



# Avalon Montessori

FAMILY & STUDENT HANDBOOK  
2023-2024

Avalon Montessori  
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# Avalon Montessori

## About Our School

### **Our Mission**

At Avalon Montessori School, we are committed to nurturing the individual gifts of each young child. We aim to provide an environment that promotes diversity, self-discovery, and a love of learning while empowering all students to reach their greatest potential. Our curriculum is an integrative approach designed to encourage a child's innate analytical, creative, emotional, and social intelligence.

### **The Montessori Method**

The Montessori Method of education, developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, is a knowledge-rich, child-centered educational approach. Children learn in a thoughtfully prepared learning environment with a comprehensive curriculum presented in the form of multi-sensory, hands-on materials. It is an approach that values the development of the whole child—physical, social, emotional, cognitive.

### **Overview of Avalon Montessori School**

Our school offers a safe, beautiful, and joyful space for young children to enjoy the extraordinary benefits of a traditional Montessori early childhood education. Our mission is to nurture creative, compassionate & confident children.

Our classroom is a well-prepared environment, in which each element exists to help in the development of the child and is according to traditional Montessori standards. The prepared environment offers the child opportunities to freely choose work, according to interest, allowing for long periods of uninterrupted concentration. Montessori materials are scientifically designed to present concepts and ideas appropriate to the child's development. These learning materials are beautifully displayed in the classroom within easy reach of the children. The materials are categorized into five key learning areas: Practical Life, Sensorial, Mathematics, Language and Culture & Science.

We offer children the opportunity to experience traditional Montessori education, as well as explore, cultivate, and enjoy areas of learning unique to our school such as Waldorf inspired art lessons. Children are provided with high quality, artist-grade materials, including unique art supplies such as beeswax block crayons, modeling beeswax, Stockmar watercolor paint and heavyweight watercolor paper. By providing high quality art materials, our children are inspired to create works of art

The importance of Outdoor Free Play, and immersion in nature for the whole child, is integral to our daily schedule. Outdoor play enables children to enjoy the natural environment and learn to seek out exercise, fresh air, and activity. Our outdoor environment provides opportunities for exploration, observation, and imagination through creative play, sand play, gardening, seasonal activities, and numerous outdoor play equipment.

We are committed to encouraging the individual gifts of each young child!

## Admission Process

- **Step 1:** Apply online and submit a non-refundable registration fee of \$100. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, throughout the academic year, until all spaces are filled. When our school is at full capacity, families will have the opportunity to be included on the waitlist.
- **Step 2:** Request to set up a facility Tour & Information Meeting. This provides an opportunity to walk through our space and receive detailed information regarding our program.
- **Step 3:** After completing Steps 1 and 2, families are notified regarding their student's admission status. Accepted families receive an Enrollment Contract and ProCare Invitation Code through email. Submit the Enrollment Fee of \$200 and Biannual Supply Fee of \$200 to secure enrollment.

## Requirements For Enrollment

Children who are infants, toddlers and primary aged are eligible for enrollment. After initial inquiry and receipt of information regarding school fees and philosophy, parent must set up an appointment to visit the school and meet with the Director. Upon enrollment and payment of initial fees, the parent receives preschool guidelines, nutrition information, playground rules, permission forms, and health and immunization forms.

## Hours Of Operation

- Monday - Friday from 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM
- Office Hours are from 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM

## Arrival

Mornings can be busy times, and they set the tone for our day. Help your child have a successful start to their day by doing the following when you and your child arrive at school:

- Greet your child's teacher at the door.
- Communicate any important information they should know about your child's morning or changes to their schedule.
- Sign your child in through the ProCare App.

Please plan to bring your child to their classroom by 8:00 AM. For your child to gain the most from their experience at AMS, we ask that you respect our 8 AM start time to the best of your ability. The teachers have carefully planned the flow of the day, and your child will miss key learning opportunities if they are consistently late.

## Separation

Separation from a parent or caregiver into the preschool classroom is an important accomplishment for every preschooler. Though you may wish to remain with a child who is having difficulty separating, trust that your child's teachers are well trained to handle such occurrences, that your child is learning important skills, and that tears are often solely for the parent's benefit. You can help your child most by conveying happiness and confidence in their well-being, stating your expected departure (sneaking out can be terrifying for the child - as it will seem you have vanished), and then leaving. Your child's teacher will be available if you need to hand an emotional child to them for some one-on-one time before they transition to begin their day.

## Items Provided by Parents

**Clothing:** Please send in a labeled extra change of clothes that are appropriate for the season. We do play outside every day, so please dress your child for the weather.

