

*The Wesley Chapel Montessori School  
at Lexington Oaks*



**The Wesley Chapel  
Montessori School**  
At Lexington Oaks

**2021 – 2022**

**Parent Handbook**

5401 Post Oak Blvd.

Wesley Chapel, FL 33544

[www.wcmontessori.com](http://www.wcmontessori.com)

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# ***About The Wesley Chapel Montessori School***

## **I. Our Vision**

To nurture a generation of children who love learning, empowering them to reach their potential, and planting the seeds for life-long growth.

## **II. Our Mission**

To educate and nurture young children in a joyous, supportive environment created by excellent teachers and staff following a Montessori educational model.

## **III. Our Core Values**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Always Put Children First:             | To develop their values, a life-long love of learning, and ability to reach their potential   |
| Support Parents:                       | To ensure they are confident that their children are safe and happy in a nurturing and joyous learning environment  |
| Develop Teachers and Staff:            | Who have a love of learning and a love of young children, and feel happy, secure and supported themselves, and know how to create the same environment for the families |
| Create a Joyous Environment:           | For all parties that is intimate, nurturing, warm, fun and comfortable  |
| Provide the Highest Quality Education: | Commitment to the Montessori model  |

## **IV. School Goals**

We are committed to:

1. The safety, happiness, and individuality of each child
2. Building strong relationships with our children and their families
3. Creating a professional work environment based on the principles of sound ethics, professionalism, diversity, and growth
4. Continuously improving our school to enable us to serve the community through many generations

## **V. Academic Goals**

Our academic goals are to:

1. Develop the overall potential of each child
2. Inspire academic excellence
3. Nurture the creativity, curiosity, and imagination of every child
4. Create a loving and caring environment that fosters happiness
5. Create a safe haven for our children

## **VI. Non Discrimination Policy**

The Wesley Chapel Montessori School at Lexington Oaks (hereafter referred to as ‘the school’ or WCMS) does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, or handicap/disability in their enrollment practices. WCMS also supports equal employment opportunity and treatment for all staff without regard to sex, race, color, religion or national origin, age, sexual orientation, handicap/disability or veteran status in all aspects of employment.

## **VII. Our Staff and Teachers**

Our staff and teachers of The Wesley Chapel Montessori School come from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds that bring richness to our classrooms. Their profound commitment to the young people in their care is evident in the way they not only support children, but parents in our center. Our teachers focus on the individual child and classroom as a whole and aim to provide a nurturing environment that helps children build a strong foundation of skills and confidence so they can learn and grow. The low teacher/child ratio makes it possible for teachers to give the child the attention they need to succeed. Our staff at WCMS always ensure continuous supervision of children at all times both in and out of the classrooms. Mandatory staff meetings, held regularly, are an important activity and serve as a major communication element in staff relationships, curriculum development, disciplinary issues, staff training and the overall quality of the school program.

## **VIII. Staff to Student Ratios**

The Wesley Chapel Montessori School strives to provide quality care and education to the students. The school adheres to the ratios set forth by The Florida Department of Children and Families. For our Nido Program the state ratio is 1:6 with no more than 24 children during the learning periods and during nap. For our Young Children’s Program, the state ratio is 1:11 with no more than 27 children during the learning periods and during nap. Our Pre-Primary classrooms state ratio is 1:15, with no more than 27 children in a classroom.

# **Montessori Curriculum**

WCMS provides a specialized curriculum based on the Montessori Method for Pre-Primary and Kindergarten age children (3 to 6 years). WCMS also offers a Nido Program and a Young Children's Primary Program (12 months to 3 years). Our Montessori School has been architecturally designed with the children's needs in mind and provides a secure environment that allows the personal growth of each child.

Consistent with our vision and mission, we want to help each child reach his or her full potential in all areas of life. Our school is dedicated to the Montessori philosophy and method of education. A child attending WCMS will be exposed to a method which facilitates the growth of inner discipline and complex reasoning skills. Our lead teachers have vast teaching experience and have received either their Montessori credentials from the American Montessori Society (AMS) or a higher education degree. With the support of our highly trained assistant teachers, WCMS takes pride in providing the best quality education to meet the needs of each individual child.

Each Montessori classroom is designed with the Montessori Philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori in mind. The Montessori Method encourages what Maria saw as the children's innate ability to 'absorb' culture -- the natural means that the child's absorbent mind takes in his environment effortlessly and unconsciously.

The Montessori Prepared Environment is purposeful. Maria Montessori believed that the teacher should prepare themselves and the environment with a definite purpose to allow for the spontaneous progression of the child's development. Thus, the Montessori classroom is not just a place of learning abstract ideas but, rather a place to acquire an education for life. The Montessori Prepared Environment educates the whole child, not just the academics of the child. There are three main elements that come together to create the Montessori Prepared Environment: the child, the materials in the prepared environment, and the teacher. The *materials* teach the child and the teacher is the *guide*. The teacher is the link between this uniquely prepared environment and the child. We believe that these are the distinct characteristics that stand out when compared to other educational systems.

In a Montessori school, the child is the reason that the prepared environment exists. It is within the environment that the child develops on so many levels. Physically, the child's development is enhanced and stimulated by the simple freedom of movement. There are no desks assigned for the child to sit at for long periods. Rather, the child moves around from one area to another growing and realizing his own place within the environment. It is by ability, not by age, that a child challenges himself and becomes self-reliant, focused and independent. Intellectually, the child's freedom of choice in his materials leads to a development in his concentration and thereby knowledge in so many areas of life. The environment addresses the children's needs as they challenge themselves from very basic to very advanced materials.

## **Practical Life**

Practical life exercises are designed to help a child gain a sense of order, to develop coordination and concentration, and to foster independence. Practical life exercises essentially provide the blueprint of life and emphasize building fine motor skills and increasing attention spans associated with daily living activities.

