARRIVAL

Toddler and Primary arrival is from 7:30 to 8:00. Please pull up in the school driveway to the purple gate. A staff member will help your child exit the car. Please have all of your child's personal belongings easily accessible. **Using cell phones in any manner during drop off is strictly prohibited.**

For arrivals after 8:00, please park in the parking lot and escort the child to the purple gate by the office to sign them in, ensuring that a staff member has received the child.

DISMISSAL

Children will be dismissed at 12:30 pm if they are a half day student, and 2:45 pm if they are full day student. Afternoon carpool ends at 3:00 pm. Please park in a parking spot and stand next to your car. Your child's teachers will walk them out to you so you can buckle them in their car seats. Please be patient, children are changing shoes, gathering belongings and teachers will only walk a few children at a time due to safety. Children not picked up by 3:00 pm will be checked into After Care and parents will be billed accordingly.

TARDINESS

It is very important for your child to be at school on time for the beginning of school. Repetitive tardiness is disruptive to the education process. Arriving on time is respectful to teachers and to classmates and your child. We take our commitment to your child's education seriously. If your child will be tardy you must notify the school office.

If you are unable to bring your child to school before 8:00 am for reasons other than emergency situations, scheduled appointments or other reasons previously communicated with your child's teacher, please do not bring your child to school that day. This is a disruption to your child's classmates and teachers, as well as your own child. Families who are repeatedly tardy will be contacted by the teacher or School Director to discuss the situation. Families continuing to arrive late to school may be asked to reconsider their commitment to Élan Vital Montessori.

ABSENCES

We request a phone call, e-mail or remind app message to the school office by 8:00 am on any day your child will be late or absent from school or extended care. If a previously scheduled appointment means that your child will be late or must leave early, we request a phone call or e-mail with that information prior to the day of the schedule change.

Any absences occurring regularly jeopardize social interaction with classmates and the Montessori curriculum. Frequent absences can create negative feelings about coming to school for students as well as heightened separation anxiety. Such occurrences on a regular basis may result in student dismissal from Élan Vital Montessori.

INCLEMENT WEATHER AND POWER OUTAGE PROCEDURES

In the event of a power outage or plumbing issue longer than 30 minutes, parents will be contacted via phone, the REMIND app and email to pick up their children until the heat and/or power or plumbing can be restored.

In the event of inclement weather, Élan Vital will often follow the closures of East Baton Rouge Parish schools. In the case that EBR is waiting to make a decision, we may cancel school before them. Please understand that due to the small sizes of our schools as well as the trees that surround our campuses, we err on the side of caution to protect our students and staff. Please check your REMIND app, email and/or the School's Facebook page for a closure message.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Primary parents: we request that you schedule at least two observations in the classroom during the year. Please contact the school office to schedule an appointment.

Toddler parents: teachers and admin will send videos periodically of the classroom, especially before conferences, that will give you a peak into the classroom environment. Often, parent observations for students this age do not give you a clear picture of what is happening in the classroom. Toddlers typically wish to sit with their parents, and other students are distracted by the extra adult in the room. Pictures and videos will give you a clearer understanding of the happenings in our toddler environment.

CONFERENCES

Conferences are held two times a year as stated on the school calendar. A conference sign up schedule will be emailed no later than one week prior to the conference dates so that parents can schedule a time that is mutually acceptable. At the conferences, parents will receive a progress report that provides a framework for conversation so that parents may get a clear picture of their child's social, emotional, and academic growth and development at our school. Conferences will be offered for all students two times yearly, in order to maintain a healthy learning relationship between the teacher, student, and family. If you have scheduling conflicts, please speak directly with your child's teacher so alternative arrangements may be made.

DRESS CODE

Please dress your child in simple, neat, comfortable clothing that the child can manage alone. **Clothing should be free of cartoon or movie characters, pop stars or violent images. All clothing needs to be appropriate and non-distracting towards other students.** The appropriateness of an outfit is at the discretion of the teachers. If one is deemed inappropriate or distracting, the student will be asked to change.

Slacks and shorts with elastic waistbands, pullover shirts and sweaters, and jackets with large zippers should be worn. While the staff will assist children who are having trouble, children should be able to manage their own clothing with little or no assistance. This is in keeping with our Independence learning objective: independence is essential to the development of high self-esteem.

