

# LITTLE MIRACLES MONTESSORI

## Parent Handbook: Policies and Procedures

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Little Miracles Montessori! We are honored to support your child's journey during their most formative years. Our school is a place where children grow emotionally, socially, physically, and intellectually in a peaceful, respectful, and stimulating environment. Rooted in the Montessori philosophy and grounded in research-based best practices in early childhood development, our program fosters curiosity, independence, and lifelong learning. This handbook outlines our policies and procedures in alignment with Texas Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards and Montessori principles. Please review this document carefully to understand our expectations, routines, and commitments.

### MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission at Little Miracles Montessori is to cultivate the innate potential within each child by fostering independence, self-discipline, empathy, and a love of learning. Guided by the Montessori Method and committed to excellence in early childhood education, we provide a secure, inclusive environment where children thrive through purposeful work and meaningful relationships.

#### 1. ENROLLMENT & ADMISSION

We accept children from newborn to 12 years old. Admission is based on available space, developmental readiness, and a family's commitment to the Montessori approach. A completed enrollment packet, health and immunization records, and payment of all applicable fees are required prior to admission.

Parents will be notified of any policy changes via email. A copy of the updated policies will be available for review, and a new parent acknowledgment form will need to be signed to confirm receipt and understanding of the revised policies.

#### 2. HOURS OF OPERATION

Little Miracles Montessori operates Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. We are closed for major holidays and professional development days. A calendar of closures is provided annually.

#### 3. TUITION & FEES

Tuition is due on the 24th of the preceding month. A late fee will be assessed if payment is not received by the due date. A written notice of withdrawal is required: 30 days for one child and 60 days for multiple children. If notice is given after the 1st of the month, tuition for the following month is still required. Fees are non-refundable and include:

- Registration fee: \$200
- Deposit: \$600
- Supply fee: \$100, charged three times per year (January, May, and September).

Withdrawal Procedure:

- Written notice must be submitted to the Director at least 30 days in advance for one child or 60 days in advance for multiple children.
- Notice should be given no later than the tuition due date (24th) or by the 1st of the child's last month of attendance.
- We do not accept mid-month withdrawal notices.
- Notice should include the child's full name and the last intended day of attendance.
- If proper notice is not given, the deposit will be forfeited and tuition for the following month will be due in full.
- The last month's tuition will not be prorated regardless of the child's attendance or withdrawal date.

#### 4. CURRICULUM & PHILOSOPHY

Our curriculum follows the Montessori philosophy, incorporating practical life, sensorial, language, math, cultural studies, and art. We also incorporate a preschool curriculum to help prepare children for kindergarten, supporting readiness skills through literacy, numeracy, and social development. Children learn through hands-on experiences, self-directed activity, and collaborative play. Lessons are individualized and guided by trained Montessori educators.

#### 5. PROMOTION OF INDOOR AND OUTDOOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- We are committed to promoting physical activity as essential to a child's development.
- Children engage in at least two hours of outdoor play daily, weather permitting, and participate in structured and unstructured indoor physical activities such as yoga, music and movement, and gross motor games.
- Physical activity contributes to healthy growth, improved concentration, emotional well-being, and social skills.
- Our daily routine includes at least 60 minutes of indoor activity and 120 minutes of outdoor play.
- Children engage in both structured activities (such as guided games, movement classes, and sports) and unstructured play (including free time on the playground, climbing, running, and imaginative games).
- Activities take place in designated outdoor play areas, indoor gross motor spaces, classrooms, and community activity rooms.
- To support participation, children should wear comfortable clothing and closed-toe, non-slip shoes that allow for safe movement. We recommend bringing weather-appropriate gear, such as jackets in cold weather and sunhats in the summer.
- Outdoor play will be suspended when extreme weather conditions pose a significant health risk, including temperatures below 40°F or above 100°F, lightning, heavy rain, or poor air quality alerts.
- When outdoor play is not possible, indoor physical activity will be expanded to ensure children continue to receive adequate exercise.

#### 6. HEALTH & ILLNESS POLICY

- Children who exhibit symptoms of illness (fever, vomiting, diarrhea, contagious rash) must remain at home until symptom-free for at least 24 hours without medication.
- Eye infections or discharge will require two doses of prescribed eye medication before a child may return to school.

- Parents will be contacted to pick up their child if they become ill while at school.
- A doctor's note may be required for reentry.

#### 7. IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Children must be up to date with required immunizations per the Texas Department of State Health Services. Exemptions must be documented according to state guidelines. Staff must also meet immunization requirements, particularly for vaccine-preventable diseases.

#### 8. MEDICATION POLICY

Prescription medications must be in the original container labeled with the child's name and dosage. A signed authorization form is required. Over-the-counter medications will only be administered with written parental consent and according to label directions.

