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GENERAL INFORMATION

Alpine Montessori School is a 501(c)(3) organization. Alpine Montessori admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all 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, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other school administered programs.

Alpine Montessori School is located at 908 N. 6th Street and includes ages 3-6 (primary) and grades 1st through 3rd (lower elementary), 4th through 6th (upper elementary) and 7th and 8th (adolescent program).

Board of Directors

Alpine Montessori School is overseen by a board comprised of parents and community members. Please see our website or refer to the handbook insert for a list of our current board members. The board meets on a monthly basis to discuss operations, finances, fundraising, and other issues of concern.

Vision Statement

The Alpine Montessori School vision is to establish and maintain accessible quality Montessori education for all the children of our community. The school encourages and assists children to reach their full potential while embodying the principles of respect for self, respect for others and respect for the environment.

Mission Statement

The Alpine Montessori Mission strives to be a racially and culturally diverse community of students, parents and staff, dedicated to creating a peaceful environment in which each person is treated with unconditional positive regard and acceptance. Within such an environment, each student, ages 3-12 will be empowered and inspired to reach his or her full academic, emotional, physical and spiritual potential.

Curriculum Goals

At Alpine Montessori School, we strive to provide a comprehensive and developmentally appropriate curriculum that supports the growth and development of each child. Our curriculum is designed to:

- Promote cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development through hands-on learning experiences.
- Focus on individualized learning, recognizing each child's unique strengths, needs, and interests.
- Integrate the Montessori principles, emphasizing self-directed learning, practical life skills, and respect for others.
- Align with the Texas Early Learning Guidelines and ensure that we meet state standards for early childhood education.

These curriculum goals are reviewed regularly to ensure that they align with the needs of the children in our care and meet the highest educational standards.

Annual Policy Review

To ensure that our policies remain current and reflective of the best practices in early childhood care, we conduct an annual review of all policies and procedures. After this review, any necessary updates are made to reflect changes in regulations, practices, or the needs of our families. Parents will be notified if there are any significant changes to the policies in the Parent Handbook.

ADMISSIONS POLICIES

Alpine Montessori School provides equal employment opportunities and equal participation opportunities to all its employees and/or students without regard to ethnicity, national origin, creed, gender, physical disability, age, proficiency in the English language, or athletic ability.

Enrollment Procedures

The yearly enrollment process begins in April when enrollment contracts are offered to students who are currently enrolled at the school. Returned contracts will be accepted in the following order:

1. Seated Students
2. Employee's Children
3. Siblings of Current Students
4. Waiting List

Paperwork Required for Enrollment

All forms that are required for a child's enrollment are available for download on our website. A hardcopy will be given upon request. The following forms compile a completed enrollment packet:

- Enrollment Contract (for new students)
- TDHHS/DFPS Admissions form
- Parent and Volunteer Commitment forms
- Packet Checklist

NO contract for a new student will be accepted without the submission of a completed enrollment packet and a non-refundable registration fee of \$100, per child. (Returning students are charged a yearly processing fee of \$100, half of which will be credited to their 1st fee installment.) *The reenrollment fee is subject to change without advanced notice.*

The Alpine Montessori School Parent Handbook, the Alpine Montessori School Contract, and the Operational Policies are to be constructed together and incorporated with one another. By agreeing to the Terms and Conditions of the School Contract, you are also agreeing to the Terms and Conditions of the Parent Handbook and the Operational Policies.

Right to Refuse

Alpine Montessori School reserves the right to refuse a contract, or to terminate a contract, of any student that the School feels it is incapable of serving.

Additional Fees*

Additional fees are assessed to cover operational costs as applicable, see the fee and fee handout for current fee amounts. The fees include: Registration Fee (new students only; non-refundable), Processing Fee (returning students only), Primary Snack and Supply Fee, Elementary Snack and Supply Fee, and Elementary Standardized Testing Fee.