**In-Door Shoes:** Please provide indoor wearing shoes for easy movement. Flip-flops, clogs, cowboy boots, and slick-bottomed shoes often cause children to fall when running outside and limit their play.

**Backpack:** Labeled with child's name.

**Lunch Boxes:** When packing your child's lunch please consider the following:

- Label everything! Labeling all lunch items helps your child recognize their name and ensures all items that belong to you return home.
- Send a cloth placemat! Placemats offer children a visual context in which to organize their meal and maintain their personal space.
- Consider reusable containers! Help your child practice fine motor skills for opening and closing lids. Children gain spatial awareness when deciding what will fit into different sizes of containers.
- Please remember to send in any utensils your child will need for their lunch. We are not set up to sanitize or hand out clean utensils.
- Please do not send foods that require refrigeration or heating.
- Please do not send any carbonated drinks, juices, desserts, or food items that contain peanuts.
- You will be notified if there are other allergies in your child's class.

**Water Bottle:** Labeled with child's name.

**Full Day Students ONLY:** Nap mat, personal blankets and pillow for rest time.

## Change In Pick Up Person

Please notify your child's teacher if someone other than you will be picking up your child. Make sure that a list of people who can pick up your child (in addition to legal parents and guardians) is on file in the school office. If someone who is not on the list will be picking up your child, they will only be allowed to do so if you have notified the teacher and/or after school in advance, preferably in writing. There is a Change in Pickup form posted in the classroom for your convenience. Anyone picking up students must provide a photo ID. AMS teachers and staff are not responsible for the care of your child once you have signed them out from school.

## Dismissal

It is important to sign your child in and out each day. Because your child remains the responsibility of the AMS staff if they are on campus, please do not sign your child out until you are prepared to leave with them (we allow for up to 10 minutes of transition time after you have signed out your child).

Adults present on campus should model appropriate preschool classroom behaviors and be mindful of the impact that visiting adults can have on the behavior and emotional security of other children. Please refer any social/emotional or behavior concerns you witness directly to the staff present.

- There is a fee grace period (10 minutes after the 11:30 AM and 3:00 PM dismissal times) if your child is picked up late.
- The school closes at 5:30 PM. There is a fee of \$25 (per child, per occurrence) charged to your account if they are picked up after the school closes.

## Parent/Guardian and Guest Visits

We invite and encourage parents to participate with their child's class in our numerous school celebrations and special events. In all situations, the teacher is responsible for classroom activity and is authorized to make decisions and direct classroom activities based on her/his professional judgment. Please inform the teacher before a visit that is intended to be more than a quick stop in.



# Avalon Montessori

## Our School Day

### Toddler Daily Rhythm - 12 Months to 36 Months

8:00 AM-9:00 AM	<b>Self-Initiated Free Play</b> Children ease into the day with free play, games, stories, and art activities.
9:00 AM-10:30 AM	<b>Montessori Work Cycle</b> Children explore the prepared environment and engage with materials of their own choosing. Children engage in Montessori activities comprised of a balance of individual and group lessons. Lessons revolve around the Montessori curriculum and include music and art. A nutritious snack that encourages healthy eating and independence is provided.
10:30 AM-11:00 AM	<b>Morning Gathering</b> Special occasions, holidays, birthdays and important topics are recognized at this time through stories and conversations. Seasonal songs, finger plays, and rhythm sticks are just a few ways our children engage in a variety of music and movement activities. Children are encouraged to participate in simple mindfulness exercises effective in helping children find a sense of calm, self-control, and an increased sense of positivity.
11:00 AM-11:30 AM	<b>Outdoor Play</b> The importance of Outdoor Free Play, and immersion in nature for the whole child, is integral to our daily schedule. Outdoor play enables children to enjoy the natural environment and learn to seek out exercise, fresh air, and activity. Our outdoor environment provides opportunities for exploration, observation, and imagination through creative play, sand play, gardening, seasonal activities, and numerous outdoor play equipment. Half Day students dismissed at this time.
11:30 AM-12:30 PM	<b>Lunch</b> Lunch in the Montessori classroom is a multi-faceted opportunity for growth. It provides occasions for making independent decision, self-sufficiency and increasing hand strength and dexterity. It's a time to practice social graces, build community and learn table manners.
12:30 PM-2:30 PM	<b>Resting Stars</b> Children enjoy much needed rest after a busy morning. The nap time process is also considered a lesson in Practical Life.
2:30 PM-3:00 PM	<b>Free Play</b> Our day concludes with free play either outdoors/indoors and preparation for dismissal.

