



2008-2009

Parent Handbook

Policies & Procedures



“The mind is not a passive thing, but a devouring flame, never in repose, always in action.”

-Maria Montessori



Dear Friends:

We hope that this handbook will provide answers to questions that concern you about the day to day operation of Kingswood Montessori Academy. The Montessori philosophy and method has served our students well since our opening in 1968 and remains a valid and highly effective program for our students today. We adhere closely to the Montessori mission of providing children with an education appropriate to their total development that is solid and reliable.

Your support and enthusiasm are essential to this mission and we encourage a long, prosperous relationship with you.

Sincerely,

David Calabrese
Administrator



Kingswood Montessori Academy admits students without regard to sex, race or religion.

The mission of Kingswood Montessori Academy is to provide a quality educational experience for the student and to encourage a high set of values to enrich his/her life and those he/she influences.



Kingswood Montessori Academy is accredited by the Association of Independent Schools of Florida (AISF), The National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA), The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and has been awarded the Gold Seal of Excellence by the Florida Department of Children and Families.

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General Rules and Procedures

Arrival and Dismissal

Morning Arrival Procedure Please drive around the circle, staying to the right, and remain in your vehicle until a staff member comes out to you. Please do not allow children out of your vehicle before reaching a staff member waiting to greet you.

Dismissal Procedures Students are dismissed from the playgrounds. Please remain in your vehicle and wait for a teacher to bring your child to you. We ask that you keep conversation with staff to a minimum at this time to avoid traffic tie ups.

Arrival/Dismissal on Rainy Days Your child's teacher will be prepared with an umbrella to help your child in from the car at morning arrival. Please have the children prepared as you approach the drop off area. Dismissal will take place from the school sidewalk. Again, we prefer that you remain in your vehicle while a staff member brings your child to you. Please do not park unless necessary.

Attendance

The Montessori Environment is highly structured to promote consistency, productivity, independence and responsibility. Some of these attributes are lost when the rhythm of the children's work cycles are disrupted by late arriving students. Please make reasonable efforts to always arrive within the designated timeframe for your child's class. It is not only very difficult for children to transition into their school environment when they arrive late, but it is unfair to the teachers and the other children in the class when their concentration is broken unnecessarily.

Preschool In order to promote a consistent routine for your child, and thereby providing a sense of stability and confidence, we request that children attend school daily; except when illness or family vacations are a factor.

Timely arrival is very important for your child's emotional well-being as well as for the benefit of good classroom management. Children arriving after the designated arrival time should be brought directly to the office. The children will remain in the office until 8:45, at which point they will be escorted to class. This will help control the number of interruptions to the classrooms. Please also consider the disruptions this may cause our office, which tends to be quite busy in the morning.

Children arriving after 9:00 will be admitted by physician's note or note from the parent detailing the cause of the late arrival.

Elementary Students arriving after 8:00 should be taken directly to the office. Each student is allowed 3 late arrivals per trimester (see calendar for trimester dates).

Absences extending beyond one day will require communication with the teacher to arrange for missed work to be completed at home.

The full attendance policy for elementary students will be provided at the Parents' Night in September.

Student Release Procedures

Only adults listed on the Student Release Form will be allowed to remove your child from this campus. It is recommended that parents put everyone on the list that is trusted by the family and may be called upon to pick the children up from school. Phone requests are not permitted. The staff adhere strictly to this policy.

Sick Child Policy

Any child who shows signs of illness such as cold, runny nose, cough, sore throat, fever, rash, diarrhea, vomiting, or conjunctivitis (pink eye), shall be removed from the classroom, brought to the office, and the parents notified to pick the child up. If a child is found to have lice, nits, or pinworms, the child shall be removed from the classroom and the parents notified to pick the child up. If parents cannot be reached, those listed on the Emergency Contact Form will be notified. Children will be readmitted to school when the symptoms have subsided and/or by a doctor's note stating that the child is not contagious. Children should be kept home from school for 24 hours after fever has subsided.

School Uniforms

School uniforms are worn by all students daily, except on Friday when the children are free to dress in respectable clothing of their choice. Preschool students wear green uniform t-shirts. Elementary students wear green or burgundy uniform golf shirts. Beige pants, shorts or skirts may be worn with tennis shoes, or other closed-toed footwear for safe outdoor play. Uniforms may be purchased at LOGOS, located at 29790 Old Dixie Highway in Homestead. 305-246-8688.

School Supplies

Most school supplies are furnished by Kingswood. Parents should refer to the class welcome letter for any specific requirements for backpacks, lunch boxes and folders.