**All fee and most fees may be paid monthly in 10 installments. The registration fee is due upon enrollment.*

Attendance Requirements

All school-aged children are expected to attend regularly. Please notify the school in the event of any absences. Elementary students, including kindergartners, will be considered truant without notification of absence. Excessive tardiness or absences may result in termination of contract. Please call in if your child will be late.

Elementary and Adolescent students that arrive after 8:15 more than five times in a semester will require a conference between parents and the administration before the child may return to school or risk termination of contract.

Withdrawal Policy

The Alpine Montessori School, Inc., must be notified in writing four weeks in advance of the date the child is to be withdrawn. A \$100 withdrawal fee will be assessed in the event four weeks' written notice is not given.

No refunds are given for vacations or absences.

Fee Charges

Alpine Montessori offers half-day, academic day and after-school care options for pre-k level children. Kindergarten and Elementary students attend the academic day program and have the option of enrolling in after-school care until capacity is reached. Please see the insert for a breakdown of charges for each option as well as fees for optional extracurricular opportunities.

Fee Billing

Fees are due no later than the first of each month. A \$25.00 late payment fee will be charged in the event the payment is received by the Alpine Montessori School after the fifth day of the month. There will also be a \$5 per day late fee added to all fee payments not received by the tenth day of the month. Communication is necessary with fee payment issues.

Refund Policy

We understand that circumstances can change, and we aim to provide flexibility when possible. Our Refund Policy is as follows:

- Tuition Payments: Tuition payments are nonrefundable after services have been rendered. However, if a family withdraws their child with notice (30 days), any unused tuition paid in advance will be refunded.
- Registration Fees: Registration fees are nonrefundable.
- Special Circumstances: Refunds for medical or emergency reasons may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Families must submit a written request with supporting documentation to be reviewed by the administration.

Parent Involvement

The Alpine Montessori School is a wonderful environment in which children can succeed because of parent and community support. We could not be the exceptional school that we are without your involvement in the school's activities. We encourage you to give generously of your time and talents in support of the many things that keep our program outstanding.

In addition to your involvement in the school's activities, parents make the following commitment to their child and to the school:

1. Ensure their child attends school on a regular basis.
2. Ensure their child arrives at school no later than 8:15 AM daily.
3. Attend the Parent Orientation meeting, usually held the Friday before the first day of school.
4. Participate in Parent-Teacher conferences.
5. Participate in volunteer activities.
6. Abide by the school policies and procedures as outlined in the Parent Handbook and Operational Policies.

Because parent involvement and commitment is crucial to the success of your child and our school, this commitment is required for all families.

THE SCHOOL DAY

Academic Calendar

A one page yearly calendar is available on the website and provided at the parent orientation meeting. The website calendar will be updated with upcoming events. Our school calendar loosely follows the Alpine ISD calendar. For school closings due to inclement weather, we will follow AISD closures, late starts and early dismissals.

A Typical Day

The primary and elementary classes follow different midday schedules. Below is a general description of how the day is organized.

8:00 AM—8:15 AM Children arrive (*it is extremely* important for children to arrive on time)

8:15 AM—11:15 AM Morning work period

11:15 AM—1:00 PM Circle time; lunch; recess; silent reading

1:00 PM—2:30 PM Afternoon work period

2:30 PM—3:00 PM Closing circle, jobs, Reading out loud

3:00 PM Academic day students are released

3:15 PM After-school care program begins

5:30 PM School closes

**Screen time is limited at AMS. Elementary students use computers for research. Though rare, primary students may watch a G-rated movie during recess on wet or very cold days. All screen time activities are optional. Students who do not wish to watch a movie may choose a game to play or book to read instead.*

Sign-In and Sign-Out Procedures

When you bring your child to school, the state requires that you sign them in. The office has sign-in/sign-out sheets for both classrooms. On this sheet you will find the day of the month and every child will have their names listed in alphabetical order. All children under the age of 10 must be accompanied into the school by an adult and the adult must sign them in, including the time of arrival. You will follow the same procedure when you pick your child up. Students will not be released without a visible parent or guardian present to pick them up. Only those individuals designated on enrollment forms will be allowed to pick up your child. If you have not included the time on your child's line, you may be charged late fees.

