

## **“Mary’s House” Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Infant-Toddler Community Policies**

Welcome to our community! We are a community of educators, parents, and children working collaboratively to create a secure, loving, interesting and safe environment for our children. We are here to support an environment that allows for independence. Thus, we have prepared “Mary’s House” with child-sized furniture, calm and active areas, and instruction that provides children one-on-one interaction and independence as they develop a need for it.

We are strongly committed to the value of Montessori education as an aid to life not only for the young children, but for the adults as well. We are interdependent. It is our challenge to constantly grow with the children. We learn as much from the children as they learn from us...and they bring to our community an unconditional love of life and the world that energizes everyone! Everything we do is done to maintain a calm, joyful, peaceful, loving environment and to develop children’s self-confidence & independence.

We look forward to having your family join us. Often there are questions that we may not have addressed during our visits, so we've written down a few questions with answers for your reference. If you have specific questions, Ms. Alice McCullen or Mrs. Jill Schwendeman are always willing to talk to you. We hope that these policies are seen for what they are intended... to maintain a safe Montessori environment in which your child moves toward becoming that independent, confident, loving person who believes in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

### **Hours of Operation**

Our school day begins at 7:45am and ends at 3:00 pm. Before care begins at 7:00 A.M. and after care is available until 6:00 P.M. each day. We follow the school calendar that has been set forth for all of the children who attend Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Elementary School. Because many of us have families, college courses, or other activities in the evening, it is imperative that we lock the doors and depart by 6:00 P.M. Parents who arrive and/or depart after 6:00 P.M. will accrue an additional fee which will be added to your monthly charge if your child is at school outside of our set hours. Please refer to after care policy for a full explanation.

### **Morning Arrival**

Continuity and routine are very important to young children. Children use sequence much the way we use a clock; to understand what happens next. The ways in which your child is awakened, the way she dresses and prepares to leave for our community, and the way she enters the community all affect not only her, but also our entire environment. Please assist us in maintaining a calm, peaceful environment by moving quietly, speaking softly, and following your child's routine when you are in Mary’s House. This leaves the children's environment undisturbed and facilitates conversation among the children. During the morning parents do not enter the children’s space; that’s because of the need for calmness and concentration. By doing this, we will be able to make the most of the teaching time we have at school by using it in the most optimal way for the children.

Most children arrive between 7:00 AM and 7:45 AM. After 9:00am, if the class has gone for a walk, the teacher will post a note telling you where they are going. You are responsible for accompanying your child to

meet the class. Continuity in arrival time is very important. By arriving at the same time each day, your child will find it easier to separate from the parent because of his familiarity with the routine and what is happening at the time.

"How do I say goodbye?" is one of our most frequently asked questions. Separation is a lifelong experience for people, and sadness is a natural part of separation. Both you and your child experience it. As experienced parents can tell you, if your child is not currently having any separation anxiety, that could change in a few months. Here are some ideas that can help you and your child with separation.

First, when your child is able, start by letting your child walk into the building from the car. This is the most natural first step in separation. Your child will already be separate from you upon entering the classroom. Also, once you arrive at the classroom, say goodbye outside of the room.

On your way to school in the morning, it may help for you to talk to your child about where they are going and who they are going to see. Again, as soon as your child is able to walk, please let them walk to their room. Please leave food, toys and other items in the car. When you arrive there will be a Montessori educator here to greet you and your child. When you are ready to leave, a Montessori educator will be available to help you say "good-bye". After you say goodbye, please leave promptly. Your child can go to the window and wave to you. We will assist your child in understanding what is happening by stating that you are going to work but will come back just like you do every day. The consistent use of this specific language from infancy helps children with separation.

Separation can be a sad time, but the first step in alleviating some of the stress is to establish a routine. The sooner this routine is established and followed, the sooner everyone will be more comfortable.

## **Departure**

We would like this time to be as calm and organized as morning arrival since there are children who will still be here after you leave. A shout hello and a big hug are very appealing from a toddler you've missed all day, but it also disrupts the other children. As with arrival, please enter calmly, say hello to the child, and depart. If you need help with this, your Montessori Educator or assistant will be happy to help you. This is not a good time for observation since the children are ready to leave, but you are welcome to take some special time during the day to watch your child at work. Talk to your child's Montessori educator for advice on the best time for observation. If you have another child with you please keep them at your side and have them refrain from playing with our materials. The materials are designed to be attractive, and all children tend to be very interested in them. If you plan to arrive early for your child, please let us know.