## **Sensorial**

Sensorial experiences appeal to the five senses of sight, touch, smell, taste and sound. Sensorial lessons define shape, color, size, weight, sound, smell and texture. The use of concrete sensorial materials establishes the necessary foundation for the child to later recognize abstract ideas with greater understanding and a more organized mind.

## **Language**

Language development spans all areas of the classroom and is alive with movement. In the Montessori classroom, children learn through phonics as well as sight–reading all throughout the classroom. Individual lessons are based on phonetics, linguistics and sight–reading skills. It is not uncommon for most four year olds, enrolled in our school, to be reading before their fifth birthday. The children’s interest in reading is never stifled by monotony; rather it is cultivated as their most important key to future learning.

## **Mathematics**

Maria Montessori demonstrated that if children have access to a hands-on approach to mathematics in their early years, it serves as a basis for logical thinking and future acquisition of math skills. The Montessori approach to mathematics is logical, clear and effective. Children work with concrete materials representing abstract concepts. The whole math experience is very kinesthetic and visual. Children learn concepts through natural progression. The classrooms are full of materials for learning the concepts of numeration, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division and problem solving.

## **Cultural Studies/ Arts & Crafts/ Computer Applications**

Geography, History, Biology, Botany, Zoology, Social Sciences, Horticulture and World Cultures are presented to the children in enriching and exciting ways. Children study about the world through maps and globes. The objective is to increase their awareness of our planet. The Montessori Method offers the children a concrete presentation of history by letting them work with timelines. Art, integrated into the curriculum, enhances the creativity of the child. Our teachers design meaningful and inspirational lessons for the children to gain awareness and an appreciation for the arts. Art is an important form of self-expression. It develops hand-eye coordination, imagination, individuality and aesthetic appreciation. Technology will be introduced to Kindergarten students on an as-needed basis.

## **Foreign Language**

The curriculum is designed to give the children a working knowledge of an additional language – Spanish. The program is designed to be colloquial, interesting and useful. Students learn shapes, colors and the fundamentals of the language. Whenever possible, WCMS make every effort to be sensitive and inclusive of the families being served and whenever possible, provide an education to the children in a language understood by the children and families if other than English.

## **Music and Movement**

Physical growth and muscle development are precursors to intellectual development. The Montessori philosophy brings together music, dance and song. An early appreciation of music and movement will contribute to the overall development of the child. Our teachers engage the children in cultural and meaningful songs that express joy and happiness.

## **Outdoor Physical Activity**

The school campus has wonderful playgrounds. Supervised outdoor play takes place during recess and extended-care. The campus also houses an outdoor patio with area allocated for a butterfly, vegetable, and herb garden.

## ***Montessori Program Types***

### **I. Nido, Young Children’s Primary and Pre-Primary Programs**

#### **a. Programs for Nido, Young Children and Pre Primary Children** (Instructional Hours begin at 8:00 a.m.)

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Half Day Program     | 7:15 a.m. — 12:00 p.m. (Available 2, 3 or 5 days a week) |
| Full Day Program     | 7:15 a.m. — 3:00 p.m. (Available 2, 3 or 5 days a week)  |
| Extended Day Program | 7:15 a.m. — 6:00 p.m. (Available 2, 3 or 5 days a week)  |

**Each child is responsible for bringing his / her own lunch. The school serves nutritious morning snacks for students enrolled in a Half, Full, or Extended Day Program and afternoon snacks for students enrolled in an Extended Day Program.**

**Please note, a month long probationary period for all new students is required to determine whether our academic program is beneficial, and meets the needs of the child.**

### **II. The Montessori Kindergarten Program**

The Montessori Kindergarten Program is highly regarded among local education professionals. The children benefit from not only the proven Montessori environment, but also the enriched hands-on academic curriculum presented by talented teachers. The nature of our classrooms (collaborative and joyful learning with high but attainable goals) results in developmentally accelerated children. Our Montessori children gain academic preparation, intrinsic motivation, social responsibility, autonomy, confidence, competence, originality of thought, and sensitivity. Our children earn an education for life, and gain an appreciation for lifelong learning. Child must be 5 years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> to be eligible for the Kindergarten program.

#### **a. Programs for Kindergarten Children** (Instructional Hours begin at 8:00 a.m.)

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Full Day Program | 7:15 a.m. — 3:00 p.m. (Available only 5 days a week) |
| Extended Day     | 7:15 a.m. — 6:00 p.m. (Available only 5 days a week) |

**Each child is responsible for bringing his or her own lunch. The school serves nutritious morning snacks for students enrolled in a Full or Extended Day Program and afternoon snacks for students enrolled in an Extended Day Program.**

**Please note, a month long probationary period for all new students is required to determine whether our academic program is beneficial, and meets the needs of the child.**

# ***Admissions Policies***

## **I. Student Enrollment Policy – Policy No. 1.1**

Enrollment to The Wesley Chapel Montessori School is open to children ages 12 months to Kindergarten. Enrollment shall be granted without regard to a child's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or disability; and without regard to a parent or guardian's race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, or gender. Parents can apply for enrollment for their child at The Wesley Chapel Montessori School by completing the Enrollment Packet and paying the \$375.00 Registration Fee. The Registration Fee is an annual non-refundable fee and is due upon enrollment. Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the following:

### **ENROLLMENT APPLICATION INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:**

- 2021-2022 Student Application for Registration
- Know Your Child Care Facility Brochure
- Signed Receipt of "The Flu" Guide for Parents Brochure – Provides helpful information about the dangers of the flu and how to protect your child as well as addresses seasonal and pandemic flu policies, including reporting designated infectious diseases to the CDC.
- Signed Permission for Food Consumption and Participation
- Signed Receipt of Distracted Adult Getting in; Getting out Form
- Signed 2021-2022 Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form
- Signed Pandemic Handbook Acknowledgment Form
- School Health Physical Exam (within 30 days of the child's start date)
- Immunization Form (within 30 days of the child's start date)
- Payment of the **non-refundable** Registration fee of \$375 due at the time of enrollment. Sibling registration is discounted to \$200.