Drop-off and Pick-Up Times

We are staffed for our contracted hours only. Any child on campus for unplanned times puts a tremendous strain on the staff and puts us at risk for being out of student/teacher ratio for supervision. Children on a half day or academic day may not be dropped off before 7:50 AM. Academic day students must be picked up by 3:15. Parents will be charged \$5.00 per half hour that the child stays at Alpine Montessori School past the contracted time. Any parent arriving after 5:30 will be charged \$3.00 per minute. Any charges must be paid before the student returns to school. Please be respectful of this and understand that this policy will be strictly enforced.

Please note: If you are planning a birthday party for your child, please be sure to mail the invitations to your guests unless you are planning to invite the entire class. Flyers, invitations, etc., may only be placed in the family boxes by a staff member. Please give these items to the administrator for distribution.

Lunch Procedure

Generally, lunch starts around 11:30. Please check with your child's teacher for exact times. Parents are responsible for providing lunch for their child Monday-Friday.

Please send a nutritious lunch for your child each day. In order to develop proper nutritional habits, lunches should consist of multiple items so that your child may make choices about what to eat. These items should be healthy, representative of the five food groups, and be items that your child enjoys. Additionally, please send a bottle of water and use an ice pack to keep food chilled. Your child will be expected to eat the majority of food provided for them in their lunch box. Please adjust this quantity to be appropriate for your child's individual eating habits. Non-nutritional items including candy and soda are discouraged. If such items are brought to school, they will be sent home unopened. We teach the children to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Please pack your child's lunch in reusable containers, with reusable utensils, and a reusable cloth napkin. Elementary: Heating food is very time consuming. When packing food items that need to be reheated please limit the microwave requirements to 2 minutes or less. ***Although Alpine Montessori School does provide nutritional snacks throughout the day, the School is not responsible for the nutritional content of children's lunches.*

Birthday Lunch

Parents have the option of bringing lunch for the class for special occasions such as birthdays or other personal celebrations. If you would like to bring lunch for the class, please let a staff member know so that we may notify the parents in plenty of time.

Nap Procedure

If your child is staying for naps, a fitted crib sheet, a blanket and a pillow are required. Please label each item clearly with your child's name. Nap materials will be sent home each Friday to be washed and returned on Monday.

Screen Time Policy

At Alpine Montessori, we prioritize hands-on, interactive learning experiences that promote the development of social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Our Screen Time Policy ensures that the use of electronic devices is limited and appropriate:

- Primary Programs: No screen time will be used in the classroom.
- Elementary Programs: Screen time may be used sparingly for educational purposes only.
- Screen Time at Home: We encourage families to limit their child's screen time at home, fostering more meaningful play and exploration outdoors.

We believe that young children benefit most from face-to-face interactions and exploration of their environment, which promotes healthy brain development.

STUDENT HEALTH ISSUES

Clothing

Young children should come to school in clothing that is easy to slip on and off. We do not recommend belts, suspenders, or overalls. Primary students will need to have at least one change of clothing. Please be sure to replenish clothes when they are used. Also, as the seasons change, you may need to exchange those items for weather appropriate clothes. Please send your child to school in comfortable clothing and be aware of the fact that they may get dirty. Jewelry often gets lost or broken at school, so pieces of value should be left at home. Elementary students need a pair of slip-on "indoor shoes" (i.e. slippers, flip flops, etc.) to be worn and left in the classroom.

