

**Parent Handbook**

**2018 – 2019**

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# Purpose and Vision Statements

## Purpose Statement

## Dothan Montessori School (“DMS”) is an independent, non-profit school dedicated to providing a carefully prepared Montessori environment that nurtures children’s innate curiosity and love of learning. We are here to guide each child and support his or her intellectual, emotional, physical and social development.

## Vision Statement​

## The vision of DMS is to support the whole child in expressing their full potential as peaceful, productive, and informed citizens of the world.

# Statement of Peace and Non-Commercialism

The powerful, absorbent mind of the young child takes in, whole and unfiltered, the images it encounters. Dr. Montessori recognized that in the early stages of development, children cannot distinguish between reality and fantasy. What children hear and see on TV or videos is as real to them as what they see elsewhere in their world.

As educators of children, we have made a special commitment to honor and protect childhood. Never before have children been the target of so much specific marketing for toys, movies, video games and TV programs. Children are bombarded with specific marketing strategies endorsing commercial products tied to TV shows and movies (e.g., characters on clothing, shoes, bedding, toys, snacks, etc.)

Although many adults view action figures, characters and video games as benign, it is apparent through our observation of children in the classroom that these products frequently have a negative influence on children.

Because children naturally model the behavior they see, the violence and gender-based modes of relating that are prevalent in media to which they are exposed are seamlessly integrated into their lives. Children exposed to popular media often try to dominate their peers with ‘power,’ pretend to fight with weapons and treat other people aggressively and rudely. If they identify with the victim, they may develop fear, anxiety and insecurity.

We believe that children deserve better from the adult world; they need activities that are based in the beautiful world around us, play things that provide open ended experiences with real objects and interactive play with others. These opportunities lead to an awakening of imagination.

For these reasons, the school adheres to a policy of non-violence and non-commercialism. **Please choose nonviolent and noncommercial themes for clothing, and any other items that your child may bring to school such as water bottles, books or items for show and tell.**

# Admission Procedures and Requirements

## Non-discrimination Policy

Dothan Montessori School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion or sex in administration of its educational policies, admissions, financial aid programs, athletic and other school-administered programs.

## Admission Requirements

DMS accepts applications for preschool on a rolling basis. The first step in applying to DMS is taking a tour of the school and participating in a ½ hour observation of the classroom your child would enter. After the tour and observation, if you feel that DMS would be a good fit for your child and your family, you are invited to submit an application for the Toddler, Primary or Lower Elementary Program. Generally, no new students for the current academic year are admitted after Feb. 1.

### Toddler Program​ - Your child must be 18 months old and able to walk.

### Primary Program​ – Your child must be at least 3 years old and daytime toilet-trained.

### Lower Elementary Program​ – In 2018-19, the program is open to incoming first grade students whose families support Montessori education, but previous attendance at a Montessori preschool is not a prerequisite.

## Admission Procedures

1. Schedule a tour and observation at Dothan Montessori School.
2. Return completed application packet and non-refundable application fee of $150 per child.
3. Based on information in the application and any additional information about the child’s educational history sought by Dothan Montessori School, and provided that Dothan Montessori School’s philosophy complements the family’s philosophy and that the school and parents/guardians of the child are in agreement that the Montessori curriculum is appropriate for the child, and that space is available, admission will be granted.
4. Parents/guardians will receive notice of acceptance via e-mail.
5. Parents/guardians have 1 week to complete enrollment forms, and submit a tuition contract with the snack and supply fee and a 25% deposit of the annual tuition. An updated immunization form is due before the child’s first day of school.

## Admission is Conditional

All children are accepted to DMS on a conditional basis. Once a child enrolls at DMS, there is a 5-week trial period. During this time, the child is adjusting to the Montessori environment, and teachers are observing the child to make sure that our environment is a good fit. If at the end of the 5-week trial it appears that the Montessori environment at this school is not a good fit, the school will refund tuition and snack fee prorated for the weeks of attendance.

