



Sunny Hollow  
M O N T E S S O R I

# PARENT HANDBOOK

Effective September 19, 2017

**Sunny Hollow Montessori**  
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[sunnyhollow.org](http://sunnyhollow.org)

## WELCOME

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We are delighted that your family is a part of the Sunny Hollow Montessori community!

This handbook provides you with the tools you need to be informed and connected at Sunny Hollow. Included are the guidelines, policies, and procedures for families. If you have any questions, please ask our administrative staff.

*Here's to a strong year of partnership, joy, and learning at Sunny Hollow!*

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## OVERVIEW OF SUNNY HOLLOW MONTESSORI

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### OUR MISSION

Sunny Hollow Montessori cultivates each child's intellectual and creative potential, appreciation of relationships in nature and society, and sense of individual responsibility. We follow the educational philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori as set forth by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI).

### OUR VISION

Sunny Hollow Montessori is recognized as a leader in guiding children and their parents through a shared journey from infancy into adulthood—all on a foundation of respect, kindness and trust in the child's potential. Sunny Hollow is dedicated to ensuring that each child sees her own possibilities and those of a peaceful world society, and takes an active role in pursuing both.

By holding the child's social, emotional, intellectual and physical development in balance, we support and guide her toward the sweet spot of human potential and living her life to the fullest.

### OUR VALUES

In order to create an environment at Sunny Hollow Montessori in which each child can be nurtured and educated to that child's fullest potential, all members of the community must have a shared understanding of the values influencing and guiding our actions. To that end, Sunny Hollow embraces the following values:

**Kindness:** An environment of kindness and warmth aids in creating peace and harmony, essential to the growth of children, and contributing to the greater harmony on Earth.

**Respect:** When we treat ourselves, others, and the environment with respect, we recognize that we are part of a greater world and our success does not happen independently. We value the contributions of others both now and in the past, shaping our world and our experience. We recognize the impact our actions have on those around us, both now and in the future.

**Diligence & Craftsmanship:** We achieve excellence in our work by employing diligence and craftsmanship, working within our limits while seeking to grow beyond them.

**Appreciation of Diversity:** Bringing together people of different cultures, perspectives and experiences enhances the overall experience of our community and the education children receive.

### OUR HISTORY

Sunny Hollow Montessori was founded in 1981 by Mary Sue Dobbin, a Montessori teacher and early childhood advocate. The school's name comes from Mary Sue's childhood experience in her own backyard. As a blind child, she loved to spend time in a special spot where she would feel the sun on her face and felt safe and nurtured. She called that backyard place her "sunny hollow." She named her school for the same feelings of security and welcome she wanted for her students.

Sunny Hollow Montessori is celebrating over 35 years of serving children in the Twin Cities area. Originally founded as a Montessori preschool and kindergarten, Sunny Hollow expanded to offer Montessori Elementary classrooms in the fall of 2006. In addition to three classrooms for children ages 33 months to 6 years, Sunny Hollow has two Lower Elementary classrooms for children ages 6 to 9 and two Upper Elementary classrooms for children ages 9 to 12.

We are continuing to add programs that support the full continuum of child development. Sunny Hollow opened our second Upper Elementary for the 2016-2017 school year.

We are dedicated to high standards and a broad range of educational experiences that care for the intellectual, emotional and social well-being of the child.

## ACCREDITATION, LICENSING, AND ASSOCIATIONS

The Toddler, Casa, and Elementary educational programs at Sunny Hollow Montessori are accredited by the pedagogical organization founded by Dr. Montessori in 1929, the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI). [AMIusa.org](http://AMIusa.org). This organization helps assure that our teachers are well-trained, our classrooms fully equipped to provide authentic Montessori education, and our programs designed to meet the developmental needs of children. Our Toddler, Casa, and Elementary programs receive an AMI accreditation consultation every three years.

Sunny Hollow Montessori's Toddler (ages 16 months to 36 months) program and Casa (ages 3-6) program are both 4-Star Parent Aware programs (the highest rating available). Minnesota's Parent Aware rating system helps parents find programs that go above and beyond to prepare children for school and for life.

Our staff is affiliated with North American Montessori Teacher's Association (NAMTA, [montessori-namta.org](http://montessori-namta.org)).

Our school is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS, [nais.org](http://nais.org)) and the Minnesota Independent School Forum (MISF, [misf.org](http://misf.org)).

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) licenses the Toddler and Casa programs (Division of Licensing 651-431-6500).

The Elementary level program follows guidelines set by the Minnesota Department of Education and works closely with Saint Paul Public Schools, our local education authority (<http://www.education.state.mn.us>).

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Sunny Hollow Montessori is a non-profit organization and not affiliated with any religious organization. We admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, scholarship programs, and other school-administered programs.

Sunny Hollow Montessori is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

## STAFF DIRECTORY

### ADMINISTRATION

Head of School	Renee Champion	Ext. 104	<a href="mailto:renee@sunnyhollow.org">renee@sunnyhollow.org</a>
Assistant Head of School	Erin Haapala	Ext. 115	<a href="mailto:erin@sunnyhollow.org">erin@sunnyhollow.org</a>
Admissions Director	Ashley Shoaf	Ext. 103	<a href="mailto:ashley@sunnyhollow.org">ashley@sunnyhollow.org</a>
Office Administrator	Larissa LaMere	Ext. 116	<a href="mailto:larissa@sunnyhollow.org">larissa@sunnyhollow.org</a>
Business Manager	Renee LaLime	Ext. 110	<a href="mailto:renee@sunnyhollow.org">renee@sunnyhollow.org</a>
Admin Assistant/Bus Driver	Vivian Reed		<a href="mailto:vivian@sunnyhollow.org">vivian@sunnyhollow.org</a>
Development Director	Mary Irey	Ext. 120	<a href="mailto:maryi@sunnyhollow.org">maryi@sunnyhollow.org</a>
Parent Connections Coordinator	Jenny Thompson	Ext. 102	<a href="mailto:jenny@sunnyhollow.org">jenny@sunnyhollow.org</a>

### FACULTY

Toddler Community	Ext. 106	Marcela Crosby	Guide	<a href="mailto:marcela@sunnyhollow.org">marcela@sunnyhollow.org</a>
		Christy Love	Assistant	<a href="mailto:christy@sunnyhollow.org">christy@sunnyhollow.org</a>
		Buffy Ess	Classroom Aide	<a href="mailto:buffy@sunnyhollow.org">buffy@sunnyhollow.org</a>
Casa River	Ext. 119	Lannette Peterson	Guide	<a href="mailto:lannette@sunnyhollow.org">lannette@sunnyhollow.org</a>
		Kate Gregoire	Assistant	<a href="mailto:kateg@sunnyhollow.org">kateg@sunnyhollow.org</a>
		Johanna Munns	Classroom Aide	<a href="mailto:johanna@sunnyhollow.org">johanna@sunnyhollow.org</a>
Casa Lake	Ext. 113	Gina Murray	Guide	<a href="mailto:gina@sunnyhollow.org">gina@sunnyhollow.org</a>
		Jessica Bandelin	Assistant	<a href="mailto:jessicab@sunnyhollow.org">jessicab@sunnyhollow.org</a>
		Kristin Grider	Classroom Aide	<a href="mailto:Kristin@sunnyhollow.org">Kristin@sunnyhollow.org</a>
Casa Creek	Ext. 114	Brooke Young	Guide	<a href="mailto:brooke@sunnyhollow.org">brooke@sunnyhollow.org</a>
		Tasha Cardin	Assistant	<a href="mailto:tasha@sunnyhollow.org">tasha@sunnyhollow.org</a>
		Tammy Clemens	Classroom Aide	<a href="mailto:tammy@sunnyhollow.org">tammy@sunnyhollow.org</a>
Lower Elementary North	Ext. 107	Sylvie Grahah	Guide	<a href="mailto:sylvie@sunnyhollow.org">sylvie@sunnyhollow.org</a>
		Anna Sutheim	Assistant	<a href="mailto:anna@sunnyhollow.org">anna@sunnyhollow.org</a>
Lower Elementary South	Ext. 105	Shanna Brown	Guide	<a href="mailto:shanna@sunnyhollow.org">shanna@sunnyhollow.org</a>
		Katie London	Assistant	<a href="mailto:katie@sunnyhollow.org">katie@sunnyhollow.org</a>
Upper Elementary South	Ext. 108	Gillett Cole	Guide	<a href="mailto:gillett@sunnyhollow.org">gillett@sunnyhollow.org</a>
		Jessica Ostrov	Assistant	<a href="mailto:jessica@sunnyhollow.org">jessica@sunnyhollow.org</a>
Upper Elementary North	Ext. 117	Carl Banner	Guide	<a href="mailto:carl@sunnyhollow.org">carl@sunnyhollow.org</a>
		Catherine Geier	Assistant	<a href="mailto:catherine@sunnyhollow.org">catherine@sunnyhollow.org</a>
Casa/Elementary		Anne Zaslofsky	Learning Specialist	<a href="mailto:annez@sunnyhollow.org">annez@sunnyhollow.org</a>
Extended Day	Ext. 118	Kristin Grider	Casa AM	<a href="mailto:kristin@sunnyhollow.org">kristin@sunnyhollow.org</a>
		Anna Sutheim Katie London	Elementary AM	<a href="mailto:annas@sunnyhollow.org">annas@sunnyhollow.org</a> <a href="mailto:katie@sunnyhollow.org">katie@sunnyhollow.org</a>
		Anna Davis	Casa PM	<a href="mailto:annad@sunnyhollow.org">annad@sunnyhollow.org</a>
		Johanna Munns	Casa PM	<a href="mailto:johanna@sunnyhollow.org">johanna@sunnyhollow.org</a>
		Tammy Clemens	Casa PM	<a href="mailto:tammy@sunnyhollow.org">tammy@sunnyhollow.org</a>
		Jessica Ostrov	Elementary PM	<a href="mailto:jessica@sunnyhollow.org">jessica@sunnyhollow.org</a>
		TBA	Elementary PM	

## **HEAD OF SCHOOL**

Sunny Hollow Montessori employs a full-time Head of School who provides overall leadership of the school in conjunction with the Board of Trustees. The Head of School's major responsibilities include: pedagogical leadership, supervision of teaching and office staff, public relations, and overall management and administration of school finances and operations. The Head of School is employed by, supervised by, and accountable to the Sunny Hollow Montessori Board of Trustees.

## **ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL**

The Assistant Head of School assists the Head of School in all areas related to the operations of school programs and acts as the senior administrative official in the Head's absence.

## **ADMISSIONS DIRECTOR**

The Admissions Director is responsible for managing the administrative operations related to marketing, admissions and enrollment, including registration and student records. The Admissions Director reports to the Head of School.

## **OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR**

The Office Administrator carries out the day-to-day operations of the school office. The Office Administrator reports to the Assistant Head of School.

## **BUSINESS MANAGER**

The Business Manager oversees the business and facility operations of the school and is responsible for all financial records, tuition billing/vendor services and building maintenance. The Business Manager reports to the Head of School.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

The Administrative Assistant supports the Head of School in managing the day-to-day operations of the school and assists the classrooms in arranging and carrying out the transportation of students on outings via the Sunny Hollow school bus. The Administrative Assistant reports to the Head of School.

## **DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR**

The Development Director is responsible for the overall organization and implementation of the school's development efforts with a focus on managing the Sunny Hollow Fund. The Development Director reports to the Head of School.

## **PARENT CONNECTIONS COORDINATOR**

The Parent Connections Coordinator serves as a resource for both staff and parents – supporting the parent connection to the Montessori philosophy and fostering relationships in the Sunny Hollow community. The PCC reports to the Head of School.

## **FACULTY**

Each Montessori classroom is staffed by a certified AMI trained Guide. Sunny Hollow Montessori employs both Assistant Guides and Classroom Aides as needed, based on school enrollment and our license requirement to maintain applicable adult/child ratios. Guides maintain the Montessori curriculum by attending professional in-services and various workshops. All staff members are Red Cross certified in First Aid, CPR and Blood-borne Pathogens. The faculty is regularly observed, supervised, and evaluated by the Head of School.

## **LEARNING SPECIALIST**

The learning specialist acts as a resource to teachers, provides a variety of strategies and interventions to students with diverse learning needs, identifies the need for further assessment and services, and coordinates with parents and the public school district on special needs services and individualized education plans. The Learning Specialist reports to the Head of School.

## WHO TO CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS

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For help with:	Contact:
Arrival/departure questions Birthday celebrations Child's developmental progress Dress code Field trips or Going Out activities	Groceries Laundry Montessori philosophy Program questions  <b>Your Child's Guide</b>
Attendance/absences Emergencies Health-related procedures	Medication & medical forms School forms  <b>Office Administrator</b>
Admissions and enrollment Marketing Observing in your child's classroom Re-enrollment contracts	School pictures School records Tuition assistance Website and social media  <b>Admissions Director</b>
Alumni and grandparent relations Annual report Donations	Fundraising Spring Gala Sunny Hollow Fund  <b>Development Director</b>
Building & grounds Expense reimbursements Key cards	Tuition billing, payment and receipts Safety and security  <b>Business Manager</b>
News & Notes newsletter Parent education and resource library School events	Sunny Hollow Parent Association Volunteer opportunities  <b>Parent Connections Coordinator</b>
Academic/curriculum policies Board of Trustees Employment opportunities Legal matters	Pedagogical issues Public relations School finances  <b>Head of School</b>
Employment opportunities Substitute scheduling Professional development Summer Program	Safety and Security Language program enrollment Extended Day enrollment and changes  <b>Assistant Head of School</b>

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Sunny Hollow Montessori is a non-profit organization with a volunteer Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is responsible for the overall strategic vision and management of the school. A set of the bylaws that govern the Board of Trustees is available in the school office. The Board meets seven times during the year.

The Board delegates work to three standing committees: Finance, Development, and Governance. The Board of Trustees has established several adhoc committees or task forces to carry out the approved strategic plan for the school. These committees include: Facilities Planning, Junior High Task Force, and Staff Compensation/Benefits. Committees and task forces solicit participants by posting in News & Notes, the school newsletter. Interested persons can watch for postings or talk to any Board member.