#### 8a. PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING AND PROVIDING INSECT REPELLENT AND

**SUNSCREEN** Parents must provide insect repellent and sunscreen labeled with their child's name. Permission from parent is implicit if they are providing repellent and sunscreen with child's full name on it. Staff will apply repellent and sunscreen prior to outdoor activities in accordance with label instructions. Parents may request alternative application schedules.

9. **BREASTFEEDING POLICY** Little Miracles Montessori supports breastfeeding mothers by allowing nursing in the infant classroom. A rocking chair will be provided to ensure a comfortable and nurturing space. Breast milk may be stored onsite in labeled containers with first name (last initial) and will be handled following appropriate health guidelines. Frozen breastmilk may be put in freezer and must be labeled with child's name (last initial) and date it was expressed.
10. **HEARING AND VISION SCREENING** Children aged four and older will need to undergo annual hearing and vision screenings, as required by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Parents are responsible for ensuring that children who are age 4 by September 1st complete the required hearing and vision screenings. A copy of the screening results must be provided to the Director for placement in the child's file.
11. **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES** In case of a medical emergency, we will contact emergency medical services and the child's parent or guardian immediately. Staff are certified in pediatric first aid and CPR and will perform CPR or administer first aid if needed. An incident report will be completed, and emergency contact information must be kept current. Child care licensing will be notified if child needed to seek medical attention or go to emergency room.
12. **INFORMATION ON VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES FOR EMPLOYEES**  
Little Miracles Montessori has a policy in place to protect children from vaccine-preventable diseases. This policy includes the following:
  - A list of required and recommended vaccines for staff, including but not limited to: influenza, MMR (measles, mumps, rubella), Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis), and hepatitis A and B.
  - Provisions for maintaining documentation of immunization records for each employee. These records will be available upon request and not kept on file at LMM.
  - Procedures for evaluating exemption requests due to medical conditions, which must be supported by documentation from a licensed health care provider.

- Requirements that all new employees review this policy during orientation and receive training on how to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.
- Annual staff training to ensure awareness of symptoms, transmission, and prevention of vaccine-preventable diseases.

This policy is aligned with guidelines from the Texas Department of State Health Services to ensure the health and safety of all children and staff.

13. **ALLERGY POLICY** Parents must inform the school of any known allergies. A Food Allergy Emergency Plan must be submitted for severe allergies. Allergy information is posted in classrooms and food prep areas. Staff are trained in recognizing allergic reactions and administering epinephrine auto-injectors if needed. We do not maintain or administer unassigned epinephrine auto-injectors.
14. **DISCIPLINE & GUIDANCE POLICY**  
Discipline is positive, respectful, and consistent with Montessori philosophy. We use redirection, modeling, and conflict resolution to guide behavior. Corporal punishment and harsh discipline are strictly prohibited.
15. **INCLUSIVE CARE FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL CARE NEEDS**  
We provide inclusive care for children with identified special needs. An Individualized Care Plan will be developed in collaboration with families and health professionals. Staff receive training on adaptive strategies, communication techniques, and any required medical interventions.
16. **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN**  
We maintain a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan designed to ensure the safety of children and staff during various emergency situations. This plan includes procedures for the following scenarios:
  - **Fire and Evacuation:** Monthly fire drills are conducted to practice safe evacuation. Staff will guide children to the designated assembly area outside the building. Attendance will be taken and emergency contacts will be notified if necessary.
  - **Severe Weather:** In the event of tornadoes, hurricanes, or other severe weather, children will be relocated to a designated interior safe area away from windows. Emergency supplies and first aid kits are accessible. Drills for severe weather are practiced quarterly.
  - **Lockdown or Shelter-in-Place:** If there is an external threat or nearby danger, the school will enter lockdown. All doors will be secured, and children will be kept calm and quiet in designated areas. Shelter-in-place procedures will be followed in case of environmental threats (e.g., hazardous material release).
  - **Medical Emergencies:** Staff certified in pediatric first aid and CPR will respond immediately. Emergency medical services will be contacted as needed.
  - **Reunification and Communication:** Parents will be notified as soon as it is safe to do so using our designated alert system via phone, text, or email. In case of evacuation to an alternate site, we will relocate to Walgreens, located at 2605 W Holcombe Blvd, Houston, TX 77025. Location details will be provided.

- **Emergency Contacts and Supplies:** Emergency contact information must be updated regularly. The school maintains emergency supplies including flashlights, batteries, blankets, and sanitation items.

The emergency plan is reviewed annually and updated as needed. Staff receive training on all procedures, and copies of the plan are available to parents upon request.

#### 17. TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Little Miracles Montessori does not offer transportation services. All field trips are in-house and occur within the school premises or with visiting guests.

#### 18. PARENTS' RIGHTS

Parents have the right to:

- Visit the school at any time during operating hours.
- Receive regular communication and updates.
- Review their child's records.
- Be informed of any injuries or incidents.
- Participate in conferences and school events.
- File complaints without fear of retaliation.

