



“Enriching lives through guidance, observation and self-directed discovery.”

Parent Handbook

Revised November 2024

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INTRODUCTION

Our Mission Statement

Red Oak Montessori School's mission is driven by Dr. Maria Montessori's belief that no human

being is educated by another person; that the child must do their work for themselves or it will never be done. We believe that the goal of early childhood education is to cultivate a natural curiosity for learning that nurtures the child's independence and self-confidence for a lifelong love of learning.

We strive with love and respect, to give young children the precious commodity of time. They have the freedom of time to explore, to investigate, to smell, and to touch. They are given time to choose, to be guided, to listen, to be thoughtful, to speak, to write, to climb, to make noise or to be quiet.

We seek to balance academic and social development and to foster responsibility and cooperation within a supportive learning environment.

Development of Social Skills

A carefully planned day, which addresses the individual needs of children, helps to foster a positive emotional climate. These emotions, positive or negative, can sometimes become overwhelming. Whether it is a conflict with the need to use the same work or a disagreement with a classmate, the expression of frustration and anger is age-appropriate and allowed in our school. Each child is encouraged and guided by the teachers to do this in an appropriate and safe way.

We guide them to express their feelings through words rather than acting out in an inappropriate manner. Giving a positive alternative, reinforcing the positive behavior in a situation, identifying feelings and learning from their choices, are essential lessons for the child to understand acceptable social skills.

History of Red Oak Montessori School

Red Oak Montessori School was founded in 1998 by the Miller family, and was run out of their 1800s farmhouse in Sanbornton. In 2001 the school moved to the current building, 241 Sanborn Street, to accommodate their growing needs. Since then, the student population has ranged from 13 to 25 students. Additional weekdays and extended hours were added to support the schedules of working families while keeping true to Dr. Maria Montessori's teaching methods. The staff takes great pride in providing a learning space that is warm and inviting, conducive to the success of each child. Our specially prepared environment encourages children to explore, create and take pride in all that they do. Children are free to work independently, cooperatively or with a teacher. Our goal is to foster caring, thoughtful, self-directed learners.

Program Description

Fully licensed by the state of NH, our non-profit school offers 3, 4 and 5 day options for a morning or full day Montessori preschool/kindergarten program for toilet-trained children ages 2 years and 9 months through six years old.

At Red Oak Montessori School, children are in the care of dedicated and qualified teachers who, keeping in line with the Montessori philosophy, follow the individual development stages of each

child and encourage each to advance at his/her own pace. Our teachers are or are in the process of becoming Montessori trained, may hold college degrees and have a variety of personal experiences to provide a well-rounded learning environment.

Red Oak Montessori School admits students of any race, color, gender, religion, and national origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, national origin or disability in administration of its educational policies, employment practices, financial assistance programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

Montessori Education

Maria Montessori's view of the nature of the child is that children go through a series of "sensitive periods" with "creative moments." These are the times when they show a spur-of-the-moment interest in learning. It is then that the children have the greatest ability to learn. She maintained that they should not be held back by forced, rigid curricula (plans of study) or classes. Work, she believed, is its own reward to the child, and there is no necessity for other rewards. Self-discipline (controlling oneself) emerges out of the freedom of the learning environment.

The Montessori teacher has four primary goals:

- to awaken the children's spirit and imagination,
- to encourage their normal desire for independence and high sense of self-esteem, • to help them develop the kindness and self-discipline that will allow them to become full members of society,
- to help them learn how to observe, question, and explore ideas independently.

The Montessori teacher is a
guide,
mentor,
and friend.

Holidays Observed and Closings

Check the current Red Oak school calendar for updates:

- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Break – three days
- Holiday Break - days vary each year
- New Year's Day- Observed day varies each year
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- February Winter Break - one week
- April Spring Break - one week
- Memorial Day
- 2-4 Teacher Professional days throughout the school year

Clothing

Children should arrive with comfortable clothing and footwear for working inside and outside. During the school day children work with materials that may result in their clothing becoming soiled or wet (wet, water, paint, etc.), sometimes more than once a day. Due to inside work and outside play your child will need extra sets of clothing including underwear, socks, pants and shirts to be kept at school. Temperatures and weather permitting we will go outside daily in sunshine, rain and snow. Children should arrive at school each day with appropriate footwear, jackets, hats and gloves for outside play. In addition to sturdy, outdoor shoes, it is required that every child bring in a pair of shoes to be worn only in the classroom; examples include crocs, slip-on shoes, or hard rubber soled slip-on slippers. Wearing “inside shoes” helps to reduce the amount of dirt tracked into the classroom space each day and to maintain a clean and comfortable environment for the children.