If you would like someone besides a parent to pick up your child, please let us know that morning or as soon as possible. A verbal notice is fine if this person is on the list of people who are authorized to pick up your child. If the person is NOT on that list, we must have written permission to release your child. We will check the identification of the person picking up your child before letting your child leave with them. We hope that these procedures will make for a smooth and safe departure.

Drop off and pick up are not good times to discuss serious problems/issues. Little ears and minds hear and understand everything. Your teacher can set up a time when the issues can be discussed in private.

## **Sign In/Out**

It is required that all parents sign their child in and out each day. For your convenience, a sign in/out sheet and

pen are located by the door. This gives us a written record of the child's attendance, hours, and the person who brought/picked up the child each day.

## **Health and Illness Policies**

In a community setting, health is an important issue. Your child is beginning to develop immunities and will be exposed to a new environment, new children, and new adults. We spend much time and effort on sanitation and good health procedures in the classroom. We also understand that a child may become ill. We ask that you weigh all these factors when determining whether your child should attend our program. If your child becomes ill, we appreciate your assistance in minimizing the exposure of other children to illnesses that might spread throughout the classroom. We recommend that your child be kept home at least during the initial and most contagious days of a cold. This concern is for his/her comfort and for the protection of the other children in the program. Your pediatrician will tell you when it is safe to resume attendance. It is also important to keep your child at home if she is unable to participate in the normal routines of the day. Children want care from their parents in the comfort of their own homes, if they are not feeling their best. For the benefit of our staff and other children in our care, a sick child will not be permitted to return to care for 24 hours after condition has returned to normal. The child may return 24 - 48 hours (depending upon the illness) after they have received the first dose of an antibiotic. If a child receives an antibiotic for an ear infection, he/she may return to day care immediately if he/she has been free of other symptoms for at least 24 hours. If you aren't sure about whether or not to bring your child to care, please call your onsite director to discuss it. Allergy related symptoms, and non-communicable illnesses do not require exclusion if you have a note from your doctor.

In the event that your child becomes ill while at school, we will notify you at the telephone numbers you gave us on your registration. If necessary, please update your telephone numbers with the office. We expect you to pick up your ill child as quickly as possible. We do understand that it is necessary to tie up loose ends at the office, but one hour is the maximum amount of time it should take. If we are unable to reach you, we will call your emergency contacts; of who should be aware that you've given us their names and they might be asked to take your child home. We may ask you have your doctor fill out a "Physician's Report on Contagious/Non-contagious Illnesses" to verify that your child is well and able to return to our community. However, if you choose not to see a physician, please have your child stay home until he/she is symptom free for a minimum 24 hours. These measures will ensure a healthier environment for your child and the other children in our community.

### **Children will be sent home if they have any of the following symptoms:**

Fever of 100 degrees registering from under the arm or ear or 101 degrees if taken orally (a child needs to be fever free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning without the aid of Tylenol®, or any other fever reducing substance.)

Vomiting (2 or more times in a 24 hour period) Note: please do not bring your child if s/he has vomited during the night.)

Diarrhea-more than one abnormally loose stool (runny, watery, bloody stools, or 2 or more loose stools within last 4 hours)

Severe coughing

Excessive and/or discolored nasal drainage

Difficult or rapid breathing (Breathing trouble, sore throat, swollen glands, loss of voice, hacking or continuous coughing.)

Yellowish eyes or skin

Pink eyes; redness of eyelid lining, irritation, swelling, discharge or pus from eye

Unusual spots or rashes

Sore throat or trouble swallowing

An infected skin patch-crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy areas of the skin

Unusually dark, tea-colored urine

Gray or white stool

Headache and stiff neck

Severe itching of the body or scalp

Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without hurting the health, safety or well-being of the other children in our care.

All medication must meet the following requirements:

A current prescription specifically for your child in the original container with pharmacy label, doctor, type of medication, child's name and date.