Continued enrollment at The Wesley Chapel Montessori School is contingent upon the parent's, emergency contacts, and child's adherence to the policies and procedures of The Wesley Chapel Montessori School as outlined in the 2021-2022 Parent handbook and the Pandemic Handbook including, but not limited to, timely payment.

## **II. Termination of Enrollment – Policy No. 1.2**

**The Wesley Chapel Montessori School reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause.** In a case of dismissal from the school, neither the current month's tuition nor the registration fee will be refunded. Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal. An invoice detailing the past due balance will be forwarded to the address indicated in the child's file within one week of the dismissal. Any balances remaining after the 30 day period will be referred to the agency's legal counsel for collection. The school's Director or designee, will assist the parent in gathering their child's belongings at the time of dismissal and parents are required to leave the property in a calm and respectful manner, immediately. The Wesley Chapel Montessori School will request assistance from local police should any parent become disruptive and/or uncooperative while gathering their child's belongings upon dismissal. A dismissed child and his/her parents are required to call and request an appointment with the school's Director if they wish to return to the property following a dismissal. Appointments are made at the discretion of the school's Director and not a right of the dismissed child or parent. Following a dismissal, any parent or child who harasses, threatens or in any manner causes harm to anyone affiliated with The Wesley Chapel Montessori School by calling, writing, or any other means, will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

### **III. Tuition – Policy No. 1.3**

Tuition is an annual fee for the entire academic school year from August through June. Payments under the monthly installment plan are due by the 3<sup>rd</sup> business day for each month. School year rates for August will be pro-rated. Summer Camp rates for June, July and August will also be pro-rated.

**The tuition installment payment is due every month irrespective of how many days your child is absent due to sickness, family vacations, official holidays/breaks observed by the school, or school closures due to inclement weather, local or national emergencies, outbreaks or pandemics. WCMS will not credit, refund, or pro-rate tuition if a child is absent due to sickness, family vacations, or official holidays and breaks observed by the school under any circumstances.** If your child does not plan to attend school for an extended period of time, tuition must continue to be paid to reserve their seat in the classroom.

Tuition may be paid by check, cash, or money order. ***Please use your cancelled check and/or monthly invoice in lieu of receipts as receipts will not be given.*** A late fee of \$10 per day will apply for all tuition received after the 3<sup>rd</sup> business day of the month. A \$35 fee will apply on all returned checks. The receipt of two “Insufficient Funds” checks will require that all future tuition payments and penalty fees be paid by money order or cash. For tuition payment made online through with a debit or credit card, a 3.5% convenience fee will be applied. Parents also have the option to sign up for monthly recurring automatic payment through their bank account. If you would like to sign up for Auto Pay, please ask a staff member for the “Recurring Payment Authorization Form”.

In the event of an overdue account of more than five school days, the child will not be permitted to attend school until full payment has been made or permission has been obtained from the Director. Tuition payment must be given to an office staff member.

**All payments made to WCMS are final.** In the event that a payment is made and funds need to be issued back to the owner, a full credit will be given to your child’s account with WCMS. The issued credit will go towards any owed tuition or fees. Any credit that needs to be refunded, will be left to the discretion of the owner of The Wesley Chapel Montessori School.

### **IV. Tuition Payment Plans and Discounts – Policy No. 1.4**

- **Plan A:** One Full Annual Payment - A 4% discount will be applied to one full year’s tuition payment
- **Plan B:** Two Semi-Annual Payments - A 2% total discount will be applied to the semi-annual tuition payment
- **Plan C:** Ten Monthly Payments – Tuition is due by the 3<sup>rd</sup> business day of the month
- A 5% monthly tuition discount will apply for multiple siblings enrolled in a program at the same time. The discount will apply to the older sibling.
- A 4% tuition discount will apply for Active Duty or Veteran Military families, educators, firefighters, and police.
- We accept check, cash, money order, or recurring automatic payment through a bank account. Checks can be made payable to The Wesley Chapel Montessori School or WCMS. Payment using a credit or debit card will be applied a 3.5% convenience fee.
- Only one (1) discount per family.

**The Tax I.D. Number for The Wesley Chapel Montessori School is 45-3538559**

## V. Student Withdrawal – Policy No. 1.5

30 days written notice is required when withdrawing a child for any reason. If the proper notice is not given, and your child's tuition is deducted using our recurring payment option, tuition will not be refunded once charged to your account. Refunds will not be issued for previous payment of tuition or registration fee. Parents who wish to change their child's days or times of enrollment at The Wesley Chapel Montessori School must submit a request to do so two weeks in advance of the proposed change. The school's Director will notify the parents if the new schedule is available. A schedule change will not be considered to be final until a new fee agreement is signed. If the requested schedule is not available, parents may choose to continue with the current schedule until the requested schedule becomes available.

## ***Center Policies / Procedures***

### I. Appearance and Attire – Policy No. 2.1

**School uniform is mandatory for all students Monday through Thursday.** Students must appear clean and neatly groomed and wear clothes that are non-disruptive to the educational activities and processes of the school. The Uniform Policy is strictly enforced and children not in uniform must have a uniform t-shirt purchased. School uniform shirts are available for purchase at the school for \$10 each. Friday is "free dress" and children may wear play clothes.

Uniform bottoms must be the following colors:

Navy/dark blue and khaki, tan or beige. ***Denim is not an acceptable blue.*** Jeans are only permitted on Fridays.

