



# The Ammonite School

## Parent Handbook

5304 Bonneville Bend, Austin TX 78744 (206) 235-4270

E-mail: [theammoniteschool@gmail.com](mailto:theammoniteschool@gmail.com)

Website: [www.theammoniteschool.com](http://www.theammoniteschool.com)

Director: Susanne Crawford

## **Our History**

The Ammonite School was founded in 2020 to provide exceptional and individualized care for our students. The School was founded by Susanne Crawford, who designed a program that incorporates all of the best practices she discovered while teaching Montessori for 20 years. The school is designed as a small environment that allows for close connection and very individualized education for each unique student, honoring all learning styles and neurodiversity..

## **Vision Statement**

The Ammonite school's vision is to create individualized and exceptional education for our students and instill a lifelong love of learning, sense of wonder, and respect for *self*, *others*, and *the environment* that spirals outwards to positively impact our community and world.

## **Mission Statement**

The purpose and goal of The Ammonite School is to facilitate the development of: intellectual, physical, social, and emotional skills for our students. We actualize our mission by respecting children's learning styles, exploration, natural interests, and curiosity in a school community rooted in love and respect. We support each child's unique way of learning and self-expression in a small class that facilitates deep and meaningful connections. This small class size allows customized curriculum for each student. Children are encouraged and guided to attune to their feelings and express them, as well as value, respect, and understand others. We strive to promote respect for all living things, strong personal values and the universal human values of truth, equal rights, peace, integrity, love, non-violence and citizenship.

## **Enrollment Guidelines**

An enrollment visit will take place with the parent, and child before enrolling in school. We ask that if possible both parents/guardians be present if possible to establish connection, communication, and to ensure questions are answered to ease the transition to school and familiarize your child with their school.

Enrollment occurs annually and we are enroll until the school is at capacity. We have a wait pool and will enroll students with sibling preference first, followed by children and families that bring a balance in ages, gender, and racial diversity to our community.

## **Forms**

All Registration Forms must be complete and returned before a child can attend school. The registration form must be filled out completely, so please do not leave anything blank. Anytime there are changes in the registration information (i.e. phone numbers, address, work contact, etc.) you must notify the school immediately and in writing. It is imperative that we have current contact information, in case of an emergency.

## **Before a child begins school we must have the following completed:**

1. Application Form
2. Admission Form/Tuition Agreement
3. Well child Statement from Physician
4. Immunization Record-current
5. Parent Handbook Acknowledgement
6. Medication Permission Form (EPI-pen, asthma inhaler, etc.)
7. Allergy documentation and plan (if required) from the child's physician

These forms give us vital information about your child. Anytime there are any updates in your contact or medical information, including shot records, please make sure we update your child's file.

## **Immunizations**

All children must have a current immunization or exemption affidavit on file. If you choose not to immunize your child on the recommended schedule, you must provide a notarized State of Texas Immunization Waiver Form.

The Recommended Childhood Immunization Schedule is available via the Department of Health and Human Services – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://www.immunizetexas.com>, and in your enrollment packet.

All employees are required to have a Tuberculous (TB) test completed per Health Department and must present documentation stating that they are negative for TB before they can be present at the school.

## **Tuition and Fees**

Our annual tuition is \$13,7500 which can be paid in full July 1st or in monthly installments of \$1,375 due the first day of each month starting on July 1st and ending April 1st. Tuition is considered late after the 5th of the month and will incur a fee of \$100. There is an annual enrollment fee of \$500 due with enrollment agreement. Additionally there is a materials fee of \$300 due each year at the time of enrollment. Rates are subject to annual increases.

## **Withdrawal Policy**

If you must break your Agreement and withdraw your child before the end of the school year, you are required to provide 30 days written notice. Tuition must be paid for the 30 days following notice, regardless of attendance.

## **Hours of Operation**

The school is open from 8:45 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Monday-Thursday. We follow Austin ISD (AISD) for school closures, opening dates and holidays. We follow AISD/and Del Valle ISD decisions regarding school delays and closures due to weather. All families will be notified via text of any school closures or delays. If there is an active weather event we reserve the right to make school closures outside of AISD. The school will follow state guidelines in the instance of a Pandemic.

## **Website Information**

Please visit our website at [www.theammoniteschool.com](http://www.theammoniteschool.com) for any additional information that you may need.

## **Dropping off and Picking up Children**

Please remember that we are in a residential neighborhood make sure to always follow posted speed limit signs 25 MPH Also, please ensure neighbors driveways are not blocked under any circumstances. Our goal for drop off and pick up is to be as swift and unobtrusive to neighbors as possible. If your child wants to visit with their friends, or you want to catch up, you are very welcome to meet at the park near the amenity center near the 183 entrance to the neighborhood (parking by the pool). There is also a grassy, well shaded area there too.

Feel free to drop off in a "window" between 8:45-9:15. We understand that some mornings can be difficult, and don't want school to add to the stress-know that we empathize. Please send a text if you are running late, you will be greeted with warmth and a smile.