Outdoor shoes should be sturdy, have rubber soles, and be easy for children to put on and remove themselves. Students may wear shorts, slacks, or dresses (with bloomers) as long as the dress does not restrict movement in climbing and playing. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather conditions. Remember that children do go outside every day, unless heavy rain prevents outdoor recess.

Remember that school is a place where we use paint, glue, and all sorts of other learning materials that may occasionally spill on your child's clothes.

On the first day of school, please send a complete change of clothes for your child. Label each item with the child's name. Send the clothing in a clear plastic bag clearly marked with the child's name. This clothing will be stored at school and used in case of accidents at school. Please remember to immediately replace any clothing that is sent home so that a change of clothes will always be available for your child.

INDOOR SHOES

In order to provide a clean and orderly environment within the classroom, all children in the program are required to wear hard-soled indoor shoes while in the classroom environment. The indoor shoes must be provided on the day school begins and will be kept at school to be worn while in the classroom. Hard-soled indoor shoes (such as slippers and cros) are required in the event of fire drills and emergency evacuations (no slipper socks or flip-flops).

SHARING ITEMS FROM HOME

Teachers may request "sharing items" for their classrooms. Please label your child's sharing items. Sharing items must have an educational value and the student must have permission from the teacher. We welcome books, music, and articles of scientific interest. **Toys, fidget**

spinners or trading cards are not permitted. If you are uncertain about any item, please ask the teacher if it would contribute to the class program.

Please do not send valuables with your child unless special arrangements have been made between you and the classroom teacher. Élan Vital Montessori will not be held accountable for personal items that are lost or broken.

LUNCH

Your child should eat breakfast prior to arriving at Élan Vital Montessori each morning. Parents are responsible for packing a lunch for their child in an appropriate container with a cold pack, (if necessary). Cold packs in lunches are required to keep food cold and safe. Students should have foods in containers that they can easily open and feed themselves, cut into small pieces at home. Please send forks, spoons and other utensils needed.

Send servings in plastic or aluminum containers rather than disposable items in order to support recycling efforts and to lessen our trash output. Use a thermos for soups, casseroles, etc. We will not heat lunches. Any food that needs to be kept warm needs to be heated in the morning and stored in a thermos.

Élan Vital Montessori has a lunch program catered by local restaurants. The menu will be provided each month. You may turn in a lunch calendar monthly, or weekly, by turning in a completed calendar to the school office or emailing the order to lunch@elanvitalmontessori.org. EVM school lunch is \$6/day. Orders will not be accepted after 9:00 am each day.

Lunches are eaten as a class and positive manners are modeled and encouraged. Lunch is a quiet and social time when good manners and polite conversation are observed. Children set out their own lunches and all are required to tidy up after eating.

Please send a balanced nutritional lunch for your child. Please pack "healthy body" foods. Suggestions include pasta, sandwiches, string cheese, cheese snacks, fruit, yogurt, and vegetables. Do not send lunchables of any kind, go-gurts or any yogurts packaged in this way, candy, soda, cookies, sugared crackers, desserts, punch, Capri Sun, juice boxes or foods with high sugar content. **If sent, these items will be returned unopened.** If a teacher has to repeatedly send inappropriate food items home, the school has the discretion to require the family to order school lunch. We appreciate your understanding in this matter.

Toddler students have further guidelines mandated by the State Licensing Office. These are specified in the Toddler Policy Book.

There is organic milk, fresh juice and filtered water available to the children.

We do not allow students to share lunches with each other due to allergies.

We do not allow fast food or takeout food to be delivered to the children.

SNACKS

Élan Vital Montessori has snack time each school day. The cost of snack is included in the supply fee. We follow the “healthy body” guidelines outlined in the lunch section of this handbook.

Due to COVID restrictions, we are limited on the items we can provide the children. Possible items will be individually wrapped cheese sticks, raisins, fresh bananas, oranges, apples, melon, granola/cereal bars.

Extended care children may bring their own snack from home to be eaten only during extended care hours. These snacks may be placed in the after care snack basket located in each classroom. If the snack requires to be kept cold or hot please package them appropriately.