Outdoor Play

Time spent outside is an important part of every child's day. It provides the fresh air needed to ensure good health and aids in the development of social and gross motor skills. Weather permitting, the children will go outside every day during light rain, snow, wind and sun. Layering clothing is very helpful as children can take off articles of clothing if needed. Keep in mind that during the Fall, Winter and Spring seasons mittens can get wet very quickly. To help keep little hands warm in the Winter please send thick, waterproof mittens for outdoor play.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are a very special part of our classroom. Each child will have the opportunity to bring in pictures from each year of his/her life to share at circle time. Your child may also bring a birthday snack to share with the class, keeping any allergies in mind. Invitations may be passed out to children here at school only if ALL children are being invited. If your list is selective then please send invitations outside of school.

Holiday Celebrations

Holidays are part of children's cultural heritage. The teachers will determine how each holiday celebration will be incorporated into the curriculum. We encourage the children to share with us their cultural traditions through stories, recipes, pictures, clothing, etc. Holiday celebrations will be described in advance in the monthly newsletter.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Child Health requirements

The following are guidelines from the NH State Licensing Code of Administrative Rules:
He-C 4002.17 Child Health Requirements

- Documentation of immunizations shall be on file for each child on the first day the child is in attendance at the program.
 - Notarized Religious Exemptions forms are accepted.
 - Children younger than 6 years of age must have physical examinations updated annually. •
- The form must have the date of the child's last examination along with the physician's signature.

Illness Policy

Red Oak Montessori School adheres strictly to the following guidelines for dealing with illness in school. These NH State Licensing standards are designed to protect your healthy child. Please do not send your child to school if they are sick and unable to participate in daily activities, including outdoor playtime. Your child will recover more quickly at home and the other children and adults will be protected from continued exposure to the illness.

If a child becomes ill at school they will be made comfortable while parents are called to arrange for their child to be picked up. We do not have a separate space for children who are ill so your quick response is appreciated.

The following are guidelines from the NH State Licensing Code of Administrative Rules:

He-C 4002.17 Communicable Diseases:

When it is determined that your child is too sick to remain in school immediate arrangements must be made for your child to be picked up. Your child will be sent home for any of the following:

- A fever of 100 degrees
- Vomiting (more than one incident in one day)
- Diarrhea (more than one incident in one day)
- Uncontrolled coughing or wheezing
- Rash
- Ear ache, sore throat
- Suspected contagious disease; conjunctivitis, chicken pox...etc.
- Head Lice or nits are present.
- Unusual or extreme fatigue or lethargy which causes the inability to participate in daily activities in conjunction with or without the above symptoms.

Your child may return to school when they are:

- Fevers: fever free (without medication) for 24 hours
- Vomiting: free of vomiting for 24 hours
- Diarrhea: free of diarrhea for 24 hours
- Rash: A note is provided from the clinic or physician that the rash is not communicable. •
- Conjunctivitis: All discharge has ceased and note from clinic or physician stating that the child is not communicable and/or on antibiotic for at least 24 hours.
- Head Lice: After treatment and free of lice and nits.
- Able to participate in daily activities, inside and outside.

Let the school know by 8:30 am if your child is going to be absent.

Medication Policy

When children need medication administered to them at school, parents will be given an “Authorization to Administer Prescription and Non-Prescription Medication” form to sign for their child. Medications will only be given with this signed parental authorization and in accordance with the following state of NH guidelines:

He-C 4002.18 Administration and Storage of Medication:

- Authorized staff shall administer only those prescription medications for which there is a prescription label or written directions provided by a licensed healthcare practitioner, and written permission from the parent.
- Medication orders shall be valid for no more than one year.
- Each medication order shall legibly display the following information:
 - (a) The child’s name;
 - (b) The medication name, strength, the prescribed dose and method of administration;
 - (c) The frequency of administration;
 - (d) The indications for usage of all medications to be used PRN; and
 - (e) The dated signature of the parent or licensed health care practitioner for orders other than the prescription label.
- A medication authorization form is mandatory to dispense any medicine prescribed by a doctor or over the counter medicine. Medicine must be handed directly to the teachers for safe keeping.

Drop Off, Pick Up and Late Fees

Communication between parents and teachers is essential to the safety and best care of your child. Arrival and dismissal times are quite busy for all. Conversations regarding how your child’s night was, their overall disposition, medicines or a change in pick up are welcome, but in-depth conversations deserve more time. Parents are invited to schedule a time for a conference if needed.