Lunch and Snack

Lunches are generally brought in from home as they are preferred by both parents and students. Kingswood does not have a kitchen so please purchase an insulated lunchbox to keep foods cool and a thermos to keep foods warm. Please prepare lunches with an emphasis on nutrition. Soft drinks are not permitted. Lunch is usually enjoyed outside, weather permitting. See *"Programs Offered at Additional Cost"* for information on delivered lunches.

Snacks are provided to preschool children in the morning. A snack and drink are also provided to children in extended care.

Classroom Visit and Observation

Kingswood has an "open door" policy for current parents. You are welcome to drop in any time to visit your child's classroom for 10—15 minutes. Please check in at the office and someone will escort you to the classroom. Longer visits for observation may be scheduled through the office. You are asked to sit quietly and engage in as little conversation as possible so as not to disrupt the routine of the classroom.

Parent/Teacher Communication

The teachers always enjoy communicating with the parents and will schedule time for this three times a year at Parent/Teacher Conferences. Additionally, feel free to call and leave a message and the teacher will call you back after class or at an agreed time. Conferencing should not take place at dismissal. This is a difficult time since the teacher must gather students together and organize the dismissal process from class to the playground/athletic field.

Parent Meetings

Parent Meetings are usually held three times each year. One is set aside for the children to demonstrate lessons to you and is a popular evening. The other two nights are for educational purposes, sometimes with guest speakers. If possible, we arrange for child care, but feel it best that baby sitting be arranged at home since the meetings are mid-week and the children need to get to bed earlier than when the meeting is over. Your attendance is a message of high interest and involvement. Montessori is a vibrant and exceptional philosophy that is rewarding to parents as well as the children who directly benefit from it.

Discipline

Low-keyed, non-physical discipline measures are implemented at Kingswood. The teachers are aware that 'diversion' is usually the best way to stop negative behavior. If the behavior persists, the child will be asked to have a "time-out". Time-out for a preschool child may be to sit in the classroom rocking chair to think about his actions. An older child may have a time-out in the office. At the toddler level there are occasional incidents of biting. This is normal. However, when a child is bitten, parents of both the biter and the child who is bitten are notified. If the student bites again, the parent is called to take the child home for the day. If student behavior is very poor and is upsetting to the other members in the classroom, the parents are called to take the child home.

Accidents

Accidents at school occur infrequently, but they do happen. If the accident is very minor - such as a scrape, a small cut or a bump - the staff will apply first aid and notify the parent at dismissal or by note. However, if any accident other than a very minor one occurs, the parents are notified immediately by phone to pick up their child and an accident report is filled out. In the event of a serious injury, the staff will administer first aid and activate Emergency Medical Services. If necessary, transport will be provided by EMS. The parents will be notified immediately. All teaching and administrative personnel are certified in first aid and CPR.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Hurricanes

If a hurricane warning is issued, Kingswood will be closed until the threat of the storm passes. In the event a hurricane warning is issued during school hours, the administrator, at his discretion, may call for an early dismissal of students in order to prepare the school for the approaching storm. Kingswood will follow the action of the Miami-Dade School Board in most cases. School closings will be announced through local TV stations on channels 4, 6, 7, and 10. The school's answering machine will also be updated as often as possible. Following a hurricane, telephone communication may be interrupted. In this case, parents are urged to drive to the school and check the communication board that will be placed at the office entrance. Kingswood will reopen as quickly as possible following a hurricane and may do so before the public schools reopen.

Radiological Release at Turkey Point Nuclear Power Plant

Kingswood is located outside of the 10-mile emergency planning zone for the power plant. The school is west of zone 8. Though outside the evacuation zone, Kingswood will follow instructions given for zone 8. The Miami-Dade Office of Emergency Management has two recommended actions for schools: Early Dismissal and Shelter In-Place. An early dismissal order will be given in advance of any evacuation notice for the public. Sheltering In-Place is recommended for areas that are not directly downwind from the power plant. In the event of a serious emergency at the plant that resulted in a radioactive release, Kingswood's administrator will monitor radio and television broadcasts to receive instructions and assess the situation.

If zone 8 were ordered to evacuate, Kingswood would implement the recommended Early Dismissal. The administrative staff will contact parents to pick up their children. Parents will have a one-hour window in which to pick up their children. Teachers and assistants will stay with their class until students are picked up. One hour after Early Dismissal is called, students who have not been picked up will be evacuated to our host school, Winhold Montessori School, 17555 S. Dixie Highway, Palmetto Bay 33157.

If a Shelter In-Place order is given for zone 8, Kingswood will take steps to secure the lower elementary classroom, move all students and staff members to the secured room and shelter in place until notified that all is clear.