At any later point, should the Director, under the advisement of the classroom teachers, determine a child does not benefit from this Montessori environment or a child’s behavior is consistently disruptive to the learning environment and community, DMS reserves the right and option to terminate any child’s enrollment in the school. Please refer to Discipline and Needs Assessment Policies outlined below.

# Tuition and Tuition Payment Procedures

## Tuition

The tuition schedule for the 2018-19 school year is as follows:

Toddler Program: 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

5 days a week……………….……$5,700/ year

Primary Program: 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.

5 days a week…………………….$5,700/ year

Lower Elementary Program: 8 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

5 days a week…………………….$8,600/ year

## Tuition Payment Procedures

A child’s enrollment is contingent on submission of 25% of the full yearly tuition. The remaining balance may be paid in one of two ways:

1. **Monthly auto-debit authorization**​ – Tuition payments are withdrawn once a month over 9 months beginning Sept. 1. Parents/guardians are responsible for any bank set-up fees. Monthly debit for 5-day Toddler and Primary is $475 and Lower Elementary is $716.67.
2. **Pay tuition in full**​ – Payment in full is due by ​**May 1**​ of the year in which the child enrolls, or before the child’s first day if admitted mid-year.

We depend on tuition to pay our staff and keep the school running. If your child is admitted to DMS, you will be required to sign a tuition contract for the full year. You are responsible for paying the balance in full if you decide to leave DMS for any reason.

## Returned Check Policy

There is a $10.00 bank charge for checks returned to DMS.

## Financial Assistance

Dothan Montessori School’s ability to offer financial assistance is reviewed each year by the Board of Directors. In 2018-19 DMS is offering limited financial assistance to applicants. DMS uses a third party company, FAST, to make blinded, need-based financial aid recommendations.

# Days and Hours

The first day of school is August 20, 2018 and the last day of school is May 23, 2019. A school calendar is included with enrollment materials, and is also available on the school website.

Toddler Program

The Toddler Program is offered 5 days a week, with drop-off between 8 – 8:20 a.m. and pick up at 12 p.m.

Primary Program

The Primary Program is offered 5 days a week with drop-off between 8 – 8:20 a.m. and pick up at 12 p.m.

Lower Elementary Program

The Lower Elementary Program is offered 5 days a week with drop-off at 8 a.m. and pick up at 2:30 p.m.

# Attendance

Children flourish when they feel secure in the rhythm of their weeks and days. For children to feel a part of the classroom community and to fully benefit from the Montessori method, they must be present for the day-to-day events in the prepared environment. Each individual child’s presence is important to the whole group. This applies to children in the Toddler Program, Primary Program and Elementary Program. For this reason, we ask that your child attend school regularly. If he or she will be absent, please let your child’s teacher know in advance.

# Arrival and Departure Procedures

## Arrival

Dothan Montessori School highly values being on time. DMS has a secure drop-off and pick-up location behind the school building. From 8 a.m. – 8:20 a.m., please use our carline. A member of our staff will greet your child at the car door. You are required to sign the sign-in sheet.

If there are any notes for the day that you would like the teacher to know, including if someone different will be picking up your child, if your child had a poor night’s sleep, etc., please make a note on the sign-in sheet.

## Departure

Pick-up is from the playground or from the classrooms if there is bad weather. Please park and retrieve your child from the playground or his/her classroom, making certain to sign out on the clipboard provided. For the safety of all the children, you must secure the playground gate when you enter and exit.

We are able to release your child only to those individuals listed on their enrollment form. If you would like someone other than those listed on the enrollment form to pick-up (e.g., a visiting relative), we must have this request in writing with your signature in advance of pick-up. You may use the sign-in sheet in the morning to let us know. Adults picking up for the first time will be asked for photo I.D.

Before leaving, children should always say goodbye to their teacher.

## Early Departure

On those occasions when your child needs to be dismissed early, please email or bring a note to school including the date and time of dismissal and give it to your child’s teacher.

## Late Policies

Arrival time is between 8 and 8:20 a.m. Unless previous arrangements have been made, please do not bring your child to school past 8:30 a.m. Arriving late deprives your child of valuable classroom time, and may embarrass him/her. It also disrupts the classroom activities already in progress.​​We are working very hard to instill consistency, as well as respect for your child’s self and others in our school. Please keep this in mind as you are preparing your morning routine.

