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# Mission

The mission of Maine Mountain Children's House is to provide a supportive and loving Montessori educational experience for young children which fosters respect and responsibility to self, others, and the earth.

## School Incorporation

Maine Mountain Children's House (MMCH) is a non-profit corporation 501(c)3, licensed by the State of Maine as a Child Care Facility.

## Our Programs

MMCH provides a Montessori Toddler Program for children ages 18 to 36 months, a Montessori Primary Program for children 3 to 6 years of age, and a Montessori afternoon Kindergarten Program for enrolled children who turn 5 after October 15th. MMCH also offers Before and After School Care for enrolled MMCH students as well as siblings and alumni students up to age 8.

Maine Mountain Children's House is an enriched, safe, and loving learning environment supported by clear and consistent boundaries. This allows the child to freely explore and discover with joy.

### Toddler

The Montessori toddler classroom follows Dr. Maria Montessori's teaching philosophy, and is lead by a certified Infant/Toddler Montessori teacher. The toddler program aims to nurture the young child's budding independence while maintaining respect to one's self, others, and the environment. In our toddler room, children are provided a safe, warm, and carefully prepared space to explore and discover their new sense of self and the environment that surrounds them.

## **Primary**

Our Primary program is also based on Dr. Maria Montessori's careful observations of young children and their natural tendencies during certain phases of development and is led by certified Primary Montessori teachers. The Montessori philosophy emphasizes following the child and respecting each child's individual needs in a carefully prepared environment. The teachers guide each child in their learning and development in a multi age classroom through observation and the presentation of lessons at critical moments for each child. The Primary classroom is where the children become active, independent, and self-directed learners. The younger students learn from the older students, and the older students teach the younger children. The program goal is to facilitate the natural development of the whole child.

## **Extended Day/Kindergarten**

While the other children are napping, our older students participate in the "Extended Day" portion of our program. This starts with "Tea Time" where the children gather together to have tea, eat a snack, and hear a story. From there, the Kindergarten students break off to do small-group work with the Kindergarten teacher, and the rest of the children work in the classroom with the Primary Assistant Teacher.

The mission of the MMCH Kindergarten program is designed to...

- ❖ Support the child's natural shift to a "group" mentality as he/she starts to transition to the next plane of development and prepare for new school environments
- ❖ Support the child's inner drive to delve more deeply into skills and topics that have been introduced in the Primary classroom through the Montessori materials
- ❖ Support the child's need to clarify his/her sense of self, his/her place within the school, and eventually his/her place in our world both geographically, and socially.

The Kindergarten teacher will communicate with Kindergarten parents regarding the curriculum and daily schedules in the beginning of the school year as this varies from year to year. From there, the Kindergarten teacher will continue to communicate about progress, thoughts, challenges, etc.

## **Before and After School Care**

Before and After School Care serves enrolled students in our Toddler, Primary and Kindergarten programs, as well as alumni students, and siblings of our enrolled students up to age 8. We

provide support from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. M-Th, and 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. on Fridays (no after - care on Fridays), for children in need of care beyond school hours. Much of this time is outdoors and unstructured to allow for free play and exploration. Children ages 18 months to 8 years old have the opportunity to work and play together in a safe and nurturing environment. Additional activities and opportunities for enrichment are offered throughout the school year, including art, cooking, yoga, and more. Families are encouraged to sign up for Before and After Care ahead of time so that we can prepare accordingly. However, Before and After Care is a flexible service we offer our families, so occasional or varied use of the program is also acceptable, and parents are asked to give as much notice as possible so the staff may prepare your child for the change in their schedule.

# The Prepared Environment

## **Our Classroom:**

MMCH serves children ages 18 to 36 months in our Toddler Program, and children ages 3 to 6 years of age in our Primary and Kindergarten Programs. The school is referred to as the “children’s house” because it is typically in a house-like setting where children can participate in caring for their environment as they see their caregivers do at home. Oftentimes, it is also the first environment in which a child may spend his/her days outside of their home, so the close connection between the two environments is designed to ease the transition.

All lessons are prepared ahead of time by the certified Montessori teachers after carefully observing and then creating work that suits each child’s developmental needs. Maine Mountain Children’s House has a full set of Montessori materials for our students, in addition to home-made materials the teachers have made through the years. Both the Montessori and the home-made materials are referred to as “lessons”. Lessons are placed on low, open shelves and children may choose to use them when inspired. The multi-age classroom allows children to work at their own pace and transition from observer to leader amongst their peers throughout their time at this school.

## **Our Teachers:**

Teachers at MMCH are expected to treat each child as an individual and abide by the school guidelines: be safe, be kind, be gentle, and to model the behavior we wish to see at all times. Our teachers have experience in early childhood and Montessori education.

All full time teachers are required to continue their education annually to meet state requirements of a minimum of 30 hours of classroom training and observation. Part time teachers are required a minimum of 18 hours of classroom training and observation. We recognize that teachers need to further develop and fine-tune their teaching strategies, which facilitate and support the child's growth and development. Because of this, MMCH is closed for two days during the year to allow time for teachers to complete part of their state requirements. Additional training is conducted on early release days, as well as nights or weekends.

MMCH lead teachers are educated in the Montessori philosophy and methodology significant to the age level they are teaching and have received their Montessori teaching certificates either through American Montessori Society or North American Montessori Center. MMCH lead teachers are required to know and learn how to use the diverse set of Montessori materials, activities, and experiences which are designed to foster physical, intellectual, creative, and social-emotional development. Teachers have the ability and dedication to put key concepts into practice in the classroom. For staff who are certified and involved in the American Montessori Society or are actively seeking an American Montessori Society certification, training includes 200 hours in the classroom, 400 hours of practicum, and a minimum of 120 hours of classroom teaching above and beyond the requirements of an undergraduate or graduate degree.

