MONTESSORI WEST LTD.

PARENT HANDBOOK

Approved and adopted – Date August 15, 2024

This policy has been developed and implemented in consultation with the whole Montessori West (MW) board of directors.

Review Date: August 21, 2026

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Introduction

Parent Handbook

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide you with information about the Company (Montessori West Ltd T/A Montessori West) its policies and procedures. The partnership between parents, teachers and administrators is key to a successful relationship and our goal is to provide the tools for good communication from the start.

Please familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook and refer to it as needed throughout the school year. If you have questions or comments, please direct them to the Administrative Office, (admin@montessoriwest.ky).

I look forward to an exciting and productive school year. Thank you for choosing Montessori West!

From the Montessori West Team 😊

Mission Statement

Our Mission is to encourage the development of the whole child by providing a comprehensive Montessori education, cultivating independent thought and foundational skills as well as awareness of their environment; empathy for others; social ease and confidence.

We aim to establish within a child the intellectual, emotional, and physical rigor needed to become a self-directed learner, flexible thinker, creative problem solver, and support their ever-increasing curiosity about the world in which they live..

Montessori West Values

- Joyful – Our offices and education centre are friendly places and we are positive and optimistic in our approach.
- Caring – We support our staff, our children and families and one another.
- Inquisitive – We are self-reflective and curious.
- Integrity – We are true to our beliefs, we are always polite and professional and offer the best quality and value we can.
- Inclusive and collaborative – We value difference and respect the contribution that any individual or organization can make.

Montessori West Vision

A world where Montessori education is empowering the next generation to be happier, more fulfilled and better able to make a positive difference to their family, their community and the planet.

School & Program Hours

Office Hours 7:30am – 4:00pm

	Drop Off	Program Hours	Pick Up
Toddler (Half Day) Program	7:30am- 8:15am	7:30am – 12:00pm	12:00- 12:15pm
Toddler (Full Day) Program	7:30am- 8:15am	7:30am – 3:00pm	3:00- 3:15pm
Casa (Half Day) Program	7:30am- 8:00am	7:30am – 12:00pm	12:00- 12:15pm
Casa (Full Day) Program	7:30am- 8:00am	7:30am – 3:00pm	3:00-3:15pm
Elementary Program	7:30am- 8:00am	8:00am – 3:00pm	3:00-3:15pm
Stay & Play After Care		3:00pm – 5:30pm	

Attendance

Regular attendance is important at all stages of school; therefore, attendance should be a priority for all families. There are numerous breaks during the school year. Please plan your family trips off island during school vacation times so that your children will be in class on school days. Tardiness: Your child misses a very special part of the day when arriving late: classmates greet each other; friends join together to choose work; the teacher plans special lessons for each child. A child feels awkward coming into the class after missing the beginning rituals of the day. It is also a disruption to the class when a child arrives late. Children are eager to see their friends and become distracted.

For Full Day Elementary Children: Repeated tardiness is observed and recorded by the teachers. After five (5) tardies, parents are notified and asked to correct the problem. After eight (8) tardies, parents are notified and this record is reported to the School Director. If the tardiness continues, parents may be contacted by the Head Teacher to discuss the issue.

Tardiness and absenteeism are kept on file and on your child's permanent record. Private and public schools ask for this information as part of their enrollment procedures. If you expect your child to arrive late because of an appointment, please send a note to your child's teacher in advance so that lessons can be re-arranged according to his arrival.

Early Pick-Up

If your child is to be picked up early, please send a note to your child's teacher in advance so that lessons can be re-arranged according to his dismissal. To pick up a child early you must sign them out at the office and your child will be brought to you.

Releasing Children

Please ensure that the signed Parental Agreements within the Montessori West Enrollment form completed during annual registration will include the names of those authorized to collect your children are provided to the school at the start of the year, and any changes are updated as they occur.

Absences

It is important that your child is in class every day. Each child is an essential part of the classroom dynamics. Lessons are planned for children each day, thus a child's absence impacts the schedule.

We do not, however, expect you to send your child to school when he is sick or recuperating. Please reference our Illness policy. Absences are also considered excused in the event of a family death or funeral, religious holiday, and doctor's appointment.

Please call the office when your child has an unexpected absence for sickness or other reason.