Fire

Fire drills are held each month so the children will respond calmly to an alarm and follow correct procedures for exiting the building. All classrooms meet on the athletic field where the teachers call role. Once all students are accounted for, the administrator gives the clearance to return to class. The drill usually does not take longer than 10 minutes from start to finish.

ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Fall Trimester

Open House

Open House occurs on the Friday morning before school starts. It is the last day of teacher workweek. This is an opportunity for new students to meet their teachers and see their classrooms. School usually starts the following Tuesday, the day after Labor Day.

Student Pictures

Individual pictures are taken in the 1st trimester and are available for purchase. We use these pictures in the annual yearbook. Class pictures are taken in January.

Fall Family Event

The Fall Family Event occurs in late October and is a themed affair, usually held off school grounds. It is an evening event with dinner and live entertainment. Past themes include a Hawaiian Luau, Sock Hop and 60's Groovy Get Together. The children and parents always enjoy this night of food, music, games and dancing. A fundraising raffle is also held at this time.

Stanford Achievement Tests (SATs)

SATs are administered to lower elementary students in the fall. Test results are usually available after the winter recess and a report is sent home before February conferences. (Upper elementary tests in spring).

Columbus Day

School is closed

Speech, Vision and Hearing Screening

Speech, vision, and hearing screenings are performed by an independent testing service. This is an important and yet convenient screening as it is offered at school. There is a fee for these tests.

Veteran's Day

School is closed

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Each teacher has a day out of the classroom to confer with parents. The teacher will very much want to talk with you by this time. It is best if both parents attend. Conferences are set up for twenty minutes, usually. **There are no make-ups for Parent/Teacher Conferences.** If you miss your appointment, a written report will be sent home. A teacher workday usually precedes the Parent/Teacher Conference day.

Thanksgiving

This holiday is observed differently in each classroom. This celebration usually follows the end of the first trimester. School is out on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS
Winter Trimester

Winter Festival

The whole school participates in a winter themed morning on the school grounds. The upper elementary students prepare game booths for the younger children and the planning committee arranges for music, clowns, and a bounce house. There is also face painting, sand art and a baked goods sale. The event takes place in the morning on the Friday before winter recess. Children are expected to be with their parents at all times. There is no extended care available on this day.

Winter Recess

School is closed for two weeks.

Martin Luther King Day

School is closed

Rodeo Day

Each year, Kingswood students enjoy a "rodeo day" on campus. This is done the Friday of the annual Homestead Rodeo. The children are invited to wear their cowboy/cowgirl boots and hats for a day of hayrides, square dancing and other related activities. Parent volunteers are always welcome on this day.

Valentine's Day

Special messages of love and friendship are emphasized as children exchange cards and have another decorated luncheon. Children return to schoolwork following this lunchtime affair.

President's Day

School is closed

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Elementary teachers are available for two days to schedule individual conferences with parents to discuss midyear progress.

Preschool parents are provided a midyear written report. Conferences may be arranged at the request of the teacher or parent.

ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Spring Trimester

Science Fair & Art Show

Elementary and preschool students participate in a school-wide science fair in the spring. A common theme is followed by all classes. Past themes have included "space", "everglades", "energy", etc. The students study around this theme throughout the year, then display what they have learned for their families. Presentations include display boards, videos, and hands-on activities. There are great art projects from the year displayed in each classroom, as well. This is an event enjoyed by all.

Spring Break

Spring Break usually falls in late March or early April. Kingswood will break at the same time as the public schools in Miami-Dade. The day preceding spring break is usually filled with egg hunts, scavenger hunts and snacks.

Stanford Achievement Tests (SATs)

SATs are administered to upper elementary students and kindergarteners in the spring. Test results are usually available before final conferences and can be discussed at that time. If scores are not available at conference time, a report will be mailed home as soon as they are available from the scoring service.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

This final conference of the year is mandatory for all families. This is an important conference when summer plans are discussed in relation to a student's academic needs. Please be sure to schedule your 20-minute conference through the office.

End of Year programs

Elementary students perform a play, musical, or poetry recital on Wednesday evening of the last week of school. Achievement awards are also presented on this evening.

Kindergarten, preschool and toddler children participate in a short performance for their families on the final Friday of the school year. The performances are scheduled throughout the morning and the children are dismissed for the summer immediately following.

Other Programs and Course Offerings Throughout the School Year

Field Trips

Students from preschool through elementary enjoy field trips to local areas of interest. Metro Zoo, Parrot Jungle, Alligator Farm, Everglades National Park, Museum of Science, Vizcaya and Knaus Berry Farm are some of the special outbound places we have visited. Elementary students usually travel by a licensed and insured bus, and usually a fee is required. Preschool students are usually driven and chaperoned by their parents. Students going on field trips must bring in a completed permission form and must wear their green school uniform shirts.