Over the counter medication is only given with written permission of the doctor or a current pharmacy label. Please be sure to check for the date of expiration on your child's medication. Medication bottles left behind this date will be discarded to assure the children's safety.

No over the counter medication may be given without written permission from your doctor. If you foresee the use of Tylenol for temperature or discomfort due to teething or immunization, we will give you a form in the office. This will be kept inside your child's file and can be updated when dosages change. We will administer this only after receiving a telephone authorization from you.

"Medication Authorization" forms are available from the school nurse, Mrs. Lynn Bodine. These must be completed and signed for us to begin medication. The nurse will dispense the medication as it is prescribed on the label.

### **Medical forms for the Department of Health**

The Department of Health requires a Medical Examination report to be completed and in your child's file upon enrollment. Since infants and toddlers have frequent immunizations, please keep the office up-to-date on changes. From time to time a public health nurse may visit to check our records. If a child's immunization record shows your child to be out of compliance, the nurse will send him/her home until evidence of proper immunization is received, so please help us keep this record current.

### **Immunization Exemption**

In accordance with State law, the parent or guardian of a child enrolled in our school may request notice of whether there are any children enrolled who have an immunization exemption on file. Please note, however, the names of individual children are confidential and cannot be released.

### **Outdoor play**

We take walking children outdoors daily for walks in the woods, movement on the playground, and to get fresh air. Children who do not walk are also taken outside frequently in strollers. The Department of Health supports this policy.

If you are thinking about bringing your child back at the end of an illness, please be sure they are well enough to be outside.

As working parents, we realize how difficult it is to miss or leave work to care for your children on such short

notice. If we work together as a community to solve these problems, absenteeism can be minimized.

These policies have come directly from the Licensing Rules of the Missouri Department of Health, legal advice, and common sense.

### **Safe Sleep Policy**

In accordance with the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics and as required by the State of Missouri, caregivers serving children less than 12 months of age will participate in training on Safe Sleep practices every three years. All infants under 12 months of age will be placed on their backs to sleep. Exceptions to this practice may be allowed, provided parents present to the school, detailed, written instructions, signed by a physician. When infants can turn over on their own, they may establish a preferred sleep position.

Sleep clothing designed to keep an infant warm may be used, provided there is no potential hazard of covering the head or face. Infant sleeping equipment features only firm mattresses, tightly fitting sheets and all such equipment will be free of loose bedding, pumper pads, pillows, and soft toys. Sleeping equipment will not be covered by blankets or bedding at any time, for any reason.

Caregivers will be well-positioned and in close proximity to napping infants in order to provide constant care and supervision, in addition to conducting frequent physical checks to insure infants are safe and comfortable. Light and sound levels in the infant nap room will be carefully monitored to maximize infant safety by ensuring caregivers' ability to easily see and hear infants at all times.

### **Feeding and Eating**

Infants: The people in our community have a profound respect for the importance of the mother in the infant's world. Breast-feeding is strongly supported. We will communicate with you throughout the day regarding your child's schedule and assist you in determining when your child is ready to nurse. If you are unable to be here physically, your child can still receive your breast milk, which can be expressed and stored in either the refrigerator (for the day) or the freezer (up to 180 days).

If your child is on formula, we request that you bring in empty bottles and cans of formula and we will prepare the bottles as they are needed. Please clearly label each bottle with a permanent marker.

We have observed that the introduction of solid food begins as early as three months of age and as late as six months. We request that you bring in a box of cereal and jars of food; these too should be labeled. We have observed that most infants can handle soft table foods by nine months, even without many teeth. The chewing of food is possible with the gums alone. Out of respect for each infant's individual needs, we will feed on demand unless otherwise directed by your pediatrician.

Most infants begin drinking cow's milk around twelve months. We will provide whole milk for your child when that time comes. Babies often lose interest in bottles around nine months so this is a logical time to begin the weaning process. The process is simple. Offer the cup first, then the bottle. Gradually give more and more in the cup and less and less in the bottle. By twelve months, most babies are getting their liquids from the cup.

We are eager to communicate with you regarding this most important issue of feeding. We rely on you to inform us of any changes in diet. Please label all bottles, cereals, and jars.

When the child begins to eat table food, we will work closely to meet your child's needs. When your child begins to eat table food, he will be offered utensils. The more they practice, the better they get.