Uniform bottoms may include the following:

Shorts, pants, skirts, skorts, capris or overall dresses. Please note that dresses and skirts should be accompanied by bloomers/shorts. **Spandex bottoms of any kind are strictly prohibited.** Small embellishments around the pockets or hems are allowed. Embellishments that are large are not permitted as it can be disruptive during class time.

Play clothes may NOT be:

Garments and/or jewelry which display or suggest sexual, vulgar, drug, gang, weapons, or alcohol-related wording or graphics, or which provoke violence or disruption in the school.

Students must wear closed-toed shoes that are sturdy and comfortable. Sandals and flip-flops are highly discouraged. Excessive jewelry (bracelets, necklaces, rings, watches, sunglasses) and hair accessories including hats/caps are prohibited inside the classroom as they are a distraction to the children in the classroom. Children may bring a hat/cap and sunglasses to wear during outside play.

**\*Please see Pandemic Handbook for updated policy regarding 'Appearance and Attire'.\***

### II. Arrival Procedures – Policy No. 2.2

In order to receive the full benefit of the Montessori curriculum, it is imperative that children arrive to school on time. The morning provides crucial information and lessons that the child will use throughout the day and year. Children may arrive as early as 7:15 a.m. when the school opens. Instructional hours begin promptly at 8:00 a.m. everyday. Late arrivals and tardiness are disruptive to the classroom. Art, music and special events also take place in the early hours of the day. **Children will no longer be accepted past 9:30 a.m. unless previously approved by an administrator.** If you know your child is going to be late due to an appointment or family emergency, please call or email the office in advance. If your child will be absent, please call or email the office as soon as

possible. Per DCF guidelines, if a child does not arrive within 1 hour of school commencing and a parent has not communicated their child's absence, parents will be contacted.

**\*Please see Pandemic Handbook for updated policy regarding 'Arrival Procedure'.\***

### **III. Attendance – Policy No. 2.3**

To obtain the full benefit of our instructional program, students are expected to attend school regularly and to arrive on time. Daily attendance is taken in each classroom by a teacher. Poor attendance or excessive tardiness results in a loss of continuity and may affect your child's performance.

Parents must notify the school if their child will be absent. Per DCF guidelines, if a child does not arrive within 1 hour of school commencing and a parent has not communicated their child's absence, parents will be contacted. Each child's arrival and dismissal (sign in/sign out) will be recorded on an attendance log on a daily basis by a staff member. Students who miss more than 20 days during the school year will be considered excessively absent.

**No credits, refunds, or proration of tuitions will be given for a student's absence due to vacation, holidays/breaks or school closures due to inclement weather, local or national emergencies, outbreaks or pandemics.**

### **IV. Authorization of Pick up – Policy No. 2.4**

In order to ensure the safety of each child, no child will be released to any person other than a parent/guardian or person listed on the Authorized Person for Pick Up/Emergency Contact section on the Student Application for Registration or without prior written authorization. Only adults 18 years and older may be authorized for pick up. If you wish to have someone else pick up your child from school, please send in a note with the adult's name, phone number, and relationship giving staff written permission to release your child into the care of that individual. We will check photo ID's and make photocopies of ID's if necessary. The name on the photo ID must match the name listed on the Authorized Persons for Pick Up/ Emergency Contact section on the Student Application for Registration. Please inform of Authorized Person for Pick Up/Emergency Contacts of our policy. **Authorized Person for Pick Up/Emergency Contact who fail to provide photo ID will not be allowed to pick your child up from the school.**

### **V. Birthdays and Holidays – Policy No. 2.5**

Holidays and birthdays are exciting and we welcome special snacks to help celebrate your child's special day. Due to sanitary and safety reasons, we do not allow homemade food to be brought in. All foods brought to the school must be pre sealed. In addition to bringing nutritious snacks, children are encouraged to wear a special outfit and bring pictures to help us celebrate. **Please coordinate your child's birthday celebration with the office staff to verify the snack details and day / time of the celebration.**

WCMS will close for Thanksgiving, winter and spring breaks as well as major holidays, such as Memorial Day, Labor Day, and Veterans' Day. WCMS follows the Pasco County Public School holiday calendar. **No credits, refunds, or proration of tuitions will be given for vacation, holidays/breaks or school closures due to inclement weather, local or national emergencies, outbreaks or pandemics.** A school calendar will be provided to each family in the Registration Packet or the first day of school.

We understand that particular holidays are not celebrated by all, and we respect your decision to either bring your child after holiday celebrations or keep your child at home on these days. Please notify the school if your child will be tardy or absent.

## **VI. Communication and Electronic Information – Policy No. 2.6**

Good communication between the school and parents is vital. All updates and reminders will be communicated electronically through email, the WCMS website ([www.wcmontessori.com](http://www.wcmontessori.com)), the WCMS Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/WCMontessori](http://www.facebook.com/WCMontessori)), ClassDojo, as well as posted on the front door. In an effort to reduce paper usage, we will no longer send memo's (unless for specific students), school event flyers, newsletters or important messages in the student's folder. Weekly emails will be sent with reminders and updates for parents.

## **VII. Conference, Grading, and Assessment – Policy No. 2.7**

Report Cards will be sent home after each 12 week grading period (three Report Cards per academic year) for students enrolled in Montessori Program. Parent-Teacher conferences will be conducted after the first and last Report Card or as needed. Lead teachers evaluate the progress of each child through extensive daily record keeping. We maintain individual records on the progress of every child in all areas of the Montessori environment including Academic, Social and Emotional Development, and Conduct.

Children with delayed intellectual or social development skills, with cooperation of the parents, can be referred to a licensed specialist.

Each VPK student enrolled at WCMS are required to participate in pre and post assessments. The VPK Assessment includes progress monitoring measures in the areas of print knowledge, phonological awareness, mathematics, and oral language/vocabulary that are aligned with the *Standards for Four-Year Olds*.