Illness

At Montessori West, our health policy has been developed with the main focus being the wellbeing of our students and staff. In order to maintain a healthy school environment, parents are advised to keep their child at home when any of the following symptoms are present:

- Fever (temperature of 100.4 or over)
- Rash
- Mucus Cough
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Discolored or excessive amounts of nasal congestion
- Sore Throat
- Head lice
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)

If any of these symptoms occur during the school hours, a classroom teacher will call the parent/caregiver to come and collect the child immediately. Children who experience diarrhea and or vomiting, are required to be symptom free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school. Children who have had a fever are required to have a normal temperature for a minimum of 24 hours without fever reducing medication before returning to school. Please

note that Montessori West reserves the right to make a decision to send a child home due to illness or injury.

Please notify the Front Office if your child contracts any communicable disease.

Notices of possible exposure will be given to all parents in your child's classroom, while maintaining your child and family's confidentiality. Children will go outside and play on most school days. If you feel that your child should not go outside because he/she is recovering from an illness, please keep your child home an additional day. All Children will be included in all class activities unless special instructions are outlined in a Child's medical profile and signed by the child's physician.

Medication

A Montessori West classroom member will not be allowed to administer medicine without your consent. If the need may arise for medication to be administered by a member of staff, please ensure that the Medication Permission Form is completed. Staff will only follow instructions that are outlined on the Medical Permission Form. If a medical condition is listed on a child's Authorization for Medication form and accompanied by a doctor's order, Montessori West will administer medication necessary for the student's health and normal functioning.

For medicine administration please follow the below:

- All medication must be left with the Front Office.
- All medication must be in its original container with the dosage and child's first and last name listed.
- No medication will be dispensed for longer than two (2) weeks unless it is accompanied by a doctor's note.

Injuries & Medical Emergencies

Although we provide exceptional supervision, accidents and injuries often cannot be avoided. At Montessori West all our staff are fully trained in First Aid and CPR. Minor injuries, bumps, and bruises will be addressed immediately with basic First Aid, Band-Aids, ice packs, etc. An incident report will be filled out and given to you that day or the next morning.

Every attempt will be made to speak with you, or designee, directly at pick-up. Parents will be called in the event of any injury to a child's head or neck area. In the case of a medical emergency, Montessori West will call 911 immediately and will make every effort to contact the parents.

In the event that parents cannot be reached, those listed as emergency contacts will be notified. If needed, a member of staff will accompany children to the hospital emergency facility nearest the school.

The signed Parental Agreements within the Montessori West Enrollment form completed during annual registration will ensure that children receive prompt attention at the hospital or emergency clinic. Parents are expected to pay the charges for medical services rendered.

Birthdays

At Montessori West, a child's birthday celebration varies depending on which program they are in. In the Toddler Program, a child celebrating their birthday will be invited to bring in their favorite book which will be added to the classroom library as well as a healthy snack such as a fruit/vegetable platter. In the Casa program, a birthday will be celebrated with a "Walk Around the Sun", which will showcase a photo for each year since birth. The child's parents/caregivers will also be given the opportunity to come in to be a part of the birthday celebration. A favorite book or healthy snack is also welcomed in the Casa program. In order to minimize disruptions and avoid the possibility that some children may feel excluded, please do not distribute birthday party invitations or presents at school by sending them to class, giving them to a teacher or assistant, and/or leaving them for pick-up at the front office. If you wish to invite a child from the classroom, please send your classroom teacher an email with the details and they can forward it to the family via email.

Toys

Please keep toys and accessories at home. This includes electronic toys and games as well as play jewelry, watches, and fitness trackers. If a child would like to bring personal items to school, we welcome books, pictures, items the child has made, as well as objects related to world cultures, science, and nature. If items are to be returned, please label them clearly.

Snacks, Lunch & Food Allergies

Snacks

The school provides a healthy morning and evening snack; however, if you wish to send an additional snack with your child, you are welcome to do so. We encourage healthy options and we ask that you refrain from packing foods that are high in sugar. We also ask that children only have water to drink at school, and no juices or sodas at all.

Lunch

Full day children should pack a lunch and bring it each day. All lunch boxes should be labeled with your child's name. We encourage the use of reusable and recyclable containers. Lunch should be nutritious and well-balanced. A good balance between carbohydrates, protein, and fat is desirable. Processed and packaged foods are discouraged for nutritional and environmental reasons. **Children may not bring candy or carbonated beverages for lunch and sweets/desserts are strongly discouraged.** Teacher's will not be able to heat up

lunches. Should your child require food heated, please send it in a Thermoses, tin foil, or insulated container to help keep food warm until lunch time. If food is required to be cold, please pack an ice pack in the lunch box to help items stay cool.