## **Release of Children**

Also feel free to use a pick up window from 2:15-2:45. We are only able to release children to authorized pick up people designated in the child's Admission Form at time of enrollment. All authorized pick-ups will need to show identification if we have never met them. Please notify authorized persons that we will need their identification, this helps them to be prepared.

## **Parental Rights**

The Ammonite School does not have the right to withhold a child from any parent having custody or joint custody, without a complete copy of current court orders, that clearly state custody details, on file in our office. The school cannot be involved in custody disputes.

## **Cell Phones**

Please refrain from using your phone when you are dropping off or picking up your child. Attention should be given to your child and your child's teacher.

## **Code of Conduct for Parents/Teachers**

1. Children should be supervised always. Children cannot enter or leave school without adult supervision.
2. Children will learn non-violent communication; they will practice saying how they feel and asking for what they need in instances of conflict.
3. We use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement, and encouragement rather than competition, comparison, and criticism.
4. Under no circumstance will we release children to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian. These authorized pick-ups will be listed on the Admission Form at time of enrollment.

5. Employees are required to report any suspicion of child abuse to the proper authorities and are required to read and sign all policies relating to identifying, documenting and reporting child abuse and attend prevention training per state requirements.

### **Photography**

We often take photographs of the children at school. These pictures are sometimes used on our website, instagram, yearbook or shared with you. A photograph release form will be included in your paperwork signed by families at time of enrollment. The permissions are not mandatory and you will be able to select your photography preferences.

### **Dress Code**

Please dress children appropriately for weather conditions. Please send your child in comfortable clothing for an active day. We use art supplies that can stain clothing, so please encourage your child to dress accordingly. Children should have the proper outerwear during the winter months because we always play outside when the weather permits. Please provide a full change of clothing for your child and make sure to replenish their clothing the following day if spare clothes are used. If a child borrows clothes (for spills, accidents, etc.), we ask that you wash and return it to us the next day. Please have your child dress themselves in appropriate clothing to have independent success in the restroom.

### **Attendance**

Please keep in mind the following: regular attendance sets your child up for success. A familiar pattern enables the child to take part in routines more easily, increasing their sense of security.

### **Illness**

Children unable to participate in scheduled activities due to illness should not attend. If for any reason a child is unable to attend on his/her scheduled day (i.e., vacation, illness, family emergency) parents should communicate by 10:00 that day via text.

Children must stay home if they have:

- Fever of 99.6 or higher in the past 24 hours.
- Diarrhea: Two or more times within 24 hours.
- Vomiting: One or more episodes within 24 hours (more than usual "spitting up").
- Eye Infection: Redness or swelling of the eye and/or lids, and/or secretion of yellowish discharge and crusting.
- Bronchitis: Or any other upper respiratory or chest infection which usually begins with hoarseness, cough, and a slight elevation in temperature. The cough may be dry and appear painful for the child.
- Rash: Any skin irritation we cannot identify.
- Impetigo or Hand Foot Mouth Disease
- Head Lice: Live contagious insects or their nits (egg sacs) that infest hair. Children will not be readmitted without being free of live lice and nits.
- Unknown illness: Any condition without obvious symptoms other than unusual paleness, irritability, tiredness, or lack of interest.
- Contagious Disease or Condition: Any contagious condition including but not limited to: COVID 19, Measles, Chicken Pox, Mumps, Roseola, Strep Throat infection, Head Lice, etc.

In the event of a medical emergency transportation to an emergency hospital is by ambulance only.

Health/Medical Emergencies Physician & Hospitals: The name, address and telephone number of the child's physician and/or



hospital must be on record. It is the responsibility of the parents to notify the School of any changes.

### Illness, Medications, and Injuries

1. No child who has had any fever in the past 24 hours or who shows any of the symptoms listed below for the past 24 hours may be brought to the School. These conditions may threaten the health of the other children and staff.

2. Any child showing symptoms of illness OR temperature (99.6°) will be isolated (in a kind and loving way) from the other children.

Examples are: vomiting, diarrhea, green/yellow runny nose, evidence of lice infestation, continuous cough, red throat, unexplained rashes, swollen glands, head or stomach aches, lethargy, difficulty breathing, wheezing, and mouth sores with drooling. The child must be picked up within one hour.

3. A form authorizing the staff to dispense medications must be completely filled out and signed by the parent and doctor.

4. The above medication must be in its original container with the prescription number, name of the medication, child's name, dosage and the prescribing physician's name on the label.

5. CHILDREN ARE NOT ALLOWED TO CARRY ANY MEDICATIONS. PARENTS MUST BRING THE MEDICATION TO THE TEACHER. Medication should never be left in the classroom or the child's backpack.

6. If your child has been diagnosed with any illness or disease that is listed below, please inform the director so we can notify the appropriate community and required agencies immediately.