Toddlers: Individual snack preparation is offered as soon as 9:00. The morning snack is usually fresh fruit. The children choose when they want a snack, how many times they wish to return, and have the freedom to prepare it themselves. Please plan on packing your child's lunch. We understand you will know what you are wanting your child to eat, what s/he will enjoy, and what is best for him or her. When children awaken from nap, a snack is available for them to prepare.

**Supplies Needed for the day:**

Infants: please label all clothing and supplies clearly with child's first & last name or all 3 initials.

- Bottles
- Formula or breast milk
- Cereal and/or baby food
- 3 complete outfits (including socks)
- Diaper ointment
- Diapers
- Wipes
- Flexible shoes for outside
- Jacket, Coat, sweatshirt, mittens and winter hat (clothing appropriate to the season)
- Sunscreen and sun hat (if desired)
- Sleep sack
- Pacifier for naps (if used)

Toddlers: please label all clothing and supplies clearly with child's first & last name or all 3 initials.

- Loose fitting pants with elastic waist
- Tennis shoes (no high tops please)
- Blanket or quilt for nap
- Diapers
- Diaper ointment
- Wipes
- Boots (for both rain and snow)
- Mittens and winter hat
- 3 complete two-piece outfits (including underwear if toilet learning)
- Snow pants (weather determining)
- Sunscreen
- Slippers (optional)
- Raincoat (optional)

After one year of age, your child is welcome to bring a favorite stuffed animal and/or blanket to use during their nap. Since there is no developmental reason to use a pacifier after your child begins to chew we ask that you please leave them at home. We assist the children in learning self-calming skills. We have many activities designed for the children. Please do not bring toys from home; we cannot be responsible for items of personal or monetary value.

## Appropriate Clothing

Children should arrive dressed for movement. Clothing should be comfortable and seasonally appropriate, keeping in mind that the children go outside daily. Your newborn infant will need sleepers with undershirts or onesies underneath in the winter. Diapers and t-shirts are fine in warm weather.

As soon as your baby begins to creep and crawl, it is important that their legs and toes are exposed to grip the floor. Dresses, although cute, are often impractical at this stage of development because the babies' knees and feet are easily tangled in loose clothing.

When your child begins to take walks tennis shoes are requested. Sandals are not appropriate for climbing hills and running. In cooler weather we require the children to have jackets, hats, and mittens.

## Laundry/Lost and Found

We don't always know whose clothing belongs to whom. For this reason we request that you label all of your child's clothes clearly with a permanent marker. This includes blankets and other items used at naptime, shoes, boots, mittens, hats, socks and coats. Because some of the children have the same first names we ask that you use their first and last names or all three initials.

## Toilet Learning

After years of observations, we find that success in toileting is often closely linked with the ability to express personal needs and desires. This happens most often after a period where the child observes others using the toilet. Observation and expression of personal needs are encouraged in our program. As Montessorians, we follow the children. That means we wait for the child to show an interest in using the toilet. At that point, we facilitate this interest to meet his or her needs. Our language and affect is positive. We use this experience for language development by providing the proper biological labels and non-biased terms. We do not use guilt or bribery as a motivator.

The transition from diapers to underwear is usually very, very easy for the child when he or she is fully prepared. If you would like to read more about this subject we have a book titled Toilet Learning by Allison Mack available for you to borrow.

Just as in other areas of learning and discovery, children are often the best teachers. Pressure for children to become "toilet trained" often results in frustration over inappropriate expectations on the part of the adult. Ignore advice from others who insist that all of their children were "trained" by twelve months; toileting is a process of physical maturation and cognitive awareness. Power struggles *always* result in the parent losing. We like to avoid that situation by trusting the children to let us know their needs.

In our culture, parents often have many questions about what is traditionally been called "Toilet Training". If anyone is "trained", it's probably the parents-who are trained by their child to respect his/her interest and timetable. Our Montessori staff is very experienced and is available to offer suggestions, to talk, and to offer reassurance.

## **Communication**

As we are all very busy with our work and our children, communicating events and policies become somewhat difficult. We are available throughout the day to speak with you on the phone, though for the toddler Montessori Educators naptime is most convenient. If you do happen to call and we are busy with the children or otherwise unavailable, we will return your call as soon as possible.