Travel

Each year, students in grades three through six are invited to participate in an educational field trip for seven to ten days. The trips are different every year and have taken our students to all areas of Florida, Williamsburg, Smoky Mountains, Grand Canyon, Park City, Washington and more. The trips are chaperoned by the teachers and administrator. There is a cost to the parent which varies with each trip.

Guest Speakers

Throughout the school year Kingswood arranges to have a variety of guests come in to educate and entertain students. Some of our guests include: firefighters, policemen, theatre performers, musical performers, and wildlife rehabilitation workers. Many of our parents volunteer to present artifacts, clothing and stories of their native countries.

Gardening

The preschool children have a lovely garden area with raised beds for growing herbs, fruits and vegetables. The garden is usually managed by parent volunteers. The children are given the opportunity to plant seeds, care for the growing plants, then harvest at the appropriate time. The children have experienced making salsa, salads, and cabbage soup from their own gardens.

Farm Animals

Since we are located in a rural area, we are able to have farm animals. Currently, we have two miniature horses, two goats and a goose. The elementary students are involved in the care of the animals from feeding to grooming. The preschool children visit the barn on their regular walks around the school property and may bring in bruised apples or carrots from home to feed to the animals.

Other Programs and Course Offerings Throughout the School Year

Physical Education

Elementary students have PE on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons for one hour. On alternate days they practice their sports under the supervision of classroom assistants. The students will learn skills in softball, soccer and kickball in addition to personal fitness exercises. Kindergarten students have one PE class per week and are given instruction in basic skills for gross motor control, listening and following a sequence of instructions. All classes have daily recess.

Music

Elementary students receive music instruction each week for one hour. The instructor introduces the children to vocals, instrumentation and various artists. The children enjoy this time of singing together and taking turns at the microphone. The preschool teachers are trained in the MusicGarten program which provides a structured music curriculum appropriate to the younger ages. The children are exposed to music on most days during group time. Preschool and toddler children have music class every two weeks.

Art

Each classroom prepares art lessons independently. Many projects are related to holidays, seasons, historical events and geography. Each Friday, the elementary students have a scheduled art project for the afternoon.

Computer

The elementary classrooms are equipped with computers that have internet access and multimedia capabilities. The lower elementary students are taught the basics of computer operation including file storage and retrieval, word processing and basic internet searches. The upper elementary students are instructed in the use of multimedia applications for digital photograph and video editing and manipulation, digital presentation software, internet use and Microsoft applications.

Spanish

The lower elementary students are given Spanish instruction for one hour each week. Students are arranged in groups according to ability rather than age or grade. Spanish instruction at the upper elementary level is computer-based, using the Rosetta Stone software for schools. The students work at their own pace and are tested and monitored at regular intervals. "La Escuela" is a full time immersion program for preschool age children from English speaking households. The program serves children 3-6 years of age and is a complete Montessori program with materials and instruction in Spanish.

Programs Offered at Additional Cost

Early Care/ Extended Care

Early care is available every morning at 7:15. Extended care begins immediately following dismissal and/or study hall. The cost is \$2.00 per hour and is billed every two months. Advanced arrangements are not necessary.

Study Hall

Elementary children have the opportunity to participate in an after school study hall Monday through Thursday. First and Second grade students have a half-hour supervised quiet time to complete homework assignments and unfinished class work. Third grade students and higher are given a one hour study hall for the same purpose. All elementary students remaining after scheduled dismissal times are taken to study hall. The cost is \$2.00 per day and is billed every two months with extended care charges.

Music Instruction

ENSEMBLE is a musical enrichment program for preschool children, ages three to six. The children meet once per week for 45 minutes, after school. The cost is \$45.00 per month.

GUITAR CLASS is available for children in third grade and above. Class size is limited to six students. Classes are weekly for 45 minutes. The monthly cost is \$40.00.

Karate

Karate instruction is offered to preschool and elementary children once a week, immediately following regular dismissal times. Each class is 30 minutes long. The cost is \$10.00 per class, payable monthly.

Hot Meals

PIZZA FRIDAYS are offered in every class for a weekly or monthly fee. Occasionally, classes may offer a Friday substitute to provide variation or compliment a class study in nutrition or culture.

THE KID'S GOURMET provides a warm meal option on Mondays and Wednesdays. Arrangements can be made through the office on a monthly basis for Mondays, Wednesdays or both. The cost varies by size but is quite reasonable.

**KINGSWOOD
MONTESSORI
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