For the safety of the children, they must be accompanied by an adult when entering or leaving the school. **It is best that children arrive at school on time (by 8:30 am).** Late arrivals (past 9:00 am) can be disruptive to those children already at work in the classroom. Drop offs should be

kept short and consistent. If your child is having separation issues please discuss this with the teachers, they will work together with you and your child to help make the transition easier.

Please say your goodbyes in the lobby area allowing your child to enter the classroom without distraction. Siblings are asked to stay in the lobby area during drop off and pick up. Having other children walking through the classroom can be distracting to the children who are already engaged in work.

Per State of NH Licensing Rules only an adult can sign the child in and out. Only persons listed on the emergency form will be allowed to pick up your child unless there is notification in writing or a phone call.

Arrive 10 minutes before pick up time to collect your child's belongings and depart BY their scheduled dismissal time; 12:00 pm and 3:30 pm. On time pickups help to ensure a smooth transition for those children who are remaining for the afternoon and allows our teachers to complete closing procedures in a timely manner. If a situation arises that you will be late, a phone call is expected.

Late fees: Up to two written warnings will be sent to you from the Red Oak Board along with a reminder of the late fee policy. Each additional late occurrence will have an automatic \$25 charge added to your bill. These charges are to be paid with your bill per Tuition Payment Policy.

Safety Drills

A monthly safety drill is required by NH Child Care Licensing Unit for all child care facilities. One of the following will be practiced monthly: evacuation, reverse evacuation, secure campus, drop-cover-hold, lockdown, shelter-in-place and fire drills. Two fire drills are required with a pulled alarm by the Franklin Fire department within the school year. Other monthly drills will be conducted and documented by Red Oak staff.

School Closings and Delays

We are closed for all federal and state holidays: Columbus Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving break, Christmas break, MLK Jr. Day, February break, April break, Memorial Day and Teacher workshop days.

School closings and delays will be announced on WMUR, Channel 9; online WMUR; and on Facebook. These closure days will not be made up in our calendar year. We will follow surrounding school closings. (Franklin)

Nutrition

To encourage healthy eating practices, children should have healthy choices in their lunch box. Candy and high sugar foods and drinks can be stimulants to children and should not be included in their lunch boxes for school. Each child will need to have a water bottle for hydration throughout the day. Children will be encouraged to eat a small snack during an open-morning snack time thus leaving enough food for them to choose from for lunch. During meal times children are required to sit while they eat and teachers are present to teach manners, grace and courtesy.

From the first of school we teach the children about recycling and how to decrease our trash output. To support this families need to send food in reusable containers to enable children to bring home their leftovers. Include non-plastic re-usable utensils if your child needs them for snack and/or lunch.

If there are children with food allergies we will communicate food/drink restrictions at that time.

Rest Time

After an active morning, children need to recharge their bodies and minds. Children who attend full day are required by NHCCLU to have a quiet time after lunch. "... children who are in attendance for more than 5 hours [are provided] with an opportunity for at least one hour of rest, relaxation, or sleep, depending on the needs of each child. Programs shall provide children who do not fall asleep after 30 minutes with an opportunity to do a quiet activity." NH HAMPSHIRE CODE OF ADMINISTRATIVE RULES, He-C 4002.23 Rest and Sleep.

To respect all children's needs we offer this time on a rest mat to look at books, listen to a story read aloud by the teacher, enjoy relaxing music and offer quiet student/teacher work time. Children are not required to sleep but they are required to respect others by being quiet. Children may bring a blanket, a sleeping bag/mat, a small stuffed animal or two of their own books. **TOYS FROM HOME ARE NOT ALLOWED** as this is a time for rest and mental relaxation.

COMMUNICATION

Email

Emails will be sent typically each week or as needed to provide reminders and information to families regarding activities taking place in the classroom, upcoming events, holidays, closures and information you should know.

Parent / Teacher Conferences

Conferences will be scheduled twice a year, with an optional end-of-the-year exiting conference. Dates and times will be announced by email and on the school calendar. A list of available times for conferences will be posted in the lobby. If at any time you have questions or concerns, the teachers are available for additional conferences throughout the year.

Lending Library

We have several Montessori and Child Development books available for families to borrow. The books and pamphlets available are a great way to become acquainted with the Montessori Philosophy and the work that your child is involved with here at school.

REGISTRATION AND TUITION

Registration Fee

- Annual registration fee is due at time of registration.
- This fee is non-refundable.
- Registrations for returning students for the upcoming school year received before the last day of the current school year will receive a \$25 discount.