MMCH offers internship and practicum opportunities to University of Maine Farmington students pursuing degrees in early childhood education. The students work under the direction of the lead teacher(s).

## **Our Students**

At MMCH we treat our students with love and respect. We lay basic ground rules in the beginning of the school year based on the message of Be Safe, Be Kind, and Be Gentle. These ground rules are for all people in the classroom, and are practiced each day until they have been internalized.

### **Primary Ground Rules:**

- ❖ We use walking feet and quiet voices indoors and in our outdoor classroom.
- ❖ White and blue rugs are work rugs, we always walk around them, never on them, and we roll them up when we put them away.
- ❖ We sit on chairs, stools, or on the floor, not on tables or shelves.
- ❖ A child is free to work with any material (lesson) if he or she treats it with respect and does not harm himself or others with the material.
- ❖ After working with a lesson, the child is expected to return it back to its proper place on the shelf, ready for the next child to use.
- ❖ The classroom has a designated place for everything that will be used by the children.

- ❖ Materials are placed in sequence on the shelves (top to bottom, left to right).
- ❖ Materials are carried with two hands; and only one item or tray may be carried at a time.
- ❖ When a child spills something, he or she cleans it up with the appropriate materials provided for that purpose. Adults clean up broken glass.
- ❖ No child may touch or otherwise interfere with another's work without permission from the child.
- ❖ A child may always observe another child at work as long as they do not disrupt the child working.

### **Toddler Ground Rules:**

- ❖ We walk in our school.
- ❖ We sit while we are eating and drinking.
- ❖ Lessons stay together (not taking one piece of one lesson and another piece from another lesson and using them together). Lesson materials should stay together so they are complete when a child comes to take a lesson off the shelf.
- ❖ We wear indoor shoes in our classroom, and outdoor shoes while outdoors.
- ❖ We are SAFE, KIND, and GENTLE.

### **Praise and Acknowledgement**

In Montessori classrooms, we work to have the children find intrinsic motivation rather than finding motivation from treats or rewards or even the praise or acceptance of the adults. Sometimes this is harder to achieve than one may think as we consider the ways we interact with our children. One impactful but simple way we can encourage intrinsic motivation is to move towards Descriptive Praise rather than Evaluative Praise. For example, instead of saying “good job” or “I like that” you could...

- ❖ Describe what you see the child is doing... “I see...” (you are working hard, you are concentrating, you're really enjoying yourself)
- ❖ Describe their work... “Your work is...” (colorful, detailed, dynamic, creative)

### **Positive Discipline and Guidance**

Discipline and guidance is clear and consistent in a Montessori classroom, and based on an understanding of the “individual needs and development of a child”. The goal of discipline is to maximize the growth and development of each child, and to protect the group and individuals within it.

There are three classroom rules: **BE SAFE, BE KIND, BE GENTLE**-these apply in all settings, in and out of the classroom/school. These words pertain to what we do and what we say and goes for all students and adults.



When a child should be disciplined, positive language (other than “don’t” or “please don’t”) and actions must be used and the following steps will be taken:

- ❖ The child will be reminded of the ground rules of the classroom and the purpose for following them.
- ❖ The child shall be redirected to an appropriate activity.
- ❖ If the behavior continues, the child shall be asked to please stop or correct the misbehavior immediately. We may need to remove the learning materials from the child.
- ❖ In cases of repeated occurrences of misbehavior, the child will be asked to leave the group (yet stay with a teacher) for a period of quiet time. The child will be asked to return when he/she is ready to do so.

The overriding message we convey is to treat others as you would like to be treated and to not let your good time get in the way of someone else’s good time. This goes for students, parents, teachers, and the way we treat all of the living things in our environment - our pets, our plants, and our surrounding flora and fauna.

### **MMCH Disciplinary Policy:**

A child will be removed from the classroom if he/she poses a potential danger to himself/herself and to other students and teachers, an adult will always accompany them.

- ❖ If a child is having continued behavior problems and intervention with appropriate discipline teaching methods have failed, a meeting will be arranged with the child’s parent/guardian immediately.
- ❖ The director will arrange for the teachers involved to develop a Behavior Action Plan to be carried out by all parties. Outside intervention sources may be identified and contacted.
  - The goal of all Behavior Action Plans are to find harmony between the needs of the child and the needs of the group (students and staff). If the needs of the child overwhelm the needs of the group, the child may need to be unenrolled from the program for a period of time or indefinitely.
- ❖ There will be a time duration that is given to the child to continue in the program to ensure the child’s success. We do not expect behaviors to change overnight.
- ❖ At the end of the predetermined timeline for the Behavior Action Plan, the parents, teachers, and potential outside resources will reconvene to evaluate the success of the plan. From there, a decision will be made regarding continued enrollment, which will ultimately be made by MMCH.

# **Daily Routines and Procedures**

### **Primary Daily Schedule:**

7:30 Open for Childcare (please give advance notice)

8:15 - 8:30 Arrival of Students if no childcare is needed



7:30 - 9:00 - Morning Check In - How are you feeling today? (Zones of Regulation)  
9:00 Morning Work Period  
10:15 Circle  
10:30 - 11:30 Outside Time  
11:30 Lunch  
12:15 Transition to Nap (for specified children)  
12:15 - 1:00 Quiet Work Time (“One Friend Work Time”)  
1:00 Tea Time  
1:30 - 2:30 Extended Day/Kindergarten  
2:00 Wake up Nappers  
2:30 Closing Circle  
3:00 Dismissal  
3:00-5:00 After School Care (please give advance notice) \*Monday - Thursday