## Primary Daily Rhythm - 3 Years to 6 Years

8:00 AM-10:30 AM	<b>Montessori Work Cycle</b> A Montessori Work Cycle is an uninterrupted period, during which children explore the prepared environment and engage with materials of their own choosing. This time is meant to give students opportunities to enjoy the work they love, while also being presented with new and challenging lessons. Great care is taken to not interrupt children during their work. The work cycle is designed to help children become more independent, strengthen their ability to focus, explore several areas of learning and feel deep satisfaction with their work. Incorporated into the work cycle are opportunities for children to socialize and explore creative activities. Our Work Cycle includes a Cafe Style Snack and Waldorf inspired art.
10:30 AM-11:00 AM	<b>Morning Gathering</b> Special occasions, holidays, birthdays and important topics are recognized at this time through stories and conversations. Seasonal songs, finger plays, and rhythm sticks are just a few ways our children engage in a variety of music and movement activities. Children are encouraged to participate in simple mindfulness exercises effective in helping children find a sense of calm, self-control, and an increased sense of positivity.
11:00 AM-11:30 AM	<b>Outdoor Play</b> The importance of Outdoor Free Play, and immersion in nature for the whole child, is integral to our daily schedule. Outdoor play enables children to enjoy the natural environment and learn to seek out exercise, fresh air, and activity. Our outdoor environment provides opportunities for exploration, observation, and imagination through creative play, sand play, gardening, seasonal activities, and numerous outdoor play equipment. Half day students are dismissed at this time.
11:30 AM-12:30 PM	<b>Lunch</b> Lunch in the Montessori classroom is a multi-faceted opportunity for growth. It provides occasions for making independent decision, self-sufficiency and increasing hand strength and dexterity. It's a time to practice social graces, build community and learn table manners.
12:30 PM-2:30 PM	<b>Resting Stars</b> Preschoolers/Pre-Kindergartners enjoy much needed rest after a busy morning.
12:30 PM-2:30 PM	<b>Kindergarten Work Cycle</b> Kindergartners receive individualized and small group lessons in an afternoon work cycle.
2:30 PM-3:00 PM	<b>Care of the Environment</b> Our day concludes with care of our classroom and preparation for dismissal.





# Avalon Montessori

## Our School Year

### Academic Calendar 2023-2024

DATE	EVENT
August 23	First Day of Fall Semester
September 4	Labor Day
November 10	Veterans Day
November 20 - November 24	Thanksgiving Break
December 18 - January 2	Winter Break
January 3	First Day of Spring Semester
January 15	Martin Luther King Day
February 19	President's Day
March 25 - March 29	Spring Break
May 24	Last Day of School
June 3 – July 26	Summer Camp



# Avalon Montessori

## Tuition & Fees

### Tuition

Avalon Montessori School works with ProCare Tuition Management System for tuition billing and payments. This allows parents the ability to see account information online and make automatic payments through a bank account or by credit card. Credit card payments will be assessed a 3% processing fee. Parents complete an annual Billing Management Agreement and receive and pay monthly invoices through ProCare. There is a 6% discount for full payment of tuition due within 10 days of signed contract. If a monthly payment is not received by the 5<sup>th</sup> day, a late fee of \$35 per payment is assessed.

To propose an exception to the fee schedule, a parent must make plans with AMS by writing a letter of explanation with an alternative payment.

After 60 days of no payments or payment arrangements, the student(s) will not be permitted to attend class until the total amount, including late fees, is paid in full. If full tuition is not paid when due and AMS takes formal collection actions, parents/guardians are liable for reasonable attorney fees and reasonable collection costs incurred by AMS, to the extent permitted by law.

### Tuition & Fees 2023-2024

DISCOUNTS	
Family Discount	4% off Annual Tuition
Military Discount	5% off Annual Tuition
Annual Discount - Due Within 10 Days of Signed Contract	6% off Annual Tuition
YEARLY FEES	
One Time Registration Fee	\$100
Annual Enrollment Fee	\$200
Biannual Supply Fee	\$200
MORNING & AFTERNOON ENRICHMENT	
Morning Care (7:00 AM-8:00 AM)	Free
Afternoon Care (3:30 PM-5:30 PM)	\$5 Per Hour

<b>TODDLER PROGRAM</b>	
<b>Half Day (8:00 AM-11:30 AM)</b> 3 Days – M/W/F 5 Days – M/T/W/Th/F	\$400 Monthly \$620 Monthly
<b>Full Day (8:00 AM-3:00 PM)</b> 3 Days – M/W/F 5 Days – M/T/W/Th/F	\$600 Monthly \$820 Monthly
<b>Extended Day (8:00 AM-5:30 PM)</b> 3 Days – M/W/F 5 Days – M/T/W/Th/F	\$800 Monthly \$1020 Monthly
<b>PRIMARY PROGRAM</b>	
<b>Half Day (8:00 AM-11:30 PM)</b> 5 Days – M/T/W/Th/F	\$600 Monthly
<b>Full Day (8:00 AM-3:00 PM)</b> 5 Days – M/T/W/Th/F	\$800 Monthly
<b>Extended Day (8:00 AM-5:30 PM)</b> 5 Days – M/T/W/Th/F	\$1000 Monthly



# Avalon Montessori

## Communication

### **Parent/Guardian Responsibility to Receive Communication**

Parents are expected to receive, read, and respond to all communication from the school. Information and communication will be sent to both parents. Teachers cannot act as a mediator between parents.