FOOD ALLERGIES AND RESTRICTIONS

Food Allergies are becoming more widespread and their reactions can be quite serious and in some cases, life threatening. It is the parent's responsibility to notify Élan Vital Montessori in writing of any allergies or adverse reactions that your child may have with certain foods or beverages. You should note this on the Medical form, which will be made available to you at registration time. This form will be posted in the child's classroom and in the school office. A doctor's note must be provided to the school outlining procedures in the event of accidental contact, or ingestion, allergic reaction.

In the event that certain foods are restricted for other medical, religious, or personal reasons, please also indicate this on your child's medical form.

In the event that a child is diagnosed with an air born allergy, EVM reserves the right to provide enforce the proper restrictions.

BIRTHDAYS/ CELEBRATIONS OF LIFE

The Celebration of Life is our way to commemorate your child's birthday in the classroom. This celebration allows us all to enjoy some happy moments and memories with the birthday child. We strongly encourage parents to allow each child to have this happy experience. Summer birthdays will be celebrated in the month of May.

During the Celebration of Life, the birthday child walks around a symbolic circle representing the months of the year. As each circle is made, a statement is read giving the child's history for that year and a photograph from that year is shown. A few sentences about the history of the year are adequate. Please mark your child's age on the back of the photographs. Parents prepare these statements and photographs. Each year the child is here, parents are asked to add to the history. All photographs and materials will be returned.

Some children enjoy presenting a book or donating classroom materials in honor of their birthdays. Your child's teacher would be happy to make a recommendation if you would like to make a donation.

Elan Vital will **NOT hand out birthday party invitations. However, we are happy to provide you with an email list for the parents of the students in your child's class. We are not responsible for any planning or coordinating non-Elan Vital events.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES AND FIELD TRIPS

Special activities and trips are occasionally planned throughout the school year. Parents will be given a minimum of two weeks prior notification with details outlining any planned special activity or trip and cost, if applicable. Monthly classroom and school events are included in our periodic emails.

Parents volunteering for field trips must have:

- a Louisiana Driver's License
- car insurance
- cell phone
- vehicle used must have current registration, inspection and be in good repair
- take a school field trip emergency bag

Written parental permission is required for all children leaving campus to attend field trips whether students are walking or traveling by car.

The following are our field trip guidelines:

- All students attending the field trip by car must travel in a an approved car seat, as required by Louisiana State Law, provided by the student's family on the day of the field trip. Please label your child's car seat, as many families use similar or alike models. Students requiring a car seat will not be able to attend without a car seat.
<http://www.lahighwaysafety.org/Documents/New%20Child%20Safety%20Seat%20Law.pdf>
- If you are volunteering to drive, please arrive in a timely manner before the trip and report to the teachers. You will receive a list of children that will ride in your car from the teacher. Your cell phone number should be on the list along with numbers of the teachers however, please do not use your cell phone except for emergencies while driving with students in your car.
- Teachers will have emergency kits, student information, and directions needed for the field trip.
- Groups of children will be called to the assigned cars; the teachers and volunteers will meet in the parking lot so that we may caravan to our designated spot. Follow the route to the destination provided by the teachers
- While you have children in your car, be mindful of the radio station and/or DVDs that might be playing. We do not allow movies in cars so please turn them off. Different parents have different views on appropriateness for their children. Classical music or a

child's radio station is preferred.

- Children will bring their lunch and/or a snack on the field trip when it is appropriate. No other snacks are necessary.
- Drivers should stay with the class for the duration of the field trip unless otherwise directed by the teachers.
- We are representing Élan Vital Montessori School, and we want to make sure our students are as respectful as possible. If needed, remind students to stay in line and to use an appropriate noise level. Alert the teacher if any student is not cooperative.

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ANIMAL VISITS

Your pets can visit the school and your child's classroom with prior approval of the teacher and School Director. If any child in the classroom has an allergy, no animals will be allowed to visit.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

DISCIPLINE POLICY

"To let the child do as he likes when he has not yet developed any powers of control is to betray the idea of freedom." – Maria Montessori

At Élan Vital Montessori School, it is important that the child clearly understands the rules and possible consequences for violating rules. Through nurturing and sensitivity, we hope to prepare them to function as social assets rather than as social liabilities. With this in mind, it is important this understanding is reflected in methods of discipline used at home and school.

Our approach is to lead the child towards self-discipline. We avoid spending unnecessary time responding and reacting to behavior problems. Another quote by Maria Montessori is, "The undisciplined child enters into discipline by working in the company of others; not by being told he is naughty." Discipline is, therefore, a learning experience and less a punitive experience if appropriately dealt with.

In the Montessori class, a child's opinion is respected and the child is asked to share his or her view. Children want to follow the rules if the adult clearly defines the rules and then invites the child to assume responsibility for his or her behavior. Assuming responsibility for behavior is to understand and accept the consequences for violating rules.

Children whose rights are violated by physical harm are asked to report this problem to the nearest adult rather than hit back. This instills the practice of following legal procedures we adults must follow as we seek help from law officials when our rights are violated.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES AND POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES

First Offense

- The teacher explains or reviews class and school rules and warns of possible consequences.

Second Offense

- The teacher communicates the problem to the parents through verbal or written communication.

Third Offense

- The teacher communicates the issue with the director and the parents and schedules a conference with the parents.

Fourth Offense

- The teacher sends the child to the office and the child is sent home. You will be notified immediately and will be expected to pick up your child within an hour.
- Fighting and/ or violence against others may lead to out-of-school suspension or permanent dismissal from EVM.

ILL CHILDREN

Please notify the school office if your child will not be attending school due to illness. If your child should become ill during the school/extended care day, you will be notified immediately and will be expected to pick up your child within one hour. If you cannot pick up your child, choose and authorize a designator so that your child does not further expose other children and staff to illness. In such event, your child will be given a place to rest, away from the other children in the school office until you arrive. Parents are responsible for finding alternative care in case of the child's illness. Children who are contagious must stay at home. School parents and the Health Department, will receive a notice of communicable diseases that are present at the school when applicable.

If your child displays any of the following symptoms, you must keep them home until they are symptom free for at least 24 hours:

- **Fever:** Temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher and sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability or confusion within the last 24 hours.
- **Diarrhea:** Three or more watery stools in a 24-hour period, especially if child acts or looks ill.
- **Vomiting:** Vomiting on one or more occasions within the past 24 hours.
- **Rash:** Body rash not associated with diapering, heat or allergic reactions, especially with fever or itching. Even if noncontagious, must provide a doctor's note to be admitted to school.
- **Eyes:** Thick mucus or pus draining from the eye, or pink eye must be completely clear for 24 hours before returning. This means they may not return to school until 24 hours after they have been treated and free of symptoms.
- **Any symptom of the usual childhood diseases:** e.g., scarlet fever, measles, mumps, chicken pox, and whooping cough.
- **Appearance/Behavior:** Unusually tired, pale, lack of appetite, difficult to wake, confused, excessive crying or irritable for 1 or more hours.
- **Sore Throat:** Especially if associated with fever or swollen glands in the neck.
- **Common cold.** Regarding chronic allergies: If your child is under the care of a physician, a written statement from the doctor must be presented specifically stating the nature of

the child's condition and that the condition is not contagious. Guidelines regarding the care of the child should be provided from the physician.

- **Any skin infection:** boils, ringworm, impetigo.
- **Lice:** Children who have lice may not return to school/childcare until they are louse and nit (egg) free. Your child may not return to school for 24 hours after being treated and are louse and nit free. Please make sure to wash all of your bedding, car seat covers, etc.
- **Mucus:** Thick or colored mucus must be completely clear for 24 hours before returning. Doctors note may be required.

If your child develops any of these symptoms while at school or extended care, you will be notified and asked to make immediate arrangements to pick up your child within one hour. Children are welcome to return to school the morning after they are 24 hours symptoms free and when they are able to participate in all regularly scheduled activities of their class. An example of this means if your child vomits on Monday at 11:30am, and is 24 hours symptom free by Tuesday at 11:30am, they may return to school at regular drop off time on Wednesday. Students who are unable to participate in recess or who need "extra" rest should stay at home until they are fully recovered from their illness.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Parents should try to schedule visits to the doctor and dentist so that they do not conflict with school hours. If this is not possible, inform the school in advance so that the staff can be prepared if your child must arrive late or leave early.

HAND WASHING PRACTICES

Hand washing sinks are provided with easy access to comfortably warm water, soap, and towels. Adults and children are encouraged to wash hands frequently throughout each day, after toilet use, blowing a nose, as well as before and after snacks and meals. Children are taught how and why they must frequently wash their hands. Art and outside activities are times when additional hand washing is needed. Élan Vital Montessori staff is aware of this important health practice and monitors the situation by helping the child.

SUNSCREEN

Sunscreen is recommended for all children. Please apply the base coat of sunscreen at home prior to sending your child to school.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

All Élan Vital Montessori staff members are trained in First Aid and CPR for both adults and children. Minor cuts, bruises, and scrapes will be treated with soap, water, and a bandage and parents will be notified upon their arrival at school for pickup with an incident form. The original will be kept at the school in the child's file and a copy will be given to the parent. In

case of a serious injury or emergency, staff will call 911 and may administer appropriate first aid. Parents will be notified after 911 has been called.

Staff will notify the parents immediately of any head injury, nose bleed, or other serious injury and treatment given. If staff members are unable to reach a parent, they will call the second emergency contact number listed on the Parental Authorizations Form. If a student injury results in medical treatment or hospitalization, Élan Vital Montessori is required to immediately call and submit an "Incident Report" form to the Department of Social and Health Services Licensors.

MEDICATION MANAGEMENT AT SCHOOL

Medication can be either internal or external. The only medications that will be administered by EVM are bug spray and life saving medications that are prescribed by a physician. They will only be administered with the written approval of a parent or guardian. The school must keep the life saving medication in its original packaging along with a copy of the doctors orders, the pamphlet of information that comes with the prescription and the prescription label provided by the pharmacist. This medication and the appropriate paperwork must be updated by the parents every six months.

If your child requires a prescription medication during the school day it must be administered by the parent or guardian. Before administering the prescription to the child, the doctor's orders and prescription bottle label must be presented to the school office. If it is the first time the child is receiving the medication, the parent or guardian must remain present to observe the child for one hour.

Élan Vital Montessori School does not administer non-prescriptions, such as: anti-histamines, non-aspirin pain relievers and fever reducers, cough medicine, decongestants, anti-itching creams, and sunscreen.

Plans for COVID-19 Cases Occurring on Campus

Guidelines and mandates are required by the Governor of State of Louisiana, the Mayor of East Baton Rouge Parish, The Department of Health and the Department of Education. Elan Vital will provide you with the most updated guidelines as we are advised.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

Louisiana State Law requires that school staff immediately report to the Office of Community Services in good faith and in accordance with Louisiana Children's Code, Article 610 D any instance where there is reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect, or exploitation.

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) requires that all schools conduct detailed inspections to identify all asbestos containing building materials (ACBM) that may be present in the school environment. AHERA requires the inspection results and the associated Management Plan be submitted to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ). A copy of the Management Plan must be maintained in the administrative office for review by the public.

Elan Vital Montessori School maintains a proactive asbestos awareness program. This letter of notification is an annual requirement to administration, staff, parents and students. If there are questions, please contact administration at (225)767-6620.

SCHOOL SECURITY

Transportation of Children

Children are authorized to be transported to and from school only by those authorized by the child's parents/guardians. The child's Pick-Up Authorization Form lists all those adults who are permitted, by the child's parents/guardians, to pick up the child from school. Under no circumstances, should a child be permitted to leave school grounds with an adult, without written permission from the parent. If a staff member is unfamiliar with the person picking up the child, photo identification (of the adult picking up the child) is required to be checked against the Pickup Authorization Form or parent signed note. A copy of the photo id must be copied and placed in the child's file.

Strangers

The school gate must be locked by 8:00 each school day. It will only be unlocked during arrival, dismissal, and aftercare times. If a parent or authorized pickup person arrives to pick up a child early or during aftercare, they must ring the doorbell at the gate and announce their presence in the intercom. Staff members will visually check that the appropriate person is picking up before sending the child to them.

The classrooms must be locked once all children are inside from any recess time. Staff members must have school keys on their person during school hours. If someone unfamiliar to the staff enters the school building or school grounds, the staff should immediately exit the school grounds through the gate, then, they must inquire as to their presence. Strangers are not allowed on campus without a confirmed appointment. ID's of anyone with an appointment to tour or visit EVM will be checked to confirm the information given at the time an appointment was made and they must sign in. Appointment information may be found in the school office. If there is any concern as to a stranger's presence in or around the school grounds, please follow the emergency protocol that is communicated and practiced during emergency staff training. 911 must be called immediately if there is serious question as to a stranger's presence on school grounds.

Epinephrine Policy

Elan Vital Montessori School will authorize all trained early learning center employees to administer auto-injectable epinephrine to a child who is believed to be having an anaphylactic reaction whether or not such child has a prescription for epinephrine. Elan Vital will have at least one employee trained on campus at all times in the administration of auto-injectable epinephrine. The employee must have training to be completed by a registered nurse, a licensed medical physician, a child care health consultant, anaphylaxis training organization, or any other entity approved by the Louisiana Department of Health. Elan Vital Montessori School will do their best to maintain a supply of an auto-injectable epinephrine at the center in a secure and easily accessible location but inaccessible to children. At the start of each academic year, Elan Vital will contact a healthcare professional authorized to prescribe medications to prescribe epinephrine auto-injectors in the name of Elan Vital Montessori School to be maintained for use when deemed necessary. If no auto-injectable epinephrine is on campus, then Elan Vital will contact emergency health care professionals in a timely manner to come to the aid of the child.

APPENDIX A- PARENT GRIEVANCE FORM

Élan Vital Montessori School Parent Grievance Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

Please explain your complaint with specific details:

I discussed this matter with the School Director on the following date (Date of first conference):

I disagreed with the School Director's response because:

I think the proper solution should be:

Received by School Director (Date): _____

Response of the School Director to the complaint after investigation:

Date: _____

A second conference was held with the School Director to discuss the investigation of the complaint on (Date of second conference): _____

I disagree with the School Director's response because:

Appendix B- Parent Observation Form

Guidelines for Observing

Thank you for observing at Élan Vital Montessori School. We welcome you into the classroom to observe and to gain a better understanding of Montessori philosophy and curriculum. In order to observe a true environment and to be able to see the children working as they do when you are not present, we have a few guidelines for you to follow.

Guidelines:

- Turn off all electronic devices.
- Dispose of any food or drink before entering the classroom.
- Enter the classroom quietly.
- Sit in the chair provided for visitors. The chair has been put in a specific place for you to get the best view.
- Please remain seated during the entire observation time.
- Watch what happens without interfering. Please remember that this is an observation and not a time for interaction.
- If a child talks to you, briefly ask him or her to allow you to do your work, which is to observe.
- Exit as quietly as you entered.

Please complete and return the attached form to guide your observation. Thank you for observing our school!

Guided Questions for Observations

Visitor's Name: _____ Date: _____

Please use the following questions to guide your observations.

1. What do you notice that is child-centered about this environment (furniture, shelves, materials, etc.)?
2. How are children engaged with peers, with teachers, and with materials?
3. Can the child take the work from the shelf, complete the work, record his/her work, and return it to the shelf (the work cycle)?
4. Is the child able to concentrate on his or her work or is s/he easily distracted?
5. Does the child show independence in scheduling his or her own work or does s/he look to classmates and/or teachers for directions and ideas?
6. Do you observe an atmosphere of respect between the teacher and the children?
7. Does the class atmosphere promote learning?
8. Do you have any other observations or questions?

Appendix C- Permission to Administer Medication at School Form

PERMISSION TO ADMINISTER MEDICATION

I, _____, give my permission to Élan Vital Montessori School’s administration to administer the provided medication to my child _____. I am aware that the medication will remain in a double locked position on campus and that I am responsible for providing the school with current, non-expired medication that is labeled with my child’s name. I am aware that Medication can be either internal or external. The only medications that will be administered by EVM are life saving medications that are prescribed by a physician. The school must keep the life saving medication in its original packaging along with a copy of the doctors’ orders, the pamphlet of information that comes with the prescription and the prescription label provided by the pharmacist. This medication and the appropriate paperwork must be updated by the parents every six months. Élan Vital Montessori School does not administer non-prescriptions, such as: anti-histamines, non-aspirin pain relievers and fever reducers, cough medicine, decongestants, and anti-itching creams.

Signature of Parent _____
Date

Signature of School Representative _____
Date

Type of Medication: _____

Special Instructions: To be administered as directed on the doctors’ orders and the prescription packaging.

CONFIRMATION OF RECEIPT OF PARENT HANDBOOK

I, _____, confirm that I have received a copy of Élan Vital Montessori School's Parent Handbook. I assure that I have read and understand all of the guidelines set forth. I have received this information on behalf of my minor child _____.

Signature of Parent

Date

Signature of School Representative

Date