### **Toddler Daily Schedule:**

7:30 Open for childcare (please give advance notice)  
8:30 Arrival of students if no childcare is needed  
8:30 Morning Work Period  
9:45 Circle and Diapering/Toileting  
10:00 Outside Play Time  
11:00 Lunch  
11:45 Transition to Nap  
12:00-2:00 Nap Time  
2:00 Group Snack/Diapering/Toileting  
3:00 Dismissal  
3:00 - 5:00 After School Care (please give advance notice)

## **Student Drop Off and Pick Up Policies and Procedures**

- ❖ All parents are asked to use the parking area on the Curve street side of our property, entering by the south side of our play area next to the small MMCH sign.
- ❖ Parents and guardians must be with children at all times in the parking lot - no child may go into the parking lot without an adult.
- ❖ All drop offs and pick ups **MUST** take place at the Curve Street gate - only staff members are permitted to use the Salem Road gate.
- ❖ If we are indoors during drop off or pick up times, **please call or text the school phone. Our doors are locked from 9:00 to 3:00.**

### **Drop Off:**

**Please Note:** Drop offs should occur between 7:30 and 8:15 if childcare is needed. Otherwise, all children should arrive at MMCH between 8:15 and 8:30 to begin their school day. If arriving later than 8:30, please let us know. **If we are indoors, you may call or text the school phone and a staff member will come out to greet you and your child because our doors are locked.**

1. When the child arrives at school, a teacher will greet them at the entrance of the school or the front gate (curve street) if we are outside.
2. The parent/guardian must sign the child in and initial on the sign-in sheet.
3. At this time, the parent/guardian can relay any pertinent information about the day - i.e. when the child is going to be picked up that day, who may be picking up, how the child slept, whether they had breakfast, etc. This can also be noted in the “comment” section of the sign-in sheet by the teacher or the parent.
4. The parent/guardian of Primary Students is asked to say goodbye to their child at the gate or at the front door, rather than joining their child as they settle in. This helps for a smoother transition from home to school. The first week of school we'll be a little more flexible with parents coming into the building as your child gets settled into their new routine.
  - ❖ Toddler Parents are permitted to enter the school and go to the Toddler door to drop off their child and sign in for the day.
5. The teacher will then help the child put away their belongings. If indoors, the child will then wash their hands and start the school day. If outdoors, the child will play outside until the teachers have allowed them to transition indoors for the morning work period.

### **Pick Up:**

**Please Note:** Students and teachers should be outside after 3:00 each day to be picked up or to attend After Care. If you are coming at a time that is before 3:00, or if the children are indoors due to inclement weather, please call the school phone and your child will be escorted outside to you by a teacher. **All children must be picked up by 5:00 Monday - Thursday and by 3:00 on Fridays.**

1. When arriving to pick up your child at MMCH, please stop at the Curve Street Gate where a teacher will greet you. Parents/caregivers are encouraged to wait by the gate for their child rather than entering the yard or school, unless entering for a specific reason (i.e. using the bathroom, looking for a lost item, etc.).

- ❖ If you are new to MMCH, or an alternative driver is picking your child up, make sure to have identification ready. If a person arrives to pick up a child and they are not the parent/guardian, or an approved alternative driver, the child **will not** be permitted to leave the MMCH grounds until a parent has been contacted and written approval has been granted.
    - **Please note:** All new MMCH staff will check ID's of all persons picking up in the afternoon until they become familiar with the MMCH families and caregivers. Please treat our staff with respect and understanding if they ask for proof of identification as this is meant to keep your child safe while in our care.
  - ❖ Again, if we are indoors, please call or text the MMCH school phone to let us know you've arrived.
2. A teacher will locate your child and help them gather their belongings. If there are missing items let us know and we will help find them, or they will be placed in your child's cubby for the next day of school.
  3. A teacher will sign your child out to indicate the transfer of responsibility from MMCH to the parent/guardian or alternative driver. **Do not ever leave the school with your child without connecting with a teacher first.**
    - ❖ If you arrive and your child continues to stay and play at MMCH, they are still our responsibility and your pick up time will reflect the actual time the child was released into your care.

## School Closure Policy

If MSAD58 is closed, delayed, or closes early due to inclement weather or a safety-related event, MMCH will follow suit unless you hear otherwise from MMCH. MMCH reserves the right to return to school and stray from the district policy should the immediate threat be resolved and MMCH decides that the district's decision does not directly impact the majority of MMCH students, staff, and families.

### Communication:

MMCH will reach out to families directly through email and will post on our facebook page (Facebook: <https://m.facebook.com/mainemountainchildrenshouse2/>) if there is a delay or cancellation.

If there is an early dismissal, MMCH will also contact families via text message, in addition to email and posting on our facebook page.

### **MSAD58 Public Closure and Delay Postings:**

- TV Stations/Websites  
WLBZ-2, WABI-TV-5, WCSH-6, WMTW-8, and WGME-13
- Radio and online newspapers  
WKTJ and Daily Bulldog

### **If there is a delay for MSAD58...**

- MMCH will not provide Before Care that day. MMCH will open as follows:  
1 hr delay -- MMCH opens at 8:30 a.m.  
2 hr delay -- MMCH opens at 9:30 a.m.

### **If there is an early dismissal for MSAD58 due to hazardous weather conditions...**

- MMCH students must be picked up between 12:30 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. unless otherwise stated.

### **If MSAD58 or KES cancels afternoon activities due to unsafe or hazardous weather conditions...**

- MMCH will cancel After Care that day as well and students must be picked up by 3:00 p.m.

Any specific questions or concerns about school closure, delay, or early dismissal should be brought to Bethany, our Director.

- Email: [director@mainemountainchildrenshouse.org](mailto:director@mainemountainchildrenshouse.org)
- MMCH School Phone (inside of school hours): 207 491 2596
- Director Cell Phone (outside of school hours): 207 604 4643

## **Transportation:**

Transportation is the responsibility of the parents and caregivers. If someone other than a regular driver, that is not on the Alternate Driver list is to transport your child, a written note must be sent to school. A driver's license will be required to confirm identity. Maine State law is to provide a car seat for all children under the age of 8. No child will leave school without a safety seat.