At the end of the school year, all VPK & Kindergarten children will participate in a Graduation Ceremony celebrating their completion of their academic year.

## **VIII. Discipline Policy & Procedure – Policy No. 2.8**

The development of inner discipline is the goal of the Montessori Method. Our teachers are trained to use various techniques to redirect a child's behavior including encouragement, positive reinforcement, and natural consequences for actions. We strive to provide a loving, secure and supportive environment that focuses on children's positive behavior. A month long probationary period for all new students is required to determine whether our academic program is beneficial, and meets the needs of the child. Children shall not be subjected to discipline, which is severe, humiliating or frightening. Discipline shall not be associated with food, rest, or toilet needs. **Any form of physical punishment is strictly prohibited at The Wesley Chapel Montessori School.**

All children must abide by the playground and classroom safety rules. When a child exhibits a consistent pattern of behavior that is disturbing to the program, damaging to the school or endangers the safety of other children, appropriate steps will be taken. Such steps will include, but are not limited to:

1. Immediate notice to parents.
2. Incident report(s) will be documented and sent home.
3. Parent/Teacher conference will be arranged.

#### 4. Dismissal of student.

Discipline concerns will be addressed in an accident/incident report. It will document any inappropriate behaviors that directly impact other children, staff members or the group as a whole. This report will be shared with the parent and will explain the behavior and how the behavior has affected others. It will also explain how the situation was resolved. These incident reports will be presented to the parents at the time of pick up, but in extreme or chronic situations, a more formal conference with the parent may be needed. Parents of all children involved in the incident will be notified by note, phone, or conference. The incident report should be signed by the parent and will be placed in the child's file. Parents should note that information about other children cannot be disclosed in your child's accident/incident reports. This is in keeping with our confidentiality practice.

**WCMS reserves the right to dismiss any child from school for serious and continued misbehavior. In a case of dismissal from the school, neither the current month's tuition nor the registration fee will be refunded.** Children are encouraged to develop language skills that help them to communicate their needs and feelings to others. They are encouraged to solve their differences with their peers through cooperation and empathy.

#### **IX. Expulsion Policy & Procedure – Policy No. 2.9**

**The Wesley Chapel Montessori School reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause.** Unfortunately, there are reasons that The Wesley Chapel Montessori School would have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We will do everything possible to work with the family of the child in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following are reasons WCMS may have to expel or suspend a child from the school are as stated below:

##### **a) Immediate Causes for Expulsion**

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or him/herself.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions towards staff members, children or other parent/guardians.
- Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff or other parents/guardians in front of enrolled children.

##### **b) Parental Actions for Child's Expulsion**

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Habitual late drop off beyond the 10:00 a.m. cutoff and or tardiness when picking up your child.
- Verbal abuse to staff or other parents/guardians.

##### **c) Childs Actions for Expulsion**

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children
- Excessive biting

Prior to expulsion, a parent will be called and correspondence will be sent home indicating what the problem is. Every effort will be made by both the center and the parents to correct the problem.

**\*Please note that The Wesley Chapel Montessori School at Lexington Oaks reserves the right to terminate childcare for any reason at any time without prior notice.**

## **X. Hours of Operation – Policy No. 2.10**

The Wesley Chapel Montessori School will be open 7:15 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. We will be closed on holidays listed on the annual school calendar.

## **XI. Late Pick up – Policy No. 2.11**

If parents are going to be late to pick up, please call the school. A late payment charge of **\$1.00 per minute** will apply to all children who are picked up late. This fee is to be paid in cash the following day to the office staff.

## **XII. Parent Involvement – Policy No. 2.12**

An Open House is scheduled at the beginning of each school year. Parents are encouraged to be involved in school activities, as it fosters the nurturing environment that is critical to the success of your child. A good communication flow between the school and the parents is essential to monitor the progress of each child. Folders will be sent home the last day of the week your child attends and to be returned the first day of the week your child attends. The folder will contain individual work done by your child. Proactively sharing your child's school experiences will reinforce their love for learning.

We have an "open door" policy at the school. If you have any questions concerning your child or would like to visit your child at school, please request a conference with the Director or notify the Director of your visit. Engaging the classroom teachers or children in conversations during instructional hours can detract their attention and disrupt the classroom routine. Please email the Director or telephone the school if any important information needs to be communicated to the school. It is important that teachers know if your child's daily routine has had any changes.

We welcome your ideas and areas of special interest. We are an enthusiastic audience for your knowledge and your talents. Our children benefit by parents sharing their special interests and career talents. It is our objective to work closely with our parents and to create a "family friendly" environment. If you are interested in volunteer opportunities, please let the Director know.

## **XIII. Parking and Drop off / Pick up Instructions – Policy 2.13**

We request that parent's use the school parking curb for both arrivals and departures. **Punctual arrivals and pickups are required.** If you plan to come into the school, please park in the spaces provided on the side of the school to facilitate the flow of traffic. Should you choose to come in, please leave your child with an office staff member rather than walking them into the classroom. Parents are asked not to go beyond the double doors when picking up or dropping of children and to keep pick-ups and drop offs at the front door. This is to not only ensure the safety of all of our students, and to not disrupt the classrooms, but it also makes separation easier for the child.

For quick pick-ups and drop offs, please use the parking curb in front of the school. Please adhere to the following safety rules and guidelines as you drop off and pick up your child:

- Pull into the parking curb slowly and carefully at all times. Park as close to the curb as possible to allow other cars to exit.
- Please ring the door bell and wait for a staff member to assist you in signing in/out your child.

At the time of departure, parents/guardians (not a staff member) must make sure that the child is safely buckled in their car seat before driving.

Remember to use extreme caution when entering/exiting the school driveway and parking lot. Yield to give the right of way to children and pedestrians. Be cautious when backing your vehicle out and follow the flow of traffic.