It is important to include your Elementary child in the preparation and clean-up of his/her lunchbox. These actions will extend the Montessori process by allowing him/her to make choices, assume responsibility, and develop independence.

Food Allergies

Should your child have a food allergy, this should be noted within the Montessori West Enrollment form completed during annual registration or as soon as a food allergy is identified.

All parents in the class community will be notified if there are any food restrictions in the classroom.

Please note that Montessori West is a nut free school and no nuts of any sort can be brought to school. If your child brings a food item containing nuts it will not be eaten and sent home.

Communication

Communication with teachers through email is recommended. It is important that any issues, concerns, or feedback regarding your child be addressed directly with the teacher. Teachers will make themselves available to talk with you when children are not present. They will also check email and return your message or email within 24 hours, except for holidays and weekends.

The school also uses a communication app called *ClassDojo*. ClassDojo is a free educational platform designed to foster communication and collaboration between teachers and families. It functions similarly to messaging apps like WhatsApp.

Teachers check ClassDojo regularly; however, please allow them some time to respond, especially if they are in the middle of teaching or presenting a lesson.

Newsletters will be sent out monthly from each class highlighting unit studies, successes and photos. It will also contain all relevant information including upcoming birthdays, events, reminders and important updates. We strongly urge all families to read the monthly newsletter to keep up to date with your child's classroom.

Dress Code and Clothing

Dress should be simple and appropriate. All Children have time to play outdoors or participate in physical education each day and should dress accordingly. We encourage children to wear closed in shoes that they can put on/take off themselves (velcro sneakers) which are safe for them to play outdoors. In addition, all children must have a hat to be able to play outdoors. Please no flip flops at school.

Children will also change into "inside" shoes upon arrival in the classroom. Parents are asked to provide rubber shoes (Crocs or the like) that fill securely for indoor use.

All clothing (including outdoor wear) should be clearly labeled with the Child's name.

Toddler Clothing is a very important consideration in the Toddler community. To assist in a positive toileting experience. Children should be dressed in comfortable two-piece clothing with elastic waist pants/shorts.

Accidents are inevitable at this stage so please provide two (2) seasonally appropriate complete changes of clothes in a ziplock bag that are labeled with your child's name . Soiled underwear and clothing will not be rinsed but will be placed in a wet bag and sent home daily. Please send in a replacement change of clothes the following day and return in the clean wet bag. Please note: It is the parent's responsibility to provide all Diapers/pull-ups at the start of the school year and it will be replenished as needed. All clothing (including hat & outdoor wear) should be clearly labeled with the Child's name.

School Uniforms

We have implemented a school uniform policy. While uniforms are **not mandatory for toddlers**, we encourage families to begin the habit early to support a smooth transition into the Casa program where uniforms are required for all children.

Please take a moment to review our full School Uniform Policy for details on expectations and guidelines.

What to Bring for School

Please provide the following items for your child to bring on the first day of school:

- Hat
- A pair of "inside" shoes (to remain at school)
- 2 Sets change of clothes (to remain at school and be replenished as needed)
- 2 Wet Bags (One will be kept at home, and one will be kept at school and be sent home with soiled clothing as needed)
- Diapers/Pull- ups- Toddler class only
- Flushable Wet Wipes (to remain at school and be replenished as needed)
- Toothbrush with case and Toothpaste
- A lunch kit and placemat (with lunch for Full Day children)

- Sunscreen & Insect Repellent
- Sleeping Bag in a pillow case (Full Day children only)

Pacifiers and Baby Bottles

Montessori West is committed to promoting children's independence, healthy development, and age-appropriate self-care skills. In keeping with this approach, the school does not encourage the use of pacifiers or baby bottles while children are attending school.

- Parents/guardians are encouraged to support their child in transitioning away from pacifiers and baby bottles prior to or upon entering the school environment.
- Where a child arrives at school with a pacifier or bottle, staff will work respectfully with the child and parent/guardian to support an appropriate transition away from its use.
- Pacifiers and bottles should not be used as part of the child's regular classroom routine or during Montessori work periods.
- Children will be encouraged to use age-appropriate cups and develop independence in their eating and drinking routines.
- Pacifiers and baby bottles are not permitted in the Casa Program during the school day.
- Any exceptions or individual circumstances will be discussed with the school administration and considered on a case-by-case basis.