### **ProCare Parent App**

ProCare is an integral communication tool at AMS. It is an all-in-one parent engagement app. It provides contactless sign in and sign out. This is a great source for monthly smart invoices, account information, classroom updates, curriculum information, school calendar, monthly newsletters, incident notifications, snack menus, and much more. Parents are invited to join after completing enrollment requirements.

### **Other Sources of Communication**

**Emails:** Much of the communication within your classroom and from the administration will be done by email, including informative newsletters from your child's teacher and weekly Rainbow Reminders with upcoming community events. Please let your child's teacher know if you need to use another form of communication.

**Phone Calls:** We do not interrupt class activities for phone calls. Messages can be left (day or night) for any staff member on the school's voice mail system. If you need to get a message to your child's teacher during the school day, (to communicate a change in pick up, for example) please send a text message with details.

**Website:** [www.avalonmontessorischool.com](http://www.avalonmontessorischool.com)

The AMS website is a great source of overall information about the school, including an updated school calendar, community news, and links to the AMS Facebook page.

**Classroom Newsletter:** You will receive monthly e-newsletters to keep you informed on details specific to your child's class.

**Parent Meetings:** On an as needed basis during the year, teachers may organize a parent meeting to communicate important information to the class families. Though these meetings are not mandatory, attendance by at least one parent is strongly encouraged.

### **Appointments With Teachers**

Appointments with teachers may be scheduled throughout the year, as necessary. Please understand that teachers cannot be available for impromptu meetings/discussions at arrival or dismissal times (other than a quick message), as they are preparing for class and greeting their students upon arrival or dismissing students. Please ask your

child's teacher about his/her available times so that he/she can be truly present, and not distracted, when speaking with you.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled two times a year; please consult the school calendar for exact dates. In each cycle, one conference per child is scheduled – even if a child lives in more than one household. Parents who wish to meet with teachers for conferences need to meet on these scheduled conference days and take responsibility to sign up for a conference time. Teachers are not obligated to reschedule missed conferences for a family who does not attend a conference due to recreational reasons (vacations), neglects to sign up for a conference in advance, or does not show up for their scheduled conference and does not provide a reason for their absence. If parents are unable to attend a conference due to circumstances beyond their control, they should notify their child's teacher as soon as possible.

- **November Conference:** About a week prior to the November conference, you will be able to schedule a conference to make best use of your time with your child's teachers. At the conference, parents will receive their child's assessment and discuss the child's progress.
- **Spring Conference:** About a week prior to the March conference, you will be able to schedule a conference to make best use of your time with your child's teachers. Teachers will discuss each child's strengths, challenges, and present possible goals for the remainder of the school year.



# Avalon Montessori

## School Policies

### Nutrition Policy

We feel strongly that good quality food both benefit your child's health and positively influence their energy while at school. Please only send in food that has nutritive value and does not contain sugar as a primary ingredient (when in doubt, check the labels; you might be surprised). Inappropriate foods include candy, soda, cupcakes, cookies, puddings etc.

It is important to us that every child eats nutritious meals while in our care. We are committed to serving whole, unrefined, natural foods as much as possible. Please honor our Nutrition Policy when packing your child's lunchbox. We understand that finding foods that your child will eat can be a challenge; therefore, we are providing some healthful suggestions:

- **Vegetables:** Please provide at least one vegetable with your child's meal. Suggestions include carrot sticks, celery with cream cheese, peas in the pod, sweet pepper slices, cucumbers, tomatoes, broccoli or cauliflower trees, and salad greens. These items may be eaten cold. They are also tasty when dipped in your child's favorite salad dressing.
- **Fruits:** Please provide at least one type of fresh or dried fruit. Fruit rollups and chewy fruit snacks are not considered fruits. Apple, orange, mango, peach, avocado, kiwi, watermelon, and cantaloupe slices are favorites with the kids. They also enjoy strawberries, raspberries, grapes, cherries, and blueberries.
- **Main Course:** These should include grains (bread, rice, pasta, etc.) and protein (beans, tofu, tempeh, meat, fish, eggs).