#### **XIV. Personal Belongings – Policy No. 2.14**

Please clearly label all of your child's belongings with their first and last name. The school requires that each child bring (2) seasonal appropriate complete changes of clothing (this does not need to be a uniform) including a top, bottom, underwear, socks (shoes are recommended) each semester. The clothing should be packed in a Ziploc bag with your child's first and last name clearly written. Replace clothes as needed. It is necessary that each clothing article worn or brought to school have a label with the child's name on it. Please label jackets, hats/caps, lunch boxes, water bottles, backpacks etc. and any other item brought to school that needs to be returned home. **WCMS is not responsible for personal belongings that are lost or damaged.**

*\*Please see Pandemic Handbook for updated policy regarding 'Personal Belongings'.*

#### **XV. Smoking / Tobacco Use / Substance Abuse – Policy No. 2.15**

The use of these products is strictly prohibited anywhere in the building or on the premises of the school.

#### **XVI. Special Events / Extra Curricular Activities – Policy No. 2.16**

For security purposes, WCMS does not provide field trips. We prefer to bring the world to our children. Throughout the year, special events are planned in coordination with the curriculum and holidays.

Extracurricular activities are available after school (3:00 p.m.) through a screened and licensed third party company for children enrolled in an Extended Day Program. Such activities include, but are not limited to theatre, ballet/tap, soccer and gymnastics. These activities are hosted at the school by the company for an additional fee. The fees and materials are determined by the individual company.

#### **XVII. Special Needs Students – Policy No. 2.17**

WCMS strives to provide an exceptional academic experience for all of its students and therefore all students must meet certain minimum standards that will be determined during the 30 day probationary period. The school will make reasonable accommodations to allow students with special needs who are otherwise qualified to attend the school; however, the school cannot make substantial modifications to its programs, staffing, or curriculum to accommodate a student with special needs without diminishing the school's ability to provide the exceptional academic experience that all of the students deserve. Accordingly, if the school determines that a student with special needs cannot meet the minimum academic and technical standards required of all students in spite of his or her handicap, the school may not be able to admit the student with special needs, if the school determines that admitting the student will diminish the school's ability to provide an exceptional academic experience to all of its students. Additionally, if the school admits a student with special needs and later determines that the student cannot satisfy the requirements expected of all students after making reasonable attempts to accommodate the student's disability, the school may determine that it cannot readmit the student in subsequent years, or suspend or expel the student if his or her behavior is causing distractions or otherwise interfering with the school's ability to educate all of its students.

#### **XVIII. Student Records – Policy No. 2.18**

Information in each student's file is considered highly confidential. Please notify the Director of any changes as soon as possible (i.e., cell phone numbers, authorized pick-ups, address, etc.). The only

person with access to student files is the Director. Staff members are instructed to keep all information regarding students confidential. Parents may, at any time, review their child's file with the Director. Should a child withdraw from the school, parents may elect to take their child's records. Information in student files will be released to the parent or guardian only. Student information will not be forwarded to other schools without a written request from the parent or guardian.

**Important:** Should a student be involved in a child custody case, we require a copy of the legal document specifying the custody arrangement. In cases of unauthorized pick up situations, teachers are instructed to maintain the safety of the child and themselves as a priority. In case of such events, the custodial parent will be notified immediately.

#### **XIX. Summer Program – Policy No. 2.19**

WCMS offers a Summer Program in which children participate in many activities and events that are not only enjoyable but enriching. The Summer Program is a relaxed extension of our academic year. The focus is to enrich the child's experiences with nature and the world at large. Tuition for the summer program is the same as the school year but pro-rated for the weeks the child attends and must continue to be paid for on a monthly bases.

#### **XX. Toys and Electronics from Home – Policy No. 2.20**

Children are not permitted to bring in toys or electronics such as but not limited to stuffed toys, dolls, handheld games, iPad or tablets from home unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher to use as part of the curriculum. Parent are responsible for enforcing this policy with their child. Parents will be asked to take any toys or electronics from the child before entering the building. This policy is to prevent the risk of damage, loss, and sharing issues of personal belongings. **The Wesley Chapel Montessori is not responsible for any lost or stolen toys or electronics brought from home, even if they are placed in the front office.**

### ***Health and Safety Policies***

#### **I. Accident / Incident Reports – Policy No. 3.1**

The safety and security of our children is the first priority of our school. All accidents and incidents are documented and reported to the parent(s) or guardian. Reports will be given to parents at pickup and must be signed the same day of the accident/incident. Parents will be notified immediately in the event of a serious illness, bleeding, head injuries or other emergencies. If necessary, the child will be taken to the nearest hospital. **All medical expenses will be the responsibility of the parent.** It is very important that you keep the contact information in the office up to date at all times. This information should include but not limited to, current home addresses, cell and business telephone numbers, and emergency contacts.

#### **II. Allergies and Medications – Policy No. 3.2**

Parents must notify the school in writing of their child's allergies and/or dietary restrictions on the 'Permission for Food Consumption and Participation' Form. If parents request that medication or over the counter products (including topical ointments such as sunscreen lotion and topical insect repellents) be stored and administered to the child at school, all prescription medication and over the counter products are required to have a physician's prescription label on the medication or over the counter product. All medication and over the counter products should be replaced after contents are depleted or upon expiration. Parents must also complete an "Authorization to Administer Medication" form. All medication or over the counter products should be in its original bottle and packaging with

the prescription label. WCMS teachers are **NOT** authorized to administer any medication to any child and are only permitted to administer over the counter products such as sunscreen lotion and topical ointment. The only person(s) authorized are the Director and Assistant Director. All medications will be stored in the office.

Parents will be notified immediately in the event of an allergic reaction or other emergency. If necessary, the child will be taken to the nearest hospital. **All medical expenses will be the responsibility of the parent.** It is very important that you keep the emergency contact information in the office up to date at all times. This information should include but not limited to, current home addresses, cell and business telephone numbers, and emergency contacts.