## **Parking:**

All dropping off and picking up of children should be done using the Curve St. parking lot. Drivers enter using the side marked "entrance" and drive in a counter-clockwise direction.

Please pull straight into parking spots outlined by the boulders on the left side of the driveway when parking. If additional parking is needed, please park along the road on Curve St. or wait for an available parking spot. Please do not park along the cement wall or in front of the playground gate.

Always drive slowly and with care in the parking lot.

**ALL CHILDREN MUST BE WITH AN ADULT WHILE IN THE  
PARKING AREA — NO EXCEPTIONS.**

## **Lunch:**

**During the 2024-2025 school year, Maine Mountain Children’s House will be a nut-free school. All peanuts and tree nuts will no longer be allowed for snacks or lunches due to a severe nut allergy in our student population.**

Food is such an important part of our lives as human beings. We feel that it is crucial to teach children about healthy food habits while they are young. Because of this, we ask that you are thoughtful with the lunch and snack choices you provide for your child. We support the national 5210 program (5 fruits and veggies, 2 hours of outside play time, 1 hour or less of screen time, and 0 sugary drinks each day), so we ask that you support this message with your children as well. Lunches should contain parts of each food group and should contain very little sugar. We even encourage children to look for a “rainbow” in their lunches each day to ensure lots of vitamins and minerals in their food choices. If you feel comfortable, involve your child in the process of choosing and preparing their lunches each day. This will be a helpful process for them as they create their own lunches when they are older.

## **Snack:**

Preparing and eating snack foods at MMCH is an opportunity for children to try new foods and experience the culture of other families in our community. Each week a different family will be asked to provide snack foods for the morning snack period for the Primary classroom. MMCH will provide a schedule for each family’s designated snack week for the school year starting the 2nd week of school. This schedule also includes a list of snack ideas and potential ingredients. Here are some additional details about snacks at MMCH;

- ❖ Snacks should be healthy and well rounded - please no sweets (cookies, candy, cake, etc.) and mostly consist of whole foods.
- ❖ MMCH will provide a special basket and guidelines for families the week before their designated snack week.
- ❖ We typically have 15-20 students each morning in the Primary classroom. Toddler families will be added to the snack schedule as they transition into the Primary classroom.

- ❖ Students will have the opportunity to prepare snacks with a teacher each morning. This offers a feeling of pride and independence to the child when they are able to share and provide for others in this way.

**Please note:** If your child stays for childcare in the afternoons, please send additional snacks (we recommended fruit and vegetables). These can be kept in your child's backpack or we can store them at MMCH.

## **School Field Trips:**

MMCH will generally only travel to locations within walking distance for our field trips this year. This may include nature walks, trips to the playground, Webster Library, and other spaces within the Kingfield community. If we are traveling to another destination, parents will be notified and can choose to either volunteer to attend, have their child ride with another parent, or not have their child participate in the excursion. Ample notice will be given to parents ahead of time.

## **Birthdays:**

Birthday celebrations are very important occasions in Montessori classrooms. We talk about the journey the child has taken as they've traveled around the sun, including what foods they have tried, which activities they enjoy, etc. On your child's birthday, we like to invite family members to participate in the celebration. We encourage your child to bring in pictures of themselves as they are growing up as well as a special snack to enjoy at circle time during the celebration. Typically, we read the story, On the Day You Were Born, by Debra Frasier, but your child is welcome to bring in a story from home if they so choose. Typically, birthday celebrations occur in the afternoon around 2:30 during closing circle. Please check with your classroom teachers to work out specifics.

Oftentimes, a family may choose to provide a gift for their child to present to the school. This may be a book, puzzle or some other classroom material. By allowing your child to give on their birthday, you are reminding them of the pleasures of sharing with others. Please check in with teachers or the director to see if there are specific needs of the school at that time in terms of a gift.

## **Toileting/Potty Training:**

Toileting or “potty training” typically begins during the toddler years - approximately 18 - 30 months depending on the child (all children learn to use a toilet at a different rate). If your child attends our Toddler room, he/she will be observed for signs of “readiness” and may begin the potty training process while at MMCH. Signs of readiness may include, but are not limited to, an interest in using the potty/toilet, signs of independence with dressing and undressing, and seeking personal space for bowel movements. Potty training should be discussed with the lead toddler teacher so the parents and the teacher may work together to support this huge developmental milestone for your child. Children may not transition to the primary room until independently using the toilet.

If your child is enrolled in our Primary or Kindergarten program, your child **MUST** be able to use the toilet, wipe oneself, dress/undress, and use the sink to wash his/her hands independently. Though occasional accidents are okay, frequent accidents are a sign that the child is not ready to independently use the toilet. If your child needs consistent prompting to use the toilet, he/she should not be considered “potty trained.” (Please note: if your child is unable to independently use the toilet as described above due to a diagnosed delay or handicap, please communicate with the director of MMCH to discuss alternative ways we can support your child).

## **Rest Period:**

All children in the toddler program will rest from approximately 12:00-2:00. There is also a scheduled rest period for all-day children in our primary program from 12:30-2:00. Generally, all of our three year old students will start the year off in the nap room each afternoon - whether they actually sleep or just have some quiet rest time. If you would like us to allow your child to continue to sleep after the designated nap time, please let us know.

We ask that each child who is napping bring in their own mat, small blanket, and a small pillow and some sort of pouch to store them in (i.e. a sleeping bag stuff-sack or a pillow case). Children may also bring a small stuffed animal or “lovey” to rest with. During the rest of the day, these items will be stored on your child’s nap cot or cubby. Bedding will be washed at the end of each week at MMCH.