If you arrive past 8:30 a.m., the security doors will be locked. Please walk your child into the office. To minimize disruption to the other children, the Director will then walk your child to his/her classroom.

Pick-up time is at noon for Toddler and Primary students and at 2:30 p.m. for Lower Elementary students. If you are late picking your child up from school in the afternoon, we will attempt to contact you or an approved guardian. Your child will stay with a staff person until someone can pick him/her up, and there will be a late fee of $1.00 per minute late per child. Billing for late pick-up is done at the end of each month.

## Weather Cancellations

In stormy weather, DMS follows NOAA weather and local reporting closely. School cancellations due to inclement weather will be e-mailed to parents as soon as the cancellation decision is made, and will be posted on the Dothan Montessori School Facebook Page. We will leave late arrival and early pick-up to the discretion of parents. If a bad storm arises mid-school day, we will phone parents of any remaining students and ask them to pick up their children.

# Transportation Policies

DMS does not engage in regular transportation of students.

For any Lower Elementary Field trips, parents may be asked to chaperone and will be asked to sign a separate consent and waiver form for each trip.

# Communication Between Home and School

## School Contact Information

Physical Address:

Dothan Montessori School

205 Holly Lane

Dothan, AL 36301

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 5921

Dothan, AL 36302

Phone:

334-671-7170

Website:

[www.dothanmontessorischool.org](http://www.dothanmontessorischool.org/)

Director

Adrienne Lorton

dms.adrienne@gmail.com

## Office Hours

Office hours are 7:30 a.m.– 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday during the school year. The DMS office is not open on a regular schedule from June – August. If you need to speak with someone during that time, please e-mail Director Adrienne Lorton at dms.adrienne@gmail.com.

## Contacting Your Child’s Teacher

We value timely, open communication with you about your child. Each teacher will let you know at the start of the year the best way to contact him or her, and provide contact information. Teachers will respond to parent inquiries/concerns within 24 hrs. via note, e-mail, telephone call or in-person meeting.

During hours that teachers are in the classroom with children, they are unavailable to respond to phone calls, texts, e-mails or speak to you in person except in the case of an emergency. If it is an emergency, please call the office. If the office does not answer, alert the teachers by text that you have an emergency and they will step outside the classroom to call you back.

## Parent Notices

Parent notices from your child’s teacher and administration are sent out via e-mail on a regular basis. These notices contain important information, so please read them in a timely manner.

## Parent-Teacher Conferences

Conferences are scheduled twice a year and the dates are included on the school calendar. Sign-up sheets will be posted at least two weeks in advance. There is no school on conference days, and no on-site childcare is provided. This is a time for parents and teachers to talk without the child present. The teachers share information about your child’s progress, needs and goals at DMS, and answer questions as time allows. In most cases, a written summary is provided.

In the case of parents who are divorced or separated, it is our policy to ask both parents to meet with the teachers at the same time to ensure that the information shared is consistent. It is not mandatory for both parents to attend, but two individual conferences are not scheduled.

Teachers or parents may request an additional meeting at any time if they feel it is in the child’s best interest to do so.

## Communication with Dual Families

In situations where parents are separated or divorced, please advise the school of additional addresses for mailing purposes so that everyone is fully informed about school events, parent-teacher conferences, etc.

## Change of Contact Information

If you have a change of address, e-mail, or phone number, please stop by the office for an “Update Status” form to register the change. It is vital that we have current contact information, especially phone numbers, to be able to reach you in an emergency.

## Changes in Home Situation

Please inform your child’s teacher if there is a change in the home situation: death, divorce, or relocation, a new baby, extended visits from friends or relatives, a new care-giver, a change in routine, or any fears or bad dreams. A change at home will often be reflected simultaneously or subsequently in behavior at school. Communication from parents will enable the teacher to best support your child.