Tuition

We offer secure online ACH (debit bank account) tuition payments via QuickBooks. A link is provided on your tuition invoice for your convenience. There are no service charges for families or Red Oak.

Families with multiple children enrolled at the same time will receive a 10% discount on the lowest tuition rate.

Annual tuition:

- Tuition is based on 10 monthly payments, September – June.
- Families will receive a 3% discount on the yearly tuition if the full tuition amount is paid by the first day of your child's school year.

Monthly tuition:

- Monthly payments are due on the first day of your child's enrollment of each month. • A late fee of \$25.00 will be added to your balance for payments that are received after the 10th day of the month.
- On the 15th day of the month, if payment of tuition and late fee has not been received by our office, your child will not be allowed to attend school until your account has been paid up to date.
- Make-up days due to non-payment are not offered.

Tuition Contracts

The contract will include the following information:

- Child's name
- Annual tuition
- Hours and days of attendance
- Payment schedule
- Parent/guardian signature and Director's signature
- Agreement to Parent handbook
- Agreement to NHCCLU Annual Statement

NH Child Care Assistance Scholarship

Red Oak Montessori School is a participating school in the NH Child Care Assistance program.

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For information and to apply for a NH Child Care Scholarship, go to NH EASY at: nheasy.nh.gov .

Withdrawal Policy

Leaving any school can cause disruption in a child's routine. A two week notice is helpful in allowing your child and their classmates to properly say goodbye at our goodbye circle ceremony.

Disenrollment Policy

Within Maria Montessori's philosophy we seek to balance academic and social development and to foster responsibility and cooperation within a supportive learning environment for each child. Our classroom environment must show respect for each individual child's opportunity to learn, investigate and socialize in a physically, emotionally and socially safe atmosphere. We seek to provide a Montessori program that is designed to support children's growth and to challenge them to learn, each as an individual with a unique learning style and way of responding to the world. Given the diversity of the families and communities that we serve, it is incumbent upon us to recognize and appreciate the characteristics and behaviors that each child and family brings to our program.

Red Oak seeks a solid partnership with our families as a basis for their children's success within our program. Because Red Oaks' child-centered/family Montessori approach seeks to accommodate a wide range of individual differences, it is only on rare occasions that a child's/family's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for either a short term or permanent basis.

The following are some reasons why we would have to disenroll a child or family from the center. Some examples of such instances include:

Child's Actions:

- Child unable to adjust to the program after a reasonable amount of time
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children
- Ongoing uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts
- Excessive biting, hitting, yelling or being oppositional.

Parental Actions:

- A parent/guardian fails to abide by Center policies or requirements imposed by the appropriate licensing agency.
- Non-payment of tuition.

- A parent/guardian demands special services that are not provided to other children and cannot reasonably be delivered by the program. This includes requests that depart from the philosophy of Red Oak Montessori's program.

Immediate Causes for Disenrollment:

- A parent/guardian is physically or verbally abusive or intimidating to Center staff, children, or
- anyone else at the Center.
- Potentially dangerous behavior by a parent or child;

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Working Towards a Positive Solution:

The decision to disenroll a child from a Red Oak Montessori is a difficult one for both the school and the family. In all cases, our goal is to act quickly, thoughtfully and thoroughly to communicate, address and resolve concerns relating to the children in our care. School personnel will attempt to work with a family to take constructive steps to finding a solution that resolves the problem(s), before a disenrollment occurs.

When a child's teacher or an administrator has concerns about a child's behavior or other circumstances, he or she will document such concerns as soon as they arise. The Director will inform and involve the child's parent/guardian by notes, phone calls, and meetings, as necessary, to establish a collaborative environment. If the child's behavior is problematic, a review of that behavior using developmental tools will aid in understanding the behavior in its appropriate context. This review includes input from teachers and administrators, so that checks and balances are used to analyze the problem.

As we develop strategies to address a child's particular problem, a variety of options will be considered, including:

- consistency
- transition times
- redirection

Similarly, teachers' expectations, management skills, and intervention techniques will be evaluated and changed to adapt to the particular circumstances. Whenever possible and appropriate, efforts will be made to help a family understand how they can support the plan at home or encourage a resolution by adjusting their interactions or expectations for a child. Literature and other support resources regarding methods of improving behavior will be provided to the family, if available.