## **Extended Day**

### **Tea Time:**

All children who do not nap at school, or who participate in the Kindergarten program, will participate in Tea Time as well. During this time, children listen to a story and drink tea (or water) and have a small snack that is prepared and served by the teacher. MMCH provides all of this for your child. If your child does not want to participate in Tea Time, they may quietly look



at a book or choose an independent lesson in the classroom until the other children have been dismissed from the table for Journaling.

### **Kindergarten:**

Enrolled children who turn 5 before October 15th, 2023 are part of our Kindergarten Program here at MMCH. This child is typically in their 2nd or 3rd year with MMCH and are considered natural leaders within the classroom. Specific plans for the Kindergarten Program may vary year-to-year, but the academic portion of the program will remain consistent with the Primary Montessori Curriculum designed for children ages 3 to 6 years old. When possible, the kindergarten teacher will work with corresponding public school teachers to coordinate plans and activities, and will use the Maine Early Learning Standards alongside their Montessori curriculum goals to ensure readiness for the child's next steps in education.

### **Clothing and Footwear:**

Children and teachers wear slippers when they are inside during the school day. We ask that you provide slippers that stay on your children's feet and have leather or rubber bottoms. We recommend moccasin- style Acorn slippers or even Crocs. Please refrain from providing shoes with high-heels or plastic bottoms, or slippers with characters on them for they can be cumbersome or even distracting.

Life at MMCH can be messy due to paint, using water or playing outside. Keep this in mind when choosing what your child wears each day. If, for example, your child's Grandmother made a beautiful sweater and would be heartbroken if it got paint on it or tore, please don't send your child to school in it! In addition, children may have accidents and need to change their pants and underwear. Be mindful of the seasons, and please change out clothing periodically to match the temperatures. Please provide two seasonally appropriate changes of clothing for your child to keep at school in their bathroom box, including socks and underwear.

**Please be sure to label ALL personal belongings before bringing them to school as other children often have similar items and this will help with confusion.**

### **Toys and Personal Belongings:**

We ask that toys and personal items are not brought to MMCH, unless your child is in the habit of taking a nap at school, and those items will be kept and stored at MMCH.

### **World Holidays/Celebrations:**

Holidays and celebrations can be a wonderful way for children to learn about different cultures around the world. Montessori's approach to holidays is to honor and respect the celebrations of all cultures but to keep holiday celebrations to a minimum within the classroom. While it is appropriate to study religious and cultural events from a historical and cultural perspective, we do recognize that holidays and celebrations can be a challenge for young children. All the distractions, abstract concepts, and pressures can leave a child out of sorts. At MMCH, we especially like to focus on the commonalities between world celebrations, specifically "light." Our teachers will present holidays and celebrations through this lens, as it is a tangible concept that young children can begin to grasp.

## **Administrative & Financial Policies**

### **Enrollment:**

Children ages 18 months to 5 years may be considered for enrollment in our program. Admission shall be decided after a consultation between lead teachers and the director of the school. The Re-Enrollment period begins around April 1st each year, and the Open Enrollment period begins around May 1st each year. Families may enroll mid-year after connecting with the director of MMCH and as long as space and staffing allows.

### **Re-Enrollment:**

Re-Enrollment begins on April 1st of each year. Returning students are always given first priority as long as they enroll during the Re-Enrollment period (April 1st to May 1st). If a family cannot confirm enrollment during this time, please speak with the director of the school to consider other arrangements.

**All enrolling families must turn in signed Enrollment contracts and the application fee for a space to be reserved for your child.**

### **Registration and Tuition:**

Each family is responsible for paying the full amount of tuition at the beginning of each month (if this option was chosen on registration form). There will be a \$15 late fee for each payment made after the 10th of each month, so please be mindful of paying on time. If tuition has not been paid for more than a month, we may ask that you do not return to the program until that payment has been made. If you are having trouble making tuition payments, please make

arrangements to speak with the director of the school to discuss your options. Being asked to leave the program should be a last resort.

### **Annual Fees:**

MMCH requires an application fee of \$50, and a materials fee of \$50, which does not guarantee your child's placement in a program. If we are unable to enroll your child, for whatever reason, only the material fee will be returned to you. If your child has started the program and you decide to withdraw them or they are asked to leave for whatever reason, the application and material fee will be forfeited to MMCH.

### **Drop-In Days:**

If you choose to take a vacation during the school year, you are still obligated to pay for the time that has been reserved for your child. There is no make up for sick or missed days during the school year. If you would like to add an additional day during the week for your child to come to school, above and beyond their reserved days, then this is referred to as a "drop-in." A 1/2 day drop-in (8:30-12:15) is \$40 and a full drop-in (8:30-3:00) is \$65.

### **Schedule of Tuition Installments/Childcare Payments:**

**August 1:** September Tuition payment(1 of 10), 1 month tuition deposit (10 of 10) + material fee(s)

**September 1:** October tuition payment (2 of 10) + Summer childcare

**October 1:** November tuition payment (3 of 10)+ September childcare

**November 1:** December tuition payment (4 of 10) + October childcare

**December 1:** January tuition payment (5 of 10)+ November childcare

**January 1:** February tuition payment (6 of 10) + December childcare

**February 1:** March tuition payment (7 of 10) + January childcare

**March 1:** April tuition payment (8 of 10) + February childcare

**April 1:** May tuition payment (9 of 10) + March childcare

**May 1:** June tuition payment - covered by deposit made in August (10 of 10) + April childcare

**June 1:** Summer Program Payment Due + May childcare

**July 1:** June childcare

### **One Month's Deposit:**

A security deposit of one month's tuition is due at the time of your first tuition payment with MMCH if you choose to pay in monthly installments. This security deposit is applied to your last month's tuition payment at the end of the year at MMCH. If you pay in full at the beginning of the school year, you are exempt from paying a security deposit.