# Grievances

We strive to do our very best for the children and families at DMS. If a problem arises, our goal is to address it promptly, satisfactorily and confidentially. To help us do this, we ask that questions or concerns regarding your child be brought to his/her Lead Teacher. We find that most concerns can be best resolved by speaking openly with your child’s Lead Teacher. In rare cases where the teacher is unable to resolve the issue, or in cases where it seems warranted, please share your concerns with the Director.

# DMS Expectations and Discipline Policy

For the safety and harmony of our classroom communities, DMS has the following expectations and policies regarding children’s behavior.

## The Teacher Will

1. Provide a structured Montessori environment in which a child feels secure and confident to choose his/her work

1. Set behavioral expectations through classroom instruction and role modeling

1. Redirect a child and use conflict resolution techniques

1. Work one-on-one with children who need additional guidance.

## The Behavior Expectations We Have For Our Students Are

1. Respect for self, others and our environment
   1. Work peacefully
   2. Treat all classroom materials with care
   3. Return all things to their proper place
   4. Keep the school environment clean and orderly

1. Demonstrate responsibility, respect, and self-restraint
   1. When in the classroom, be “engaged” in an activity or job at all times
   2. Work quietly in the classroom
   3. Use ‘walking feet’ at all times except when on the playground
   4. Walk quietly around the classroom and hall

## For the Safety and Well Being of all Individuals at DMS, the Following Behaviors are Unacceptable:

1. Talking back and arguing

1. Misuse of classroom materials or playground equipment

3. Encouraging others to misbehave

* 1. Disrupting or impeding the work of others

* 1. Showing rudeness or disrespect to others

* 1. Physically harming another person

## If a Child Exhibits Unacceptable Behavior, the Following Actions may be Taken, According to the Severity of the Misbehavior.

1. Role modeling
2. Peer mentoring
3. Conflict resolution/problem solving with the child
4. Redirection/“Gluing​”: The teacher keeps a child close to her before inviting the child to find an appropriate activity. Gluing is not punitive. It gives the child time to re-focus and observe others working in the Montessori classroom. It is a way to re-center and calm them so that they may work effectively in the classroom.
5. Reflection time in the classroom at the Peace Table

1. Separation from the class​: the child will be taken outside the immediate environment, supervised by an adult, to be given the opportunity to calm down and discuss the behavioral issue.

1. Removal from classroom ​(specific length of time): If the behavior is dangerous to other children, and other approaches have not been successful, a parent may be called to pick-up the child.

1. Seek outside professional consultation

1. In cases where the family and school have worked diligently together to support the child and address the behavior, but the child continues to be disruptive to the school’s working environment and is interfering with other children’s ability to learn, it may be necessary to consider the appropriateness of continued enrollment at DMS.

The Director reserves the right to waive and/or deviate from any and all disciplinary regulations for just cause at his or her discretion.

The school will do its best to ensure that all communications from DMS in relation to children’s conflicts are respectful, professional and offered in the spirit of working together. The school expects the same from parent(s)/guardians. Because solutions to conflicts may involve working with several families, the school needs all parents to model for their children, in speech and in actions, respect for and willingness to cooperate with the school’s policies, staff and other children and families.

# Needs Assessment and Referral Policy

One of the most important responsibilities of a teacher is to observe his or her students. Occasionally, the teacher will note behavior (whether it is emotional, social, or academic) that is a-typical or is impeding the child’s ability to function as a student or a member within the DMS community. In these cases, the teacher will make modifications in the environment and in specific works in order to help the child to be successful.

The teacher has the responsibility to clearly document and communicate all developmental and behavioral concerns to the parents. In order to optimize success, the parents have the responsibility to communicate behavior seen at home.

In instances where DMS believes the expertise and support of a specialist would be helpful to the child, that will be communicated to parents. DMS encourages parents to ask their child’s pediatrician for a referral or a list of specialists in the area. DMS is devoted to your child’s success, and is prepared to work with your chosen specialist to help meet your child’s needs.

In instances where the child’s behavior is disrupting the learning of other students, DMS may require a family to have an evaluation and enlist the support of a specialist as a condition of continued enrollment.