Lines of communication with parents will be established, and parent conferences will be conducted to review the problematic behaviors, the strategies implemented to resolve them (and their relative success) and the possibility of disenrollment if the behaviors are not resolved. It is Red Oak's ultimate goal to provide the parents sufficient time to take the necessary corrective action to allow the child to remain at the school and to provide them with sufficient notice of the potential for disenrollment, so they can secure alternative care. Some cases may require immediate disenrollment. Ultimately, school personnel will attempt a number of approaches before making the final decision to suspend or disenroll a child from the program.

Disenrollment Process:

If the behavior has not been resolved after all remedial actions have been exhausted, a conference will be held with the child's parent/guardian to communicate the Center's decision to disenroll. A follow-up letter will be provided which will include, if applicable: ● the reasons for the disenrollment or suspension

- the date of the disenrollment or length of the suspension, which affords the parent sufficient time to seek alternative care, (up to two weeks, depending on safety risks presented)
- the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return or to resume or continue enrollment at Red Oak
- the avenue for appealing the decision to disenroll within Red Oak's management; 13

The Center will not disenroll a child based solely on any of the following: ● making a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements

- reporting abuse or neglect occurring at the center
- questioning the center regarding policies and procedures

If the school elects to disenroll a child, the school will maintain on file a record of the circumstances, parental notification, and corrective action taken.

The Appeal Process:

A parent/guardian may appeal Red Oak's decision to remove a child from the school, even when the removal is immediate. The parent/guardian should submit the appeal in writing to The Red Oak Board of Directors, in care of the school. The appeal must be submitted within ten (10) days of Red Oak's notice to the family of the decision to disenroll. The parent/guardian should describe the basis for his/her disagreement with the decision and to provide any supporting documents in this written appeal so his/her position can be fully considered.

Upon receipt of the appeal, the Red Oak Board of Directors will review the appeal and will provide a response to the family within thirty (30) days.

OUR COMMUNITY AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Family Work Days

There will be several opportunities throughout the school year for families to support Red Oak through service attending at least one family work/volunteer day. This allows us to get better acquainted as a community and helps to keep costs down. Opportunities will be posted at the meet & greet and emails.

- We are requiring each family to volunteer at the school at some point during the school year.

You can help by:

- reading to a small group of children
- pick up library books at the local library
- help with a fix it project
- volunteer in the classroom if a teacher is out
- volunteer to clean

- become a board member

This does not need to be ongoing, a few times a year would help immensely!

Community Service

Children learn by doing. Each year, the teachers choose an act of kindness project that will be appropriate for the enrolled group of children. Donations will be arranged and announced through email. If you have a great idea, let the director know.

Board of Directors

Red Oak Montessori is a nonprofit organization and, as required by law, is run by a Board of Directors. The board meets regularly (monthly) and meeting minutes are available for parents who inquire. The board works closely with the director to develop policies and to ensure the fiscal solvency of the school. New board members are invited to join after a majority vote of the entire board. Any member of Red Oak or the community at large can express interest in a seat on the board. Two Open Board Meetings will take place yearly, one in November and one in May. Board members' contact information is posted on the Parent Information in the lobby.

SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

8:00 – 8:30 Arrival: Puzzles/coloring/table play

8:45 - 11:30 Snack/outside/ work time

11:30– 11:45 Circle: singing/yoga/story/lesson

12:00 - 12:30 Lunch

12:00 **Parent pick up half day**

12:30 Lunch clean up/Get ready to go outside

12:45- 1:45 Outside

2:00 -2:45 Rest/ Peace Time

3:00-3:30 Lunchroom activities

3:20-3:30 **Parent pick up full day**

3:30-4:50 After School Care

4:50-5:00 **Parent pickup**

Classroom times are approximate and subject to change.

*Pick up departure times are **not** subject to change.*

CCLU ANNUAL STATEMENT

"The licensing authority for this program is the bureau of licensing and certification, child care licensing unit. Child care programs are required to post a copy of the statement of findings and corrective action plan for the most recent visit in a location which is accessible to parents, and must maintain copies of the statement of findings and corrective action plan for the preceding visit and make them available for parents to review upon request. Statements of findings and corrective action plans are also available on-line at <http://childcaresearch.dhhs.nh.gov> or by calling the bureau at 603-271-9025. During licensing, monitoring, and complaint investigation visits to licensed programs the department shall speak with children regarding the care they receive at the program if in the judgment of the licensing specialist the children's response would be valuable in determining compliance with licensing rules. Licensing staff are experienced in working with children and trained to interview in a manner that is respectful and non-leading. However, if you do not want your child interviewed, or if you wish to be informed prior to your child being interviewed you must give the family child care provider, center director, site director or designee, and update annually, a signed dated statement indicating your preference."