COVID 19, Diphtheria, Streptococcal Infections, Measles (Rubella), Scarlet Fever, Meningitis - Viral or Bacterial, Tetanus, Mumps, Tuberculosis, Polio, Rubella, Viral Hepatitis, Salmonellosis, Whooping Cough (Pertussis), Shigellosis

7. The Ammonite School staff is not responsible for any accident or injury occurring while your child is participating in this program.

8. If a child is injured while at the School, an accident report is filled out. At least one parent is informed by phone or when the child is picked up at the end of the day. Parents receive a copy of the accident report upon request. The original report is placed on file in the school office. We administer first aid as needed. There is always a staff member on duty trained in both first aid and CPR.

9. Parents are responsible for medical bills that arise from an injury.

10. If a child is seriously injured at the School, the parent is notified immediately and their instructions are followed. 911 might be called simultaneously if necessary. If we are unable to reach either one of the parents or the emergency contact people, we call 911. We follow the advice of the operator and any transportation to an emergency hospital is by ambulance only.

### **Redirection and Positive Behavioral Guidelines**

1. Our goal is to build a positive self-concept. We encourage children to be self-directed and to use self-regulation.

2. The children are supervised by persons showing an attitude of understanding, fairness, consistent clear boundaries and, most of all, love. We teach by example, through the use of fair and consistent rules, and in a relaxed atmosphere where redirections are relevant to the behavior involved.

3. The children are given clear directions. Guidance is provided at the child's level of understanding.

4. Fighting of any form is not permitted.

5. Corporal punishment is NEVER allowed or practiced on our premises. Children who have conflicts or problems with others will be encouraged to verbalize their feelings and concerns. We guide rather than punish and encourage expressing feelings and needs, as well as acknowledgement of others feelings and needs.(Nonviolent communication)

6. No child is ever humiliated, shamed, frightened, or subjected to verbal or physical punishment.

7. Serious discipline problems are discussed with families and a behavioral plan will be created if necessary. If all methods of correcting the situation are attempted, then it must be determined that the child may not be suited for our program and the family must find alternative care for their child. The family will receive 30 days notice.

### **Severe Weather/Fire Drills**

Will occur on a monthly basis.

### **Snacks/Lunches**

All snacks and lunches should be brought to school daily in your child's backpack. Children are able to follow their bodies and eat as they are hungry. If they need help with reminders or encouragement we will gladly support them.

### **Special Diets and Food Allergies**

If your child has a specific food allergy, please notify the School during the enrollment process. We will need to have all medications and an allergy action plan on file.

### **Parent Communication and Involvement**

1. Parents will receive an emailed newsletter containing information on the school and curriculum.
2. Parents are required to stay in close communication with the School regarding any questions or concerns. We want to make sure all concerns are addressed early in order to prevent bigger issues, which children easily sense, and are affected by.
3. There are bi-annual parent/teacher-conferences in Fall and Spring where we will discuss your child's progress. Phone calls with

your teacher can be scheduled at any time during the school year. Friday is a great day for this as we are closed and have office hours.

4. All problems outside of school which may have an effect on a child's behavior while in our care should be discussed with the teacher to ensure we are informed to best serve the child's emotional needs.

4(b).All questions and concerns should come directly to the school.

**4(c) Negative talk about community members is grounds for immediate dismissal from the school.** This includes, group text, parent emails, conversations at get-togethers/birthdays/playdates, etc.. This type of behavior can erode a community. If you find yourself in this type of situation (ie. someone communicating unkindly about a student, parent, or staff member) please notify Susanne immediately as to not be an involved party.

5. Parents are welcome at the school any time (it helps to plan ahead for this).

6. We invite parents to share personal interests, including hobbies, talents, cultural backgrounds, etc. with our children.

7. If you are interested in volunteering or being a library parent please discuss with your child's teacher.

### **Personal Belongings**

The School is not responsible for any personal belongings. Parents are asked to make certain that children do not bring toys to school except for one item on show and tell days.

1. Children must have their full name clearly marked on all items.

2. The lost and found is located in the Classroom.

### **Pets**

The Ammonite School currently has two pets that live on the premises. Mochi the very well behaved Frenchi, who makes a rare appearance in the classroom so the children can read aloud to him while he sits in Susanne's lap. There is also Cirrus, the very friendly

black cat who often greets people with loud meows in the morning, he is outside most of the time, and always during school .unless he sneaks past during drop off, headed to the back yard.

### **Inclusion/Parties**

Any birthday/holiday/summer/end of the year **parties** that involve Ammonite students need to **include all or no students**. Inclusion is inherent in the fabric of our school community and exclusion of any kind will not be tolerated.

### **Closing Statement**

We are committed to providing the best possible educational experience for your child by creating a beautiful, academically-rich environment that is customized for each student. We look forward to collaborating with parents and students alike to have a one-of-a-kind, truly extraordinary school experience.

*--We do not discriminate against any race, ability, neurological diversity, creed, sex or national origin in hiring of staff and enrollment of our students. --*

***The Ammonite school reserves the right to amend or withdraw any policy or matter set forth in the handbook at any time. 30 days notice will be given for any changes.***