Student and Medical Information Forms

The student and medical information forms are the most important records that we keep on file for your child. These forms are used to contact you in case of emergency and to inform us of any known allergies. Please

remember to update your child's records whenever your address or phone numbers change. A child can be exempt from immunizations for one of the following two reasons:

1. His/her physician recommends against immunizations on medical grounds.
2. His/her parents' sign an affidavit mandating release based on religious or personal beliefs.

Should the vaccination rate of our student body fall below the threshold of 95%, we reserve the right to deny enrollment to unvaccinated children until we again reach a safe level of herd immunity. Please refer to the Enrollment Contract for further information about our vaccination policy.

It is the policy of Alpine Montessori School to comply with the reporting requirements of confirmed communicable diseases as required under the Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 81.042. Alpine Montessori School is not in the position to diagnose or disseminate any medical conditions of any students. No medical information about any students will be disclosed to anyone other than that student's parents.

As per State requirements, all four and five year old children must have a current vision and hearing screening on file at the school.

Allergies

Please make sure that your child's teacher is aware of any allergies that your child might have. Also, be sure that all allergies are listed on your child's Medical Information form.

Illness Policy

Children with any symptoms of illness should not be sent to school. A sick child does not have the physical or emotional stamina to participate in school activities. In addition, keeping your ill child at home minimizes the spread of communicable disease and demonstrates respect for other children and their families.

If your child appears too ill to function normally in the class or develops symptoms of illness during the school day, you will be asked to come to the school office to pick up your child. **A child must be without fever 24 hours before returning to school.**

Signs of illness include: fever, diarrhea, vomiting, rash and discharge from the eyes, ears or nose. If your child is exposed to, or contracts a contagious disease or parasite, please notify the school so that other parents may be alerted. Children with contagious diseases (strep, impetigo, etc.) need to remain out of school for 24 hours from the initial time of treatment. Children being treated for lice need to be completely symptom free before returning to school and all bedding, clothing, etc. should be thoroughly washed.

Health and Nutrition

Resources about this topic can be found in the resource folders located above family boxes in the office. These include USDA sample menus and lunch suggestions. Please remember that food items that contain sugar in the top three ingredients will be sent home with your child. These guidelines are adhered to for the safety and wellbeing of your child within their learning environment.

DISCIPLINE

Behavior Policy

Alpine Montessori School implements the philosophy of natural and logical consequences to support the children in maintaining the classroom ground rules. Staff does not use corporal punishment or other intimidating means of

discipline. Our intention is that our children never be humiliated or ridiculed in any way. Classroom discipline is centered around a basic concept of respect: respect for each other and respect for the environment. Children are given appropriate choices. On occasion, however, we may be faced with a particularly difficult disciplinary situation. When behavior becomes disruptive to the class and continues over time the teacher will contact the parent to discuss the issue. Together a course of action consistent with our principles will be planned, with meetings scheduled to follow up and ensure the issue has been resolved. In the event that such problems cannot be resolved in a mutually beneficial way it may become necessary, and we reserve the right to ask the family to remove the child from class. Ultimately each individual teacher will determine the balance that the class requires to function in an optimal manner and we request that parents deal directly with their child's teacher. Parents should familiarize themselves with the school's Operational Policies. This document can be found on our website (under Current Families > Enrollment Forms and School Policies) and is also available in the black binder located on the desk in the office. Copies can be made available upon request.

Biting Policy

In order to provide a safe and healthy environment for your child the school enforces a no biting policy. An occasional biting incident is normal. However, if the child becomes a chronic biter, and if it is determined that the child would be better served in a smaller group setting, you may be asked to remove your child from the school until the problem is under control.

MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES

Communication

All school notes and newsletters will be placed in your family mailbox; their daily work will be placed in their cubby or backpack. Primary students should clear their cubby every Friday. All student's backpacks should be cleaned out every weekend. Administrative communications such as invoices, newsletters and notices will be placed in your family box.

If parents need to speak with a teacher about their student, please refrain from attempting a discussion at pick-up or drop-off. All staff may be reached via email using their first name "@alpinemontessori.org" to schedule a conference for a time when they can give you their full attention.