**WCMS is not an “Allergy Free School”.** Parents are encouraged to bring ‘safe foods’ that will be kept at school for substitution. Due to allergies, please remind children not to share their lunch with other children. Children with allergies will sit in a designated area to avoid exposure to “unsafe food”.

### **III. Diaper Changing and Toilet Training – Policy No. 3.3**

We work diligently with children in our Young Children’s Primary on toilet training. If a child has not yet displayed an interest in using the toilet we will change them following diaper changing procedures. The child will be checked every hour for a wet or soiled diaper. During diaper changing, the child will be laid on a nonabsorbent surface to be changed. Once the diaper has been changed and the child is dressed, the teacher who changed their diaper will remove their gloves and help the child to properly wash their hands. The staff member will wash their hands as well. Then the surface is disinfected for the next child.

If a child has displayed an interest in using the toilet, they will be brought to the restroom every thirty minutes. This provides them with familiarity to the restroom routine. A teacher will help the child onto the toilet as well as clean the child. Once the child is done on the toilet, the staff member will assist the child with putting their clothing back on. The staff member will then remove their gloves and help the child to properly wash their hands. The staff member will wash their hands as well.

### **IV. Emergency Procedures and Notifications – Policy No. 3.4**

Fire safety drills are conducted monthly as is tornado and lockdown drills done regularly. Evacuation signs are posted in each classroom. Each classroom is equipped with an outside emergency exit, and the school fire alarm system is linked directly to the local fire station.

In cases of unforeseen/rare emergencies, if need be, the school will lock down for the safety and security of our students and teachers and parents will be notified immediately via telephone or email.

We live in an area that experiences various forms of severe weather. Bad weather necessitating school cancellation/closure will be announced immediately via telephone and or emails to parents.

In the wake of the Coronavirus Pandemic, WCMS will follow local, state, and federal guidelines and recommendations in the event of school closure due to the Coronavirus or other national/global pandemic or outbreak. In the event of school closure, arrangements will be made for distance learning. Parents will be notified of school closures via telephone and or emails.

**\*Please note, The Wesley Chapel Montessori School follows the Pasco County School District closure procedures. No credits, refunds, or proration of tuition will be given in the event of school closure due to inclement weather, local or national emergencies, outbreaks or pandemics.**

## **V. Firearms and Weapons – Policy No. 3.5**

At no time is any person permitted to carry any type of firearm, ammunition, and or weapon on the school's property for any reasons, unless they are a police officer. Violation of the policy will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

## **VI. Food – Policy No. 3.6**

Aside from children in the Young Children's Primary, children will eat their lunch and afternoon snack on the outside patio. In cases of inclement weather conditions, the children will eat their lunch inside the building. Each child is responsible for their own lunch. Please pack a well-balanced and nutritious meal for your child. Note that small portions minimize waste and a variety in their meal helps their appetites. The older children enjoy packing their own lunches. To foster independence, please make lunch boxes manageable for your child and easy to open. First and last names should be clearly marked on all lunch boxes and accessories. Please include a spoon or fork and napkin if needed. A drink must be provided in the lunch box (do not freeze drinks). Do not send toys, glass containers or cans of any kind. Lids on canned fruits etc. are extremely dangerous. Due to the nature of our lunch period, we are unable to refrigerate or warm-up lunches. Please use ice packs to cool food, and a thermos to keep food warm. **WCMS IS NOT A PEANUT FREE SCHOOL!** Due to allergies, please remind your child not to share their lunch with any other child. Children with allergies will sit in a designated area to avoid exposure to "unsafe food".

Fridays are optional "Pizza Days". Children will be served fresh, cheese pizza, a drink and dessert. The \$12 payment for "Pizza Day" must be included with the tuition made at the beginning of each month for each child participating. Children do not need to bring their lunchbox if participating in "Pizza Day" but are encouraged to bring a bottle/thermos of water.

The school will provide a variety of nutritious morning and afternoon snacks daily. The snack menu will remain the same each week. The school serves morning snacks for students enrolled in a Half, Full, or Extended Day Program and afternoon snacks for students enrolled in an Extended Day Program. 100% fruit juice is available during all snack times.

**\*Please see Pandemic Handbook for updated policy regarding 'Food'.\***

## **VII. Handwashing – Policy No. 3.7**

Children are instructed to wash their hands numerous times throughout the day including but not limited to before and after food preparation, handling, or serving food; before and after eating food; after toileting or changing diapers/pull ups; after blowing or wiping noses; after touching an animal, or animal feed, as well as upon arriving in the classroom. Children will wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

**\*Please see Pandemic Handbook for updated policy regarding 'Handwashing'.\***

## **VIII. Illnesses and Medication – Policy No. 3.8**

Parents are requested to notify the school when a child is going to be absent due to an illness. Communicable diseases must be reported to the school immediately.

If your child exhibits any of the following conditions in the past 24 hours, your child must be kept home. Also, children will be sent home if they exhibit any signs of the following:

- Severe coughing
- Excessive yellow/ green mucus discharge from the nose
- Difficulty breathing
- Stiff neck or headache
- Diarrhea/Vomiting
- Fever (100.4° or above)
- Pink eye
- Untreated skin patches/rashes
- Lice

Children exhibiting any of the above symptoms will be removed from the classroom immediately to avoid spreading illness to the other children and employees. The child will remain in the care of a staff member in the front office until a parent or emergency contact arrives to pick-up the child. Children must be picked up within 1 hour of contact. Children may not return to school for a minimum of 1 full business day contingent upon the child being symptom free without medication for at least 24 hours.