Board members (with the exception of ex-officio members) serve minimum terms of three years. The tenure of Board members is staggered so that the Board always has a mix of experienced and new members. New members are nominated by the Governance committee and elected by the Board. If you would like to serve on the Board or nominate someone to serve, please contact a Board member who will forward the information to the Governance committee. To contact a board member, please refer to the Family Directory or call the office at 651-690-2307.

### **2017-2018 BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Renee Champion, Head of School / President ex officio (non-voting)

Kimberly Miller, Chair

Andreas Hipple, Vice Chair

Joshua Drivdahl, Treasurer

Justice Lindell, Secretary

Verlynn Agrimonti

Jack Dickinson

Andy Greene

Rebecca Greene

Jason Klapste

Tara Norgard

Matt Sullivan

## THE MONTESSORI METHOD

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*“Scientific observation has established that the education is not what the teacher gives; education is a natural process spontaneously carried out by the human individual, and is acquired not by listening to words but by experiences upon the environment. The task of the teacher becomes that of preparing a series of motives of cultural activity, spread over a specially prepared environment, and then refraining from obtrusive interference. Human teachers can only help the great work that is being done, as servants help the master. Doing so, they will be witnesses to the unfolding of the human soul and to the rising of a New Man who will not be a victim of events but will have the clarity of vision to direct and shape and future of human society.*

Dr. Maria Montessori, *Education for a New World*

The Montessori method of education is a philosophy of child growth and development that includes a carefully prepared environment with a variety of hands-on materials and an adult trained in meeting children’s development needs. The Montessori environment is designed to take full advantage of a child’s self-motivation and unique ability to develop his or her own capabilities.

The heart of Montessori education is this: Children love to learn, and when we surround them with people and environments that support their development, they become responsible, compassionate, and intelligent human beings.

Dr. Maria Montessori was an Italian physician and educator. She observed that when children grow up in an environment that is intellectually and artistically alive and encouraging, they spontaneously ask questions, investigate, create, and explore new ideas. Dr. Montessori centered this theory on a learning experience for children that is relaxed, natural, and home-like.

The key elements of authentic Montessori education include:

**A prepared environment that is child-centered.** All activities are sized for children and are at their level. A trained teacher (called a “guide”) prepares the environment (the classroom) so that children are able to do the work independently or in small groups after the guide shows them how to use the materials. The guide observes the children to determine their needs and interests, and to offer lessons that draw upon and deepen those interests. In the Toddler Community, the guide works collaboratively with children to help build their concentration and independence. In the Casa, the prepared environment offers children a myriad of opportunities for exploring with hands-on materials, repeating activities for as long as they’d like, and building their coordination, concentration, and confidence. For Elementary children, the prepared environment helps capture their imaginations and draws upon their reasoning minds.

**Purposeful work.** Purposeful work is engaging, hands-on, and calls to the child’s inner nature. A two-year-old’s work may include doing a puzzle, learning the words for animals, setting the table for snack, and learning to dress herself. A three-year-old’s work may include scrubbing a table, watering plants, doing a puzzle of the continents, playing sound games, making snack for a friend, painting a picture, or counting beads. A six-year-old’s work may include writing and illustrating a book of dinosaurs, doing arithmetic with bead materials, playing a reading game with a friend, or creating a collage. A nine-year-old’s work may include doing a science experiment, creating a model of the universe, or writing a book of poems.

**Uninterrupted work cycles.** Children have long stretches of time to do work that is engaging to them. They work at their own pace and follow their own interests, within the community guidelines of safety and kindness to others. The long work cycles help children feel a sense of “endless time” where they can repeat work they love over and over again (for the youngest children) and, as they grow and develop, structure their own time and dream up and pursue big projects that span days and even weeks.

**Mixed-age classrooms.** With three years of students grouped together in Casa and Elementary classrooms, the younger students are inspired by the older students, and the older students gain confidence and show leadership in being role models for the younger students. Similar mixed-age learning and growth happens in the two years children are in the Toddler classroom.

**Support for independence.** We provide the tools, materials, and furniture that are sized just right for the children so that they may make independent choices of work and community responsibility. We show them

how to do a task (like peeling carrots or writing a letter to the mayor) or how to learn about a subject (like types of mammals or parts of a volcano), then encourage them to explore with the materials when and where they choose. For the young child, her mantra is “Help me do it by myself.” For the Elementary child: “Help me think for myself.”

**Learning through the senses.** In Montessori environments, children explore and work with materials that involve all of their senses, such as fabrics that are soft or rough, bells for distinguishing changes in pitch, the smelling bottles for matching smells, and color tablets for putting shades of color in order. In the Toddler Community, all activities encourage sensory exploration, from painting to musical instruments to kneading dough for making bread. In the Casa, an entire area of the classroom is devoted to materials that engage the senses, and all activities of the classroom, including math and language, often engage at least two of children’s senses. For Elementary children, sensory experiences are the beginning point for lessons. To study mammals, children might first connect with a hamster or a rabbit (their classroom pet or a visitor). They will carefully touch and examine the creature as an initial step in understanding what mammals are about. Real life examples of all aspects of the curriculum are provided so that rich, multi-sensory images are created in children’s minds.

**Freedom to move.** Children choose where they want to work (such as at a table or on a mat on the floor) and are free to move about the classroom. Children in the Toddler Community use chairs that they can move and carry, sit at a table (rather than in high chairs), and sleep on cots (rather than in cribs). All of the activities in the Casa (3-to-6) environment encourage movement of all sorts—carrying trays across the room, getting water for plants, playing a fetching game with the math materials for learning counting—because movement is essential to children’s growth and development. Elementary children are also free to move about the room to accomplish their work and meet the needs of the community (rather than having assigned seats). At all levels, whole-group time is minimal so that children are not forced to sit for long periods of time, which is contrary to their natures.

**Freedom within limits.** Children are free to choose, to move, to repeat an activity, to talk to others—but within the limits of what is good for themselves and the community. Any action that hurts someone or something is immediately and firmly stopped, and children are redirected to positive uses of the materials or appropriate behavior toward others.

## MONTESSORI EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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*The complete Toddler and Casa Program Plan can be found in the Sunny Hollow office and is available for review during school hours.*

### TODDLER COMMUNITY (16 TO 33 MONTHS)

Sunny Hollow Montessori's Toddler Community serves children ages 16–33 months. In a beautifully prepared environment, our AMI-trained guide connects children to learning experiences that encourage exploration, discovery, purposeful activities, socialization, and play. Furniture and learning materials are specifically crafted to suit children's intellectual, sensorial, social, and physical development. The Toddler Community offers activities and caring adult guidance to promote independence, self-confidence and a positive attitude towards learning. The classroom is self-contained with space for working, playing, sharing community meals and napping, as well as an accessible bathroom designed to support toilet learning. An outside door gives direct access from the Toddler Community environment to a patio and outdoor play area. We are licensed to serve 14 children and our typical class size is 12 children.

### Montessori Education in the Toddler Community

In the Toddler Community indoor and outdoor prepared environments, learning materials are arranged invitingly on low, open shelves. The materials and activities are designed to support the needs for community, language development, and psycho-sensory motor development of the child in a manner consistent with the child's cultural background. Children may choose whatever materials they would like to use and may work as long as the material holds their interest. They often work in collaboration with the guide; the guide does a little and then the child does another part of the work and eventually, after some repetition, the child will be able to do it by herself.

The Toddler Community includes the following:

**Art activities** include opportunities to build, create, draw, paint, and sculpt.

**Construction activities** are provided throughout the classroom. Children explore spatial relationships with blocks and puzzles.

**Fine motor development** is refined through activities in all areas of the classroom. From the earliest Practical Life activities through more complex community activities (like setting the table for lunch), children are given direct and indirect opportunities to refine their motor skills.

**Language enrichment** is a critical part of the Toddler Community and includes oral language and vocabulary building. Objects and language cards and books are ways that children grow in their language development, as well as songs, stories and poems. Adults model language that helps children learn to express themselves.

**Large motor development** is developed in both indoor and outdoor spaces. The outdoor playground is equipped with equipment for pushing, pulling, tricycling, and other large motor actions. The indoor large motor area includes large building blocks, a small slide, tumbling mats, and other large motor materials.

**Music** is introduced through singing, musical instruments, and movement games.

**Practical life** is an area that presents many opportunities for self-mastery and environmental mastery exercises, which allow a child to work on her concentration, coordination, independence, sense of order, and fine motor development. Examples include buttoning, zipping, brushing hair, washing hands, cleaning up, pouring milk, watering plants, peeling eggs and slicing bananas. Outdoor practical life includes sweeping, raking, weeding, and shoveling.

### Independence in Toileting

Learning to use the toilet is a developmental task for the young child, and an important part of their growing independence. Our Toddler Community provides the environment and structure for children to

learn naturally when they are ready. When the timing seems right, children will start their mornings by sitting on the toddler-sized toilet or a potty chair and then putting on thick cotton underpants (which Sunny Hollow provides). They are encouraged to use the toilet throughout the day. Over time they learn to recognize their body's signals, as well as the sensation of being wet (without the moisture absorbency of disposable diapers.) Daily, they get to practice the sequence of feeling the sensation, getting to the toilet (in our door-less bathroom that makes it easy for them), pulling their pants down, and using the toilet. Children have a natural curiosity about toileting and are interested in watching one another use our toddler-sized bathroom. If we provide an encouraging environment, without pressure and with respect to each child's timetable, children will naturally learn to use the toilet just as they learn to walk and talk.

We encourage families to consider using thick cotton underpants at home for consistency. You will find these at most stores that sell children's clothing. Start by using them for short periods of time, and have your child wear them without other pants to make it easy for her or him to pull them down independently (you could also use a plastic cover for extra protection).

Please feel free to check in with our Toddler guide about strategies for encouraging your child's toileting independence. We also recommend the book *Toilet Awareness* by Montessorian Sarah Moudry (find it in our Parent Resource Library).

### Toddler Program Options

All toddlers are enrolled five days a week. There are two program options:

HALF DAY	Monday - Friday	8:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.
FULL DAY	Monday - Friday	8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

### Toddler Extended Day

Extended Day care is available on a contractual basis, separate from tuition. Children who arrive prior to and/or stay beyond regular school hours must be enrolled in the Extended Day program. Extended Day care is contracted on a monthly basis for all five days of the week. Children enrolled in the Before School program have breakfast items available until 8:15 a.m. Toddlers remain in their Toddler Community environment for Extended Day (before and after school) and also go outside to their play space.

BEFORE SCHOOL	Monday-Friday	7:30 - 8:30 a.m.
AFTER SCHOOL	Monday-Friday	3:30 - 4:30 p.m.
AFTER SCHOOL	Monday-Friday	3:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Drop-in Care is available with appropriate notice. For more information, please see Requesting Drop-In Before or After Care on page 31.

## Typical Toddler Schedule

TIME	ACTIVITY
7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Extended Day (before school) care in the Toddler environment. Children are greeted as they arrive. They hang up their coats, put on their indoor shoes, use the bathroom and put on cotton underpants (if needed). Then they help in preparing the environment, and choose from activities within the classroom. Breakfast is offered and available until 8:15 a.m. However, in order to have breakfast the child needs to arrive at or before 8:00 am.
8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.	Arrival. Children are welcomed to join the morning activities after using the bathroom.
8:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Morning Work Cycle. Children engage primarily in individual, independent work and do some collaborative group work. Their choices include working with Montessori materials, doing art, language, or practical life activities (care of self and care of the environment), preparing food, or doing other activities to develop eye-hand coordination and concentration. They are offered the opportunity to use the bathroom throughout the morning.
10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Transition. The children get ready to go outdoors or to Fink Hall for large motor movement activities.
11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Large Motor Activities. Children and staff spend time together outdoors if weather permits, otherwise indoors. Outdoor activities include practical life work (weeding, sweeping, shoveling, digging in the garden, and so on), large motor activities (jumping, riding tricycles, going down the slide, playing with balls), playing in the sandbox, collecting leaves, and so on. Fink Hall indoor activities include ball games, a slide, large building blocks, and other large motor activities.
11:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	Transition: Children return to the Toddler Community. Half Day children gather their things and staff bring them out to the Toddler hallway to greet their parents and go home. Half Day children are ready to go home at 11:30. Meanwhile, Full Day children prepare for lunch. They use the bathroom, wash their hands, and help set the table.
11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Lunch time for Full Day children. Children and staff eat together at a table using glass or ceramic plates and cups. They help clean up when they are finished.
12:30 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Transition: Prepare for nap.
12:45 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.	Nap/Rest Time. Children sleep with blankets from home on individual cots. We wash sheets regularly. Blankets are sent home with families for washing every Friday.
2:45 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Transition: Prepare for end of day. Children begin to awaken, go to the bathroom, and help set the table for afternoon snack. Children who sleep longer join the group as they get up.
3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.	Children are invited to sing songs and do finger plays while some children get ready to leave. Staff bring School Day children out to the Toddler hallway to greet their parents and go home.
3:30 p.m. – 4:30 pm. or 5:30 p.m.	Extended Day (after school) care. Children registered for Extended Day have a family-style afternoon snack and then help clean up. They may help with practical life activities such as gathering laundry and cleaning up the environment, or may choose hands-on materials to work with. They also spend time outdoors (weather permitting). They are dismissed as their parents arrive.

## CASA (33 MONTHS TO 6 YEARS)

Sunny Hollow operates three "Casa" environments. Each Casa is a mixed age grouping of 28-30 children ages three to six; we are licensed to serve a total of 92 Casa children. Within a mixed age community, the oldest children become role models and inspiration for the youngest; developing social skills and fostering their own knowledge, concepts, self-confidence, and sense of responsibility. Since children build on their previous years' experiences and mastery of the materials, the three- to four-year program allows for growth towards healthy independence and preparation for the next level of education. To best promote and satisfy the child's developmental need for order within a community of young children, our Montessori Casa program meets five days a week, Monday through Friday. All children in their final year of the Casa must enroll in the full day program. The full day program has been designed to eliminate unnecessary transitions, allowing children to remain in the familiar Casa setting for an entire school day.