Home visits provide an opportunity to gather more information about a typical day in our school, and about the Montessori process of education. We also benefit by getting to know you and your child better. A Montessori educator will schedule at least one visit a year. This is a wonderful way to begin a positive relationship with your child in his/her environment, where they feel safe and comfortable. These written policies are a supplement to our visits. The yearly school calendar is available on the school website. It includes holidays and other days when school is not in session as well as activities and events.

## **Conferences and Evaluation**

For a community to work together there must be good communication between the parents and the lead teachers. If you would like to arrange an extended conversation with your Montessori Educator, you are welcome to come in during naptime or call and schedule a convenient time. We schedule formal conferences with parents one time a year, in the winter, to discuss their child's development. Do not feel you need to limit your comments or questions to just this scheduled occasion; we are always available to talk.

Should a problem arise at any time, please call your child's Montessori Educator immediately to discuss it. We want you to be completely informed and satisfied with your child's day. As part of the Montessori process, we are always observing and analyzing the children's behaviors. If we see anything that we feel you need to be aware of, we will speak to you or send a letter home. The first thirty days of your child's enrollment are probationary. If necessary, we may ask you for a conference to suggest alternatives to our program.

## **Observation**

We look forward to your visits during the school day. If you would like to see your child at work please take some time to come by. Since this is a children's house, we ask that our visitors act as their child's guest and take special care not to interrupt an activity, a child's concentration, or the flow of their movement. We think you'll enjoy what you see! It is better for the children when they are not interrupted while doing their work and thus, we prefer for parents to refrain from entering the classroom but observe from the hallway.

## **Celebrations**

Holidays are very abstract and thus children this age have various understandings of the celebrations. We respect the right of each family to teach their child about holidays; however we will celebrate certain feasts and Holy Days that are found within the liturgical calendar. We will also celebrate life, nature, and the changing of the seasons.

When your child does celebrate a birthday, the toddlers may choose to celebrate with singing and a snack. If you wish to provide a special birthday snack we suggest a healthy treat of fresh fruit or vegetables, small boxes of raisins or muffins. Many of our parents wish to limit the amount of sugar in their child's diet, so we ask that you avoid bringing in treats containing large amounts of sugar.

Another way to celebrate birthdays, holidays, or children moving on to other schools is by donating a book in honor of your child. We can suggest appropriate books to you. These gifts are always much appreciated and will bear a nameplate inside the front cover honoring your child if you would like.

### **Babysitting**

Our Montessori employee policies prohibit our staff from babysitting for the children in our community. When a child has moved on to the preschool, you are welcome to ask employees to sit. We ask that you please arrange babysitting outside of school so that our staff can give their full attention to the children.

### **Tuition and Fees**

After care fee statements are not mailed out, rather they are placed with your child's things to go home. All tuition is paid using FACTS. Please see <http://assumptionbvmschool.org> for more information about payment plans. Our tuition is broken down by month for ease of payment. Credit for extended illness or hospitalization will be considered by the School Board. For tax purposes, our Federal Tax number is: 43-0688865. Please visit your FACTS account for the ability to print off a receipt for dependent care reimbursement. You may also contact the parish bookkeeper, Mary Knapp, at (636) 240-3721 for more information regarding tuition payments and tax credits.

### **When the relationship is not working well:**

We will strive to create the best home/school/child relationship possible; that is what is best for children. We have entered this partnership with you, realizing it is a privilege to serve you and your child. Unfortunately, there are times when this relationship may not be in the best interest for all involved. When this happens, we reserve the responsibility to terminate the relationship. Some reasons for that may include:

- Failure to pay
- Routinely late picking up your child
- Failure to complete the required forms
- Lack of parental cooperation
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person
- Our inability to meet the child's needs
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations

### **Thank You**

We appreciate your interest in Mary's House Montessori Infant-Toddler Community; we have the privilege to serve wonderful families. Our staff is well educated and very experienced with young children. From our experiences, we have learned that each child is capable of teaching us something not only about themselves, but about ourselves as well. We look forward to enjoying and sharing in this wonderful time of life with you and your child. Thank you!