Parents are asked to use extreme caution when returning their child to school. A child with a fever (100.0° or above) must be fever-free for a minimum of 24 hours without medication. Children diagnosed with Strep Throat or other contagious illnesses must be on antibiotics for a minimum of 48 hours before returning. Severe coughing and runny noses that are thick with mucus are conditions that require at-home care.

If parents request that medication or over the counter products (including topical ointments such as sunscreen lotion and topical insect repellents) be stored and administered to the child at school, all prescription medication and over the counter products are required to have a physician's prescription label on the medication or over the counter product. All medication and over the counter products should be replaced after contents are depleted or upon expiration. Parents must also complete an "Authorization to Administer Medication" form. All medication or over the counter products should be in its original bottle and packaging with the prescription label. WCMS teachers are **NOT** authorized to administer any medication to any child and are only permitted to administer over the counter products such as sunscreen lotion and topical ointment. The only person(s) authorized are the Director and Assistant Director. All medications will be stored in the office. We strongly recommend that you request from your child's physician a medication that can be administered at home in the morning or evening.

Do not send any medication in your child's lunch box or backpack. All medicine must be handed to the Director. In the event that any side effects are noticed from any doctor-prescribed medications, parents will be notified immediately.

Parents will be notified immediately in the event their child becomes ill while at school. In extreme cases, the child will be taken to the nearest hospital. **All medical expenses will be the responsibility of the parent.** It is very important that you keep the emergency contact information in the office up to date at all times. This information should include but not limited to, current home addresses, cell and business telephone numbers, and emergency contact.

In the wake of the Coronavirus Pandemic, WCMS will follow CDC guidelines in regards to any persons experiencing Coronavirus symptoms, tested positive for Coronavirus, been in contact with any person with Coronavirus, traveled outside of the state in the past 14 days of attending school, isolation at home, and returning to school after being home. Children will be closely monitored throughout the day for symptoms of the Coronavirus. Please see the Pandemic Handbook for more information as we have updated our Illness policy.

### **IX. Nap Time – Policy No. 3.9**

Childcare licensing requires young children who stay in school during the afternoon to have a nap period. Children at WCMS will nap until age 4. Rest time will take place from 12:00-2:00 p.m. while the lights are dimmed and soft classical music is played. Mats are provided by the school and parents need to send a sheet (standard crib size) and a small blanket for their child. All bedding articles should be brought the first day of the week the child attends school and will be returned the last day of the week the child attends school. Please clearly label all bedding with the child's first and last name. Please do not bring large backpacks, stuffed animals, pillows, or any other sleep aids as they are strictly prohibited.

### **X. Outdoor Activities – Policy No. 3.10**

A Florida state requirement is that all children at school are provided with outside play/physical activities each school day unless rain, extreme heat, or cold temperatures are a prohibiting factor. Parents should be aware of this fact and provide their children with appropriate shoes, seasonal clothing and outerwear. Please ensure that outerwear clothing is easy for your child to manage. The amount of outdoor playtime will be based on the discretion of the Director and weather conditions. Children will be provided with activities to engage in while outside. The school cannot accommodate sick children who cannot go outdoors with his/her class, as this would take a staff member away from their outdoor supervisory activities. It is recommended that if a child is too sick to go outside for a short period of time during the day, the child should not attend school that day.

### **XI. Pandemic – Policy No. 3.11**

In the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic, WCMS has re-evaluated how we operate as a child care center. For this reason, we have composed a Pandemic Handbook implementing new policies and procedures. Each parent will be given a copy of the Pandemic Handbook and should read through the policies and procedures that we have put into place to help keep everyone healthy and safe. The handbook serves as a guide for parents during the Coronavirus pandemic. The handbook will be adjusted based on updated information on the Coronavirus pandemic and as needed with state and federal guidelines.

The policies and procedures listed in the Pandemic Handbook were created with guidance with the Governor, Florida Department of Health (FDH), Florida Department of Children and Families (FLDCF), and The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in order to keep children, families and staff safe and healthy. Due to mandates and licensing requirements, as well as best practices, the policies and procedures listed below are mandatory for all children, staff, and families.

WCMS is committed to taking all precautions toward keeping children, staff, and families safe and healthy as well as to follow all rules, regulations, and recommendations of the local, state and federal government. Following the policies and procedures in the Pandemic Handbook is mandatory for continued enrollment at WCMS.

### **XII. Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect – Policy No. 3.12**

According to Florida Statutes, teacher's frequent contact with children requires them to be mandated reporters for child abuse and neglect. The Wesley Chapel Montessori School employees have a legal responsibility to report child abuse and neglect. Any instances where there is reasonable cause for an employee to believe that child abuse, neglect or exploitation may have occurred must be reported to The Department of Children and Families, Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services Agency, or local Police.

### **XIII. Safety and Security – Policy No. 3.13**

The school takes precautionary measures to protect the health and safety of our children. The safety of the children is our first concern. Staff members are required to take a course on Child CPR, First Aid, and emergency procedures. A first aid kit is available in all classrooms and outside patio in case of minor injuries.

Our playground equipment meets the highest safety standards for quality and design. The front doors of the school are electronically locked at all times. Entry cannot be obtained without ringing the doorbell. All other entry points at the back and sides of the building are secured by a locked 6 foot fence. If an unknown person arrives at the front doors, the Director or other staff member will ask for proper identification.

All children will be signed in during drop off and signed out during pick up daily. The teachers in class are also responsible for taking attendance of the children in their care at all times.

The safety of the children is the first priority of our school. Each employee, volunteer and substitute of the WCMS must ensure every child remains safe at all times (in the classrooms, in the bathrooms, and on the playground). Every employee is responsible for immediately reporting any unsafe conditions or potential hazards to the Director.

Children must be 100% supervised and policed to regulate behavior. **No child may be left unattended. Children may not be allowed to behave in an unsafe manner. Every employee of WCMS is responsible to immediately intervene in a child's actions if they pose a danger to themselves or to others.**