Parents are encouraged to schedule a meeting with the Child Care Director to review and discuss any questions or concerns regarding the center's policies and procedures. Open communication is essential to ensure the best care for each child.

Parents may participate in the child care center's operations and activities by volunteering for events, assisting with classroom projects, or joining family engagement meetings. Opportunities to be involved are shared through newsletters and school announcements.

Parents may access the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers online at: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov>. To report suspected abuse or neglect, call the Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-252-5400 or visit <https://www.txabusehotline.org>.

#### 19. PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Staff are trained annually in recognizing and reporting signs of abuse and neglect.

Training includes methods for increasing employee and parent awareness of issues regarding child abuse and neglect, including warning signs that a child may be a victim and factors indicating a child is at risk.

We provide educational resources to staff and families on prevention techniques and strategies to reduce risk. Materials and discussions may include safe and respectful relationships, appropriate supervision, and communication with children.

We coordinate with local community organizations and agencies that provide support and intervention services, including Child Protective Services and child advocacy centers.

Parents of a child who may be a victim of abuse or neglect are encouraged to seek support and intervention services immediately. To report suspected abuse or neglect, contact the Texas

Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-252-5400 or visit <https://www.txabusehotline.org>. Reports can be made anonymously, and protection from retaliation is assured by law.

Resources for families are available upon request.

## 20. SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION POLICY

At Little Miracles Montessori, we strive to provide a supportive and inclusive environment for all children. Suspension and expulsion are considered only after all other behavioral and developmental interventions have been exhausted. We are committed to working with families, specialists, and support services to address behavioral challenges constructively.

The following procedures will be followed:

- **Initial Concerns:** Parents will be informed of recurring behavioral concerns or safety issues. Documentation of incidents and observations will be shared.
- **Parent Conference:** A meeting will be scheduled with the Director, teacher(s), and parent(s) to discuss concerns and develop a collaborative behavior support plan.
- **Intervention Period:** Interventions and strategies will be implemented over a defined period, during which staff and parents will work together to support the child.
- **Suspension:** Temporary suspension may be necessary if a child's behavior poses a risk to themselves or others. Parents will be notified in writing with specific reasons and duration.
- **Expulsion:** Expulsion will only be considered if all support efforts fail or if a serious incident warrants immediate removal for the safety of others. Written documentation and parent communication will be provided in advance.

The goal of this policy is to support every child's success and maintain a safe and nurturing learning environment for all. Ultimately, we reserve the right to suspend and expel a child due to dangerous behavior immediately without notice.

## 21. SAFE SLEEP POLICY FOR INFANTS (BIRTH – 12 MONTHS)

To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related infant deaths, Little Miracles Montessori follows safe sleep practices for infants as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and required by Texas Child Care Licensing.

- Infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep, unless a signed physician's note indicates otherwise for medical reasons.
- Infants will sleep in a safety-approved crib with a firm mattress and a tight-fitting sheet.
- No soft bedding, pillows, bumper pads, stuffed toys, or loose blankets will be placed in the crib.
- Sleep areas are kept free of hazards, and cribs are placed to allow supervision and air circulation.
- Infants will not be swaddled unless there is a medical reason documented by a healthcare provider.

- Pacifiers may be used during sleep, but they will not be reinserted once they fall out.
- Each sleeping infant is checked at least every 15 minutes by staff for normal breathing and sleep position.
- Staff are trained annually on safe sleep practices.

Parents will receive a copy of this policy upon enrollment of an infant and must acknowledge receipt and agreement in writing.

## 22. MEALS AND FOOD SERVICE PRACTICES

- Little Miracles Montessori will provide a catered lunch prepared by a catering company that is permitted by the health department.
- Lunches are provided Monday through Thursday only. Parents are required to provide a sack lunch on Fridays.
- Parents are responsible for providing two nutritious snacks each day. Snacks should not include candy, cookies, pastries, or other sugary items. Please avoid sending chips daily.
- A weekly menu is posted in advance for parent review.
- We accommodate dietary restrictions and food allergies with written documentation from a parent or healthcare provider.
- Infants are fed according to written feeding plans provided by parents.
- Bottles and breast milk must be labeled and stored properly. Unused portions will be discarded according to licensing guidelines or mom's suggestions.
- If your child brings lunch every day, please understand that you are responsible for your child's nutritional needs.
- Parents are encouraged to communicate regularly about their child's eating habits and preferences.

## 23. PARENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

- I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understood the Little Miracles Montessori Parent Handbook.
- I agree to abide by the policies and procedures outlined herein, including those regarding tuition, illness, withdrawal, discipline, and emergency procedures.
- I understand that if the proper notice of withdrawal is not given, I will forfeit my deposit and be responsible for paying tuition for the following month.
- I understand that tuition is due regardless of attendance.
- I understand that Little Miracles Montessori does not prorate the last month of tuition regardless of withdrawal date.

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_