# Transition Procedure

Periodically, children are ready to move from one environment to another during the school year. Dothan Montessori School teachers are well-trained to observe children, and to follow their development. Your child’s teachers observe his or her physical, social, emotional and cognitive growth over time. When your child’s teachers observe his or her development moving him or her from one sub-plane or plane of development to the next, they will begin a discussion about your child’s transition from their class to the next.

Below is an overview of the process:

1. Teachers in the sending classroom share their observations about a child’s readiness with teachers in the receiving classroom.

1. Staff from the sending and receiving environments, on different days, spend not less than an hour observing the child who is showing signs of readiness to move from one sub-plane or plane of development to the next.
2. Staff from both classroom environments meet to discuss if a transition is in the best interest of the child.

1. If there is agreement that the child is ready to transition, staff proposes a phase-in timeline to the administration.

1. A meeting with the family is scheduled to discuss the recommendation for transition and the proposed phase-in timeline.

1. The family schedules a time to observe the receiving environment.

1. Once the family has observed, and the staff and family are in agreement about the transition, phase-in begins.

1. Each day, before leaving the sending environment to visit the receiving environment, staff will let the child know where they are going and what they will do.

1. The familiar sending adult will walk the child to the receiving classroom and stay with the child as needed. As the child becomes comfortable, he or she will stay for longer periods of time.

10) Parents will be updated from the familiar sending adult about how the transition is progressing.

11) When staff from both environments agree the child is ready to make a full transition, they will advise administration and parents of the date for completing transition. The day before the move, the child can carry his or her belongings from the old environment to the new environment.

12) Staff in the receiving environment will send a weekly update about the child’s adjustment to the new environment for the first few weeks.

This is a big step in the development of your child! As with any significant developmental milestone, there may be regression in other areas. For example, toileting may be disrupted, sleep may be disrupted, or your child may be less patient around a younger sibling. All of these things are normal. Your child will need understanding and guidance. Please communicate with the teachers about how your child is processing the transition at home.

# Parent Involvement

## Parent Volunteering

Family involvement is vital to Dothan Montessori School’s success. ​**DMS families are asked to contribute 15 volunteer hours during the academic year**​. There are many ways to get involved, including participation in special events, driving on field trips, doing classroom laundry, playground stick patrol, making classroom materials, etc. There is a Parent Volunteer binder available daily on the playground at pickup, so please log your hours each time you volunteer.

## Special Events

Throughout the year there are a number of events that provide opportunities for parents and children to have fun and socialize together including, Montessori Madness 5K (fall fundraiser), Thanksgiving Feast (potluck), Winter Celebration and Book Swap (light refreshments), and Field Day (fun water events). Working in event specific committees, parent volunteers organize each of these events. Volunteer duties may include planning, set up, clean up, refreshments.

## Fundraising

Each fall, DMS hosts its annual “Montessori Madness 5K and Family Fun,” which is the major fundraising event of the year. Through the efforts of parents who volunteer for our Montessori Madness Committee, we receive sponsorships, donated race food and beverages, and donated door prizes. The proceeds from this event are put into the DMS General Fund to help cover operating expenses and keep tuition as low as possible for all families.

DMS also sends out a spring solicitation letter to parents and the broader community. This letter is the second major fundraiser of the year. Our goal for 2018-2019 is to have 100% participation from our families. If you know of businesses, community members, family or friends who may be interested in supporting DMS, please let the Director know.

## Parent Education Workshops

During the school year, DMS offers education workshops for enrolled families. These workshops are intended to give you a better understanding of your child’s development, what your child is doing at school, and what you might be able to do at home to enrich your child’s learning experience. These meetings are a great chance to expand your parenting “tool kit” and to meet other parents in your community.

Past workshop topics have included child development, explanation and demonstrations of sensorial work, an overview of the Montessori philosophy and positive discipline. If there is a topic you would like to learn more about, please let the teachers know!

Dates and times for these workshops will be announced at the beginning of the year.

## DMS Parent Library

If you are interested in learning more about Maria Montessori, the Montessori method of education, or teaching Montessori practices in your home, there are many helpful resources available. DMS has a growing collection of books, magazines and DVDs available for parents to borrow. If you would like to borrow an item from our library, please stop by the office.