Please refrain from sending the following foods: Pop tarts, Jell-O, sugary granola and cereal bars, chips etc. Most children make these items the focus of their meals and refuse to eat their more nutritious foods.

### Health Policies

**Medical Reports:** A record of immunizations and a physical examination within the past 12 months must be completed and on file at school within the first 30 days of each child's first day of attendance. Records should also include results of any screenings, prescribed medications, descriptions of any impairments and current or chronic health conditions. All children are required to either be immunized or to have a medical or religious exemption on file in the school office. Non-immunized students might be prohibited from attending school if an outbreak occurs for which they have not been immunized.

**Administration of Medicine:** Parents must fill out and sign a medical permission form for a staff member to give medicine to a child. This form must give date, dosage as stated on the original bottle, and time of administration. If it is a prescribed drug, the doctor's prescription must be affixed to the medicine and staff will, always, follow the doctor's prescription—even if the parent is requesting something different. Your child's name must be indelibly written on the medicine. The medications must be locked up while in school and taken home at the end of the day.

**Health Rules for Attendance:** Children should be kept home from school if they are feverish, have diarrhea, are vomiting, have dark mucous nasal discharge, or if they show signs of becoming sick (listlessness/drowsiness, productive cough, extreme sore throat, ear pain, eyes that are pink, burning, itching, or producing discharge). See exclusion criteria on following page. Exclusion will help prevent contagion and promote the health and safety of your own child. Please notify the school if your child has a highly communicable disease or condition, so that all other parents can be alerted. If your child becomes ill during the school day, every effort will be made to make them comfortable, away from the other children. A parent will be called to come and pick them up.

**Hand Washing:** Hand washing greatly cuts down on the transfer of germs. We ask that all children and adults wash their hands with soap immediately upon entering school in the morning and from outside play. We also wash our hands before and after eating, before and after water play, after working with Play Dough and other sensorial materials, and after using the toilet, nose blowing, finger sucking, or touching any contaminated objects and surfaces.

**Toilet Training:** Teacher's will observe new children to ensure they are developmentally ready to care for their toileting needs independently. If frequent accidents occur, teachers will work with parents to develop a plan to best meet the needs of individual children and their community.

**Recording and Reporting Accidents:** All injuries involving bumps to the head, bleeding, broken bones, and/or requiring medical treatment are recorded in an incident log. An incident report is also filled out, and parents are informed of the injury/accident. The report is signed by the AMS staff member completing it and by the parent and kept in the child's student file.

**Emergencies:** All AMS teachers have First Aid and CPR training, which is routinely updated. In the event of an emergency concerning your child, the school will first contact you, the parent, and then, if necessary, the backup emergency contacts. If the emergency requires immediate medical care, we will call for an ambulance while we are contacting you. Throughout the year, please notify the school office of any phone number changes for you or your emergency contacts (including work and cell phone numbers).

## Exclusion Criteria

Condition	If Child is Diagnosed, Our Program Will...	When to Return...
Fever	Temporarily exclude child from childcare if child has a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit.	After child has been fever free for 24 hrs. without medication.
Vomiting	Temporarily exclude child from childcare if child has 2 or more vomiting episodes consecutively.	After child has not vomited for 12 hrs.
Head Lice	Temporarily exclude child from childcare.	24 hrs. after treatment with no signs of nits or lice.
Diarrhea	Temporarily exclude child from childcare. Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures.	After child is diarrhea free for 24 hrs.
Hand-Foot-and-Mouth	Temporarily exclude child from childcare. Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures.	When lesions heal or drooling ceases.
Ringworm	Temporarily exclude child from childcare. Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures.	After treatment begins and lesion starts to shrink.
Strep Throat	Temporarily exclude child from childcare. Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures.	24 hrs. after antibiotics are begun.
Pink Eye	Temporarily exclude child from childcare. Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures.	24 hrs. after first dose of medication and symptoms are mild.
Impetigo	Temporarily exclude child from childcare. Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures.	After treatment has been started.
Fifth Disease	Temporarily exclude child from childcare. Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures. Notify all parents regarding an outbreak.	After child can participate in school activities.
Chicken Pox	Temporarily exclude child from childcare. Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures. Notify all parents regarding an outbreak.	6-7 days after the rash appears or when all blisters have scabbed over.
Covid	Temporarily exclude child from childcare. Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures. Notify all parents regarding an outbreak.	14 days from the date of their last exposure.



## Covid Policy

**Daily Health Check:** All teachers, students and adults entering the facility must provide complete and accurate responses to the Daily Health Check. Should you or any household member have any of the following COVID-19-like symptoms during the preceding 72 hours, we ask you to remain out of the facility.

- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Muscle Aches
- Difficulty Breathing
- New Loss of Taste or Smell

**Temperature Check:** All teachers, students and adults entering the facility must submit to a temperature check upon arrival. Anyone refusing to comply or with a fever at or above the temperature of 100.4° F (or would have, but for the use of fever-reducers will not be permitted entry. The threshold temperature is 100.4° F unless a LOWER threshold temperature is imposed in the local jurisdiction or by the specific center.

**Illness:** During the COVID-19 pandemic period, our Health Check & Exclusion Criteria applies to all teachers and students. The final decision on whether to exclude an individual from the program due to illness will be made by the childcare center. For your child's comfort, and to reduce the risk of contagion, children must be picked up within 1 hour of notification of illness. Until then, your child will be kept comfortable and will continue to be observed for symptoms.

**Exposure:** If, within the last 10 days, any member of your household has a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, or any member of your household who is not immune has been in Close Contact with anyone who has a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, then all members of your household who are not immune must remain out of the facility.

**Symptoms:** All symptomatic individuals (including any immune individuals) and any members of that symptomatic individual's household who are not immune and who have been excluded under the Health Check must remain out of the facility, unless cleared to return.

After the applicable exclusion period has passed, you/your household may return provided these three things have happened:

- At least 10 days have passed since anyone in your household first experienced symptoms.
- Symptoms have improved for anyone in your household that experienced symptoms (for example, cough or shortness of breath has improved).
- Your household has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducers.
- Please note, depending on the circumstances we may require you to obtain clearance to return from a medical provider before return to the facility will be allowed.

## Emergency Procedures

**Evacuation:** The following steps are basic guidelines for evacuation procedures:

- The designated person-in-charge will contact 911 and post the message on the program's front doors. The designated person in charge is also in charge of the emergency cell phone and student records.

- Staff will guide children to walk calmly through the nearest clear exit to the designated assembly area. If there are any external hazards (such as extreme weather, etc.), children will be evacuated to another location.
- When the children under their care are all outside, staff will take a face-to-name count to ensure that every child is accounted for, and report to the designated person or director, as well as the names of any missing children and/or personnel
- When the "ALL CLEAR" command has been sounded, staff are permitted to lead the children back into the building.
- The designated person contacts the state licensing within 24 hours after evacuation.

**Shelter in Place:** Shelter-in-Place occurs when staff and children need to find a safe space indoors. These typically occur during severe weather emergencies. The following should be prepared in the event of Shelter-in-Place:

- Emergency radio with extra batteries.
- Designated space for shelter-in-place.
- Working cell phone.

Providers should perform a face-to-name count to make sure that all children are accounted for.

**Lockdown:** Lockdown occurs if the children and staff in a program are threatened. The threat can come from either internally, in which the threat is inside the building, or externally, such as a threatening phone call. Shelter-in-Place is a form of lockdown, but there are varying degrees depending on the severity of the threat.

The following is the series of steps to take during a lockdown:

- Lock all doors and windows in the facility, including ones in the classroom.
- Close and lock interior doors so that they cannot be opened from the outside.
- Close any curtains and blinds and turn off all the lights.
- Providers should direct children to sit in a place away from doors and windows. Meanwhile, the designated person-in-charge will contact 911 if able to do so.
- Lockdowns last until the situation is resolved and the proper authorities give the all-clear. In the case of emergency lockdowns, state licensing must be notified within 24 hours.

## **Withdrawal Policy**

If you need to withdraw your child from Avalon Montessori School, you must give AMS one month of advance notice in writing. This will give us time to fill the spot you open when your child leaves, thereby limiting the loss of income to the school. The one-month notice begins the day it is received in the school office. You will be charged tuition during this one-month period, so it is to your advantage to be proactive, so you aren't charged tuition when your child is no longer enrolled.

## **Positive Discipline**

The discipline policy at Avalon Montessori School is based on Positive Discipline by Jane Nelsen, Ed.D. It safeguards each member of the school community and furthers the mental, emotional, physical, social/moral, and supports Montessori philosophy. Essentially, our discipline approach is not just to keep students "behaving" so the teacher can teach. It is an important part of the curriculum -- helping students learn how to work together, respect their

community, and to be mindful of the needs of others. To this end, each student shall conduct themselves in a manner that supports the general learning environment, respects the right of all to live and learn in a physically and emotionally safe atmosphere, develops independent and collaborative learning skills, supports the development of problem-solving skills, and generally upholds the noblest aspects of the human spirit.