If you choose to withdraw any time after September 1st, this deposit will be forfeited to MMCH to help protect the financial integrity of the school. For more information, please read the "withdrawal" portion of the handbook below.

## **Tuition and Child Care Financial Assistance:**

Maine Mountain Children’s House is proud to offer high-quality childcare and early education based on the principles of Maria Montessori. MMCH is committed to making our programs as accessible to the families in our community as possible through our Tuition Scholarship Fund and the Child Care Subsidy Program.

### **Tuition Scholarship Fund**

MMCH’s Tuition Scholarship Fund was established in 2018 through a donation from an anonymous donor. From there, MMCH has held an annual fundraiser, Maine Mountain Harvest Festival, to replenish and build more funds each year. Financial support is dispersed in various amounts based on the needs of the individual family and available funds. Families may contact our Director ([director@mainemountainchildrenshouse.org](mailto:director@mainemountainchildrenshouse.org)) for more information or to request tuition scholarship support.

### **Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP)**

The Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP) provides State-sponsored funds paid directly to child care programs that can be used to help families pay for tuition and child care costs. MMCH is enrolled in CCSP as a licensed Child Care Center (license number 494779). To learn more about the Child Care Subsidy Program visit

[www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/support-for-families/child-care/paying-for-child-care](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/support-for-families/child-care/paying-for-child-care).

To view the income eligibility requirements, visit

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MEHHS/bulletins/317fe5b>.

## **In the Event of an Extended Closure:**

An “extended closure” is when our on-site classrooms have to be closed for more than 2 (two) consecutive weeks due to the COVID-19 pandemic, or other potential threats. In the event of an extended closure, the school will switch to a remote learning plan.

If a family decides to “unenroll” due to an extended closure, the tuition deposit is treated in the same manner as our general tuition policy and will be forfeited to MMCH to help protect the financial integrity of our school so it may remain an educational resource to our community.

## **Withdrawal:**

Parents may withdraw their child from the program at any time, however, a four-week written notice is required. Parents will still be responsible for the current month's tuition, but any prepaid tuition will be assessed and returned to the family. If a parent fails to give a four-week notice, they will be responsible for the following month's tuition as well. If withdrawal occurs prior to September 1st, the security deposit and all paid tuition will be returned to the family. If withdrawal occurs after September 1st, the security deposit will be forfeited to the school. If you pre-pay in full, prepaid tuition for upcoming months will be returned less the security deposit amount of one month's tuition. The retention of security deposits helps to alleviate the financial burden put on the school, as overhead expenses do not change with the withdrawal of your child.

## **Dismissal of Students Policy:**

Maine Mountain Children's House has the right to dismiss a student from any of our programs at any time at our own discretion. Reasons for dismissal may include, but are not limited to; lack of basic independent skills, not fully potty trained in accordance with our school policy, consistent failure to pay tuition/childcare balances, consistent behavioral challenges that are outside of our teacher resources, or irreconcilable differences in philosophy or methodology as agreed upon by the Director and Board of Directors of MMCH. Please see the **MMCH Disciplinary Policy** listed above for more details.

## **Non-Discriminatory Statement:**

MMCH is a nonsectarian Montessori school that does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, creed, religion, national origin, cultural heritage, age, sex, marital status, or sexual orientation in the administration of either its admissions or employment policies or procedures.

# **Communication**

At MMCH, frequent and open communication is very important to us. We encourage parents to check in with teachers on a regular basis to discuss their child's progress, pertinent issues, and any other questions or concerns. Lead teachers will be available to connect with parents between 3:00 and 3:30 during pick up and after school care, or can be contacted via email (see contact info below) Otherwise, our staff is often not available to chat with parents during the day as they are teaching children during this time. If you have a specific concern you'd like to discuss, please consider setting up an appointment with your teacher before or after school so they can offer their undivided attention.

We can be reached by our school cell phone between the hours of 7:00 am and 8:30 am. Our phone number is **207 491 2596**. Generally, we are unable to answer the phone during classroom time from 8:30 to 3:00 because we are with your children and are focused on working with them. If you have a message you would like to relay, please either call or text us and we will get back to you as soon as we can. **If it is an emergency, please call! If we don't answer, please hang up and call back immediately.**

As a reminder, parents are asked to call or text the school phone if they are ready to pick up their child and we are indoors. A teacher will then get your child ready to meet you at the Curve Street gate.

## **Grievances:**

If you have a concern about a policy, or a teacher or staff member, you may contact Bethany Mahar, the Director of the school. If the Director of the school is the concern, then you may contact the President of our Board of Directors, Emily Yearwood. Bethany can be reached at [director@mainemountainchildrenshouse.org](mailto:director@mainemountainchildrenshouse.org) and Emily can be reached at [board@mainemountainchildrenshouse.org](mailto:board@mainemountainchildrenshouse.org). If you are inclined to file a formal complaint, it must be submitted to the Board President, Emily Yearwood, via email.

## **Parent/Teacher Conferences:**

Parent/Teacher conferences are held in the Fall and Spring. This is the best time to discuss your child's day-to-day routine, growth and development progress, goals, and any concerns that you may have in regard to your child. A signup sheet will be shared ahead of time.

**Fall Conference:** Our Fall conference, typically in October, is a time we come together and discuss how your child has settled into their routine and environment here at MMCH as well as any goals and/or questions you may have regarding your child's education.

**Spring Conference:** The Spring conference in April is a time to reflect on the developmentally appropriate goals set in the Fall for your child. We will look over your child's portfolio where we have saved samples of their work, observations and photographs of them throughout different times during the year. This is a great time to bring up questions about enrollment and your child's next educational steps.