## Observations

Parents of students in the Primary and Lower Elementary classes are encouraged to observe a class in session anytime after the first six weeks of school. The Toddler class does not offer in-class observations as they are disruptive to the young children in this class. You can communicate directly with your child’s Lead Teacher to schedule your observation. All Primary and Lower El parents should observe their child’s class at least once per semester before the parent-teacher conferences.

# Nutrition Policy

As part of learning to respect their bodies inside and out, we help children establish healthy eating habits by providing nutritious morning snack options. We ask that you also follow these guidelines if your child is in the Lower El class and brings lunch to school.

**Due to allergies, DMS is a nut-free campus in 2018-19.**

A balanced snack or lunch includes protein, natural sugars and carbohydrates. Refined sugars in many forms (candy, chocolate, juice, soda, cookies, etc.) are not allowed. Some of the snack foods that will help fuel your child’s learning include fresh or freeze dried vegetables, fresh or dried fruit, applesauce, cheese, yogurt, boiled eggs, hummus, deli meats, whole grain tortillas or rice crackers.\*

Water will be available to children throughout the day. During the warmer months, teachers may request that children bring a water bottle to school for outdoor time. Water bottles will be sent home for cleaning at the end of each week.

The snack fee is $250 per year for the 5-day program. The entire snack fee is due with your 25% tuition deposit.

\*A child’s allergies may require modifications to the snack menu in individual classrooms.

# Birthdays and Celebrations

## Birthdays

Each classroom will celebrate your child on his or her birthday in the Montessori tradition. In the Toddler Class, celebration is kept simple with song and acknowledgement. In the Primary class, the day is marked with a special “walk around the sun” to symbolize the passage of another year, and children may share photographs taken during each year of their life. Summer birthdays are celebrated on the half-year mark (e.g., a July 6 birthday could be celebrated Jan. 6). Primary parents are welcome to attend their child’s walk around the sun.

If you choose to bring a special snack for your child’s birthday, please let teachers know ahead of time, and please keep it healthy. We ask that you keep foods such as cookies, ice cream, cakes and cupcakes for enjoyment at home. Please remember that DMS is a nut free campus in 2018-19. ​

Here are some suggestions of foods that can be enticingly presented and will also nourish children: homemade banana, carrot, or zucchini bread, homemade frozen fruit pops, fruit smoothies, tiny party sandwiches, trail mix, deviled eggs, mini bagels, popcorn, whole grain tortilla chips and salsa, etc.

In consideration of children’s feelings, unless the whole class is invited, please make arrangements for private parties outside of school. Children are asked not to talk about these events at school for the same reason.

## Holiday Celebrations

During the year, DMS recognizes different holidays, such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Winter Solstice, Valentine’s and Earth Day. Holidays are recognized in their historical context with craft projects, music, books and other activities that offer cultural enrichment. We invite families who celebrate other holidays to come to the classroom to tell the children about special customs associated with those holidays as well. Please speak with your child’s teacher if you would like to share with the class.

Some families enjoy bringing goody bags for their school friends. If you would like to distribute a goody bag at any point, please be mindful that the goodies are in-line with our non-commercial and nutrition policies. Bags should be brought to the teachers, who will distribute them at the end of the day as children are signed out.

# Clothing, Personal Belongings and Classroom Supplies

## Clothing

On the first day of school, each child should bring one full change of clothes in a gallon Ziploc bag.​​Please include underwear, shirt, pants or shorts and socks.​​ As the seasons change, please remember to update the change of clothes accordingly.

Children in our classes are focused on the active pursuit of functional independence and the mastery of movement. From very early on, part of the child’s work is to dress and undress him/herself. In order to help them be successful and allow them to meet this need, we, the adults, need to provide them with clothes that are manageable. Here are some guidelines that minimize children’s frustration when trying to master the skill of dressing themselves and to keep them comfortable throughout the day.