Discipline & Behaviour

Children are expected to:

- Respect and follow the centre and classroom rules
- Accept responsibility and the consequences of their actions
- Listen to and respond appropriately to what adults say

Where disciplinary action is required, we will follow the four Montessori Disciplinary approach as follows:

- Discipline versus Self Control
- Freedom to Do What's Right
- Making Appropriate Choices
- Clear Rules and Expectations

Grace and Courtesy lessons are given to help children know how to respond to a variety of situations. These are tailored to the developmental level of the child. Normal peer conflict is a part of every child's life experience. As children learn the give-and-take of social interaction and

cooperation, conflict naturally occurs. Young children are still learning self-control and developing a sense of personal space. The staff at Montessori West will encourage the child to make good choices throughout the school day and will act according to our Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy which can be provided.

Special Needs

Montessori West is committed to foster an inclusive environment. We will create a culture that is supportive to children and assist them to engage in all learning opportunities. We understand the expected standards in relation to the care and education for children with special education needs or children with suspected special education needs and we are committed to help all children succeed. Montessori West maintain a special need policy which can be provided for more information.

Parent Complaints & Grievances

At Montessori West we recognize that parents and children are important stakeholders at our center. Any issues affecting children and/or parents will be addressed fairly. Our aim is to immediately resolve any issues raised in a professional and consistent way so that confidence and trust is maintained.

We ask that parents first speak with their child's classroom teacher to discuss a concern regarding their child's academic, social, emotional, or physical progress.

If a parent is not satisfied with the outcome or resolution achieved with the child's classroom teacher they can contact the school director. We will be happy to set up a meeting with all parties to further discuss.

Child Protection

Montessori West holds safeguarding and protection of children as one of our priorities. Our school takes its responsibilities seriously to protect the welfare of children while in its care.

Our shareholders, directors and employees have a statutory obligation to report evident or suspected abuse or neglect of a child in our care.

Montessori West maintain a child protection policy which includes the elements of Safe Environment, Staff Safeguarding and Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting. This policy can be provided for more information.

Tuition Fees & Withdrawal Information

Our tuition is an annual one with termly and monthly payment options. Please remember that you are **contractually obligated** for tuition for the entire school year as per the school calendar.

Mid-Term and Camps are billed separately.

If a child is withdrawn from Montessori West during the school year, a withdrawal notification via email must be submitted to the admission's office at least 30 days prior to withdrawal date.

Refunds

Refunds will not be given in the event the school is closed due to catastrophic events and/or any circumstances resulting in interruption of business. Should such an event occur, the school reserves the right to retain 100% of tuition invoiced and/or paid as of the date of such event.

School Safety

Visitors

All Visitors, Volunteers, and contractors are required to sign in at the main office and wear a visitor badge identifying them at all times.

Parent Volunteers

Montessori West encourages occasional classroom support. However, all volunteers are required to receive Child Protection training and have a Police Clearance Certificate, which we can assist in arranging. For more information, please contact the administration office.

Business Continuity and Emergency Procedures

Montessori West maintains a Hazard Management Policy which can be provided for more information.

School Closures

Montessori West will follow the policies of the Education Department with regards to school closures for inclement weather and any other disasters.

Photo Release

The signed Parental Agreements within the Montessori West Enrollment form completed during annual registration requires your consent for Montessori West to be able to use your child's photo. Throughout the year the centre will take pictures of children in the class participating in various activities. Photos will be released in our newsletters, website, social media and all other advertising material. Should you change your mind at a later date, please let us know.

Calendar

The school will observe all Cayman Islands public holidays. Details of all Cayman public holidays observed in the Cayman Islands as well as traditional school holidays, which means we will be closed for Christmas and Easter Holidays, as well as half term breaks.

A copy of the current school calendar is available on the Transparent Classroom portal under School Info and on the school's website at www.montessoriwest.ky.

Parent Handbook Acknowledgment

1. I confirm I have read and am familiar with the Parent Handbook :

☐ I confirm

☐ Other – If other, please provide full reasons why you are unable to confirm this point:

Signature:	
Date:	

Thank you for completing the Parent Handbook and Policy Acknowledgment form. Completed forms should be returned to the administration office.