## **Employees & Board of Directors:**

## **Employees**

❖ **Bethany Mahar**

**Title:** Director of Maine Mountain Children's House, Part Time Extended Day Teacher

**Contact:** [director@mainemountainchildrenshouse.org](mailto:director@mainemountainchildrenshouse.org)

❖ **Dani Bateman**

**Title:** Assistant Director, Lead Primary Teacher, Nap Coordinator

**Contact:** [primary@mainemountainchildrenshouse.org](mailto:primary@mainemountainchildrenshouse.org)

❖ **Taylor Richardson**

**Title:** Lead Toddler Teacher,

**Contact:** [toddler@mainemountainchildrenshouse.org](mailto:toddler@mainemountainchildrenshouse.org)

❖ **Piper Alexander**

**Title:** Assistant Primary Teacher, Extended Day Teacher

❖ **Kate Dewar**

**Title:** After School Care Provider

❖ **Lindsay Currier**

**Title:** Bookkeeper

**Contact:** [bookkeeper@mainemountainchildrenshouse.org](mailto:bookkeeper@mainemountainchildrenshouse.org)

## **Board of Directors:**

❖ Emily Yearwood, President (Chair), [board@mainemountainchildrenshouse.org](mailto:board@mainemountainchildrenshouse.org)

❖ Amber Stone, Vice Chair and Secretary

❖ Michelle Tranten, Treasurer

❖ Chris Parks, Trustee, Building and Grounds

❖ Julia Eggleston, Trustee, Grant Writing

❖ Don Aubrecht, Trustee, Financial Planning and Forecasting



# Parent Involvement

## Classroom Observations and Visits:

Observing the classroom while at work can be a great way to get to know the Montessori philosophy and what your child is doing while in our care. Observing is best done during the morning or afternoon work periods and parents will be given an Observation Binder that gives insight to the Montessori philosophy and the inner workings of each classroom.

We ask that parents wait until October to observe or volunteer within the classroom. This gives our children time to get settled into routines. Please speak to Dani or Bethany about visits in the Primary classroom, and Taylor or Bethany about visits in the Toddler classroom.

## Volunteer Hours:

MMCH asks that all families commit at least 10 hours of volunteer time to each school year. This allows us to feel supported by our families, strengthening the bond between home and school environments. The more time we take to get to know one another will only enhance your child's sense of community.

Volunteering can include substitute teaching in the classroom, being part of our fundraising committee and fundraising events, picking up supplies for the classroom, helping to market our programs or fundraising endeavors, or working to improve the school grounds. Please take a moment to think about how you would like to use your volunteer time and fill out the **Parent Volunteer form** (which can be found on our website) if you have not done so already.

This is not a huge amount of time to ask of you, but it is a huge help to our school. Many hands make light work!

## Parent Education:

MMCH will hold Parent Education opportunities throughout the year for parents looking to better understand the Montessori teaching philosophy. Through presentations and discussions we can answer questions about the Montessori approach and help bridge the gap between home and school.

## **Bring-A-Parent Night:**

During the school year we will hold “Bring-A-Parent Nights” along with an Art Show. Please see our school calendar for scheduled Parent Nights/Art Shows. Bring-A-Parent Night does not have to be just a parent, it can be any loved one that would like to check out your child’s classroom and see the lessons they enjoy practicing. Bring-A-Parent is an open house in the evening where you can come for as little or as long as you’d like. Once your child tires of showing you lessons, you’ll know it is time to head home and call it a night.

# **Health and Safety**

Each person attending one of our programs at Maine Mountain Children’s House understands that participation in the program can involve the inherent risk of damage, illness (including communicable diseases such as MRSA, influenza and COVID-19), and injury, including permanent disability and death, to both people and property. While particular rules, equipment and personal discipline may reduce these risks, the risks do exist.

## **General Health Policy**

The MMCH school policy is that sick children should be kept home or will be sent home if they have any of the following (**please note that there are specific guidelines for COVID-19 related symptoms or exposures**):

1. Fever (defined as temperature over 100.4) and/or a sore throat, cough, skin rash, lesions on mucous membranes (lips, mouth), difficulty breathing or changes in behavior such as lethargy, irritability or persistent crying. Your child may return to school when fever-free without acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) for 24 hours and other symptoms have subsided.
2. Prolonged diarrhea or vomiting (more than 1 time). Your child may return when symptoms have stopped.
3. Abdominal pain that persists for more than 2 hours or intermittent pain associated with fever.

4. Any illness, injury, or condition that prevents your child from participating comfortably in activities as determined by the staff or results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising their ability to care for other children.

## Covid-19 Policy

Below are strategies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our community, as well as other infectious diseases such as influenza (flu), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and norovirus, and are subject to change based on [COVID-19 Community Levels](#), or in response to an outbreak in our school community.

### Symptomatic and/or Testing Positive for COVID-19:

People who have symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal infections, such as cough, fever, sore throat, vomiting, or diarrhea, or other [symptoms of COVID-19](#) should stay home and be tested for COVID-19 using a PCR or [Antigen tests](#) to test for current infection.

- ❖ Persons with positive results should follow CDC's [COVID-19 isolation guidance](#).
- ❖ Persons with positive test results should wear a mask for 10 full days after positive results/symptoms began, or receive two (2) negative antigen tests taken 48 hours apart, after day 5.
- ❖ Children who test positive for COVID-19 may return to school 10 full days after testing positive and/or symptoms begin if fever-free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication and symptoms have started to subside.
  - After day 5, a child can take two (2) antigen tests 48 hours apart. **If both tests are negative, the person may return to MMCH before day 10, and are not required to wear a mask.**
- ❖ Adults who test positive for COVID-19 may follow CDC guidelines regarding isolation, quarantine, and testing. If symptoms are subsiding after 5 full days of isolation, they may return to work and wear a well-fitting mask or respirator until day 10.
  - After day 5, an adult can take two (2) antigen tests 48 hours apart. **With two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart, the adult may remove their mask sooner than day 10.**

### Exposed to COVID-19

- ❖ Wear a mask when close to others indoors.
- ❖ Monitor for symptoms.
- ❖ Test at day 5 after exposure or prior if symptoms develop.
- ❖ If negative, continue to wear a mask for the full 10 days when indoors and close to others, and monitor for symptoms.
- ❖ If positive, see guidelines for isolation.