* Elastic waistbands, loose enough for children to pull up and down easily. Children who are first learning to use the toilet should not have bottoms with snaps, buttons or belts.
* Clothing that moves with the child and is not restrictive
* Clothing that fits properly – baggy, saggy sleeves sweep materials out of place, and sleeves that are too long can interfere with finger dexterity
* Please keep in mind that children will engage in a variety of activity throughout the day and may get dirty. If you want to ensure that a particular outfit stays free of dirt, paint or anything else your child might encounter while at school, please reserve that outfit for wearing outside of school.
* Children should be sent to school with appropriate layers for working indoors and outdoors each day.
* Closed shoes and socks are recommended for the playground, and flip flops are discouraged. This is for your child’s safety. ​

In keeping with our Statement of Peace and Non-Commercialism, DMS ​**asks that you send your child to school in clothes free from cartoon characters or action figures**. If your child​ arrives in clothes that conflict with our policy, we will offer your child the choice of changing into their spare shirt, or turning their shirt inside out. Please keep necklaces, bracelets and shoes with characters, or ones that squeak or light up at home. If you have questions as to whether you think something is appropriate to wear to school, feel free to ask us.

# Toilet Learning

**Dothan Montessori School asks that your child arrive at school in a diaper or underwear rather than pull-ups.** ​Children who are beginning to use the toilet are given the opportunity to use the toilet shortly after arrival, and Toddler teachers can change the child from a diaper to underwear at that point. In underwear, children receive immediate feedback when they miss the opportunity to use the toilet, and this provides a great learning tool. Please be aware that there may be multiple “misses.” Several changes of clothing (perhaps 3-4, including shoes) may be needed daily. Be prepared for extra laundry for a few weeks.

# Personal Belongings

**Dothan Montessori School asks that any non-school-related items be kept at home.**​ This includes trinkets, action figures, toys, stuffed animals and the like.

Personal belongings, such as water bottles, coats, etc., must be clearly labeled in permanent ink with the child’s full name. This will ensure that your child’s personal belongings are not misplaced or accidentally used by another child.

In keeping with our Statement of Peace and Non-Commercialism, DMS asks that your child’s school belongings be free from cartoon characters or action figures.

# Classroom Supplies

At Dothan Montessori School, teachers shop for supplies for his or her classroom. We encourage each family to donate consumable supplies (paper towels, tissue, hand soap, etc.). Children are proud to make a contribution to their classrooms, and the experience of shopping for a donation to the classroom with your child underscores two important values of our school – contributing to the community and learning the value of consumable goods (e.g., that they cost money and that we should only use what we need). A few times a year, your child’s teacher may provide a list of supplies that are needed.

Each classroom also has an Amazon Smile wish list and we are always grateful when families choose to purchase an item from those lists to donate to the classroom.

# Health and Wellness Policies

## Illness

**Please DO NOT send your child to school on days when any of these symptoms are present**​:

* Fever of 100.5​◦​ F
* Diarrhea
* Vomiting
* Nausea
* Persistent cough and/or sore throat
* Unusual yellow color to skin or eyes
* Skin or eye lesions or rashes that have not been diagnosed or that are severe, weeping, or pus-filled
* Stiff neck and headache with one or more of the symptoms listed above
* Difficulty breathing or wheezing
* Complaints of severe pain

If your child is not feeling well in the morning, please observe them closely before sending them to school and risking the health of other children.

Any child who becomes ill during the day will be separated from the group, but will have continuous supervision by a staff person. The parent(s)/guardian will notified and asked to pick the child up from school as soon as possible.

**Children must be free from any of the above symptoms (without any prescription or over-the-counter medication) for** ​**24 hours**​ **before returning to school. For lice, treatment must have been applied and the child must be nit-free for 24 hrs.**

If your child is diagnosed with any communicable disease (chicken pox, whooping cough, fifth disease, pink eye, head lice, etc.) please report this at once to the Director as well as to your child’s teacher. Your child must have a doctor’s note to return to school.

## Medications

No medication shall be administered to a child without a written, signed authorization on the required form, from the child’s parent(s)/guardian. The time and date of all medication dosages administered at Dothan Montessori School shall be documented in writing and signed by the administering staff person, and kept in the child’s file.