We teach and help children to use a calming space to help them change their energy or behavior pattern. We view this as a positive way of helping our children better understand and manage emotions and energy. These spaces are non-punitive, near the group, and usually selected by the child. A child may choose to find a calming space at any point during the day in which they need to find balance. Children may stay in a calming space for as long as they wish, provided they can demonstrate positive behavior when they choose to resume their usual activities. Our goal is to teach children to make positive behavior decisions and manage their feelings appropriately. Our method of discipline, which we consider energy or behavior management, generally follows these steps:

**Step 1:** Guidelines/rules are discussed as a class. Children are taught to use calming spaces and techniques.

**Step 2:** Energy is redirected. We redirect a child's activity to another work where the energy is more appropriate (sand, water, clay, hammering, play dough).

**Step 3:** Reminders are given, and use of a calming space is encouraged.

**Step 4:** Problems are discussed. We discuss a problem with the child or group rationally and try to find solutions together and examine their possible effects. Calming techniques are discussed and practiced.

**Step 5:** Warnings with natural consequences are given if behavior persists. For example, a child may be asked to put work away if playing disrespectfully. Calming techniques are practiced.

**Step 6:** There are times when a child's energy is such that they are not able to cope with their feelings alone or is simply not able to sit alone by themselves for a minute. In such instances, where one-to-one intervention is necessary, another staff member may be asked to intervene and give the child extra attention until they are able to re-enter group activity.

Generally, our environment is prepared to avoid the need for disciplinary measures. Our faculty is trained to use early intervention, to help shape the classroom atmosphere toward a happy, harmonious, playful one. Teachers give the children lots of positive feedback and affection, we vary the rhythm of activity during the day to provide for successful experiences. The Montessori curriculum offers a variety of materials to work with in order that extra energy can be vented naturally. In cases of discord, children learn to say to each other how they feel and to listen carefully to each other's feelings. This facilitates their solving their own problems instead of a teacher solving it for them. Children are taught to consider each other's feelings and are given lots of positive strokes for caring behavior.

## **Removal/Dismissal from School**

The physical and emotional safety of students is of utmost importance to Avalon Montessori School. Almost all behavioral issues either never happen because they have been prevented, or they are resolved with little class disruption. However, every community, and every classroom has its issues. Therefore, how do we know when a student needs to be removed from the classroom for a period? Each child and every situation are unique, but the general guidelines that a child needs to be separated and parents need to be called are:

**Criteria 1:** The child has targeted violent or emotionally aggressive or damaging behavior toward another child or children. In this case, often the “victim(s)” need some separation from the aggressor, so they have time to regain a sense of safety in the classroom. Plus, separating the child can sometimes help the child understand how serious or potentially damaging their behavior is for others.

**Criteria 2:** The behavior is repetitive, even if no single event is serious enough to warrant removal, a teacher will use their discretion to determine when it is pervasive enough that the class needs a break and the student needs more direct consequences to understand the situation and work on changing behavior.

**Criteria 3:** If the behavior is impeding instructional time and community space to a degree the teacher warrants is beyond what the class can expect to deal with. Generally, when a student is removed, it is for the rest of the day, and sometimes for a day or two following. Always, the staff will try to help the student by considering what his/her needs are. What seems to be the reason behind the behavior? If removal occurs more than two or three times, the child will be considered for an individualized modified behavior plan.

## **Adult Conduct**

As the adult leaders of our community, AMS faculty and parents should model cooperative conduct in all situations. We also urge all parents and other adult members of our educational community to understand and support the philosophy and methods of our discipline policy, the essential goal of which is to resolve conflict by educational rather than punitive means, using democratic processes which support the inherent dignity and rights of every individual. If any member of the AMS community shows repeated disrespect towards other members of our community, including the use of abusive language or gestures toward a child, teacher, or staff member, and/or an unwillingness to mediate a solution or to resolve a conflict situation, AMS reserves the right to ask the family in question to leave the school and terminate that family’s contracts with AMS.

## **Parent/Guardian Concerns**

As a community-oriented school, it is essential that the adults in the community model the cooperative, compassionate communication we want our children to imitate. AMS encourages a positive culture, where adults in the community are mindful of their communication. AMS is careful to avoid the toxic culture that can result from habitual negative communication, and conscious about how to foster a functional community. In the spirit of Avalon, we know it isn’t healthy for people to push away their concerns and unmet desires, but that it is necessary to move through them. The conflict resolution process below is designed to help us all recognize our needs and to move through them toward resolution... while treating people respectfully and keeping things in perspective. Although we may not, individually, always get exactly what we want; as a community we increase our health and happiness (which, ultimately, brings the best kind of individual satisfaction). The intended result is the gratification of feeling understood, while continuing to grow as humans. It is lifelong learning at its fullest.