### Montessori Education in the Casa

Maria Montessori called her program for children aged 3-6 "Casa" because she wanted children to consider their classroom a home. They treat the room with both freedom and care, as might be expected in their own houses. The Casa contains child-sized furniture and materials within reach of the youngest students. The materials and activities help children develop essential skills for life through building their self-confidence, independence, and concentration. Key areas of the Casa include practical life, art, sensorial, language, math, geography, and cultural activities, as well as the dynamic social community that the children and guide create.

**Practical Life Activities.** These include the work of daily living to which children are so attracted to, such as washing windows, sweeping the floor, preparing food (and eating it!), fastening clothes with buttons or zippers, pouring water, and setting the table. Through deep engagement, they learn to follow a sequence of steps, develop their fine-motor skills, and strengthen their ability to concentrate. With a carefully prepared environment and everything sized for them, children become happy participants in the everyday life of the Casa.

**Art Activities.** Children use a variety of materials that help develop their fine motor skills as they creatively express themselves. Painting, modeling with clay, creating collages, cutting patterns, drawing, sewing, and knitting are activities that Casa children can learn to do.

**Sensorial Activities.** Hands-on manipulatives allow the children to explore with and refine their senses. Children match color tablets, differentiate between sizes and shapes, match notes on the bells, place cylinders in matching holes, and build towers—all to help their developing minds make sense of the world.

**Language Activities.** The youngest children begin with spoken language activities such as sound games, listening to books, and singing. As they grow through their three years in the Casa, they learn the sounds of the alphabet, trace sandpaper letters with their fingers, write short words using wooden alphabet letters, practice making letters themselves, and eventually write and illustrate their own stories. They expand their vocabularies and their interests by using language cards. The Casa is a richly literate environment where children learn to express themselves in speech and writing, enjoy stories and books, and ultimately learn to read.

**Math Activities.** Children love to explore with the Montessori math materials that they begin using around age 4. They count objects and beads and learn to do mathematical operations with units, tens, hundreds, and thousands (using beads that they can touch and hold). Through work with the materials, they develop their problem-solving and critical thinking skills. All math activities involve the core Montessori approach: children learn at their own pace, they choose when and where to work with the materials, and the activities involve hands-on learning and whole-body movement.

**Geography and Cultural Activities.** In the Casa we offer the sensorial (concrete, hands-on) and language aspects of geography and culture: children trace sandpaper continents on a globe, work with puzzle maps for each continent, learn about flags of various countries, make their own maps of the world, learn songs from world cultures to sing and play on the bells, hear stories and read books about holidays and peoples around the world, and learn art forms related to diverse holidays and cultures.

**Social Community.** The Casa is a buzz with children’s voices as they ask each other for help, chat while they eat snack in twosomes, converse over a book, and engage in many authentic social situations. Because large-group time is minimal, children have ample opportunity to communicate with each other in real-world ways, such as discussing whose turn it is to have snack or use the art easel. Children also gain practice in social interactions through small-group Grace and Courtesy lessons that give them the vocabulary necessary to practice etiquette and also provide them with role-playing opportunities. Adults and the class leaders model respectful behavior that the youngest children quickly learn. Courtesy and care of the environment are fundamental throughout the classroom as students learn to take care of themselves, each other, and their classroom.

### Casa Program Options

All Casa children are enrolled five days a week. There are two program options:

HALF DAY	Monday - Friday	8:30 a.m. – 11:55 a.m.
FULL DAY	Monday - Friday	8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

### Casa Extended Day

Casa Extended Day care is available on a monthly contractual basis, separate from tuition, for all five days of the week. Casa students who arrive prior to and/or stay beyond regular school hours must be enrolled in the Extended Day program. Children enrolled in the Before School program have breakfast items available until 8:00 a.m. Casa Extended Day programs take place in our separate large motor spaces (the lower level and the Casa playground).

BEFORE SCHOOL	Monday-Friday	7:30 – 8:30 a.m.
AFTER SCHOOL	Monday-Friday	3:30 – 4:30 p.m.
AFTER SCHOOL	Monday-Friday	3:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Drop-in Care is available with appropriate notice. For more information, please see Requesting Drop-In Before or After Care on page 31.

### Casa Extracurricular Programs

Please refer to CASA AND ELEMENTARY EXTRA CURRICULAR PROGRAMS on page 22.

## Typical Casa Schedule

TIME	ACTIVITY
7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Extended Day (before school) care. Parents escort children first to their lockers, where they hang up coats and put on indoor shoes (encourage your child's independence). Then proceed to the lower level where staff will greet your child and offer breakfast (until 8 a.m.). Children choose from a wide variety of hands-on activities (blocks, Legos, and so on) as well as large motor activities (running track, slide).
8:20 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Arrival. Staff greet children in the foyer and children proceed to their lockers to remove their outdoor gear and go into their classroom. They shake their guide's hand at the classroom door.
8:30 a.m. – 11:40 p.m.	Morning Work Cycle. Children engage primarily in individual, independent work, as well as work with another child or two. Their choices include working with Montessori materials, doing practical life activities (art, food preparation, cleaning, care of self, care of the classroom), doing sensorial, language, or math activities, and doing other activities to develop eye-hand coordination, concentration, and self-confidence. At some point in the morning, they may be invited to a short collective with the Head Guide to sing songs, do finger plays, or tell stories.
11:40 a.m. – 11:55 p.m.	Transition – Half Day children prepare for home and may spend a short time playing outside or in the lower level; Full Day children prepare for lunch.
11:55 p.m.	Half Day children are dismissed to their parents in the foyer.
12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.	Lunch & Large Motor Activities. Two Casas eat lunch first and one Casa plays first, and they rotate the schedule during the year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At lunch, children sit at small tables in their classroom, put their food on their plates, enjoy lunch with each other and their teachers, and help clean up.</li> <li>• For large motor activities, children and staff spend time together outdoors on the Casa playground if weather permits, otherwise indoors in the lower level play area. Outdoors, children engage in free play with options such as climbing the climbing wall, going down the slide, swinging, balancing on a beam, using the monkey bars, playing with balls, and digging in the sandbox, as well practical life work (weeding, sweeping, shoveling, and so on). Indoor activities include running on the running track, building with Legos or large blocks, doing puzzles, and using the slide.</li> </ul>
1:15 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Nap / Rest Time in Fink Hall for children who rest.
1:30 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.	Afternoon Work Cycle. Children who do not rest have a second work cycle in their classroom.
3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	Transition: Children who nap awaken and use the bathroom. They return to their classroom to get ready to go home or to Extended Day.
3:10 p.m. – 3:25 p.m.	Transition: Prepare for end of day. Children in the classroom put their work away and help tidy the environment.
3:25 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	School Day children are dismissed to their parents in the foyer.
3:30 p.m. – 4:30 or 5:30 p.m.	Extended Day (after school) care in lower level large motor room and/or on the Casa playground. Children begin with an afternoon snack.

## ELEMENTARY (GRADES 1 TO 6)

The Montessori Elementary experience focuses on allowing a deep community spirit to develop and grow. The sensitive interplay between the needs of the individual and the needs of the group is a fragile, vital element greatly assisted by the efforts of all involved. Sunny Hollow operates four Elementary environments. The two Lower Elementary classrooms are mixed age groups of children ages six to nine (1<sup>st</sup> year to 3<sup>rd</sup> year). The two Upper Elementary classrooms are mixed age groups of children ages 10-13 (4<sup>th</sup> year to 6<sup>th</sup> year). Children have the opportunity to visit all of the Elementary classrooms, experiencing the materials and unique offerings of each environment.

### Montessori Education in the Elementary

Once children reach the age of 6, they become interested in the questions of “how” and “why” about everything—from stars and planets to rivers and trees to the cycle of life. Montessori Elementary education encourages these explorations through the five Great Lessons, stories that encompass the breadth of human knowledge. We move from the creation of the universe to the coming of plant and animal life to the arrival of humans. We then focus on the fruits of human innovation: language and mathematics.

Our Elementary classrooms hum with activity and social connections. Students feel empowered to follow their own passions and interests. They work to create a respectful, welcoming community. They speak up when they think something is unfair or unjust. Along with the Montessori-trained guide and the classroom assistant, they create a community of joyful learning.

Dr. Montessori called her Elementary curriculum Cosmic Education to acknowledge the interconnectedness of all fields of study and of all elements of the world. As students contemplate the narratives of the world and of human life, they begin to find their place in the global community and develop ways in which to make their own unique contributions. This creates a sense of peace and belonging for all students.

The jumping off point for learning in Elementary starts with one of five Great Lessons—an engaging story that grabs children’s interest and makes them want to learn more. These lessons help them delve into these areas of Montessori curriculum:

**Physical Sciences: Earth Sciences, Chemistry, Physics.** The first Great Lesson describes the Creation of the Universe. Together, we learn about the composition of the earth, its elements, and the sun and air and water. We experiment and test things we are learning about.

**Life Sciences: Biology, Ecology, Botany, Zoology.** The second Great Lesson, the Coming of Life, tells the story of how plants and animals developed on earth, from single-celled organisms to the vast diversity of life on our planet. Children then springboard to studies of all of the life sciences through a variety of approaches and materials that help them relate parts of plants and animals to their functions and understand and predict why biological processes happen.

**Social Sciences: History, Geography.** All of the Great Lessons in Montessori education use history as a tool to explain the development of the world and human society. The third Great Lesson in particular describes the arrival of humans on our planet. Through the modes of history and geography, we trace civilization and map the world in all of its geographical and political forms.

**Language and Literature.** Once we establish the advent of human civilization, we begin to study the most profound human creations. In the fourth Great Lesson, guides tell the story of spoken and written language. Students become aware of the many functions of language and its power. They write in a variety of forms (essays, illustrated books, poems, letters) about subjects that interest them.

**Mathematics: Geometry and Measurement.** The final Great Lesson focuses on the history and development of mathematics. We learn how humans have used their reasoning powers to invent, discover, and solve problems. Similarly, we ask students to invent and solve their own problems through creative

means. While students are introduced to all chief mathematic functions, they are more importantly given a sense of adventure and a drive to explore numbers without limitation.

**The Arts: Music, Fine Arts, Drama.** The arts are woven throughout everything the children do and learn about through the Great Lessons. Children are encouraged to respond to all of the Great Lessons in a variety of ways, from paintings to plays to songs. They learn techniques to make illustrated, bound books. They write plays about what they are learning in math and science. They learn and play on the Montessori tone bars the music of ancient civilizations.

**Foreign Language (Mandarin Chinese).** In addition to learning spoken language and Chinese character formation, students explore Chinese culture, history, poetry, and art. Like all other elements of Cosmic Education, a student’s exploration of Chinese occurs throughout the day in conjunction with other lessons.

Elementary children also have a Going Out program where, in small groups, they turn the surrounding community of the Twin Cities into an extension of their classroom. Students decide that they want to learn more about something in particular, then plan and execute a trip (including finding transportation and a chaperone) to seek out the information or experience. They may venture to a public library to gather resources, interview an expert at a local university, go to an ethnic restaurant, or visit an exhibit at an art museum. Through this experience, they gain independence, confidence, and important life skills.

### Elementary Program Options

All Elementary children attend full days, five days a week:

ELEMENTARY	Monday –Friday	8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
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### Elementary Extended Day

Extended Day care is available on a contractual basis, separate from tuition. Elementary students who arrive prior to and/or stay beyond regular school hours must be enrolled in the Extended Day program. Extended Day care is contracted on a monthly basis for all five days of the week. Children enrolled in the Before School program have breakfast items available until 8:00 a.m. Elementary Extended Day programs take place in our separate large motor spaces (Fink Hall and outdoors).

BEFORE SCHOOL	Monday-Friday	7:30 – 8:30 a.m.
AFTER SCHOOL	Monday-Friday	3:30 – 4:30 p.m.
AFTER SCHOOL	Monday-Friday	3:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Drop-in Care is available with appropriate notice. For more information, please see Requesting Drop-In Before or After Care on page 31.

## Typical Elementary Schedule

TIME	ACTIVITY
7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Extended Day (before school) care in Fink Hall. Children can choose from a variety of hands-on and collaborative work and play, including puzzles, knitting, games, Legos, craft projects, and so on. They can also use the stage for dramatic play and games.
8:20 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Arrival. Children drop off their outdoor gear at their lockers and enter the classroom to begin their day. Parents can say goodbye from car drop-off, in the foyer, or at the classroom door.
8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Morning Work Cycle. Children engage in independent work or small group collaborative work. Their choices include hands-on work in all areas of the Elementary classroom: life sciences, physical sciences, geography, language, literature, mathematics, music, fine arts, drama, and Mandarin Chinese. They may research topics of interest to them and plan a Going Out activity that supports their classroom work.  Approximately one day each week, each classroom has physical education (taught by the Head Guide) and Mandarin Chinese language lessons (taught by Language Sprout teachers).
11:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	Transition to outdoors
11:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Outdoor recess (weather permitting) or collaborative activities and free play in Fink Hall. Outdoors, children can play in the field (group ball games, running, playing with snow), on the south end of the building (basketball, enjoying the garden), or in the forest area under the west trees (building forts, dramatic play). If staffing permits, children go to the north field (next to the temple) for more large motor play.
12:15 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch in Fink Hall or their classroom. On a rotating schedule, Elementary classes will eat some days in their classrooms and some days in Fink Hall. Everyone helps clean up and several student lunch monitors (K.P.) help with recycling and final cleaning.
1:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	Afternoon Work Cycle. The afternoon may begin with the teacher reading aloud from a chapter book or novel. Students are free to choose their work, often continuing projects they began in the morning, and are invited to small group lessons or individual check-ins with the Head Guide.
3:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Transition: Prepare for the end of day. Children put away their materials and collaborate to complete classroom cleaning jobs.
3:25 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	School Day children are dismissed to their parent/guardians outside at the south end of the building.
3:30 p.m. – 4:30 or 5:30 p.m.	Extended Day (after school) care in Fink Hall or outside in the play areas on the Mississippi River Boulevard side of the building. Children begin with an optional afternoon snack and are encouraged to spend time outdoors.

## **CASA AND ELEMENTARY EXTRA CURRICULAR PROGRAMS**

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### **FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

Sunny Hollow Montessori partners with Language Sprout, offering language instruction for Casa and Elementary levels. All programs begin at 3:30 p.m., after the regular Montessori work cycles are complete. Students are charged separately for language instruction and advanced registration is required. Classes begin in mid-September.

### **YOGA**

Casa and Elementary students are able to participate in after school sessions of yoga. The 30-minute classes include introductions to yoga poses, storytelling with movement, and mindful songs with movement.

### **ELEMENTARY AFTER-SCHOOL OPTIONS**

Every year we offer several after-school clubs for Elementary students. The offerings vary depending upon children's interests and the dedication of our parent volunteers. Possible clubs include Running Club, Tinkering Club, Book Club, Math Club, and Ukelele Club.

Information about clubs and other after-school activities is available during the first weeks of the new school year.

## PARENT-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

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### SUNNY HOLLOW COMMITMENTS

To best support our Mission, Vision, and Values, and provide the best modeling for our children, Sunny Hollow Montessori staff and board members commit to:

- Provide Montessori educational experiences that meet the high standards of the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) for children ages 16 months to 12 years.
- Provide beautiful and joyful learning environments at each stage of development.
- Provide a welcoming community to parents, guardians, and other caregivers.
- Abide by school policies and support the Mission of Sunny Hollow by respecting others, embracing diversity and promoting kindness.
- Communicate with other members of the school community openly, directly, promptly, and constructively without resorting to gossip and spreading of rumors.
- Model appropriate ethical behavior and exemplify the school's core values of kindness, respect, diligence, craftsmanship and appreciation of diversity.

### PARENT/GUARDIAN COMMITMENTS

To best support the Mission, Vision and Values of the school, and provide the best modeling for our children, we ask all parents/guardians to:

- Abide by school policies and support the Mission of Sunny Hollow by respecting others, embracing diversity and promoting kindness.
- Communicate with other members of the school community openly, directly, promptly, and constructively without resorting to gossip and spreading of rumors.
- Model appropriate ethical behavior and exemplify the school's core values of kindness, respect, diligence, craftsmanship and appreciation of diversity.
- Attend twice-yearly parent-guide conferences, and communicate directly with guides throughout the school year related to questions and concerns about your child's experience and development.
- Volunteer at least 10 hours per school year per family.
- Actively participate in parent education opportunities.
- Read and/or respond to communication from the school, including emails and weekly newsletters.
- Observe in your child's classroom every year.
- Honor financial commitments to Sunny Hollow, whether required or voluntary.
- Support security procedures of the school at all times.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Sunny Hollow parents are actively engaged in the life of the school. We offer a variety of parent engagement and education opportunities so parents can be informed, supported, and connected. Knowing that parents are children's first and best teachers, we actively seek ways to strengthen the bonds between home and school. Ways to connect at Sunny Hollow include attending parent education events, supporting our mission through donations, attending community events, and volunteering.

## PARENT EDUCATION

We think it is essential that parents understand as much as they can about Montessori education in order to strengthen the school-parent partnership. When parents encourage their child's independence and responsibilities at home, children experience a consistency with the school experience. We offer many different opportunities and resources for parents, both to learn more about Montessori education and to support your parenting journey. Here are opportunities for learning and support:

- **Parent Education Workshops:** Opportunities to learn more about Montessori education or parenting topics. Our evening events are led either by our Montessori guides or by outside speakers with expertise in various topic areas.
- **Parent Groups:** In these multi-week sessions, parents meet with a Montessori guide to discuss parenting topics and make connections with and learn from other parents.
- **Observations:** Parents are encouraged to observe in our classrooms to deepen their understanding about their child's experience and educational environment.
- **Topic Talks:** Drop-in parent discussion hours focused on a particular topic.
- **Casa Welcoming Days and Elementary Gallery Nights:** After-school opportunities for parents to spend time in their child's Casa or Elementary classroom, observing their children's work and classroom community.
- **Parent Resource Library:** The blue cart in the foyer has a wealth of parenting resources for you to check out. Talk to Jenny Thompson, Parent Connections Coordinator, if you are looking for a particular resource.
- **Parent Connections Bulletin Board:** View parenting articles, volunteer opportunities, and community events on this bulletin board above the family folders in the foyer.

**Please Note:** The **Silent Journey and Journey of Discovery** will be offered every two years. This event is a two-day opportunity to connect to Montessori education through the span of ages at our school, experiencing our classrooms and materials as learners who get lessons and work with materials. Parents find this is the best opportunity for really understanding their child's experience. We encourage all Sunny Hollow parents to take advantage of this opportunity at least once in their child's time at our school.

## PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT OF OUR MISSION

Sunny Hollow Montessori and Sunny Hollow families and friends form a strong partnership with a shared mission—to cultivate each child's intellectual and creative potential, appreciation of relationships in nature and society, and sense of individual responsibility. For more than 35 years, parents, alumni, grandparents, parents of alumni and friends have invested in the futures of our students by generously donating time, talent and financial resources.

## THE SUNNY HOLLOW FUND

Donations to the Sunny Hollow Fund support the school's fundamental goal to create the best AMI Montessori educational environment possible. Throughout the year, there are a variety of opportunities for families to contribute to the Sunny Hollow Fund.

### Annual Giving Campaign

Each November, the Annual Giving Campaign culminates on Minnesota's *Give to the Max Day*. We encourage all members of the Sunny Hollow community—staff, parents, grandparents, alumni parents, alumni, and friends—to give as generously as possible according to their means. An unrestricted gift to the Annual Giving Campaign enables Sunny Hollow to:

- Prepare and maintain beautiful indoor and outdoor learning environments
- Employ, train and support effective and engaging teachers
- Maintain affordable tuition for all Sunny Hollow families

An Annual Giving Campaign tax deductible gift, valued and valuable no matter the amount, supports Sunny Hollow's ability to ignite the potential of our students—giving each the ability to transform our world.

### Spring Gala

In the spring, Sunny Hollow hosts its biggest party of the year, the Spring Gala. A vital fundraising event and fun adult-only gathering, the Spring Gala is a wonderful occasion for the school's community -- families, alumni families, grandparents, staff and friends -- to come together to celebrate and enthusiastically raise support for Sunny Hollow.

The Spring Gala is also an excellent opportunity for families and volunteers to be involved with event planning and fundraising.

### Capital Improvements

The commitment and hard work of our families, Board, and staff has brought us to a point in our history where we are investing in the future of our school through significant capital improvements. The Board has established a strategic plan for this phase of development. Funding capital improvements may occur through fund-a-need activities, a special project fund drive, or through a capital campaign.

## WAYS TO MAKE A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

It is easy to make a one-time or monthly [online contribution](#) to the Sunny Hollow Fund, or you can choose one of the options below.

**Cash.** The full value of your contribution goes directly to supporting Sunny Hollow when you make a gift of cash or cash-equivalents. Please mail gifts of cash, checks, or money orders to Sunny Hollow (636 South Mississippi Boulevard, St. Paul, MN 55116) or drop your contribution off in the main office or put it into the Payment/Communication Box in the foyer.

**Gift Matching.** Families often direct their United Way funds to Sunny Hollow or participate in their corporation's matching gifts program.

**Gifts of Stock.** For many, a gift of appreciated securities held more than one year may be the most advantageous way to make a gift. A gift of stock often results in both the avoidance of the capital gains tax and a full income tax deduction based on the valuation of the gift on the date the stock is transferred to Sunny Hollow.

**Estate Planning.** You can help support and provide the best possible AMI Montessori education for your grandchildren and future generations by including Sunny Hollow in your estate plans. Sunny Hollow welcomes future gifts made through wills, bequests, life insurance policies, retirement plan assets, life income gifts, and real estate.

### For More Information

If you are interested in any of the above options or would like to discuss other avenues of giving, please contact our Development Director for more information.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Sunny Hollow has many volunteer opportunities that support school events and classroom needs, while connecting parents to each other and the school. Your involvement is essential to the successful operations of our school and to keeping our tuition costs down, as well as modeling to your child a spirit of philanthropy.

**We ask all families to commit to at least 10 volunteer hours per school year.** This investment of your talent and time is a direct benefit to the children and is essential to the efficient operation, maintenance, and growth of our school.

Volunteer opportunities are posted throughout the year in the weekly News & Notes and in the foyer. Attending monthly Parent Association meetings is another way to learn about volunteer opportunities.

Ways to volunteer:

- Buy groceries or do laundry for your child's classroom
- Make materials for classrooms (e.g. cutting paper, laminating, sewing aprons, or building benches)
- Care for the garden and outdoor environments
- Help coordinate, set up, do activities at, or clean up all-school events such as the Fall Festival, Spaghetti Dinner and Dance, Winter Program, and Spring Fair.
- Help set up or clean up adult-only events, such as the Spring Gala or the Annual Meeting
- Attend Parent Association meetings
- Be a Classroom Liaison
- Be a volunteer classroom substitute

For more information on volunteer opportunities, please contact our Parent Connections Coordinator.

## **SUNNY HOLLOW PARENT ASSOCIATION (SHPA)**

The Sunny Hollow Parent Association facilitates parent participation in the life of the school with the goals of enriching student experiences, building community, and promoting the success of Sunny Hollow Montessori. The Sunny Hollow Parent Association is a committee of the school comprised of parents and guardians of currently enrolled children and a Sunny Hollow staff representative (the Parent Connections Coordinator). All Sunny Hollow parents are part of the Parent Association.

In partnership with the school, the Parent Association organizes community-building events, provides a forum for parent-to-parent communication and socialization, and implements activities to enhance the student and community experience at Sunny Hollow Montessori. The Parent Association runs the Classroom Liaisons program, which serves to organize parent support for each classroom.

The Parent Association engages parents and families with monthly parent coffees, a back-to-school Welcome Picnic, bike-to-school days, the Fall Festival, and the Spaghetti Dinner and Dance. To create community amongst our families, the Parent Association also organizes schools-out meet-ups where families get together at sites around the Twin Cities. With the help of the Parent Association and our many active parents, the Sunny Hollow community is strong and vibrant.

The Parent Association meeting schedule is posted on Sunny Hollow's website, in the school newsletter (News & Notes), and in the foyer. All members of the Sunny Hollow community are invited to attend monthly SHPA meetings, which offer ways to connect with other parents and identify volunteer and engagement opportunities.

For more information about how to get involved with the Sunny Hollow Parent Association, contact our Parent Connections Coordinator.

## **CLASSROOM LIAISONS**

Fostering a sense of community among Sunny Hollow families and staff, Classroom Liaisons provide support and assistance for guides and new Sunny Hollow families. Each classroom has one or two volunteer parents to assist with activities such as welcoming new parents, communicating school events, organizing family events outside school hours and supporting guides' classroom needs and requests. Example events organized by Classroom Liaisons include ice skating outings, trips to the park, and potlucks.

Please refer to the Parent Portal for the updated list of Classroom Liaisons for your child's classroom and the Family Directory for their contact information.

# COMMUNICATIONS

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## HOW WE COMMUNICATE WITH YOU

We strive to have our communications with you be helpful and clear. Please do not hesitate to ask the office staff or guides if you have any questions!

**Toddler Daily Written Reports.** Toddler families receive daily communication that includes information about their child's food intake, elimination, sleeping patterns, and general behavior.

**Family Folders for Toddler, Casa, and Elementary Families.** These folders are located in the main foyer and organized by your child's last name. This is where we put notices about upcoming events, minor injuries, tuition billing, and other important information. For two-household families, each family has a folder. Please check your folder frequently.

**Mailings.** We occasionally send important papers to your home address (such as re-enrollment agreements and school-year forms).

**Emails from Guides or the School.** We use email communication for classroom updates, notice of upcoming events, requests for volunteers, and so on. Please make sure we have your current email address.

**News & Notes Email Newsletter.** Our weekly newsletter keeps you informed about school events and the daily life of the school. We often include photos of children's work and special projects. If you have a grandparent or other caregiver would like to receive this newsletter, please let our Office Administrator know.

**Classroom Updates.** Each classroom sends out a monthly communication to keep you up to date on the life of the classroom.

**Bulletin Boards.** Our foyer bulletin boards include information about upcoming events, parent resources, and volunteer sign-ups.

**Sunny Hollow Montessori Website.** Go to [www.sunnyhollow.org](http://www.sunnyhollow.org) to check out our website. You may especially be interested in these pages:

- Montessori resources: <http://sunnyhollow.org/montessori/montessori-resources/>
- Parenting resources: <http://sunnyhollow.org/parents-2/parenting-resources/>

**Parent Portal on the Sunny Hollow Website.** The Parent Portal is your source for the Family Directory, teacher contact information and other resources. Access the portal from the middle of the top of the website home page ([www.sunnyhollow.org](http://www.sunnyhollow.org)). At the beginning of the school year Office Staff will share the password with families.

## HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH US

Here is information on how to communicate with the staff at Sunny Hollow. The main ways to communicate:

- Call the school office at 651-690-2307. Options:
  - 2 for Attendance
  - 3 for Admissions
  - 4 for Extended Care
  - 5 for School Directory
  - 0 for Office Administrator
- Stop in the office at drop-off or pick-up. We're happy to help!
- Use the *Communication Forms* located with the Payment/Communication box in the foyer. Use these forms to tell us about changes in pick-up person, pick-up time, planned absences, or general notes to the classroom guide.
- Email the Office Administrator with attendance notes, upcoming absences, medication issues, and so on.
- Email any staff member directly. See STAFF DIRECTORY on page 7.

## CONTACTING YOUR CHILD'S GUIDE

Enrolling your child in Sunny Hollow Montessori begins a relationship and creative partnership. Involvement in your child's education gives him or her security and supports our ability to provide an extraordinary learning experience. Our staff is available to respond to your questions and to act as a resource for support. Regular, private communication with your child's Head Guide is highly encouraged. Please contact the school office immediately if a non-custodial parent is NOT to be notified of your child's progress.

The options for connecting to guides are listed below. Head Guides are available before and after the regular school day. The best time to talk with guides is not at drop-off or pick-up, when your child needs either your attention or the guides' attention, so please use these alternative methods.

To contact your child's guide:

- To communicate information that your child's classroom needs to know the same day, use the *Communication Forms* that are located in the foyer. Place the forms in the Payment/Communication box in the foyer.  
  
We check the box throughout the day and will get messages to your child's guide.
- To speak to a guide in person or on the phone, request a time to talk in one of these ways: use a *Communication Form*, call the office to leave a message, or email the guide.
- If you have questions that are best answered in writing, email your child's guide.

## CHANGING THE PICK-UP PERSON

Please notify the school office when someone other than parents/guardians is picking up your child from school. **We must have written permission to release your child to an adult other than a parent or guardian.** To notify us:

- Email the Office Administrator or
- Fill out the *Communication Form*, or
- Give the office a hand-written note.

If the staff person releasing your child does not recognize the adult (such as a grandparent picking up for the first time), then we will ask for identification. Please let the pick-up person know to bring their identification each time they are picking up.

## REQUESTING DROP-IN BEFORE OR AFTER CARE

If you need your child to stay after school or come early when you are not contracted for Extended Day, you may request drop-in care. We can usually accommodate your request, provided we can still meet staff-to-child ratio requirements.

To request drop-in care:

- Call the main office, 651-690-2307, and choose extension zero (0) for the Office Administrator, or
- Email the Office Administrator

*For after-school care, same-day drop-in care requests must be received by 2 pm.*

*For before-school care, drop-in care requests must be received by 3:30 pm the business day before care is needed.*

## MAKING CHANGES TO EXTENDED DAY

To sign up for or make changes to Extended Day (before and after school care), please stop in the office to pick up the *Program Change* form. Extended Day changes require a two-week notice.

## MAKING CHANGES TO LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Families sign up for language programs at the beginning of the school year. For Casa language, you may make changes by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month for the next month (fill out the *Program Change* form in the office). Elementary language registration is for the whole school year and may not be changed.

## REACHING EXTENDED DAY STAFF

Before 4:00 pm, call the main office to get a message to the Extended Day staff. After 4:00 pm, call 651-690-2307, option 4 or extension 118.

## REPORTING ABSENCES

To report same-day attendance changes, call 651-690-2307, then select option 2 (attendance line). Or email our Office Administrator.

For more information on reporting absences, please see ATTENDANCE on page 32.

## ATTENDANCE

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Regular attendance is important for your child's understanding of the prepared environment and involvement in the classroom. The children who benefit most from their Montessori experience arrive promptly and attend consistently in order to fully participate in the daily work cycle. School-aged children (K-6) who are frequently tardy or absent compromise their academic and social learning potential. Please make every effort to see that your child comes to school regularly and on time.

School-aged students are expected to attend school every day except when excused according to Minnesota State compulsory attendance laws. School administration will follow-up on any unexcused absences to ensure the safety of the children. The school is required to report excessive absences or tardiness to the appropriate agencies.

To report an unplanned absence or tardiness (because of a sick child or other reason):

- Call the school's Attendance line at 651-690-2307, option 2, or send an email our office administrator.
- Please contact us by 9 am.

Please report all symptoms when your child is ill. In case of contagious illness, indicate the specific illness (for example, "strep throat" or "chicken pox"). Reports of contagious illness or disease are posted on the bulletin board in the school foyer.

To report planned absences, do one of the following:

- Use the *Communication Form* (located in the foyer at both entrances) to give advance notice of late arrivals, absence due to vacation, or extended time out of school.
- Send an email to our office administrator.

Office staff will always pass your communication along to your child's teacher.

## TUITION AND FEES

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In January of each year, Sunny Hollow Montessori's Board of Trustees sets the annual tuition for each program. Tuition may be paid annually, bi-annually or monthly. Other tuition payment policies are detailed in the enrollment agreement.

### REGISTRATION FEE POLICY

To secure enrollment, each year families pay a non-refundable Registration Fee. If the Registration Fee payment is not received by the requested date, Sunny Hollow Montessori reserves the right to fill the student's space.

### ELEMENTARY PROGRAM ACTIVITY AND SUPPLY FEE

The Elementary program engages in Going Out activities and invites experts into the school to share their knowledge with the classroom through residencies or projects. The activity and supply fee is used to cover the additional expense of these programs, as well as the various supplies used by Elementary students.

### FAMILY DISCOUNT

Sunny Hollow Montessori offers a sibling discount of 10% for each additional sibling enrolled at the school. The discount applies to the program with the lowest tuition amount. This discount applies to tuition only and does *not* apply to the annual Registration Fee or other fees.

### TUITION ASSISTANCE

We value your commitment to enroll your child in a private Montessori environment and recognize the financial sacrifice this commitment may bring. We also value socio-economic diversity amongst our families, and work with all families to support their enrollment.

The Board of Trustees sets aside a fund for tuition assistance from the operating revenues each year. In addition, through the generous support of the Hiawatha Education Foundation, we are able to offer scholarships for low-income children enrolled at Sunny Hollow.

Family applications for assistance are processed by Student Scholarship Services (SSS) for Financial Aid, a unit of the National Association of Independent Schools. Applications are available at [www.nais.org/financialaid/sss](http://www.nais.org/financialaid/sss) or in the school office. There is a financial aid application fee per family set by SSS for Financial Aid. Priority is given to applications received from returning families and to children completing their leadership year in a classroom. Award notifications will be made in late April. Application information is kept strictly confidential.

Parents of toddlers and preschoolers may be eligible for the following sources of funding:

- Childcare Assistance Program (CCAP), administered through the county in which you live. For more information: In Ramsey County, call 651-641-6665; in Hennepin County, call 612-348-5937; other counties, call 1-888-291-9811.
- State Early Learning Scholarships (up to \$7500 per year toward tuition at a 4-Star Parent Aware School). For more information, go to [http://www.thinksmall.org/for\\_parents\\_and\\_guardians/help\\_paying\\_for\\_child\\_care](http://www.thinksmall.org/for_parents_and_guardians/help_paying_for_child_care).

For information on these two programs, contact our Admissions Director.

## **LATE PAYMENT POLICY**

Tuition is due on the date specified for each payment option in the current Schedule of Tuition and Fees. Annual or semi-annual payments received more than five days after the payment due date are automatically assessed up to six percent of the current past due amount.

Continued enrollment is contingent upon payment of tuition. Families who are experiencing financial difficulties must make tuition payment arrangements with the Head of School. Families who are delinquent in their tuition payments and have not made payment arrangements will be dismissed.

## **LATE CHARGE FOR PICK-UP POLICY**

Late pick-up fees start within 5 minutes of the contracted dismissal time.

Late Fee Schedule:

5 minutes	\$5.00
6-10 minutes	\$10.00
10-15 minutes	\$15.00
+15 minutes	\$1.00 per minute

\* An additional \$50.00 fee is assessed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> late pick-up and each occurrence thereafter.

## TODDLER DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES

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The Sunny Hollow school day for toddlers:

- Begins **PROMPTLY** at 8:45 a.m. (arrival is 8:30 to 8:45).
- Ends **PROMPTLY** at 11:45 a.m. (Half Day students) or 3:30 p.m. (Full Day students)

**Please turn cell phones off before entering Sunny Hollow.** The time spent with your child is precious and deserving of your full attention.

**Please help keep children safe by driving 10 M.P.H. in the parking lot.**

### TODDLER DROP-OFF

We have a special entrance at the Temple of Aaron just for toddler families so that we can best support our youngest students. The Toddler entrance is quieter and less crowded so that we can meet each toddler's developmental need to walk independently and at his or her own pace.

The Toddler entrance is located at the middle of the building, between the Temple of Aaron main entrance and the Sunny Hollow playground.

### Toddler Drop-Off Procedures:

- Enter the parking lot from the north entrance (Hartford Ave.) and park in the designated spaces. There is **NO PARKING** on the south end of the parking lot from 8:00 – 9:00 a.m., Monday to Friday.
- **Keep your child in hand as you cross the parking lot to the Toddler or main school entrance.**
- **Morning Extended Day: From 7:30 to 8:15**, walk children through the *Sunny Hollow main entrance* and down the hall to the Toddler Community door. **After 8:15 am**, please enter through the Toddler entrance in the Temple of Aaron. If the classroom door is closed, please knock. Our staff will greet you and your child at the door.
- **School Day arrivals:** From 8:30 to 8:45, walk children through the Toddler entrance at the temple to the Toddler Community door. *Please wait outside the classroom door* for our staff to greet your child.
- *Please remember to sign your child in!*
- Exit the parking lot from the north entrance (Hartford Ave). Do not exit through the south entrance (Woodlawn Ave).

### Late Arrivals

- **After 8:45 am late arrival:** Go through the *Sunny Hollow main entrance* and sign your child into the office. We will walk you and your child to the Toddler Community; please wait at the classroom door for staff to come greet your child.

If you have a Casa or Elementary child, it's best to drop off your older child first. We recommend car drop-off for older children who have toddler siblings (but car drop-off is not available for toddlers).

## TODDLER PICK UP

**11:30 a.m. (Half-Day) or 3:30 p.m. (Full Day):** Please use *the Toddler entrance* and wait outside the Toddler Community door. Staff will dismiss children to parents/guardians at the door. Please arrive 5 to 10 minutes before the program end time. The Half-Day ends promptly at 11:30 am, but parents are allowed a window of 15 minutes to pick their child up.

**Afternoon Extended Day:** Please use the *Sunny Hollow main entrance* and walk through to the Toddler Community. Children will be in the classroom or in the outdoor environment. You may enter the classroom to get to the outdoor environment. Please arrive 5 to 10 minutes before the program end time.

## ALTERNATE PICK-UP PERSON

Please notify the school office when someone other than parents/guardians is picking up your child from school. **We must have written permission to release your child to anyone other than a parent or guardian.** To notify us:

- Email the Office Administrator, or
- Fill out the green *Communication Form*, or
- Give the office a hand-written note.

If the staff person releasing your child does not recognize the adult (such as a grandparent picking up for the first time), then we will ask for identification. Please let the pick-up person know to bring their identification each time they are picking up. If an adult will be a regular pick-up person, make sure they are listed on your family's *Student Information Form*.

Staff will release toddlers only to adults (not to older siblings) unless parents make a special arrangement with the school office.

## BEING ON TIME

Parents/guardians are expected to be on time to pick up their children at dismissal. Just as being on time for the start of school is important, it is equally important to be prompt when picking up your child. Your child trusts that you will be timely. If you are running late, please call the office.

Children who are not picked up at the designated time will be taken to the office or included in the Extended Day program. *Sunny Hollow reserves the right to impose a late pick-up fee as described in the Extended Day contract.*

Late pick-up fees also apply to Extended Day drop-ins. If you are running late for the 3:30 or 4:30 pick-up times, call the Extended Day line to request an additional hour. For more information on how to call the Extended Day line, please see *Requesting Drop-In Before or After Care* on page 31.

## PARKING LOT MAP

Car Drop Off →

Foyer Drop Off →

No Parking M-F 8-9  
AM    **X X X X**



## CASA AND ELEMENTARY DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES

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The Sunny Hollow school day:

- Begins **PROMPTLY** at 8:30 a.m. All Casa and Elementary students are expected to be in the school building by 8:30
- Ends **PROMPTLY** at 11:55 a.m. (Half Day students) or 3:30 p.m. (Full Day students)

**Please turn cell phones off before entering Sunny Hollow.** The time spent with your child is precious and deserving of your full attention.

**Please help keep children safe by driving 10 M.P.H. in the parking lot.**

## **DROP-OFF FOR CASA AND ELEMENTARY (8:20 - 8:30 A.M.)**

Parents have the opportunity to bring their Casa and Elementary children to school each morning by car drop-off or by walking in with them to the front foyer. Families who have registered for before school care will escort their child into the building, visit the child's locker, and go to the designated before school care area.

### **Car Drop-Off for Casa and Elementary**

We encourage parents of older children to use this option as often as possible. This is the only parking lot drop-off option; please do not drop your child off from any other area of the parking lot.

- Car drop-off is available between 8:20 and 8:30 am.
- Before entering the car line, please make sure your child has everything she or he needs to walk into school.
- Enter the parking lot from the *south entrance* (Woodlawn Ave).
- Form a car line at the side entrance to the garden.
- The drop-off point will be marked with orange cones. This is the only spot where children should get out of the car. Please do not allow children to get out of the car at other points in the line.
- A staff member will open the car door and assist children in getting out of the car and into school. A second staff member is posted at the school doors to ensure children get from the car into the school. In the foyer, another staff member will greet Casa children and ensure that they proceed to their lockers. Elementary children will proceed directly upstairs.
- Exit at the *north entrance* (Hartford Ave). Do not turn around to exit through the south entrance.

If your child experiences difficulty saying goodbye at the car, please park and walk with your child into the school. **At 8:30, the Woodlawn entrance will close.** If you arrive after that time, please enter through the *north entrance* (Hartford Avenue) and escort your children into the building.

### **Foyer Drop-Off for Casa and Elementary**

Parents may choose to escort children directly into the building.

- Enter the parking lot from the *north entrance* (Hartford Ave.) and park in the designated spaces. There is no parking on the South end of the parking lot from 8:00 – 9:00 a.m., Monday to Friday.
- **Please keep your child within your *sight* and your *reach* as you cross the parking lot to the school entrance.** For young children, please hold their hands.
- From 8:20 to 8:30, staff members will greet the Casa children in the foyer and ensure that they proceed to their lockers. Children will greet their teachers at their classroom doors. Elementary children proceed directly upstairs.
- Exit the parking lot from the *north entrance* (Hartford Ave). Do not exit through the south entrance (Woodlawn Ave).

### **Late Arrivals**

Please make every effort to bring your child to school on time. Parents arriving after 8:30 a.m. must sign in their children with the office. After 8:40 am, children are marked tardy. A Sunny Hollow staff person will escort Casa children to their lockers and classrooms. Elementary children will proceed directly to their own lockers upstairs and then to their classrooms.

## PICK UP FOR CASA AND ELEMENTARY

**Casa 11:55 a.m. (Half-Day) or 3:30 p.m. (Full Day):** Prior to the time of dismissal, children will visit their lockers under the supervision of staff. When the children finish at their lockers, they will be dismissed to their parent/guardian in the foyer area of the school. Please arrive 5 to 10 minutes before the program end time.

**Elementary 3:30 p.m.:** All Elementary children are dismissed outdoors. After parking your car, please wait at the south gate to the front field (on the Mississippi River side). An Elementary staff person will escort children to the gate and release each child with a handshake. Please make sure your child receives this farewell so each child is accounted for.

Note: Families picking up both a Casa and an Elementary student should pick the Casa child up first. Please contact your child's Elementary Guide to make arrangements.

**Casa or Elementary Afternoon Extended Day:** Pick up children outside (playground for Casa or front lawn for Elementary) or in the indoor after-school space (basement for Casa or Fink Hall for Elementary). Check the front door to find out where the children can be picked up. Be sure to check in with the Extended Day staff prior to taking your child home. Please arrive 5 to 10 minutes before the program end time.

If you need to pick up your child before the scheduled time, please submit a *Communication Form* or email our Office Administrator.

## AFTER-SCHOOL PICK UP FROM YOGA OR LANGUAGE

For all yoga and language classes, the instructor will bring your child(ren) to the Sunny Hollow lobby. The teacher shakes each child's hand as she releases them to the parent/caregiver. Please make sure your child receives this farewell so that the instructor knows that each child is with the right adult.

## ALTERNATE PICK-UP PERSON

Please notify the school office when someone other than parents/guardians is picking up your child from school. **We must have written permission to release your child to an adult other than a parent or guardian.** To notify us:

- Email the Office Administrator or
- Fill out the *Communication Form*, or
- Give the office a hand-written note.

If the staff person releasing your child does not recognize the adult (such as a grandparent picking up for the first time), then we will ask for identification. Please let the pick-up person know to bring their identification each time they are picking up. If an adult will be a regular pick-up person, make sure they are listed on your family's *Student Information Form*.

## BEING ON TIME

Parents/guardians are expected to be on time to pick up their children at dismissal. Just as being on time for the start of school is important, it is equally important to be prompt when picking up your child. Your child trusts that you will be timely. If you are running late, please call the office. We can then explain the circumstances to your child, eliminating unnecessary fears.

Children who are not picked up at the designated time will be brought to the office. *Sunny Hollow reserves the right to impose a late pick-up fee as described in the Extended Day contract.*

## MEALS

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### BREAKFAST

Casa and Elementary students contracted to attend the before-school Extended Day program have breakfast foods available until 8:00 a.m. Toddlers have breakfast foods available until 8:15 a.m.

### LUNCH

Parent/guardians provide a daily lunch for their child (see daily Nutritional Guidelines below) in a labeled paper bag or reusable lunch tote. **Lunch portions provide one-third of the child's daily nutritional needs.** If a student forgets lunch, we will call you to arrange lunch delivery prior to lunchtime. Sunny Hollow staff must provide nutritional supplements if a child's lunch does not provide one-third of the child's daily nutritional needs as specified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Code of Federal Regulations, title 7, section 226.20. **Staff is required by regulation to notify parent/guardians of Toddler and Casa students if lunches do not meet the USDA designated lunch requirements.** We have children keep their uneaten lunch items in their lunch containers so you can monitor nutritional intake.

Lunchtime provides an opportunity to teach children about the importance of nutrition and to reinforce positive messages about respect for the environment. Parents are encouraged to discuss nutritional content with their children and to use reusable containers to reinforce these important concepts to the children. We also ask parents to provide lunch containers that children can open independently, if possible. Squeezable tubes are not allowed as children are often unable to open them independently.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service recommends specific **daily food patterns** and nutritional guidelines for children by age and physical activity level; see [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov/tools-daily-food-plans](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov/tools-daily-food-plans). All children should play actively every day, and 60 minutes or more of physical activity is recommended for 2- to 12-year-olds.

#### Single-Meal Recommendations for Children (Based on One-Third of Daily Recommendations)

##### **2-Year-Olds**

###### MyPlate Plan (1000 daily calories)

Grains	1 ounce
Vegetables	1/3 cup
Fruits	1/3 cup
Dairy or equivalent	2/3 cup
Protein Foods	2/3 ounce

##### **3- to 5-Year-Olds**

###### MyPlate Plan (1400 daily calories)

Grains	1-2/3 ounces
Vegetables	1/2 cup
Fruits	1/2 cup
Dairy or equivalent	2/3 cup
Protein Foods	1-1/3 ounces

##### **6- to 12-Year-Olds**

###### MyPlate Plan (1800 daily calories)

Grains	2 ounces
Vegetables	3/4 cup
Fruits	1/2 cup
Dairy or equivalent	1 cup
Protein Foods	1-2/3 ounces

All Sunny Hollow Montessori staff must be aware of prescribed diet needs of the children and must keep the prescribed diet and duration specified in the child's record. Food allergy information must be available in the area where food is prepared or served to children with allergies. All staff must be informed of these allergies.

**Sunny Hollow Montessori is a peanut free and tree nut free school. Items with peanuts or tree nuts (almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, etc.) may not be consumed, served, or stored anywhere on the Sunny Hollow campus.**

*Please check with your child's Guide for allergy guidelines specific to each classroom.*

For daily lunch, children need:

- A soft-sided lunch container that is labeled with the child's name.
- Reusable and labeled containers that children can open independently.
- Healthy, fresh foods (see nutritional guidelines above).
- Warm food sent in thermal containers. Children do not have access to microwave ovens.

Note: Pre-packaged food such as Lunchables, soft-wiches, and fruit snacks do not provide the nutrition children need to stay focused at school. Please avoid these types of foods

The Toddler and Casa classrooms provide:

- Refrigeration for your child's lunch container (at a temperature of 40 degrees Fahrenheit or less).
- Water and milk from rBST-free cows.
- Reusable plates, utensils, napkins, and tablecloths or placemats.

The Elementary classrooms provide water and milk from rBST-free cows. Elementary lunches are not refrigerated; please use ice packs/insulated lunch bags if necessary. Please provide silverware for your child.

Sunny Hollow follows DHS and State Guidelines for providing meals and supplemental snacks to preschool aged children, based on the hours of attendance by the student:

2 – 5 hours attendance	=	1 snack
5 – 10 hours attendance	=	1 meal + 2 snacks, unless 4+ hours were sleep
+10 hours attendance	=	2 meals + 2 snacks, unless 4+ hours were sleep

## **SNACK**

A mid-morning snack is available during the morning work cycle. In the Toddler and Casa environments, the "food preparation" work also provides a nutritional food opportunity. Students attending after-school Extended Day programs will be provided with a healthy snack and milk or water, all available until 4:15 p.m.

Sunny Hollow maintains a safe water supply and makes water available to children throughout the day.

## HEALTH

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The *Student Information Form*, the *Health Summary*, and the *Childcare/Student Immunization Record* provide the school with information regarding the child's health history, doctor, dentist, and preferred medical facilities. **It is imperative that parent/guardians keep the school informed of changes to all information, especially phone numbers and medical conditions.**

**ALL SERIOUS MEDICAL CONDITIONS, INCLUDING ALLERGIES, FOOD SENSITIVITIES OR DIETARY RESTRICTIONS, MUST BE REPORTED TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE.**

### STUDENT INFORMATION FORM

Parents must complete, sign and return this form to school at the start of the school year. Children cannot attend until this information is received. The form includes the contact information for parent/guardians as well as persons authorized to be contacted in an emergency if the parent/guardian cannot be reached. This form also includes the child's physician, dentist, hospital of choice, insurance information and any medical problems or concerns. This is the school's main source of providing information to emergency personnel in the event of an emergency. Please remember to update the form with any changes throughout the school year.

### HEALTH SUMMARY / IMMUNIZATION RECORD

The *Health Summary* and the *Childcare/Student Immunization Record* must be completed by the child's physician and submitted to the school office prior to admittance. In addition, children with chronic conditions (such as asthma) must have a medical action plan signed by the physician on file at the school.

Children cannot attend without an up-to-date immunization record (or signed *notarized* statement of parental objection to the immunization or a physician-signed medical exception) on file in the school office. The completed form must contain documentation of current immunization against:

- Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTP)
- Polio
- Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR)
- Haemophilus Influenzae Type b (Hib)
- Varicella (Chickenpox)
- Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B

The *Childcare/Student Immunization Record* must be updated whenever your child changes program levels and/or receives an immunization, until the full series of childhood immunizations has been given, in keeping with the Minnesota Department of Health's immunization law. It is important to communicate any information regarding health conditions that may affect your child during the school day, such as asthma or food and beverage allergies. We will communicate this information to all staff persons involved with your child's care.

Other Sunny Hollow policies apply to children who have not been immunized for measles, pertussis, and other preventable diseases. Contact the office to learn more about these policies.

## MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION RECORD

Prescription and/or non-prescription (over the counter) medications will NOT be administered to the child without the written consent or instructions from **both** physician/nurse practitioner and parent/guardians. Use the *Medication Authorization/Administration Record* form.

### Do not send medication or supplements in your child's lunchbox.

**Non-prescription medications** (fever reducing, cold/allergy, sunscreen, sun block, insect repellent, lip balm, skin lotion, first aid cream, etc.) must be in the manufacturer's original container that includes written dosage instructions. The administration of non-prescription medications shall be limited for a specific child for each specific episode of illness. Use of the *Medication Authorization/Administration Record* form and written instructions from the physician/nurse practitioner are required. **Pain-reducing medication for symptoms of illness or after the administration of immunizations also requires a physician order and a completed *Medication Authorization/Administration Record* form. Please give as many doses at home as possible.**

**Prescription medications** must be kept in the original container, have a legible prescription label with the child's name, prescribing physician, and written instructions before the medication can be administered.

A Sunny Hollow Montessori staff person will administer medication as instructed by the physician/nurse practitioner, documenting the child's name, date, and time the medication was administered. The record is available to the parent/guardian and maintained with the medication until it expires or until the medication dosage plan has ended. Any unused portion of medications will be returned to the child's parent/guardian or destroyed as instructed on the *Medication Authorization/Administration Record* form.

## ILLNESSES AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

The Minnesota Department of Health reports that the best way to prevent getting and transmitting disease is to wash hands frequently and cover your cough/sneeze by coughing or sneezing into your sleeve (not your hands), or into a tissue that you discard immediately. MDH recommends that all families make preparations at home so that you have an adequate supply of over-the-counter medication and fluids if you or your child is sick and home for an extended period. Sunny Hollow tracks any illness symptoms, as recommended by MDH. If your child is ill, please follow the absence reporting procedures.

Parent/guardians are required to inform Sunny Hollow Montessori within 24 hours, exclusive of weekends/holidays, if a child is diagnosed as having a contagious reportable disease (such as chicken pox, head lice, or ringworm). Sunny Hollow will notify the community of any reported diseases within 24 hours of receiving information. Notification is posted on the school foyer bulletin board.

**Your child must stay home from school if he or she has:**

- a reportable illness (mumps, measles, chicken pox, etc.);
- a contagious disease (strep throat, chicken pox, head lice, ring worm, etc.);
- conjunctivitis (pink eye) or pus draining from the eye;
- a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit (or higher) **before fever reducing medication is given;**
- been vomiting;
- has diarrhea;
- unexplained lethargy;
- significant respiratory distress that makes it difficult for the child to participate in program activities;
- had antibiotics administered for less than 24 hours;
- not been treated by a physician for an exposed wound requiring stitches.

**Your child must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to school.**

**If your child has experienced fever, vomiting, or diarrhea, he or she may return to school 24 hours after the fever has broken (without medication), or vomiting and/or diarrhea has stopped. These guidelines minimize spread of illness within the community.**

**If your child has been prescribed antibiotics for a contagious illness, he or she may return to school 24 hours after the first dose of the prescription has been administered.**

If your child becomes ill while at school, parent/guardians will be immediately notified and **are expected to pick up the child.** The student will be isolated from other children and rest under the supervision of a staff person until a parent or guardian arrives. The child may return to school 24 hours after symptoms disappear or antibiotics are administered.

## **ACCIDENT AND INJURY TREATMENT AND REPORTING**

The Sunny Hollow Montessori staff is trained in Red Cross First Aid and CPR procedures. Our first aid procedures are detailed in our Health and Safety Policies Manual located in the office. For treating minor injuries, we will use nothing but soap, water, and ice.

In the event of minor injuries (scratches, abrasions, etc.), first aid procedures are administered to the child as needed. Any injury and first aid procedures administered are documented and reported to the parent/guardian in writing that school day, as well as recorded on an injury/accident log and in the child's file. For head injuries and other serious injuries, we call the parent or guardian immediately. Every effort is made to reach parent/guardians in an emergency situation. If the parent/guardians cannot be reached, the school will contact the authorized person(s) or health provider/facility listed on the *Student Information Form*. The school retains the right to contact local paramedics and/or use ambulance transportation as deemed necessary. Sunny Hollow reviews our accident/injury log annually to assess for potential hazards. In addition, if any injury requires treatment by a health care provider or the use of emergency medical services, we report this to the Department of Human Services within 24 hours.

## BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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Sunny Hollow Montessori staff, in partnership with parents, work to create environments where all children are appreciated, feel safe, and are free to learn. The Montessori environment and philosophy encourage choice and freedom within an atmosphere of love and positive guidance that helps the child to create an inner guide and develop their own self-discipline. The classroom staff, in coordination with the school administration, is responsible for ensuring implementation of and compliance with the school's behavior guidance policies and procedures. Staff expects and appreciates parental support when students experience behavioral issues. Parent/guardians are strongly encouraged to discuss these behavior expectations with their child prior to school admittance (if developmentally appropriate).

### TODDLER BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

Very young children require positive guidance and redirection to grow and develop. Our Toddler staff establish simple guidelines for the Toddler Community that help create a safe and respectful environment for the children. We use these behavior guidelines for the children:

- Maintain a safe and healthy learning environment
- Respect others and oneself
- Respect property

Staff set firm, consistent, and loving limits for children. When children engage in inappropriate behaviors (including hitting, biting, or damaging a material), staff provide positive behavior guidance to help children develop the self-discipline to engage in appropriate behaviors. Our techniques include:

- Stating rules in the positive (“Please walk in the classroom” or “Chairs are for sitting on.”)
- Redirecting children (such as reading a book, singing a song, or getting children engaged in a constructive activity) when they are not able to be safe with themselves or others.
- Giving positive choices.

If a child is jeopardizing the safety of others, an adult may separate her or him from the group until he or she is able to be safe. If a behavior is violent and results in an injury that breaks the skin of another child or an adult, the parent/guardians may be contacted to pick up the child.

The following policy and procedure will be implemented if a child's inappropriate behavior persists, is serious in nature and/or requires increased staff guidance and time:

- Staff will observe and record the child's behavior and the staff response to the behavior.
- When developmentally appropriate, the Guide will address the behavior with the child.
- Staff will consult with the parent/guardians to address the child's unacceptable behavior.
- Staff and parent/guardians will develop a behavior guidance plan to alter the behavior immediately. A professional assessment may be recommended when appropriate.
- If the problem becomes serious and/or the unacceptable behavior persists beyond 30 days after implementing a mutually agreed upon behavior guidance plan with the parent/guardians, the child will be dismissed from Sunny Hollow Montessori. Recommendation of dismissal will be made in writing to the parent/guardians.

## CASA AND ELEMENTARY BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

Classroom Guides are responsible for establishing and maintaining a safe, respectful environment. Each student is held accountable for his or her behavior in keeping with Sunny Hollow's behavior guidelines:

- Maintain a safe and healthy learning environment
- Respect others and oneself
- Respect property

**If working with a child with special needs**, a professional source (psychiatrist, special needs coordinator, case manager, physician, physical therapist, etc.) will be consulted for interdisciplinary guidance.

Behaviors that violate Sunny Hollow's behavior guidelines include (but are not limited to):

- Behavior inconsistent with classroom rules.
- Uncooperative behavior.
- Disrespectful or hurtful acts towards others.
- Inappropriate language.
- Being in an unsupervised area.

Staff redirect children when the children's actions violate the behavior guidelines. Children are taught acceptable alternatives to inappropriate behavior, redirected toward a constructive activity, encouraged to address a wrongful action, and guided in how to receive forgiveness. If behaviors are persistent, we will bring them to the attention of parents/guardians.

Behaviors that are more serious include (but are not limited to):

- Repeated occurrences of inappropriate behaviors that violate behavior guidelines. "Repeated occurrences" is defined as requiring a child to be separated from the group five or more times in one week or eight times in two weeks.
- Harassment or bullying (when one or more persons uses superior strength or influence in the form of repeated, unwelcome verbal or physical conduct which has the purpose and/or effect to intimidate or manipulate another person and creates a hostile /offensive environment).
- Violent or assaulting behavior that jeopardizes the physical safety of other children and/or staff.

If a child is jeopardizing the safety of others, he or she may be separated from the group. If a behavior is violent and results in an injury that breaks the skin of another child or an adult, the parent/guardians will be contacted to pick-up the child. Except in rare circumstances, the child will be invited to rejoin the classroom community the next day.

The following policy and procedure will be implemented if a child's inappropriate behavior persists, is serious in nature and/or requires increased staff guidance and time:

- Staff will observe and record the child's behavior and staff response to the behavior.
- When developmentally appropriate, the Guide will address the behavior with the child.
- Staff will consult with the parent/guardians to address the child's unacceptable behavior.
- Staff and parent/guardians will develop and implement a behavior guidance plan to alter the behavior immediately. A professional assessment may be recommended when appropriate.
- If the problem becomes serious and/or the unacceptable behavior persists beyond 30 days after implementing a mutually agreed upon behavior guidance plan with the parent/guardians, the child will be dismissed from Sunny Hollow Montessori. Recommendation of dismissal will be made in writing to the parent/guardians.

In cases of harassment or bullying, staff will separate the aggressor from the target. At that time, we will address the bullying behavior with the aggressor, letting him or her know that the behavior is not acceptable, and will follow disciplinary procedures.

## GENERAL POLICIES

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### ADMISSIONS

Prospective families may apply for admission at any time, with priority given to families who apply before the spring application deadline. We notify families of acceptance by April 15.

For our Toddler Community, children must be at least 16 months old and be steady walkers. There are no toilet training requirements as toilet learning is part of their developmental work.

For our Casa program, children must be at least 2 years and 9 months old. They must be toilet-trained, able to communicate, and be physically, mentally and emotionally capable of participating appropriately in classroom activities. When there is a question of readiness, we may recommend an additional meeting with the child closer to the start date. If the child does not meet the readiness requirements, we may delay admission to the child.

Children with special needs are encouraged to enroll, provided we can reasonably accommodate them. We will schedule a classroom observation for the child, along with a consultation with the parent/guardians, a Guide, the Learning Specialist, and the Head of School to assess our staff's ability to work with the child and the child's ability to adapt to the group. Enrolling the child for a trial period may be necessary.

### ANIMAL POLICY

Caring for an animal provides a valuable learning opportunity for children. Sunny Hollow Montessori permits the presence of small animals (fish, gerbils, birds, etc.) in the classroom. Notify the school office if your child has an allergy or medical condition that would restrict the presence animals with fur or feathers in the classrooms.

*Due to licensing and insurance requirements, visiting pets are not allowed on school grounds during school hours of operation (7:00 am – 6:00 pm), or during school events outside of those hours, without prior approval from the Head of School. Please contact the Head of School at least seven business days in advance to arrange a visit for your pet. Service animals are not considered pets for the purpose of this policy.*

### BATHROOM HYGIENE (TODDLERS)

Toilet learning is part of a toddler's work. When children arrive each morning in the Toddler Community, they will use the toilet and put on cotton underpants, which help them become more sensitive to their body signals.

### BATHROOM HYGIENE (CASA)

Children admitted to the Casa program must be toilet trained before the start of school in the fall. During times of transition and new situations, it is not uncommon for children to experience some regression in this area. Staff will expect this and work with both you and your child in order to make continued progress in this area. Please let classroom staff know about your child's development in this area as soon as possible so we might help facilitate this learning. Independent toileting consists of carrying out all aspects of using the bathroom facilities (relieving, wiping, managing clothes, washing hands, etc.).

**Please do not send your Casa child to school in either a diaper or pull-up. These items are not allowed in our Casa environment per state guidelines.**

If challenges with independent toileting become an extraordinary burden on our staff or cause significant disruption in the classroom (as determined by the Guide), we will set up a meeting to address possible solutions. It is our full intention to recognize and sustain the individual needs of your child in this critical step of development. Your assistance and acknowledgement of our desire to do so will only ensure a positive, successful experience for your child.

## **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Birthdays are an important part of a child's life. Each child's birthday is celebrated at Sunny Hollow Montessori. Birthday celebrations vary from classroom to classroom. Your child's Guide will contact you prior to your child's birthday to discuss celebration opportunities consistent and appropriate with the Montessori philosophy. For Toddler and Casa families, we ask that parents do not bring food into school for birthday celebrations.

## **CALENDAR**

Sunny Hollow Montessori updates the school calendar annually. A school year calendar is distributed before the school year starts and can be found on our website, [www.sunnyhollow.org](http://www.sunnyhollow.org). Reminders are distributed **electronically** and will hold the most up-to-date information. The administration makes every effort to minimize changes to the schedule after publication. Some circumstances may require a change in calendar dates. Families will be notified of calendar changes as quickly as possible.

## **CELL PHONE POLICIES**

We ask parents to please turn cell phones off before entering Sunny Hollow. We believe the time spent with your child is precious and deserving of your full attention.

Children do not need to bring a cell phone to school. If after-school activities or other needs require your child to bring a cell phone to school, please check with your child's Guide to develop a plan for storing the cell phone during the school day.

## **CHILD ABUSE / NEGLECT**

Minnesota law requires that school staff report suspected physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect of children to the local welfare agency, local police department or county sheriff, or the Department of Human Services. Any staff member who knows of or has reason to believe a child is being neglected or abused must report the situation to the proper authorities immediately. Please see the Department of Human Services document at the end of this handbook for more information on child abuse/neglect reporting.

## **CLASSROOM PLACEMENT**

Our goal for classroom placement is to provide an age and gender balance in each Montessori environment. Older students serve as role models and tutors for the younger students and in the process gain confidence in their abilities and develop a positive self-concept. The younger children observe the older children and obtain a clear example of what is expected, working with and learning from their peers as well as from the classroom Guides. Classroom placements carefully match the skills and needs of the individual child with the skills and needs of the learning community.

Montessori environments are multi-year placements: one to two years in the Toddler Community, three to four years in the Casa (Primary) program, and three years at each Elementary level (lower and upper). Because the composition of the Montessori learning community is carefully selected, children are not transferred to another classroom environment unless the Head Guide, in collaboration with the Head of School, determines a classroom transfer is needed.

For these reasons, Sunny Hollow does not accept classroom placement requests. However, parents or guardians may communicate in writing any specific characteristics or needs to be considered in determining your child's placement selection. Send this written information to the school office no later than May 15 of the registering school year.

We communicate classroom placements to families in August.

## **CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS / SUBSTITUTES**

Each school year we encourage parents who are available to join our volunteer substitute pool. Substituting supports our classroom environments and also gives parents more understanding of the Montessori approach to education. Parent/guardians who volunteer in the classroom complete the same information

and screening as employees, including a Department of Human Services background check. A classroom substitute orientation, required by all parents who volunteer in the classroom, is held in the fall. Volunteers are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding personal information about children and families. If you are interested in being a substitute please contact the Assistant Head of School.

## CLOSINGS

The Sunny Hollow Montessori Administration and Board of Trustees recognize the importance of operating our programs with minimal closings per year. Careful consideration is given before establishing our annual school calendar. As a tenant of the Temple of Aaron, we are obligated by our lease agreement to vacate the building on the Jewish Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, which occur early in the school year.

School closings due to weather or other conditions will be announced as early as possible via local media (KARE, WCCO, KSTP) websites and television broadcasts. Register for web notification on one of these websites to receive school closing or delay information. We do not use a telephone communication service. A message will be posted on the school's voice mail and website. If the Saint Paul Public Schools are closed it is likely that Sunny Hollow will be closed as well. Inclement weather can cause school and Extended Day programs to close early. If school is in session when weather becomes severe, parent/guardians will be called to pick-up their children as quickly as possible via our Parent notification system. Please be alert to current weather situations and make arrangements for alternate childcare and transportation if needed.

In the event of a facility emergency (broken pipes, etc.) during the school day, parents will be contacted by phone and email if the school will be closed. It is imperative that all parent/guardians provide the school with accurate emergency contact information.

## CUSTODY ISSUES

Custody issues must be reported to the office via the *Child Custody* form. Current court or mediation agreements must be provided to Sunny Hollow administration. Sunny Hollow will follow the custody and visitation arrangement described in court documents. We ask parents to act cooperatively, complete all required paperwork, and to provide all necessary documents to the school. If there is a disagreement between parent/guardians on the interpretation of the court document, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to obtain clarification from the court. Families are asked to mediate any custody differences outside the school environment.

## DAMAGE TO PROPERTY

Sunny Hollow Montessori takes pride in our school environment, the classroom materials, our garden, and playground area. If a student intentionally damages Sunny Hollow Montessori property or materials, the parent/guardians will be immediately notified of the circumstances surrounding the event and will be responsible for damages incurred.

## DIRECTORY

The Family Directory contains the student's name, parents' name, mailing address, email address, and telephone numbers. The directory is useful for facilitating carpools or arranging play dates. Families can communicate their willingness to be included in the school directory by checking the appropriate box on the enrollment agreement. Information contained in the directory is confidential and not to be used for solicitation purposes. Use of the Family Directory is restricted to personal communications among those listed and to permitted use by Sunny Hollow Montessori. Use of the information for any other purpose is prohibited, including but not limited to commercial, private, or political mailings.

## EMERGENCY DRILLS

Sunny Hollow Montessori recognizes the importance of fire drills and complies with the Minnesota Uniform Fire Code. Emergency exit and procedure information is posted in each room. All staff has been trained in evacuation procedures and participate in regularly scheduled fire drills. Tornado drills are held between April and October, complying with state and local regulations and procedures. Each classroom reports to a designated location in the building during a tornado drill. Staff and students are trained in the

proper protective posture. Other emergency drills are conducted during the school year as required or recommended for safety planning purposes.

## ENROLLMENT FOR RETURNING FAMILIES

Every January, the school offers re-enrollment agreements to current families. In partnership with parents, the classroom Guides and the Head of School determine whether a child moves to the next level within the school. Currently enrolled families have registration priority through mid-February and must submit a Registration Fee to secure their child's spot for the fall.

## FACILITY

Sunny Hollow Montessori adheres to Minnesota's licensing requirements and reports to the Department of Human Services, Division of Licensing (651-296-3971). Sunny Hollow carries Comprehensive General Liability Insurance. The current certificate of coverage (listing the expiration date) is available for parents to view; please see our Business Manager. Sunny Hollow currently leases its space from the Temple of Aaron. Any issues regarding the use of space, environmental concerns, building access questions, and so on must first be communicated to the Sunny Hollow Montessori Business Manager. The Business Manager will work with the Head of School to find a solution.

## WALKING/FIELD TRIPS AND GOING OUT ACTIVITIES

At the beginning of the school year, parent/guardians give written permission for their child to participate in walking field trips, traveling under one mile. These include walking to parks or nearby locations.

For all other field trips, Casa parent/guardians are required to sign a field trip form, which includes the destination, mode of transportation, and purpose of the trip. **No child can participate without a signed form. Oral or telephone approval is not acceptable.** Some field trips may require parent/guardians to pay a nominal activity fee, which will be included on the field trip form. Sunny Hollow Montessori **does not** carry non-owner car insurance.

In addition to field trips, Elementary children can plan and implement their own Going Out activities. These are an important part of the Elementary program curriculum. Parents/guardians sign an agreement at the start of the year stating that their children may participate in the activities. Children and staff rely on a variety of different transportation methods to get to and from these places such as their own two feet, public transportation, staff/parent vehicles, motor coaches and whenever possible and applicable, the Sunny Hollow Montessori school bus. Parents/guardians must provide booster seats if required by current laws or guidelines. Parent/guardian volunteers who participate in Going Out activities must complete a background check through the Department of Human Services each year. If driving, chaperones must demonstrate adequate insurance coverage. For more information, please contact the school office.

## GARDEN AND OUTDOOR SPACE GUIDELINES

Families are welcome to enjoy the outdoor space at Sunny Hollow when those spaces are not in use by the Casa or Elementary programs. The Garden is to be enjoyed with respect to all animal and plant life. Both the Garden and the Forest are peaceful spaces of nature.

The Mississippi River Boulevard green space and forest is reserved for the Elementary program until 3:30 pm every day. It can be enjoyed after that time based on availability. The Garden space is reserved for the Casa program and may be enjoyed after 12 pm, based on availability. If you would like to help with care of the outdoor spaces, please join us for scheduled clean-up days. Please check with the office before doing any work in these spaces.

To use garden space and outdoor areas, check for availability and follow these guidelines:

- Use the picnic tables for eating and sitting only – do not allow children to stand or jump on them.
- Please show children how to use tools for their intended purposes. The hose is for adult use and children are welcome to use the watering cans.
- Please ask before digging in any area of the Garden.

- Flowers, vegetables and plants and their markers are for classroom use. Please do not pick them or move them.
- Encourage children to use sticks for building structures only – weapons are not welcome at Sunny Hollow Montessori.
- Leave the area beautiful for future guests! Pick up any garbage and put away any tools that you have used.

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If you have a concern about any aspect of our Montessori programs, we ask that you follow this procedure:

- Communicate personally with your child's Guide if the concern is regarding the school-day program. We encourage you to voice your opinions frankly and constructively. The staff member will respond in a timely manner.
- If your concern is in regards to the Extended Day Programs or activities or the Summer Program please contact the Assistant Head of School.
- If more response is necessary, please contact the Head of School. If possible and appropriate, a meeting will be arranged with you, your child's Head Guide, and the Head of School.
- If your concern is of an administrative nature or relates to a school policy issue, please speak to the Head of School.
- In all cases, if you need further response, the grievance can be forwarded, in writing, to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will respond within 15 working days.

## KEYCARD / SECURE ENTRANCE

Our school is equipped with a security system. Exterior doors remain locked at all times during operating hours. Each family is issued two key cards that will unlock the main Sunny Hollow door. You are welcome to purchase more for other caregivers that frequent our halls for \$15 each. The cards work without being removed from a purse or wallet. Sunny Hollow Montessori also has an intercom system and security camera located to the right of the entry.

Please keep your cards in a safe place and be conscientious of who is following you through the door. If you do not know the person, do not let that person in the building.

Please report lost cards immediately to the Office Administrator so the card key can be deactivated. Replacement cards can be purchased for \$15.00. All cards are the property of Sunny Hollow Montessori and are to be returned to the office upon termination of enrollment at Sunny Hollow. You will be charged \$15.00 per card if the cards issued to your family are not returned.

### **All visitors and maintenance workers must sign in at the school office.**

If a staff member does not recognize an individual, the person is questioned immediately. The staff will follow a confidential emergency procedure if there are any signs of danger to the school community.

**The Toddler Community entrance** (through the Temple of Aaron) will be open during morning drop-off (8:15-8:45) and during pick-up times (11:30-11:45 and 3:30-3:45). For morning and afternoon extended day and during the school day, please use the Sunny Hollow main entrance.

## LOCKERS

All Casa and Elementary children are assigned a hallway locker. Toddlers have cubbies within their classroom. Everything your child brings to school (backpack, extra clothing, winter boots, etc.) must fit into their locker or cubby. Make sure that all items are labeled with your child's name. Fire regulations state that nothing can be left outside the locker, on the floor in front of the locker or on top of the locker.

## LOST AND FOUND

Lost and found items are located in the school foyer. Unclaimed items will be donated to local clothing shelves several times throughout the year. The school office will notify the parent community before donations are made. Please check the lost and found regularly!

## NAP / REST PROCEDURES

Full-day Toddler children rest daily. Full-day Casa students rest daily depending on their stage of development and based on parent/guardian's submitted information. Sunny Hollow staff together with parents/caregivers will assess the child's developmental need for adequate rest. During the course of the school year, a child's rest habits may change with their stage of development. The staff will observe sleeping/resting patterns and make recommendations for the child's daily schedule adjustments. Following the Montessori philosophy, rest is encouraged yet not required. The goal is for each child to learn self-regulation and how to respond to his or her individual need for rest.

- Children nap or rest on a cot in a quiet area, separated from children engaged in activities, and are monitored by staff.
- Cots must be placed directly on the floor with clear aisles and unimpeded access for both adults and children on at least one side of the cot.
- Each child is assigned their own cot sheet to be used daily. All cot sheets are laundered on a weekly basis and when soiled or wet.
- Children who rest need to bring from home a small blanket and small pillow. If needed your child can also bring one small stuffed comfort item. We send these items home for laundering each week or when soiled or wet.
- Pacifiers are not permitted at school.
- Children are able to return to the classroom after 30 minutes rest time.

## NUT-FREE SCHOOL

Sunny Hollow Montessori is a peanut free and tree nut free school. Items with peanuts or tree nuts (almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, pine nuts, etc.) may not be consumed, served, or stored anywhere on the Sunny Hollow campus. A common (and child-friendly) replacement for peanut butter is sunflower seed butter.

## OBSERVATIONS

Observation is the cornerstone of the Montessori method. Scientific observations by Dr. Maria Montessori allowed her to discover the true nature of the child. Observation of the children is the most important role of the trained adult in the prepared environment. Only by careful observation can the adult appreciate the development of the young child and determine how to best meet the child's needs. The classroom Guides encourages observers and appreciates parent interest in the Montessori method.

Observations are scheduled starting in October. We allow the children at least six weeks in the environment before observations start. This gives the children time to build their community, becoming confident and comfortable within their space.

- Contact the Admissions Director to schedule an observation.
- Sign in at the school office when you arrive. The Admissions Director will escort you to the classroom.
- Your observation is most productive if you remain objective, unobtrusive, patient, and humble.

During your observation time, you will be asked to avoid interaction with the children so their work is not disrupted. Remain in the observation chair unless invited by an adult to move. The children will respect this as your place. The rest of the environment belongs to them! Avoid initiating interaction with the Guides. You may write down comments or questions and discuss them during the observation discussion that follows your classroom visit.

## PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent Conferences are offered two times each school year, fall and spring. We make electronic sign-ups available two to three weeks before the conference dates. Guides complete a written evaluation of your child's progress for each conference and also at the end of the year. We include information about your child's intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development. We send the end-of-year reports to you via mail and keep an additional copy with the student's permanent academic records.

During the school year, if the Head Guide is concerned about your child's academic, physical, social or emotional well-being, he or she will consult with you to discuss options for supporting your child, one of which may be to seek a professional assessment.

## PARENT/GUARDIAN PARTICIPATION

Dr. Montessori meant for the prepared Toddler, Casa and Elementary environments to be a supplement, not a substitute, for the home environment. Sunny Hollow believes that the school is in partnership with you to educate your children. Therefore, we must share a relationship of mutual respect with each other. Sunny Hollow staff are responsible for communicating openly and honestly with you to meet the needs of the children. Children have the very important task of self-construction. It is the adult's responsibility to prepare an environment for the children that meets their needs for movement, order, constructive work, repetition, and concentration so that this self-construction can take place. We provide you with meaningful ways to participate and assist in the environments, while always being respectful of the independence, concentration, and important work of the children.

Parent/guardians can assist by:

- Caring for the classroom environments
- Making or repairing materials
- Volunteering for Field Trips and Going Out Activities
- Sharing special interests or talents during classroom collectives
- Observing the children at work
- Attending conferences
- Celebrating your child's birthday in the environment
- Attending and participating in school events and fundraisers
- Attending Parent Education events
- Volunteer substituting in the classrooms

## PERSONAL ITEMS

Students are expected to dress in comfortable, weather appropriate clothing. In the case of young children, clothing (including undergarments and pants) should allow for independence in using bathroom facilities. We provide each child with a labeled space to store personal belongings while at school.

**ALL ITEMS BROUGHT TO SUNNY HOLLOW MONTESSORI MUST BE CLEARLY LABELED WITH YOUR CHILD'S LAST NAME!**

Your child's guide will provide you with a list of items that your child needs at school. These items include indoor shoes, extra clothing, a lunch box, and other classroom-specific items.

The classrooms are prepared environments designed to encourage independence and creative learning for the children. We ask your cooperation in leaving toys, coloring books, and action figures **at home or in the car**.

## PERMISSIONS (PHOTOS, VIDEOS, PUBLIC RELATIONS)

From time to time, Sunny Hollow Montessori photographs or films children enrolled at Sunny Hollow for use in its brochures, advertisements, promotions, displays, grant applications, annual reports, newsletters or similar purposes. Parents/guardians submit a *Photography & Video Recording Permission* form at the time of enrollment. The document is kept in the student's files for the duration of their educational career at Sunny Hollow Montessori.

For other types of activities involving children (such as public relations opportunities or research studies), Sunny Hollow seeks activity-specific permission from parents with a written permission form.

## PESTICIDES

Sunny Hollow Montessori has a practice of avoiding the application of pesticides in the school or on school grounds. In accordance with Minnesota Statute 123.B.575, **Parents Right to Know Act**, all parent, guardians and employees are advised that an estimated schedule of applications of pesticides is available in the Business Manager's office for review or copying. In addition, any parent or guardian who wishes to be notified of any variation from this schedule may be notified by providing five self-addressed, stamped envelopes to the school to be used throughout the year for mailing purposes. The schedule and subsequent notices apply only to pesticides in toxicity categories I, II or III as classified by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, or a restricted-use pesticide as designated by federal law.

## PICTURES

A professional, on-site photographer takes individual and classroom photographs in the fall. You will be able to purchase these photos if you so desire.

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY AND PRACTICES FOR STAFF

Social media is a common communication tool for our society that brings many opportunities and also many challenges to human relationships. Sunny Hollow has a long-standing employment policy that prohibits staff from connecting with current Sunny Hollow students or parents of current students on social media. The intent behind the policy is to maintain professional boundaries in all environments, including online. We are grateful for your understanding of staff who do not initiate or accept social media connection requests.

## SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

School information is communicated to families via emails, a weekly newsletter (News & Notes), the website and its parent portal, documents placed in family folders, and the bulletin boards in the school foyer. Information about upcoming school events, classroom activities, administrative policies, and helpful parent tips will be provided in these locations. Please review these communications to keep up-to-date on Sunny Hollow activities.

## SCHOOL RECORDS

Parents or legal guardians may ask to review the contents of any records or data collected for their child. The Admissions Director will not release a student's records without written consent of the parents or guardians.

## TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to and from school is the parent/guardian's responsibility. The Family Directory facilitates carpooling and ride shares. Transportation for Field Trips that are beyond walking distance is arranged with our Sunny Hollow bus, a private bus company or the public transit system. Going Out transportation for Elementary students may be via foot, Sunny Hollow bus, public transit system, staff or volunteer drivers, or private bus company.

## VISITORS

Parent/guardians are welcome to visit the school during our hours of operation. **All visitors to the school are required to check in at the school office upon arrival and obtain a visitor badge.** To preserve the classroom experience for your child, classroom visits must be made during scheduled observation times.

Alumni students may visit their previous classroom by making arrangements with the classroom Guide and Office Administrator. Alumni students must complete a new *Student Information Form* each school year. All visitors under the age of 18 who are onsite without a parent or guardian must have current and complete emergency release information on file in the office.

## **MALTREATMENT OF MINORS MANDATED REPORTING POLICY FOR DHS LICENSED PROGRAMS**

### **Who Should Report Child Abuse and Neglect**

- Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.
- If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

### **Where to Report**

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 911.
- Reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in a licensed child foster care or family child care facility should be made to county child protection services
- Reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in all other facilities licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services should be made to the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake line at (651) 431-6600.
- Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to the local county social services agency at (RAMSEY COUNTY) 651-266-4500 or local law enforcement at 911.
- If your report does not involve possible abuse or neglect, but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern the facility, you should call the Department of Human Services Licensing Division at (651) 431-6500.

### **What to Report**

- Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) and should be attached to this policy.
- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.
- An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

### **Failure to Report**

A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from

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programs licensed by the Department of Human Services and by the Minnesota Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations.

### **Retaliation Prohibited**

An employer of any mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the mandated reporter for reports made in good faith or against a child with respect to whom the report is made. The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act contains specific provisions regarding civil actions that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe that retaliation has occurred.

### **Internal Review**

When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review within 30 calendar days and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care. The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:

(i) related policies and procedures were followed;

(ii) the policies and procedures were adequate;

(iii) there is a need for additional staff training;

(iv) the reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved; and

(v) there is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care.

### **Primary and Secondary Person or Position to Ensure Internal Reviews are Completed**

The internal review will be completed by the Head of School. If this individual is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, the Board Chair will be responsible for completing the internal review.

### **Documentation of the Internal Review**

The facility must document completion of the internal review and make internal reviews accessible to the commissioner immediately upon the commissioner's request.

### **Corrective Action Plan**

Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan designed to correct current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder, if any.

### **Staff Training**

The license holder must provide training to all staff related to the mandated reporting responsibilities as specified in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556). The license holder must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.

**The mandated reporting policy must be provided to parents of all children at the time of enrollment in the child care program and must be made available upon request.**

**The Sunny Hollow Parent Handbook may be revised at any time.  
Sunny Hollow Montessori will notify families of changes.**

The Parent Handbook can be found electronically on our school's website at [www.sunnyhollow.org](http://www.sunnyhollow.org)