Please send dosage needed for one day only, in the original container with proper dispensing device from the pharmacy with the child’s name on it, and a dated note from the parent listing the times and amounts to be given that day. The pharmacy label and/or the physician’s written instructions must be included as well. A child may not carry medication. It must be given directly to the teacher supervising drop-off so that the medicine can be properly stored out of reach.

Locked storage shall be used to keep all medication or drugs​​out of reach of children.

# Security and Safety

## Building Security

Children will be signed in by the adult dropping them off in the morning, and signed out by the designated adult picking them up in the afternoon.

Security doors downstairs and upstairs are kept locked during school hours. Any visitor to Dothan Montessori School, including parent(s)/guardian and designated adults ​MUST​ check in at the office. This includes volunteering, observing, etc.

## Playground Safety

In order to maintain a safe and positive atmosphere in school and on the playground, we ask that children follow some basic ground rules. Parents can help by reinforcing these guidelines with children at all times.

On the playground we DO:

Swing in a sitting position

Slide one at a time

Go up the ladders and down the slides

Watch out for each other

Stay within sight of the teachers

Use kind words

Say goodbye to the teacher before leaving

On the playground we DO NOT:

Use sticks as weapons

Leave without saying goodbye to the teacher

The church has an ant extermination service and we do our best to be watchful for ant beds, which can spring up overnight, and spot treat. We recommend shoes and socks for outdoor play.

Once a month we invite parents to volunteer for “stick patrol” to keep the sticks on the playground to a minimum.

## Emergency Procedures

### Medical Emergencies

All of our teachers are CPR certified, and a First Aid kit is kept in each classroom. In the event of a medical emergency, we will call 911 and have emergency services transport your child to the nearest medical facility. You will be contacted by phone in the event of an emergency and be given information regarding your child, his/her illness, situation, etc. In the event a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact person(s) will be called.

### Fire Drills and Emergency Evacuation

Fire drills will occur throughout the school year. At the beginning of the year, they will be discussed with students ahead of time. Later in the year, drills may or may not be announced. In the event of an actual fire or emergency, each classroom will evacuate the building according to the evacuation diagram posted at the exit of each room. The diagram includes designated meeting places outside the building. At this designated area, role call will be taken to ensure all students and staff have safely exited the building. Each lead teacher is responsible for taking the emergency kit (including emergency contact information) from the classroom upon exiting.

### Tornado Procedures

Tornado drills will occur throughout the school year. At the beginning of the year, they will be discussed with students ahead of time. Later in the year, drills may or may not be announced. In the event of an actual tornado warning, as signaled by the city sirens and the office weather radio, each classroom will shelter in the stairwell and adjoining interior hallway. Role call will be taken to ensure that all students and staff are in the interior space. Each Lead Teacher is responsible for taking the emergency kit (including emergency contact information) from the classroom upon exiting.

# Child Abuse

Alabama law mandates that any day care employee or school teacher must report by telephone or direct communication any known or suspected child abuse or neglect. ​See​ Code of Alabama, Title 26 Chapter 14.

Under Alabama law, child abuse is: “harm or threatened harm to a child’s health or welfare which can occur through non-accidental physical or mental injury; sexual abuse or attempted sexual abuse; sexual exploitation or attempted sexual exploitation.”

Under Alabama law, neglect is “negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child, including the failure to provide adequate food, medical treatment, clothing, or shelter: provided, however, that a parent or guardian legitimately practicing his religious beliefs who thereby does not provide specified medical treatment for a child, for that reason alone shall not be considered a negligent parent or guardian; however, such an exception shall not preclude a court from ordering that medical services be provided to the child where his health requires it.”

If any employee of Dothan Montessori School suspects that a child is being abused or neglected, he or she must make a report to the chief of police or to the Department of Human Resources by telephone or in person. This report will be followed by a written report on a form furnished by the Department of Human Resources.

# Student Records

All children must have current health and immunization forms in their files before the first day of school. Children may not attend school without current forms. Each child is required to have an updated Alabama Immunization Form (blue). Please pick up these forms from your child’s doctor’s office. Each child’s records are kept confidential.