Parent Contact Information

It is crucial for us to maintain up-to-date contact information for all families. To ensure that communication with parents is effective and timely, we ask that parents update their contact details regularly. Parents can do this by:

- Logging into Brightwheel and making updates directly to your child's profile.
- Email changes or updates to admin@alpinemontessori.org

These updates ensure that we can always reach you in case of emergencies or important school matters.

Photographs and Publicity

Photographs of the children participating in our program may be taken from time to time and may appear in newspapers, magazines, brochures or other publicity materials. Your permission for photographs that include your child can be used without compensation as part of this agreement.

Toys, Games, and Electronic Devices

Materials of educational value are encouraged at Alpine Montessori School. Parents are requested to see that toys, play jewelry, makeup and valuables stay at home. Toys brought to the school will be kept and given back at the end of the day.

Cell phone usage is for emergency purposes only. If your child's phone **must** come to school, it should be kept in the child's backpack at all times. Cell phones in the classroom/playground will be confiscated. Ipod/Mp3 players, tablets and e-readers should be left at home unless your child's teacher has granted permission for the use of the device specific to the educational aspect of the classroom.

Parent Conferences

We believe in open and ongoing communication with our families to ensure the success and well-being of every child. As part of our commitment to parent engagement, we hold **two parent conferences each year**—one in the fall and one in the spring. During these conferences, we discuss each child's progress, share observations, and address any questions or concerns you may have. These meetings provide an opportunity to collaborate on your child's development and to create goals for the upcoming months.

Accommodation for Families

We recognize that every child is unique and may have different needs. We are committed to working closely with families to ensure each child receives the support they need. We partner with families by providing the following accommodations:

- **Therapy Space:** If your child requires any specific therapies (e.g., speech, occupational therapy) during the day, we offer a designated space for these sessions while your child is in our care. We work with therapists to ensure minimal disruption to your child's daily routine.
- **Supporting Documentation:** For accommodations related to a child's physical or developmental needs, we request documentation from an authorized medical professional. This helps us better understand your child's needs and provide the appropriate support.
- **Primary Language Support:** We believe in the importance of ensuring effective communication for all families. We will provide materials, resources, and documentation in your family's primary language, as needed.
- **Cultural Inclusiveness:** We celebrate the diversity of our families and actively promote cultural inclusiveness. Throughout the year, we host events and activities that encourage families to share their traditions, culture, and customs, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual respect.

Understanding Growth & Development Using Informal Assessments

We pride ourselves on providing high-quality care by tailoring our approach to fit each child's developmental needs, as determined by developmental milestones. Informal Assessments will be used to observe developmental progress. By doing so, we can identify areas requiring further attention and intervention and provide prompt support to ensure each child reaches their full potential. We use Developmental Checklists that cover the following areas: *Health & Motor, Social-Emotional, Cognitive, and Language & Literacy*. Assessments used can be found on the CLI Engage website. CLI Engage is a free online platform that provides resources for educators and families of children from birth to pre-K and elementary. The platform is developed by the Children's Learning Institute (CLI) at The University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston.

If we find any developmental delays, we recommend speaking with your child's pediatrician to ensure they get the support they need for a strong start in their growth and development.

Other assessment tools that are utilized are standardized IOWA tests for 3rd grade to 6th grade and Amplify Reading MClass for K-2nd Grade.

Volunteer Work Vouchers

From time to time AMS will have Volunteer Work Weekends. This is a time when the school opens on a Saturday morning for a few hours to allow parents and other volunteers to come in and perform tasks that aid in the upkeep of the school. Parents who participate for at least 4 hours are given a voucher for \$50 off one month's fees and may be remitted with the next installment. Those who claim year round jobs offered at the parent orientation meeting are automatically given \$20 off each installment and no voucher is needed. Vouchers and discounts cannot be combined or exceed \$200 for one year.