## **Conflict Resolution Process**

Please take a minute to read these recommendations regarding the steps to conflict resolution. We want to hear from you as we are committed to making AMS a community where needs are addressed in a clear and respectful way. After all, a problem cannot be fixed if school personnel are not aware of the problem or if they don’t understand that a particular situation, policy, or action is/was considered a problem or concern to you or the community. Ultimately, the process establishes Trust.

**Step 1:** Identify and define the conflict

**Step 2:** Find a safe way to vent your feelings without damaging the community. Feelings strongly influence our behavior, and they need validation. It is human, with our need to validate our feelings or to simply think them

through, to spread the problem to others, which often creates stronger feelings and moves things beyond perspective. When possible, we recommend that you work directly with your child's teacher if you have concerns or needs that involve the teacher or a classroom situation. This way, you work with the person who could solve the problem.

**Step 3:** Try to understand that the teacher and/or Director will listen to your concern but may not immediately offer a solution. Provide the teacher and/or Director time to analyze and/or observe firsthand (if applicable) the situation and gather information. Allow time to for a response, which may be a day or several weeks.

**Step 4:** Expect that the teacher and/or Director may ask you to brainstorm for solutions with them.

**Step 5:** Agree upon a solution together. This may require compromise. Remember the solution is not written in stone but is something both parties are committed to trying.

**Step 6:** Implement a solution together.

**Step 7:** Follow-up evaluation. After allowing plenty of time, make sure the chosen solution has really solved the conflict to your mutual satisfaction. If you are satisfied with the result, please let the other party know. If you submitted a written concern, please also indicate your satisfaction in writing for documentation. If the conflict has not been resolved to your mutual satisfaction, please consider starting the process over again and try a different solution.

## **Inclement Weather Days**

Avalon Montessori School will follow the school closing recommendations of Montgomery County schools. If it becomes necessary to close school early, you will be contacted by phone, emailed, and alerted through the ProCare App. We always try to make the best decision for the safety of our community members, teachers, and our families. Thank you for your understanding and patience.

## **Social Media/Photo Releases**

Occasionally we will use photos depicting student activities and accomplishments on the school website, Facebook, and AMS publications. You will be asked to sign a press release / photo release form, which will be one of the initial forms you will be given upon your child's admission to AMS. If you choose to not sign the form, or if after signing it you change your mind, your desire will be honored. In that case, your child's picture may still appear on materials that have already been designed and printed, but his/her image will no longer be used on new materials.

## **Lost and Found**

Lost and found items will be kept outside of the schoolhouse for a limited time. Items not claimed will be donated to charity at various times throughout the year.

## **Celebrations**

Avalon Montessori School embraces diversity. We therefore celebrate holidays of many of the world's cultures and study about families in many different countries. We observe the holidays of the world's major religions in various ways during the school year and seek to affirm the universal values and commonality among these traditions. Your child may come home singing a song in another language or having eaten a certain holiday food or celebrated a custom unfamiliar to many of us. In this way, our students learn to appreciate and celebrate diversity, perceive the universality of the human spirit, and nurture the understanding that various human cultures complement one another

## Montessori Birthday Celebrations

The Montessori Celebration of Life is a lovely way to celebrate your child's birthday. Children love to hear about the journey from their birth to the present day. They want to hear stories, look at photos, and remember wonderful memories. They want to know how cherished they are, and how our life and world is better because they were born into your family or now belong to our class. The Montessori Celebration of Life is the perfect way to do this.

In preparation for the Montessori Celebration of Life, the parents of the birthday child are asked to bring in a picture for each year of the child's life and write a short life story to accompany the pictures. We have a sample of a life story that we are happy to provide.

For the Montessori birthday celebration, our students gather in a circle, and the birthday boy or girl sits next to the teacher. In the middle of the circle, there is a flameless candle (battery operated), representing the sun; the months of the year are displayed around the electric candle. The parent or teacher turns on the candle to signify the moment the child was born. They then begin reading the life story up until the age of one. At which point, the birthday child begins the journey walking (slowly) around the sun 1 time, with the globe in their hands - stopping when they reach their birth month again.

While the birthday child walks, the children in the outer circle sing (to the tune of The Farmer in the Dell):

*The earth goes around the sun, The earth goes around the sun,*

*The earth goes around the sun, And then \_\_\_\_\_ (insert child's name) was 1!*

The reading of the life story continues until the age of two. The birthday child begins to walk around the sun again, and the children in the circle repeat singing the verse, changing the ending to '2'. This continues until the child's life story is complete. To complete the celebration the following is sung to the birthday child (to the tune of Happy Birthday):

*We celebrate your birth, And your place on the Earth,*

*May the sun, moon, and stars, Bring you peace where you are!*