## Additional Information...

- ❖ People who develop symptoms while at MMCH will be asked to wear a well-fitting mask or respirator while in the building and arrangements to go home will be made immediately. Children will be supervised by a designated caregiver wearing a well-fitting mask until able to go home.
- ❖ MMCH will contact families and staff if they have been exposed to COVID-19 within the MMCH school community with recommendations for next steps and additional resources from the CDC. **Please note:** if a person has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days, contact your healthcare provider or visit the CDC website for testing recommendations:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/testing.html#choosing-a-test>
- ❖ People may choose to wear a mask whenever they deem necessary. For example, a student or staff member may choose to wear a mask when there is increased community spread or they have a family member with a compromised immune system. MMCH will support any parent, staff member, or student who chooses to wear a mask or respirator, regardless of community spread.

## Mitigation Strategies

MMCH promotes health and wellness in our classrooms at a holistic level by giving lots of opportunities to work and play outdoors. We provide healthy, whole, locally grown snacks, and encourage all families to pack a “rainbow” of foods for their child(ren) each day. Younger children are provided ample time and space to take a 1.5 - 2 hour nap each afternoon, and older children are provided quiet afternoon activities to let their bodies recharge.

MMCH follows good practices to address the spread of illness, including frequent hand washing by both staff and children, disinfecting surfaces frequently, spending time outdoors each day, and providing adequate ventilation and air filtration when indoors. These strategies will increase and/or be modified when there is a heightened level of viral transmission in our community (including COVID-19, HFMD, whooping cough, etc.).

Parents (not the child) should make the decision on when a child should go to school and when the child should stay at home. Once at school, the teacher or the director will make the decision to send a child home due to illness.

We also ask that parents please take a moment to call the school and let us know your child is ill. If your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness such as the flu, strep throat, conjunctivitis, or chicken pox, or COVID-19, please tell the school ASAP so that we may inform

parents of illnesses their child may be exposed to. This helps parents and their medical professionals target treatment and save office visits and money. **The MMCH staff cannot adequately inform parents of what is going around unless the parents take time to let the staff know.**

Should a child become ill at school, he or she will be isolated. Parents will be notified and will make arrangements to take the child home.

## **Emergency Care**

In the event of an accident or sudden onset of illness, the school will not hesitate to seek proper care for a child. The child's individual emergency instructions on file in the school office will be consulted immediately and the parents will be called. If necessary the child will be transported to the hospital by ambulance or emergency vehicle. The consent statement, signed by parents, will accompany the child so that treatment can be given immediately in the absence of the parent. It is imperative that you keep the emergency contact information in the office up-to-date!

## **Medication**

The MMCH staff will administer prescription medication only upon written order from a physician or according to the labeled instructions on the original medicine container and with a written, signed and dated request from the parent.

MMCH will not administer any nonprescription medication to a child without written, signed and dated parental permission naming the medication and dosage.

Children who require medication to control a fever should be kept home.

## **Injury**

In the event of a minor injury, first aid will be administered by a qualified staff member (teachers and assistants are certified in first aid) and the child will be made as comfortable as possible. A written accident report will be filled out for any injury requiring first aid and the report will be given to the parent at the end of the school day. On occasion, parents will be called regarding accidents or injuries that do not require emergency care, but may require a parent's further attention, or for which a parent may want to seek non-emergency medical care. Please note that while every effort is made to give parents an accident report in a timely manner, there may be situations when an accident is communicated verbally before a report is completed (e.g. a minor injury occurring on the playground just before pickup time).

## **Smoke Free Policy**

Maine Mountain Children’s House is dedicated to providing their children, staff, parents, and visitors with a safe, healthy, and smoke-free environment.

We recognize that secondhand and thirdhand smoke and smoke residue is detrimental to the health and safety of everyone, particularly children. For this reason, MMCH has become a designated 100% smoke-free property as of August 2017. Smoke-free is defined as the smoking of cigarettes, cigars, marijuana (and related substances), and all electronic cigarettes and personal vaporizers.

### **This policy prohibits smoking:**

- Within all area of the facility
- On all facility grounds, including playgrounds, parking lots, and in personal vehicles parked on property
- In facility owned or leased vehicles and employee/volunteer owned vehicles being used in the course of work

### **To reduce the contaminants in thirdhand smoke, employees will:**

- Not wear clothing or bring articles into the school that have been exposed to secondhand smoke and encourage parents to do the same
- Shower between exposure to secondhand smoke and reporting to work to remove residue
- Share and help enforce no smoking within 100 feet of the building or entrances to the building or facility property

**All employees and volunteers are required to comply with the Maine Mountain Children’s House 100% smoke-free policy.**

## **Child Abuse and Neglect:**

The state of Maine mandates that all staff of Maine Mountain Children’s House report any suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Health and Human Services. Failing to report suspected cases is punishable by law. In the event of suspected child abuse/neglect, staff must first notify the Director of MMCH who must contact DHHS Child Protective Intake immediately.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have reviewed the MMCH Parent Handbook and understand it is my responsibility to know the policies and procedures presented.

I, the undersigned, agree to follow all policies and procedures put forth to the best of my ability, and understand that my actions affect all members of the MMCH community.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Enrolled Child(ren)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature Date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director Signature Date: