

The Newport Montessori School

Parent & Student Handbook 2026-2027

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Section 1: Introduction to Montessori Education

The Montessori classroom is a child-centered community, designed to facilitate maximum independent learning and exploration. It is an interactive, caring, and safe atmosphere where children learn to take responsibility for themselves and each other, respecting each other's differences, abilities, work and work space, and to treat each other with courtesy and dignity. Within the Montessori classroom, the role of teachers is to guide, suggest, introduce, and model, but it is the children who become the active agents in their own growth- choosing, repeating, exploring, perfecting, observing, and expanding their own expectations and abilities.

Growth, or learning, builds itself as the child develops confidence from successful work with materials that are both intriguing and challenging. Teachers present exercises individually to each child when success is possible, but not necessarily easy. Each activity has been broken down into a detailed series of steps that are shown to the child, carefully, clearly, and again and again as required. The emphasis is initially on process rather than product. All of the early materials are "self-detecting" (pouring has not been done *quite* correctly if there is water all over the table) and "self-correcting" (a sponge or cloth to mop up is included as part of each water exercise). Once shown how to work with a particular exercise, the child learns by doing. A child can always do a piece of work again better, more easily, or more beautifully (the child will realize this), but they do not have to be told that the work has been done "wrong." It is through *their own awareness of success* that Montessori children develop the courage and confidence to engage themselves with the ever-widening sets of activities available in the classroom.

Exercises in a Montessori classroom are generally divided into practical life (washing a table, arranging flowers), sensorial (matching or grading color tablets), language, and math. Activities that we call art, music, natural science, and geography build on and incorporate abilities and awareness developed through work with some of the more specific exercises: pouring water, a practical life skill, is needed to water seedlings grown as a natural science exercise; geography puzzle-maps are at first a sensorial activity, (visual discrimination of size and shape to replace the pieces in the puzzle), then a language exercise (learning the names of the continents or countries, or –finally- writing and reading these names as a child makes their own maps).

For most of the school day, the children are free to move throughout the classroom and make their own choices of materials with which to work. "Rules" are simple: a child must know how to work with a material they are selecting (the material will have been introduced by one of the teachers, or the child may ask to be shown a material that has attracted their interest); the material must be available (not in use by someone else);

and each child must respect the classroom environment (including the particular material they are using) and preserve it as a tranquil (calm and reasonably quiet) and beautiful (orderly) place in which every member of the class can work.

With a family-like mix of ages (just three to turning six, or six to turning nine, nine to turning 11, 11 to turning 14), the Montessori class becomes a tiny community, sharing rich and unique experiences as a group and within small subgroups as well. Each child comes to know their classmates as individuals with particular interests, abilities, and idiosyncrasies. In the classroom community, each child's strengths become evident and valuable, whether in tying shoes, defining an unfamiliar vocabulary word, preparing the snack, singing, reading the calendar, observing, philosophizing. Children's abilities do not necessarily develop in a fixed order: the child who already reads may not yet be coordinated enough to carry a puzzle to the table without tripping and spilling the pieces, while the most accomplished puzzle-doer may not have yet thought a bit (or care a bit) about those things called letters. The children in the classroom begin to learn from each other, both directly and by example, understanding which child might be the one to help them with a particular task, and correspondingly which child might need help they might be able to offer.

We continually work to help the children realize that most problem situations can be resolved if those involved respect each other, take the time to think out and discuss possible solutions, and work together to implement whatever plan is decided upon.

As a child advances to first grade after three years in a Montessori primary classroom and to third grade after two years in a Montessori Lower Elementary classroom; to sixth grade after three years in a Montessori Upper Elementary classroom, and to high school after three years in a Montessori Middle School classroom, we expect that they will have developed a healthy degree of self-confidence, real academic accomplishments, and an understanding of community that involves both giving and receiving.

Section 2: About Newport Montessori School

School History & Background

The Newport Montessori School began to form when our founder, Christy Whipple, started researching pre-schools in the Newport area in 2004 for her four-year-old son Alexander, and three-year-old daughter, Natasha. Wanting something more consistent than two or three days a week options, and lengthier than a couple of hours each day, Christy began looking outside of the immediate area. She found the Hanover Montessori School and was immediately impressed; however, that school had an extensive waiting list. Wanting to utilize her Masters Degree in Education and fulfill a need in the Newport area, Christy began plans for the Newport Montessori School. It is her wish that you become as impressed with Montessori learning as she was, and that it fits your family's educational needs as it has met hers.

The Newport Montessori School was incorporated in September, 2005 as a non-profit organization with the goal of meeting the growing need for a non-traditional private preschool and kindergarten experience in the Newport and surrounding communities. Classes were first in session in September, 2005.

The school opened with two primary classes. The founding student body consisted of 18 students ranging in age from 2.5 to 5 years old. In the summer of 2008, the Newport Montessori School expanded its program to include the elementary Montessori curriculum. This expansion included the renovation of a multi-purpose room to become the elementary classroom; additionally, a new 30 x 13 multi-purpose room was added.

In the summer of 2010, NMS again expanded its facility to grow to 9,000 square feet. This expansion included the addition of three classrooms, three additional bathrooms, an office, a janitorial closet, and a multi-purpose room.

In the summer of 2012, NMS expanded its outdoor classroom possibilities with the addition of a multi-use field space. This space has been used for physical education classes, recess, special event parking, and for outdoor classroom opportunities.

In the school year 2012-2013, NMS added a security system to help keep our students and staff as safe as possible during the daily operations of our school. In the summer of 2013, NMS replaced the main sign located near the driveway entrance to our school. The new, larger sign now depicts our school's logo, as well as the ages & grades of students taught at the 96 Pine Street Campus.

In the summer of 2014, the NMS driveway and parking areas were reconstructed to maintain a smooth entrance to and departure from the school as well as to add additional parking spaces.

One week into the summer of 2015 Newport Montessori School experienced a significant flood due to a cracked water valve. Nine rooms were renovated as a result of the flood. The result was that the oldest parts of the school building became the newest.

In the Spring of 2016 the NMS School Board of Directors (BOD) voted to move forward with adding a third primary classroom. During the Summer of 2016 the former Multi-Purpose Room was renovated and furnished to create the West Primary Classroom.

During the summer of 2017, NMS completed interior and exterior painting, restoring our building to its original beauty. In June of 2017, NH Governor Chris Sununu signed SB8 (Croydon Bill) School Choice Bill into law. NMS was instrumental in the fruition of this law and takes great pride in our role of securing NMS as a school of choice for students and their families living in communities without particular grades or schools.

During the school year of 2017-2018 NMS purchased its first 14 passenger school bus. In the summer of 2018 NMS completed interior painting, replaced carpets in the North, South, and West classrooms, crack filled & seal coated the driveway & parking areas, and added a Gaga pit to the upper field playground area.

During the school year of 2018-2019 NMS purchased a 7-passenger minivan. Our geographical area experienced a windy and long winter which resulted in our school needing to replace the 5 trees that are located just outside our fenced play area. In the summer of 2019 NMS completed interior painting of our entire school building, cleaning of all carpets and buffed and waxed all tile flooring areas.

In the Spring of 2020, a world-wide pandemic brought on by the Covid 19 novel coronavirus pushed the Newport Montessori School to close its preschool classrooms out of an abundance of caution. Additionally, kindergarten through 8th grade students and staff moved to remote learning for the remainder of the school year. NMS is proud to have had a 99% participation rate and a 100% success rate for all students.

During the 2020-2021 school year, NMS upgraded to a newer 14-passenger school bus. In the summer of 2021 to meet the growing enrollment interest, the West Classroom was renovated to become a second middle school classroom. The JC locker area added additional lockers. Four Promethean boards replaced classroom white boards in the LE, UE, and JC.

In the summer of 2022, the cafeteria and lower level bathroom tiled floors were replaced. The non-skid safety tread on the stairs was also replaced. The VCT flooring on the upper level was replaced with Quartz tile. The upper parking lot was re-striped. The JC flower garden was reclaimed and the shrubs aligning the school's driveway were cut back.

In the summer of 2023, NMS purchased a second 14-passenger bus to replace an aging mini-van. This increased the number of students able to be transported at one time. Additionally, the School's outdoor play structure dragon and sunshades were replaced. Both the bus and play structure purchases were due to generous donors.

In the summer of 2024 carpets were replaced in the front lobby (Flat Rock Tile & Stone), the Lower Elementary Classroom, and the Upper Elementary Classroom (Byron's Flooring). The mini-split heating/cooling unit was replaced in the Director's Office (AEC and Lake Sunapee Plumbing & Heating). Additionally, the school sign was refurbished by Paint n Place Signs.

As Newport Montessori School entered its operation in the 2025-2026 school year, the community came together to celebrate two decades of Montessori education in Newport. Monthly celebrations throughout the year honored the school's growth, its students and families, and the extraordinary legacy of its founder.

In the summer of 2025, the school community suffered a profound loss with the passing of founder and Director Christy Whipple. Christy built Newport Montessori School from the ground up and led it with vision, warmth, and unwavering dedication for twenty years. During the 2025-2026 school year, Richard Hammond served as Interim Director, providing continuity of operations during a time of grief and transition for the entire school community.

In the March of 2026, Newport Montessori School experienced a boiler fire that resulted in damage to portions of the building. The school community responded with resilience, and renovation work was undertaken promptly. The building was professionally cleaned, and a new boiler along with a fire panel were installed. All repairs were completed in time for the start of the 2026-2027 school year, allowing NMS to welcome students back to a restored and refreshed building.

The 2026-2027 school year marks the beginning of a new chapter in school leadership. Amanda Hanson, a longtime NMS teacher and Assistant Director, assumed the role of Director — bringing deep knowledge of the school's students, classrooms, and values to her new role. Although we have enjoyed remarkable growth over twenty years, we remain committed to a school that is small enough to maintain a feeling of community. Ultimately, we hope to have a lasting and meaningful impact on each child who passes through our doors.

Licensing & Credentials

The Newport Montessori School is licensed exempt by the State of New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Division of Childcare Licensing. NMS is also an approved, non-public school as defined by the State of New Hampshire Department

of Education. Additionally, NMS is an affiliate of the American Montessori Society. NMS has been an approved candidate for accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and the Association of Independent Schools in New England (AISNE).

Classroom Definitions

Primary: this refers to a Montessori multi-aged classroom consisting of students between the ages of 2.5 and 6 years of age (preschool and kindergarten).

Lower Elementary: this refers to a Montessori multi-aged classroom consisting of students between the ages of 6-8 years of age (grades 1, 2, and 3).

Upper Elementary: this refers to a Montessori multi-aged classroom consisting of students between the ages of 9-11 years of age (grades 3, 4, and 5).

Junior Years: this refers to a Montessori multi-aged classroom consisting of students between the ages of 11-14 years of age (grades 6, 7, and 8).

Our Program: Enrollment Options

Primary

Our primary classrooms are in session from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Friday. There is a before-school child-care program and two sessions of after-school child care offered from 7:30 a.m.-8:15 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

Children who are three years old (occasionally, nearly three) at the start of the school year are enrolled for five mornings (8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.). Children five years old (in their kindergarten year) are enrolled Monday through Thursday for the full day (8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.) and on Friday for the morning only (8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.) Parents of the three and four year olds may choose either the morning option or (with the concurrence of the teachers) the full day option for their children. All children bring lunch to school each day or they may purchase hot lunch through the Upper Elementary's Meals Program.

During the morning hours, 8:30 a.m. to about 11:30 a.m., both of our classrooms closely resemble the traditional Montessori classroom described in Section 1: Introduction to Montessori education. When the weather is beautiful-in any season- we may take extra

advantage of outdoor opportunities offered by our woodland environment. Preschool students participate in 30 minute art classes, PE classes, Indonesian classes, and Music classes once each week. Kindergarten students participate in 45 minute art classes, PE classes, and Music classes once each week. Elementary & Middle School students participate in these specialty classes for a minimum of one hour each week. We also come together as a school once each week for a Friday assembly of singing, practiced performances, school concerns, school praises, and muffin snacks. At least once each month our whole school comes together for participation in activities led by our monthly presenters. Past presenters include: The Newport Police Department, The Newport Fire Department, Hamstead Performers, Steve Blunt (musician), Wildlife Encounters, Junk 2 Funk, and various musicians and magicians.

Lunch each day will begin close to 11:15 a.m. and after lunch, weather permitting, we all play outside together, or inside in the event of cold or wet weather. Morning children are normally picked up from the play yard, and older children continue to play outside until 1:00 p.m. or so- a good hour or more.

When the full day children come in from recess, they are divided into year long groups (there are three separate groups) by age and reading level. We will be able to structure this reading time to the particular children in the group, choosing ever longer picture and then chapter books that first build on the children's interests and finish by broadening their horizons. We close each reading group with a snack shared by all three reading groups in our South Classroom. A book is read by one of the teachers or students to the whole group.

There is an after-school child-care program available to interested parents for children ages 3 and older. This program will operate from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. The children will be monitored by a teacher or aide and will be in the cafeteria for arts and crafts or outside on the playground depending on weather. No formal lessons will be given in this program; it is strictly a child-care program available to accommodate those parents whose schedules do not allow them to pick up their child at 12:30 or 2:30 p.m.

The Newport Montessori School has two primary classrooms. Twenty-one students may be assigned to each fully enrolled classroom at the start of the school year. Any changes in students assigned to a classroom will come as a result of director and teacher agreement. Also, any changes will take place within the first two weeks of the school year.

Start of the year home visits (for primary students only): In order to help new children feel comfortable as they begin the year in a new, or first, school setting, our classroom teachers will try to arrange a short informal visit with each child at their home in the last few days before school starts. Children may choose to show the visiting teachers something of special interest to them (their bedroom, a favorite toy, a pet). They may have questions about the new school to ask. They may feel suddenly shy and not say a word. They may even choose to ignore the visitors entirely. No matter which response the child makes, the dual purposes of the visit are nevertheless accomplished. The teachers have a context in which to place the child and enough particular information to help draw out the child some days later at the school. The child, on the other hand, will see at least two familiar faces when they come to school on the first day.

Elementary & Middle School

Our Elementary & Middle School (Junior Class) classrooms are in session from 8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Monday through Friday. There is an after school child care program offered from 3:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

Children who are six years old (occasionally nearly six) at the start of the school year are enrolled for five full days (8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.) Monday through Friday. All children bring their lunch to school each day or they may purchase hot lunch through the Upper Elementary Meals Program.

During the morning hours, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. our elementary & middle school classrooms resemble the traditional Montessori classroom described in Section 1: Introduction to Montessori education. When the weather is beautiful-in any season- we may take extra advantages of outdoor opportunities offered by our woodland environment.

Lunch will begin close to 12:00 each day. After lunch, weather permitting, we all play outside together, or inside in the event of cold or wet weather. Our recess overlaps with the primary students' recess. The elementary & middle school outdoor time will be for at least 45 minutes each day.

When the students return to the building at the conclusion of our outdoor time, the elementary & middle school students participate in the extra curricular classes of Art, Physical Education, Indonesian, and Music at least one hour each week. The extra curricular classes at this level often involve trips outside of the classroom. For example, the art class may visit the Newport Library Arts Center (located on Belknap Avenue). Permission slips will be given to parents and guardians prior to the date of an out of

building excursion in an effort to keep parents informed of their child's whereabouts during the school day.

There is an after-school child-care program available to interested parents for children enrolled in the elementary & middle school program. This program will operate from 3:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. The children will be monitored by a teacher or aide and will be in the cafeteria for arts and crafts or outside on the playground depending on weather. No formal lessons will be given in this program; it is strictly a child-care program available to accommodate those parents whose schedules do not allow them to pick up their child at 3:15 p.m.

The Newport Montessori School has 4 elementary & middle school classrooms. Up to 30 students will be assigned to the classroom at the start of the school year; two teachers will be assigned to each fully enrolled classroom at the start of the school year.

A Note About Dates & Timelines

Please note that specific months and timelines referenced throughout this handbook — such as conference schedules, reporting windows, and other school activities — reflect approximate timeframes. The Director retains flexibility to adjust schedules as needed to meet the operational needs of the school.

Section 3: School Calendar & Attendance

School Calendar

At the start of each school year, families will receive a school calendar identifying important dates, including holidays, vacations, school events, music concerts, and other special activities. Families will be notified of any changes to the calendar.

The current school calendar is available at www.newportmontessori.org. The NMS calendar generally follows, but does not exactly match, the Newport School District calendar.

Unlike the public-school calendar, the last day of school indicated on the NMS calendar does not change because of snow days.

Snow Days & School Closings

Our decision to close school for snow will be based on the ability of students and teachers to get to school safely. Because our students travel by car, and because we have many students outside the Newport area, even if we do open the school, we ask that you make the decision based on the safety of the roads where you live. Missing a day or two of school is a fair exchange for your safety.

Snow day and closing announcements are also posted on the school's Facebook page and WMUR Channel 9, and emailed to families.

Edlio App

Family members of enrolled students are encouraged to download the Edlio App to receive snow day, school closing, and other school notifications directly to their phone. The school website, www.newportmontessori.org, may also have snow day and other notifications on the home page.

Absence from School

To obtain the most benefit from instruction and participation, it is important that students arrive and depart from school each day on time.

If your child will not be attending school, please call the school and inform the school administrative assistant. If your child is absent and we have not heard from you by 9:30 a.m. we will telephone you. The staff takes a special interest in each child's health and welfare. We would appreciate a phone call from you.

Unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures are closely monitored by the School. Missing classroom time for reasons other than illness or other sufficient cause, determined at the discretion of the School in a manner consistent with state law, will be considered unexcused.

The School reserves the right to disenroll any student who has six or more unexcused absences within a school year. Additionally, the School may take other action such as alerting local or state authorities that the student is believed to be truant. Unexcused tardiness and early departures of more than one hour shall count as one-half of an unexcused absence day.

The School may require documentation to excuse absences at its discretion, including, but not limited to, documentation from a treating medical provider.

Section 4: Student Health & Medical Policies

Illness & When to Keep Your Child Home

A child should be kept home if they have a fever, a bad cough or cold, an unidentified rash, red or discharging eyes, has vomited within twenty-four hours, seems unusually fatigued, or is complaining of an ear ache, head ache, or stomach ache. A day at home is in the best interest of any child who is, or has been, sick, and is also an enormous help in limiting the spread of germs throughout the school. One child sent to school with gooey eyes, excessively sneezing, or a runny-nosed cold can infect a whole classroom (including teachers). Please be as prudent as possible if you think your child might have a spreadable condition.

Reporting and Illness or Absence

When your child is going to be absent, please notify the school by 9:00 a.m. If your child has a communicable illness, please let the school know this as well. The school, in turn, will do our best to inform parents of any communicable illnesses we know to be “going around.”

Returning to School After Illness

When a child has been home from school with an illness, it is sometimes hard to tell when they are well enough to return. *As a general rule of thumb, a child should be fever-free and not have vomited for twenty-four hours before returning to school.* (A child's temperature often drops to normal by early morning, only to rise again later in the day. Similarly, a child's digestive system might be emptied of food already eaten but not yet ready to keep food down.) The following are more specific guidelines for a number of commonly encountered situations:

- **Cold** : Twenty-four hours after fever is gone, providing there is no heavy or discolored nasal discharge
- **Strep throat**: after the child has been on medication for twenty-four hours
- **Conjunctivitis**: Eyes should be clear of discharge and, if bacterial, the child needs to have been on medication for twenty-four hours
- **Impetigo**: After the child has been on medication for forty-eight hours and does not have oozing lesions
- **Ear infection**: When the child has been pain and fever free for twenty-four hours
- **Head lice**: After treatment prescribed by child's physician, and when no egg cases are present

- **Communicable illness:** The school will follow current New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) guidance regarding communicable illnesses, including recommended exclusion and return-to-school requirements.

Student Health Forms

For new students, a New Hampshire Health Form must be completed by your child's physician at the start of each school year. (This will be included in the August Parent Packet to be returned on or before your child's first day of school.) For returning students, a new health form must be completed by your child's physician immediately following his/her birthday.

Illness During the School Day

In spite of everyone's careful attention, a child may sometimes become sick at school. If a child does not feel well, we will normally take their temperature and allow them to rest in a quiet place before checking again. Often, a short rest is all that is needed. If symptoms continue, or the child has a fever or other signs of illness, we will contact the parents. Until a parent or designated adult arrives, the child will be kept comfortable, quiet, and apart from classmates. Our lofts may serve as a classroom infirmary.

Medical Emergencies

At the start of the school year, a parent or guardian must sign a Medical Release form authorizing the school to seek emergency care. This information is collected through our online Family ID registration. In the event of an accident or sudden illness, the school will make every effort to contact parents and, when necessary, call 911. If needed, your child will be transported by ambulance to Valley Regional Hospital in Claremont, NH. The emergency form will accompany the child so treatment can be administered if a parent is not present.

Medication Administration

If your child needs medication during the school day, it must be provided in its original prescription container with a signed parent/guardian note stating the time and dosage to be given. This applies to both prescription and non-prescription medications. Medication must be given directly to the administrative assistant or Director and may not be left in a child's cubby or lunch box. When medication is required three times daily, we prefer that doses be given before school, after school, and at bedtime whenever possible.

Section 5: Student Arrival & Dismissal

Morning Arrival

The start of the school day is 8:30 a.m., although the school doors will be open at 7:45 a.m. for Elementary & Middle School students and 8:10 a.m. for Primary students in order to accommodate parents with complicated morning schedules. We expect all Elementary & Middle School students to be in the building no later than 8:00 a.m. We expect primary children to trickle in between 8:10 and 8:30 a.m. Arrival later than 8:30 (except in unusual circumstances) is difficult both for children and for teachers. Classroom activity is by then under way. A child arriving after 8:45 finds it hard to enter the environment when all of their classmates are already at work, and teachers may have to interrupt work just begun (with one or more of the children) to greet and settle the new arrival. So, for the good of all, it is important for your child to be at the classroom door within the "on time" window.

When you arrive at school, please stay with your child in the cubby room and wait for them to remove outside clothes and change into inside shoes. We expect that you will accompany your child to the classroom entrance. Normally it is best to say goodbyes as the children enter the classroom, although this is not a hard-and-fast rule. If your arrival is on the early side and if your child has something special they want to show you, it is fine to come in quietly and briefly to look at whatever has excited your child. Elementary & Middle School students need not be accompanied into the school building. Students in grades 3-8 will enter through the lower doors and be greeted by Mr. Alan or Mr. Ryder. Students in preschool, kindergarten, grades 1 & 2 will enter through the main lobby doors; Either the school secretary or Miss Amanda will greet your child in the upper parking lot. After 8:30 Elementary & Middle School students must be accompanied into the building and signed in by their parent/guardian.

Half-Day Dismissal

The school day ends for half-day children at 12:30 p.m. By the 12:30 pick-up time, we will almost always be outside (poor weather causes the most obvious exception and we can then be found in our classrooms. If you arrive at school before 12:30, please plan to wait outside (in your car or in the play yard) until you see the children outside. When you do see the children outside, we would like you to come around the building (rather than through it) to greet your child. If it is raining, please come inside to find your child in his/her classroom.

Recognizing that it is difficult to time your arrival at the school to the exact minute, we view the mid-day pick-up time as extending from 12:30-12:45, but it is important that you

arrive *not later than 12:45*. We invite you to then spend a few minutes watching your child at play, talking with other parents, or asking a quick question of an available teacher. When you are picking up a child at mid-day, we are happy to have younger siblings join in the play-yard activities. **It is important for all parents to remember, however, that they are the ones responsible for younger siblings and that all children playing at school must respect the rules and boundaries the school has established for outside play (see Section 8).**

When you are ready to leave, please let a teacher know you are going. Take your child in through the cubby-room door to collect his/her lunch box, extra clothes, paintings, etc. (often the children will know of things to take home that might otherwise be overlooked.) Stay with your child in the building, and leave together through the parking-lot doors. Children normally should not need to use the bathroom or have a drink on the way through (having just done these things at lunch time). In the event that a child does need to use the bathroom, we would like to ask that they use the bathroom in their own classroom (leaving outside shoes/boots at the classroom door) rather than the cubby room bathroom reserved for adults.

Even though full-day children will quite probably still be playing outside, we do expect all half-day children to have left the play yard by 12:30 p.m., with the exception of Fridays. However, on Friday afternoons, the school building will be closed at 1:00 p.m., so please plan to collect all belongings and use the bathrooms, if needed, before that time. (Teachers count on using the Friday hour between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. to clean the classrooms, do classroom laundry, etc., and hold staff meetings.)

Full-day Pick-Up

Our full-day primary program ends at 2:30 p.m. At the afternoon pick-up time, we are almost always inside, and you can come in to fetch your child.

Although we have several groups for reading, the full-day children have been combined in such a way as to provide more social opportunities in the afternoon. As a result, the children may not be reading in their morning classrooms. You will learn at the start of the year in which room your child's reading group meets. If you need to pick your child up between 2:15 and 2:30, please see the Administrative Assistant; she will fetch your child from his/her reading group session. (The reading group will still be at work, so please be sure to enter quietly.) If you know that your child needs to leave exceptionally early (before 2:15), and this is not a regular part of your schedule, it is helpful if you notify your child's teacher in the morning.

At 2:30, or shortly thereafter, we will take children into the cubby room to prepare for pick-up. We ask children to wait at their cubbies (rather than running to greet an entering parent) until the parent or caregiver comes to them. Please keep your child with you as you collect his/her belongings, speak to other parents or teachers, etc. Children should not approach the doors to the parking lot until you are ready to leave. *Children may never leave the building – to stand on the front step, go to the car, or play outside in the play yard – unless a parent or other caregiver is with them.*

You are welcome to use the playground at pick-up time, but please remember that for safety and consistency the same playground rules apply during and after school hours. The exterior doors of the school are locked at all times as part of our school's safety policy and procedures.

Authorized Pick-Up

If a child will be picked up on a regular basis by someone other than their parents, the name(s) of such individual(s) should be listed on the "permissions" form filed with the school at the start of the year. The morning of the alternate pick-up, the parent/guardian will be asked to complete an alternate pick-up form. The alternate pick-up person must bring this form to the supervising teacher on the playground before they remove the child from the playground. For this reason, the alternate pick-up person should first enter the building to sign the student out and to retrieve the alternate pick-up form from the school administrative assistant. We will only release your child to individuals listed on the permissions form and who are in possession of the alternate pickup form. (If necessary, you may add to or change the list of named individuals during the course of the year.)

If an emergency should arise, or your plans should change during the time your child is at school, please call the school and let us know who will be picking up your child (a message on the answering machine is necessary and sufficient authorization).

It is important to remember that *we are not permitted to release a child to someone other than a parent or an individual enumerated on the permission form without a signed and dated note or a telephone message from the parent(s).* It is not sufficient for an adult not on your list (even a grandparent or the parent of another child in the school) to appear and tell us that you have asked them to fetch your child.

After-School Childcare Pick-UP

This program concludes at 5:30 p.m. each day. The children will almost always be outside or if the weather is not permitting, downstairs in the cafeteria. Please pick-up

your child from the outdoor play area by entering the play area from outside, rather than by walking through the building. Follow the same guidelines as those picking-up a child at 12:30 p.m. Should your child be located inside the school building, please use the front entrance of the building. Walk through the cubby area and down the stairs near the Director's office. Be sure to speak to your child's teacher when you are ready to leave.

Schedule Exceptions

Occasionally, parents may have obligations that conflict with normal drop-off or pick-up times. If, exceptionally, you find that it would be easier for you to drop your child off, or pick them up earlier or later, than the normal drop-off/pick-up times, we are happy to try to accommodate your needs if we are consulted *in advance*. If you know of such a need (even an occasional full day for a half-day child), please speak to the administrative assistant as much in advance as possible (not later than the day before).

Section 6: School Environment & Safety [UPDATED]

The Crossroads of NMS

Just beyond our front entryway, the entry and cubby area serve as the crossroads of NMS. This busy space connects the front desk with our Primary classrooms, play yard, downstairs areas, and adult bathroom. Because students, families, and staff move through this shared space throughout the day, we ask everyone to follow a few simple "rules of the road" to keep it safe, comfortable, and welcoming.

Cubby Storage & Belongings

Each child has a cubby labeled with their name. During the school day, jackets, sweaters, snow pants, hats, scarves, etc., are hung on the child's hook. The space under the cubby seat is intended for footwear only, storing slippers (indoor shoes) when children are outside, shoes or boots when the children are in the classroom. The seat has been made deep enough so that lunch boxes can be placed at the back of the seat and children can sit comfortably in front of them. In winter, mittens that are dry are best stuffed into pockets or sleeves. When wet, mittens can be laid out on the cubby seat or stood up in boot tops.

The children's indoor shoes are normally kept at school overnight and through weekends and vacations. Some families will also find it helpful to leave snow pants or boots at school, especially in the spring when we need these clothes to play outside but not necessarily to go back and forth to school. We ask that you try to limit clothing stored in the cubbies to the necessities (those actually used each day). Please keep the cubbies from becoming catch-alls for forgotten sweaters, outgrown shoes, left-over lunches...

Students in grades 1-8 have locker/cubby storage areas in or just outside of their assigned classroom.

Parent Folders

In the cubby room, just outside of each primary classroom, is a milk crate file with a folder for parents of each of the children in that classroom (labeled with the name of the child). At the back of the upstairs cubby area is an area containing teacher mailboxes. We would like to remind you that these folders are the mailboxes for exchange of information among the *adults* of the school community. It is important that parents (or other adult caregivers), rather than children, check the folders each day.

Students in grades 1-8 have a travel folder that should be checked each day after school. Parents will find the two pockets labeled "return to school" and "keep at home".

Entrusting your child/student with transporting items between home and school is a practical life skill as important to their increasing maturity responsibilities as core curriculum subjects.

Safety

There are a number of things to remember in order for children to use the cubby room safely:

- Children's feet need to remain on the cubby room floor. (The cubby seats do seem inviting for children to stand on, but hooks are then dangerously close to eye height). Please help us by reminding your child of this even when teachers are not present.
- It is not safe for children to run in the cubby room.
- To keep everyone safe at pickup time, we ask the children to stay at their cubbies until parents or care-givers come to them (which is to say, we cannot permit them to run to meet a parent entering the door).
- Please keep children with you as you collect lunch boxes, check folders, etc. For obvious reasons, we cannot have unaccompanied children "hanging around" the doors as parents finish up business in the school.
- *Children leaving the building from the cubby room or entry area must always be accompanied by an adult. It is never all right to send a child, however responsible, out to wait on the front step or to play outside alone.*

Cubby-Room Bathroom

Except in emergencies, the cubby room bathroom is intended for adults only.

Cell Phone & Smart Watch Use

Parents/Guardians please try to conclude all cell phone conversations prior to entering the school building.

It is the policy of the Newport Montessori School for staff to be engaged with students and the learning process at all times that staff members are responsible for student supervision. Therefore, apart from a rare emergency, all staff are prohibited from making personal calls or having personal text communications while responsible for students. Violations of this policy may lead to discipline. Repeat violations of this policy may lead to discipline up to and including administrative leave or termination.

For Students

The use of personal communication devices by students during the school day has become a constant disruption to the educational environment, not conducive to

productive learning experiences and often the source of multiple disciplinary interventions.

Students may not have a personal communication device (cell phone or other electronic device) "on" or in use during the school day or in a location that allows the student to hear or see the activated device during the school day. Any such item must be stored in a personal backpack or school designated area. Such items should not be kept on the person or in the clothing of a student. The School will provide a locked space for all students to store their electronic devices in the event that a student is non-compliant with storing their device in their personal backpack or school designated area.

Communication during emergency conditions-all staff members have access to communication devices during the school day and can contact the school office or emergency services should emergency conditions arise. During an actual school emergency, students who access stored personal communication devices to make calls for assistance will not be non-compliant.

Personal headphones/ear buds that connect directly to school issued computers will be allowed for instructional purposes as assigned by the teacher when using the school issued device.

Discipline of Students

If a student violates this policy and is found to have a device out during the school day, they will be sent to school administration. If administration determines that the student has failed to demonstrate the ability to adhere to applicable rules, regulations, and policy, the device will be turned over to administration. The device will be returned to the student at the conclusion of the school day. In the event that a student violates this policy on more than one occasion, parents/legal guardians of minor students will be required to make arrangements for picking up the device.

Prohibition Against Firearms on School Premises

The purpose of this policy is to assure a safe school environment for students, staff and the public. No student or non-student, including adults and visitors, shall possess any firearm of any type on the Newport Montessori School Premises. Should a parent or other responsible adult who can legally possess a firearm have a firearm in his or her vehicle upon entering into the school parking lot, the firearm must remain locked and in a safe condition within the vehicle at all times. Any person found to be carrying a firearm into the school building will be in strict violation of this policy and the School reserves the right to take any appropriate action at that time, including contacting

the local police. This policy does not apply to Certified Law Enforcement Officers who regularly possess a firearm for the purpose of carrying out official duties.

Note: Possession of a firearm within 1,000 feet of school property without a valid New Hampshire Pistol/Revolver License, even though New Hampshire no longer requires said license for general concealed carry, is a felony criminal violation of federal law pursuant to the Gun Free School Zones Act of 1990. 18 U.S.C. § 921 et seq.

Section 7: Outdoor & Play Areas

Outdoor Environment

The Newport Montessori School has constructed an outdoor environment for use by students and staff. One may enter the outdoor environment on the path behind the paved turn-around area near the upper parking lot. The path proceeds parallel to the school building for approximately 1500 feet concluding near the play yard. We try to utilize this trail as often as possible throughout the school year to note changes in seasons as seen by wildlife, plant growth, and other seasonal indicators.

Play Yard

- Children are to stay in the fenced in area unless accompanied by a parent, guardian, or teacher
- Children are to proceed feet first down the slides
- Children are to use the rock wall and bar climber one at a time
- The window seat is for sitting as opposed to climbing
- The bark mulch needs to stay on the ground
- Siblings are welcome to join us with parent/guardian supervision
- Children are encouraged to climb the dragon in a safe manner
- Children are encouraged to use the sand area to the depths of their imaginations
- Children are encouraged to enjoy the tether ball equipment in a safe manner
- Children are encouraged to use the outdoor Gaga Pit in an appropriate and safe manner
- Children are encouraged to enjoy the Frisbee Golf course in an appropriate manner

Indoor Play Areas

- Walking is allowed
- Indoor voices are encouraged
- Indoor shoes are to be worn at all times
- The piano may only be used when accompanied by a teacher

Asbestos Statement

The Newport Montessori School has no asbestos-containing building materials (ACBM). The Director will maintain the school's AHERA Management Plan and re-inspection reports.

Section 8: Clothing

Children should come to school in comfortable, practical clothing that can stand the normal wear and tear of a school day (working on mats on the floor, playing outside, painting at the easel, etc.). In the classroom, children should wear only clothing that they can manage themselves. Please be sure your child is able to fasten and unfasten belts, buttons, overall clips, etc., so that they may use the bathroom without needing help from a staff member.

Each child also needs a complete change of clothes (that fit and are appropriate to the season) to be kept at school in case of accidents (among other things, we use a lot of water in the classroom). It is helpful if the child's name is written in/on every item of clothing, including shoes (an indelible pen works well for this).

We plan to go outside almost every day to play in the yard or to take a walk unless it is actually raining or too cold to be pleasurable (usually below about 25 F.). In order to make life at school as pleasant and easy as possible for your child, it is important that they have warm enough clothing for a prolonged period out of doors every day- sweater, jacket, hat, mittens, a scarf as appropriate to the season and to the weather that day. It is helpful if your child can manage most of their outdoor clothing independently. Staff and older children are always willing to help, but everyone's play-time is shortened when many children have overly-complex clothing with which to deal.

Shoes: indoor and outdoor

Children will need "indoor shoes" to wear in the classroom all of the time. This is designed to keep the classroom and children clean and quiet, and to save wear and tear on the floor, rugs, and work mats. Indoor shoes should be inconspicuous, soft-soled (not sneakers), and easy to put on (pull-on is best). Ballet slippers and leather-soled shoes both make excellent indoor shoes and are readily available, but there are many other possibilities as well. State child care regulations require that to be acceptable for classroom use, slippers must have soles (this is in case of fire drills or alarms), sandals must have **back straps**. Neither flip flops nor socks will do. It would be helpful if each child could already have indoor shoes (labeled with the child's name) on the first day they come to school. Indoor shoes will be kept at school in each child's cubby. Please keep in mind that all floors in all areas of our building are heated by radiant heat, thus, light weight, less insulated shoes work best to keep youngsters from over-heating.

We plan to go outside almost everyday to play in the yard or to take a walk. Children need sturdy, safe, and weather-appropriate shoes or boots every single day (this includes waterproof footwear for the dewy grass of spring and fall mornings).

Again, as is the case with clothing- staff members are always ready to help with those parts of dressing that a child has not quite mastered. When choosing shoes, however, it will be helpful to the whole class if you are able to find shoes for your child (both indoor and outdoor) that are both functional and as easy for the child to deal with as possible.

Crocs are not safe footwear for Physical Education activities. To prevent injuries and accidents, a child wearing crocs to PE class will be asked to observe. The school also reserves the right to ask a student to observe who is wearing other inappropriate footwear.

Section 9: School Lunch & Snack Programs

Snacks

Primary Classrooms Snack Program

Upon entering their classrooms at the start of the day, primary students will place their snack container in the classroom snack holder. For reading group students, they will take out their afternoon snack from their cubby area on their way to afternoon snack following their reading group session.

Elementary & Middle School Class Snack Program

Elementary & Middle School students are asked to bring a snack in their lunchbox. The snack will be eaten in the classroom at some point during the morning work period. Some suggestions include: cheese sticks or cubes, yogurt, cream cheese, hummus, peeled hard-boiled eggs, fresh and dried fruits, fresh vegetables, mild salsa and chips. On days when an elementary & middle school student is celebrating a birthday, that student is asked to bring in a birthday snack to share with his/her classmates. Please note: on birthday celebration days, your child may or may not eat their individual snack packed in their lunchbox.

Lunches

All of the children will be staying for lunch on most days. Classrooms alternate lunch periods from day to day to best utilize our cafeteria located downstairs. Elementary & Middle School lunch time will follow the primary lunch time. When the weather permits, we will eat outside on the lawn.

It is most important that your child actually likes the lunch they bring. Many children are happiest with exactly the same (well-balanced) lunch every day. We do ask that you do not send candy or gooey cupcakes as part of your child's lunch.

We always have water available for children to drink at lunch (although your child may prefer to bring fruit juice or a thermos with milk). We also have spoons, forks, and knives for the children to use. It is not necessary (or even desirable) to send "silverware" to school with your child.

Please be sure that any containers you send are leak-proof! Also, please label your child's lunch box with his/her name, as well as any plastic containers or thermoses you may pack with the lunch.

NMS offers a hot lunch service Monday through Friday. Hot lunch at NMS is provided by Henry's Cafe. The NMS Upper Elementary Class Business (UE's Busy Bees) coordinates the hot lunch service.

No Nut Policy

Due to a number of life threatening food allergies within our student population, the NMS Board of Directors has instituted a No Nut Policy (peanuts, peanut butter, almonds, cashews, walnuts, etc). We rely on the understanding and cooperation of parents, students, and staff members to make sure that no nuts or nut products are brought to the school at any time—including coffee hour, snack, lunch, birthday treats, and potluck dishes. If an individual is exposed to nuts at home before coming to school, we ask that person to be sure to wash hands and remove any traces of peanut butter from skin, face, and clothing.

Cross contamination is the greatest risk to children with these allergies. An allergic reaction can happen just by touching a material or door knob that a child who just ate one of these items previously touched, or even breathing peanut dust in the air. Given the severity of the consequences to children with nut allergies, any child who brings in snack or lunch items containing peanuts or tree nuts will not be allowed to eat them (an alternative will be provided by the school) and a note will be sent home to the parents reminding them of the policy. We realize that for some children, not having peanut butter and jelly sandwiches is a tough adjustment, but when the life of another child is at stake, it's a small sacrifice to make.

For children who are having difficulty giving up peanut butter sandwiches, given the school's no nut policy, we recommend you try Natural or Sunbutter (it's a peanut alternative made with sunflower seeds in a nut free facility and even our pickiest taste testers loved it). You can find it at Hannaford or Shaw's in the Natural foods section. Parents of children with food allergies need to notify staff immediately of your child's condition and provide the school with either antihistamine or an EpiPen prescription specifically for your child. If your child has other food allergies, you may be asked to provide your child's own snack and make us aware if your child has any other food exposure reactions. Please note this food policy is not fail safe. The school and the staff will take all the precautions reasonably possible to keep your child safe while at school. If you have any concerns, please contact the school's Director.

Section 10: Extracurricular Activities

In addition to our academic studies, Newport Montessori School is pleased to offer art, Music, Indonesian, and Physical Education to all of our students. These extracurricular activities will take place during the morning sessions each week to enable all of our primary students, regardless of their enrollment, to partake.

Music

NMS plans to offer foreign language instruction during the 2026–2027 school year. Details regarding the program and instructor are pending and will be shared with families when available.

Foreign Language

NMS plans to offer foreign language instruction during the 2026–2027 school year. Details regarding the program and instructor are pending and will be shared with families when available.

Art

Primary students participate in art class under the direction of Miss Maria Wallace. Miss Maria teaches art classes on Thursdays in our school's cafeteria.

Elementary & Middle School students will participate in Art class on Wednesday in 45-60 minutes classes. In an effort to expand our elementary & middle school art program, students will visit the Newport Library Arts Center gallery to attend different showings. It is our goal to have a gallery event showing the art work of our elementary & middle school students sometime in the spring.

Physical Education

PE at Newport Montessori School will be instructed by Ray Shepardson. Mr. Shep will come to the school on Wednesdays. He will work with the primary students in one of three groups outdoors; on inclement weather days, PE will take place in our cafeteria and outdoor play areas.

Elementary & Middle School students will have a spectacular PE program filled with various physical activities including: indoor swimming, gymnastics, skiing, snowboarding, and more. Elementary & Middle School students will bring home a participation form at the start of each new experiential activity. All PE activities will be of a cooperative nature.

Section 11: Birthday Celebrations

The *Celebration of Life* is our way of commemorating your child's birthday in the classroom and sharing happy moments and memories with the birthday child. We encourage every child to enjoy this special experience. Summer birthdays are celebrated in June.

During the Celebration of Life, the birthday child walks around a symbolic circle representing the months of the year, once for each year of their life. With each circle, a brief history of that year is read and a photograph is shared. Parents prepare the history and photographs, marking the child's age on the back of each photo. Each year the child is at NMS, parents add to the history. All photographs and materials will be returned.

Example:

1st year: _____ was born in _____ on _____. She/He was a happy, healthy baby. During the summer, he went to visit his grandmother in Austin, Texas. He took along his favorite toy; a brown bear named Burt.

2nd year: When _____ was one year old, he/she stood up and walked to his/her dad. For his/her birthday, his/her cousins came to share the birthday cake. He/She made friends with the next door neighbor's dog, Sam; so the first word he said was, "Sam."

3rd year: When _____ was two years old, he/she...

4th year: When _____ was three years old, he/she...

5th year: When _____ was four years old, he/she...

6th year: When _____ was five years old, he/she...

Parents are welcome to bring a birthday snack to share with the classroom during snack time on the day of their child's Celebration of Life. Appropriate snacks include muffins, fruit, crackers, and cheese. Some children also enjoy presenting a book or donating classroom materials in honor of their birthday; your child's teacher would be happy to make a recommendation.

Parents are also invited to join the Celebration of Life at Circle Time. You may tell us about your child and create a timeline of pictures from birth to the present. At the beginning of your child's birthday month, you will receive a letter with the date, time, and a brief explanation of the celebration.

Birthdays are special events at Newport Montessori, and we look forward to celebrating with you and your child.

Section 12: Tuition [UPDATED]

Tuition Obligation

By the start of the school year, individual parents or the tuitioning school district of each enrolled child will have signed a contract with the school obligating them to the full amount of tuition for the academic year. However, recognizing that there could be a circumstance of mismatch between family or child and school, the school has instituted a "trial period" of thirty calendar days from the child's first day of attendance, during which the child may be withdrawn by the parent(s) or tuitioning school district at the recommendation of the teachers without further financial commitment beyond the pro rata cost of one month's attendance. If a child is (for whatever reason) withdrawn by the parents *after* the thirty-day trial period, the family will be held responsible for full payment of tuition unless the school chooses to forgive this obligation in part or in whole.

Tuition Payment Options

A deposit of ten percent of the child's annual tuition normally accompanies the original enrollment agreement for each child. Parents may choose to pay the remainder of the annual tuition in two equal installments (billed at the end of September and at the end of January) or in nine equal installments (due as billed at the start of each month beginning with September and going through May).

For each payment option, you will receive a tuition statement (bill) in advance of each "payment due" date. The amount billed is calculated by dividing the amount still owed for the year by the number of payments remaining. Invoices will be emailed. Parents may opt to utilize ACH (automated clearing house), credit cards (with a 3.5% convenience fee), check or cash.

Payments may be made online or brought to the payment box on the Administrative Assistant's desk.

Timely Payments

Families are expected to make all tuition payments on time and in accordance with the agreed-upon payment schedule. Tuition bills are presented at least a week in advance of the due date, which is always a Friday early in the new month.

Financial Difficulties

If at any time during the year a parent or guardian has difficulty meeting a required tuition payment, please contact the Director as soon as possible. We will work with families whenever possible to establish a mutually satisfactory payment arrangement.

Overdue Tuition

We understand that circumstances may arise that make it difficult for a family to remain current with tuition payments. Families should contact the Director as soon as possible so that payment arrangements can be discussed.

Overdue accounts will first be addressed by the School Director. If payment remains outstanding, the matter may be referred to the Board of Directors at its next monthly meeting.

Tuition balances unpaid more than 30 days past their due date will accrue interest at a rate of **1.5% per month (18% annually)**. When necessary, the School and family may establish a written repayment agreement outlining a schedule for bringing the account current.

Families with an outstanding balance are expected to remain current with any agreed-upon repayment schedule as well as ongoing tuition and fees. If an account remains delinquent or an agreed-upon repayment plan is not maintained, the School may take additional steps consistent with its Tuition Payment Policy, including limiting participation in school programs or services. Outstanding tuition balances must be resolved before a student may re-enroll for the following school year.

Sibling Discount

The school offers a 10% tuition discount to families for every sibling enrolled of a currently enrolled student.

Tuitioning School Districts

A school district tuitioning students to the Newport Montessori School is obligated to pay 10% of the tuition cost at the start of the new fiscal school year (usually July 1st). The other 90% of the tuition cost is split between two payments of 45% due by October 1st and February 1st of the tuitioning school year. This obligation is put in place due to the likelihood that a tuitioning district will be enrolling more than one student. The size of each enrolled class will determine the amount of funds allocated by the school administration to such expenses as teaching staff and supplies. The school budget could be significantly impacted if NMS planned for multiple students who ultimately did not

attend or whose tuition payments were not current. *The 10% sibling discount for families does not apply to tuitioning districts.*

Tuition Assistance Program

The Newport Montessori School Board of Directors offers a tuition assistance program for re-enrolling students whose families may not be able to afford the full cost of tuition.

Tuition assistance is available to students enrolled by individual parents or guardians and is not available to tuitioning school districts.

Families seeking tuition assistance are expected to apply for all available Education Freedom Account (EFA) funding for which they may be eligible before receiving tuition assistance from NMS. NMS tuition assistance may then help bridge the remaining gap between available funding and the cost of tuition.

Tuition Assistance applications are made available to enrolled families in February as part of the re-enrollment process. All financial information is confidential and is reviewed solely by the Tuition Assistance Committee Financial Coordinator. Families will be notified of their application results before the end of the current school year.

Section 13: Safe & Respectful School Environment [UPDATED]

Our Commitment to Respect

The Newport Montessori School is committed to providing all students with a safe and supportive school environment. Members of the school community are expected to treat each other with respect. Teachers and other staff members are expected to teach and demonstrate by example that all individual members of the community are entitled to respect. Our school community is blessed with individual members from a variety of backgrounds, family structures, and other life experiences — each of whom is entitled to the benefits of the education we offer and an environment free from harassment.

Harassment & Discrimination

Harassment of any kind is a violation of school policy. This includes, but is not limited to, harassment based on race, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, or marital status.

Prohibited harassment is conduct, including verbal conduct, that:

- Creates or will create a hostile environment by interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with their physical or psychological well-being;
- Is threatening or intimidating; or
- Constitutes unwelcome sexual advances or sexual conduct of any kind.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of harassment that also violates school policy. Prohibited sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual advance or sexual conduct, including verbal conduct, that:

- Is tied to a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or to their physical or psychological well-being;
- Creates or will create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with a student's educational benefits, opportunities, or performance, or with their physical or psychological well-being; or
- Is threatening or intimidating.

Supporting Your Children

There are times in Preschool/Kindergarten, and even Lower Elementary, when it may be necessary for a staff member to be alone in a bathroom with a child or to help a child undress, dress, or clean themselves after a toileting accident. In these situations, staff

members are expected to perform their duties with the utmost professionalism, discuss what they are doing with the child, and ask the child's permission when safety and/or the child's communication skills and developmental level make it possible.

Reporting Concerns

Any student or family member who believes they have experienced or witnessed harassment should report it promptly to the Director. If the concern involves the Director, the report should be made directly to the Board President.

Concerns may also be directed to any member of the Board of Directors at board@newportmontessori.org. Reports will be handled promptly, professionally, and with appropriate confidentiality.

Retaliation against any person who makes a good-faith report of harassment is strictly prohibited and is itself a violation of school policy.

Section 14: Families & Our School Community

Welcome to our NMS Community

We have scheduled a number of events throughout the year to help parents get to know each other and become part of the school community. It is our hope that most families are able to attend, in an effort to form a good beginning.

Parents picking up their children at 12:30 are invited to watch their children at play for a few minutes. This time will provide parents an opportunity to get to know the parents of their children's friends, as well as the possibility of informal exchanges with the classroom teachers.

In mid-September, parents of Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, and Middle School (JC) students will be invited to attend Curriculum Night. This event provides parents and guardians the opportunity to learn more about their student's curriculum studies, as well as to learn how the start of the school year is progressing for their student.

In mid-March, primary parents are invited to come to school one weekday evening for a children-teach-parents night. By this time of the year, even the youngest child will have mastered many activities. Each child will have chosen in advance one or two activities to present to parents as those activities were presented by classroom teachers to the child themselves. Parents will be astonished by the seriousness, concentration, and care their children will show as they go about their work and fulfill their "teacher" roles.

Also, in mid-March parents and family members of 1-8th grade students are invited to attend our Science Fair Night.

Finally, we will finish the year with an ice cream social following our Kindergarten graduation ceremony and a banquet following our 8th grade graduation ceremony. Again, we invite all family members, including grandparents, to attend these events.

NMS has a Parent/Teacher Organization which meets monthly beginning in September and concluding in June of each school year. All parents/guardians are encouraged to attend.

School Communications

Communications announcing special events, field trips, and sometimes even problems, will appear in cubby-room parent folders or elementary & middle school travel folders nearly every week (or more often).

Occasionally, an important announcement will be posted on the notices board mounted to the entry area of the building. If you see such a notice, please stop and take time to read it. It may be a reminder of something happening that very day!

At the start of each month, a school newsletter will be sent out electronically to each family. This will contain news of specific goings-on in each of our classrooms. It will also contain an article from the director. The school newsletter is designed to be another line of communication between Newport Montessori School and the families enrolled here. Weekly emails are sent out by the Director to announce and remind our active school community of special events taking place the following week.

Additionally, our school offers an App for notices called Edlio. Instructions on how to download this app will be sent home with each student at the start of the school year.

Questions & Concerns

Parents should feel free to discuss any questions or concerns with the teacher as they arise at any time during the year. *Pick-up times*- especially when children, teachers, and parents are outside in the play yard- *usually offer good opportunities for informal discussions.*

Communication with Teachers

Please try not to plan discussions with the teachers (other than quick observations about situations of immediate or urgent concern) at drop-off time in the morning. Preparing for the day ahead, welcoming the children as they arrive, and getting the work of the morning off to a good start requires the full attention of the teachers at this time.

To contact your child's teacher or another member of the school staff, please use the school's designated phone number or school email. To maintain appropriate and consistent communication, families are asked not to contact staff through personal cell phones, personal email addresses, or personal social media accounts.

Parent-Teacher-Student Conferences

Elementary & Middle School

Individual parent/teacher/student conferences are scheduled for each child during school hours in November, January, and April. Teachers prepare an individual report presenting their observations of the child's social and "academic" progress, which is given to parents at the conference. Students will both be asked to complete a questionnaire to bring with them to each conference. A conference sign-up sheet will be generated prior to each conference. Parents will be invited to schedule a conference at a time which all responsible parents may attend.

Primary

Individual parent/teacher conferences are scheduled for each child during school hours in November, January, and April. Teachers prepare an individual report presenting their observations of the child's social and "academic" progress, which is given to parents at the conference. At the end of the year, a similar report is prepared for each child and is given to parents. A conference sign-up sheet will be emailed and parents will be invited to schedule a conference if they feel this will be helpful, although by the end of the year parents may feel that a formal conference is not needed.

Apart from these scheduled conference times, teachers will be ready at any time during the year to talk to or meet with parents if a parent has a particular concern or a more serious problem. Please speak to your child's classroom teacher or call the school to arrange a special afternoon or evening conference.

School Communications

Methods of School Communication include: the school's Facebook page, Edlio, and Montessori Records Xpress email system.

Student Record Requests

Student Records requested by parents/guardians *will include*:

- MRX/Report Card
- Standardized Testing
- Health Forms
- Student Incident/Discipline Forms
- School Injury/Accident Reports

**They will not include emails by staff.*

Section 15: Academic Expectations [UPDATED]

Academic Honesty

A cornerstone of Montessori philosophy is respect: respect for self, respect for others and respect for the environment. Because this is an educational environment, intellectual honesty is a quality that we hold dear. As a community, trust is earned through caring and working together.

The faculty at the Newport Montessori School takes their work with each student seriously. We work with both their academic and social needs. It is our expectation as a teaching community that through our modeling and community efforts the students understand and do not take for granted the importance of respect and integrity. Should it become apparent that a student is not clear about the importance of these qualities and how they relate to academic issues, we will take the following course of action.

1. Students must discuss the value of trust, respect and intellectual honesty with their current and past teachers. This exchange should be a meaningful discourse so both students and teachers come to understand the circumstance leading to the incident of concern. This should be a learning experience for all involved.
2. Students should have a period of time to reflect on the discussion with faculty and be prepared to make a presentation to their teachers of record concerning community responsibility and intellectual honesty. The Administrator will determine whether the student is suspended for this period.
3. Upon returning to school, the student will make this presentation at the faculty's convenience.
4. Following the presentation and subsequent discussion between faculty and the student, the student will be dismissed from school until a time agreed upon by the faculty.

Standardized Testing

Did you say test? That's not Montessori! Well, it is. In a Montessori environment it is important for a student's teacher (director) to observe and measure your child's work and growth. We generally have students demonstrate their skills for us as individuals during the third part of each lesson a child is given. Part one: Lesson Introduction, Part Two: Lesson Practice, Part Three: Demonstration of Mastery. These demonstrations come in many ways, and form a basis for a teacher's decision to review or to move a child on within a range of curriculum choices. If a teacher or teaching team feels it would be helpful to obtain specific information in order to facilitate curriculum planning

for a child, the teacher may do individual informal assessments. Sometimes other faculty members will be called upon to observe and consult with class teachers.

When more complete information would be helpful in determining a child's learning style, teachers will make that need known to parents. Parents and teachers will then discuss the possibilities for further tests either at school or within the community.

Annual standardized testing at the Newport Montessori School is supported as a Practical Life exercise. We want the students to learn to take tests and be confident of their preparedness for the process. Testing will begin at the Elementary level. Tests for all students will be scored to obtain raw scores. At the Lower Elementary level, Grade One tests will be scored, and will serve as a baseline for testing in subsequent years. Raw scores for Grade Two through Grade Eight tests will be available to parents as a routine part of discussion relating to a student's performance. We test grades 1, 3, 5 & 7 for parentally placed students.

Homework Policy

Homework is periodically assigned at each level of the school following the Primary years. Homework is designed to reinforce the concepts of carrying work to and from school, following directions, setting up work space, planning time, and observing due dates. This is a learning process for the child and for the parents. Research supports the notion that the goal of homework through the elementary years is to reinforce for future years. So, assignments might be fun practice and sometimes creative and multisensorial. Homework focused on acquisition of knowledge becomes more frequent in the later Middle and High School years.

You can best support your student by providing a means for securely carrying work, and establishing time and space in the evening to plan and accomplish assignments. Modeling behavior by turning off the television and reading or working quietly in proximity to your child will be most helpful. While asking questions and helping your child to formulate questions can help build your student's confidence; doing their work for them does not. At school, the children describe that as stealing their learning. The process of learning to do work at home takes time and patience for all.

Mindful Technology

Students at Newport Montessori School have access to several types of technology, including computers, iPads, electronic readers, interactive boards, and the Internet. Technology is used as an educational resource under the supervision and direction of teachers.

Internet Access & Safety

Newport Montessori School provides Internet access because it is a valuable educational resource. NMS is committed to safe, supervised use and requires adult supervision of student Internet activity. The School also uses an Internet filter to block inappropriate content.

Parents, guardians, and students should be aware that no filtering system is 100% effective. Students may intentionally or accidentally encounter inappropriate content. Inappropriate use may result in restricted access to school computers, devices, or the network.

Parental permission is required for students to use the Internet and online information tools available in NMS classrooms. Parents and guardians may change this permission at any time by contacting their child's teacher. Questions regarding student technology use may be directed to the Director.

Acceptable Use

School-provided Internet access, devices, and online tools are intended for educational use, instruction, research, communication, collaboration, and other school-related purposes. Students are expected to follow the same standards of appropriate behavior when using technology that are expected elsewhere in the school environment.

Student activity on school devices and networks may be monitored. Students should not expect that files, communications, Internet history, or other activity conducted using School technology will be private.

Cell Phones & Smart Watches

Students may not use personal communication devices, including cell phones and smart watches, during the school day. Devices must be turned off and stored in the student's backpack or another school-designated area and may not be kept on the student's person.

During an actual school emergency, students who access a stored personal device to call for assistance will not be considered in violation of this policy.

Personal headphones or earbuds may be used with school-issued computers for instructional purposes when directed by a teacher.

Device Violations: A student who uses or has a personal communication device out during the school day will be referred to the administration, and the device may be held

until the end of the school day. For repeated violations, a parent or guardian may be required to pick up the device.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

NMS recognizes that artificial intelligence tools, including AI writing assistants, image generators, chatbots, and tutoring tools, are increasingly part of everyday life and education.

Students may use AI tools **only under teacher supervision and when explicitly permitted or assigned by the teacher**. Unsupervised use of AI tools on school devices or during school hours is not permitted without teacher direction.

Student work submitted as their own must represent their own effort. Using AI to complete assigned work without teacher permission is considered academic dishonesty and will be addressed under the School's discipline policy.

Questions about appropriate AI use should be directed to the Director.

Section 16: Student Records & Health Requirements

Retention of Student Records

The Newport Montessori School will maintain individual student records that include:

- Preliminary Application completed upon enrollment;
- Name;
- Date of Birth;
- Town of Legal Residence;
- Parent/Guardian Information
- Online Enrollment Pages (Emergency Contacts, Physician, Dentist,
 - Health/Medical current within last 12 months)
- Reports of Academic Performance (Montessori Records Xpress reports for all Prekindergarten and Kindergarten students; Report Cards for all 1-8th grade students)
- Reports of Attendance

In the event of the closing of the Newport Montessori School, student records will be deposited to the local school district (SAU 43).

Immunization Requirements

New Hampshire law requires children enrolled in public or private schools to provide documentation of immunization appropriate to their age, conditional enrollment while completing required immunizations, or an approved exemption. NMS follows the requirements of RSA 141-C:20-a through 20-e and applicable New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services rules.

A child may qualify for:

- A medical exemption when a licensed physician certifies that a particular immunization may be detrimental to the child's health; or
- A religious exemption when a parent or legal guardian completes the required New Hampshire religious exemption form.

A child who is conditionally enrolled must provide documentation of required doses according to the applicable immunization schedule. During an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, a student with an exemption may be excluded from school as required by New Hampshire law.

Families are responsible for providing NMS with current immunization records or required exemption documentation.

Section 17: Discipline [UPDATED]

Discipline Philosophy & Practices

At Newport Montessori School, it is important that children clearly understand the rules and the possible consequences for violating them. Through nurturing and sensitivity, we seek to prepare children to become responsible, respectful members of their communities. We encourage families to support these principles at home.

Our approach is to lead children toward self-discipline. The Montessori method addresses behavioral concerns through teaching, modeling, redirection, and positive guidance. Discipline is therefore primarily a learning experience rather than a punitive one.

Children who experience physical conflict are expected to report the problem to the nearest available adult rather than hit back.

Possible Consequences

Consequences will be developmentally appropriate and may include:

- A supervised break from the group, followed by a conversation with an adult before the student returns to the community;
- Temporary loss of playground or other privileges when related to the behavior;
- Repair or replacement of damaged, taken, or unreturned property;
- Parent/guardian involvement and development of behavioral goals;
- Referral for additional support services;
- A temporary modified schedule for a Primary student, developed in consultation with the family;
- Community service, suspension, or, in serious or persistent circumstances, dismissal from the School.

Bullying & Social Aggression

NMS prohibits bullying and social aggression. Concerns will be addressed promptly and in a manner appropriate to the student's age, development, and circumstances.

When a significant or persistent problem arises, parents or guardians will be notified and the student, family, and School will work together toward a resolution. Through conferences, goals and support may be agreed upon. If concerns continue, additional professional support or another educational placement may be discussed. Parents, guardians, and teachers may ask the Director to assist at any time.

When further consequences are necessary, the Director, in consultation with appropriate faculty, will determine the response. If a student or family is unable to meet the School's policies, safety expectations, or agreed-upon support plans despite reasonable efforts to resolve the concern, the Director may determine that continued enrollment or re-enrollment is not appropriate.

The Board of Directors will be notified confidentially of expulsions and other significant disciplinary actions when appropriate.

Restrictive Behavioral Interventions

Newport Montessori School is committed to providing a safe, supportive learning environment for all students. Physical restraint or seclusion is considered a last resort and is permitted only in emergency situations when a student's behavior poses an imminent danger of serious physical harm to themselves or others and less restrictive interventions have failed or been determined insufficient.

NMS follows the requirements of **NH RSA 126-U and applicable New Hampshire Department of Education rules, including Ed 1200**, governing the use of restraint and seclusion.

Restraint & Seclusion

Physical restraint is the use of physical means to restrict a student's freedom of movement. It does not include brief touching or holding to calm, comfort, encourage, or guide a child, or temporarily guiding a child by the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back to a safe location when the child is upright and moving toward safety.

Physical restraint may be used only in an emergency when necessary to protect a student or others from imminent serious physical harm and must be limited to the minimum force and duration necessary to maintain safety.

Prone restraint — placing a child face-down — is strictly prohibited at NMS. Restraint may never be used as punishment, discipline, or for staff convenience, or in a manner that restricts breathing or causes unnecessary pain.

Seclusion is the involuntary confinement of a child alone in a room or area that the child is unable, or reasonably believes they are unable, to leave. Seclusion may be used only under the same emergency circumstances and must be directly and continuously monitored by trained staff.

Calming & Timeout Locations

A designated calming or timeout location may be used to help a student regain self-control. The use of a timeout location is a de-escalation strategy and is not a form of seclusion, restraint, or punishment and may never be used for staff convenience.

Students must be able to leave the area voluntarily and will be appropriately monitored. If a student is prevented from leaving because of a physical barrier, lock, or staff presence preventing exit, the situation constitutes seclusion and is subject to the requirements governing seclusion.

Parent/Guardian Notification

Parents or guardians will be notified following the use of restraint or seclusion in accordance with NMS policy and applicable law.

Following the first use of restraint or seclusion involving a student with an IEP or 504 accommodation plan, or upon the request of the student's parent or guardian, NMS will review the student's plan and make adjustments as indicated to reduce the need for future restraint or seclusion.

More Information

NMS's Restrictive Behavioral Intervention Policy is governed by NH RSA 126-U and applicable New Hampshire Department of Education rules, including Ed 1200. Parents or guardians who have questions about the policy or its application may contact the Director.

Section 18: Board of Directors [UPDATED]

Board Members

The people listed below currently comprise the Board of Directors of the Newport Montessori School in Newport, New Hampshire. All are area residents. The Board of Directors was chosen in an effort to span a variety of professional occupations: law enforcement, business, health, and of course, education. Board members can be reached through the general email: board@newportmontessori.org

- Chad Howe (President), Director of Technology, SAU 43
- Fran Huot (Vice President), Parent & Library Arts Center Marketing Director; Parent
- Katharine Sargent (Secretary), Elementary Educator; Parent
- Asleigh McFarlin (Treasurer), Certified Financial Planner
- Heidi Allgair, Analyst Relations Manager; Alumni Parent
- Sandra Flint, Secondary Educator, Retired
- Kristie Howe, Program Coordinator | College & Career Specialist, SAU 43; Parent
- Barry Hunter, Executive Major of the NH State Police, Retired
- Peter McGurkin, Behavior Specialist
- Amanda Hanson, Director; Parent

Grievance Policy

An unresolved parent/student grievance should be presented to the Director in writing. The Director will make the Board aware of all such notices. A copy of a grievance and a written report may be presented to the Board of request of a parent/student. Administrative action taken will be recorded in the student file.

The School's Board of Directors will review all grievances. A response will be provided by the School Board of Directors President and will be made available in writing to the complainant within 30 days of receipt of the complaint.

Grievance items may include:

- Bullying;
- Teacher misconduct
- Tuition refund when a student leaves the school; and
- The use of child restraint and seclusion practices

Section 19: Staff

Our dedicated staff brings a variety of educational, professional, and Montessori experience to the NMS community.

Administration

- Amanda Hanson, Director
- Izabella "Bella" Spalding, Administrative Assistant

Primary

- Aspen Toliver, South Classroom Lead Teacher
- Grace Brown, South Classroom Assistant Teacher
- Maddie Miller, North Classroom Lead Teacher
- Amy Dole, North Classroom Assistant Teacher

Lower Elementary

- Lexi Johnson-LaQuire, Lead Teacher
- Alexis Bell, Assistant Teacher

Upper Elementary

- Stephanie Jackson, Lead Teacher
- Jagger Lovely, Assistant Teacher

Junior Classroom

- Alan Norton, Science & Math Teacher
- Ryder Lovely, Language Arts & Social Studies Teacher

Specialty Programs & After-School Care

- Ray Shepardson, Physical Education Teacher
- Maria Wallace, Art Teacher & After-School Care