

**West End Montessori School**

## **PARENT HANDBOOK 2024-2025**

9307 Quioccasin Road

Richmond, VA 23229

**School Phone** 804-523-7536

**Fax Number** 804-740-0285

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Parent Handbook Signature Form

# Welcome to West End Montessori School

Our Parent Handbook is intended to provide information about the policies and procedures of West End Montessori School (WEMS). These policies were developed in accordance with state and county regulations to provide a safe, respectful environment for the children, parents, and staff of our community. If at any time you need information that is not contained in our handbook, please contact the office and the information you need will be provided.

## WEMS VISION

WEMS will provide a Montessori educational experience accessible to families of all economic statuses that establishes a foundation for students to positively impact communities with a focus on preparing students to live, work, play, learn, and respectfully interact in a culturally diverse and global society.

## WEMS MISSION

West End Montessori School's mission is to provide an authentic Montessori education in an environment that facilitates the development of self-confidence both intellectually and emotionally.

We accomplish our Mission through these guiding principles:

- Partner with families in the education of their children.
- Respond to the needs of children and their families.
- Meet the individual learning needs of each child through inclusion Foster a community that respects racial, cultural and socio-economic diversity through leadership and peace education.

## WEMS COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

To further support our Vision and Mission, we made the following commitment to diversity. WEMS created and supports an environment which encourages all people to feel welcomed and valued. Dr. Montessori's cosmic education lessons about the world, commonality of man and respectful interactions extend beyond our students to our adult community as well. WEMS seeks to continually increase understanding, inclusion and acceptance in a diverse school population of students, parents and staff.

WEMS defines diversity as "individual traits or qualities that may differ from person to person such as religion, national or ethnic origin, language, learning profile, beliefs, traditions, race, socioeconomic status, family

structure, physical appearance, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, status as a veteran, physical or mental ability, and other characteristics that blend to create the unique perspective of every individual”.

## AMS Code of Ethics

As a Member School of the American Montessori Society, WEMS adheres to the following ethical standards:

### Principle I: Commitment to Students & Their Families

In fulfillment of the obligation to students and their families, AMS will:

Share resources for protecting equitable access to all programs and services, regardless of each student’s and family’s race, color, culture, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, ancestry, national or ethnic origins, or any other classification protected by applicable law. Support practices that protect the physical health and psychological safety of each student and family.

Encourage independent action in the pursuit of learning, community building, and social action. Honor professional commitments, and maintain obligations and contracts while neither soliciting nor involving students or their families in schemes for commercial gain.

Keep in confidence information that has been secured in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law.

### Principle II: Commitment to Staff & Colleagues

In fulfillment of the obligation to staff and colleagues, AMS will:

Protect equitable access to AMS employment, programs, services, and other opportunities regardless of each individual’s race, color, culture, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, ancestry, national or ethnic origins, or any other classification protected by applicable law.

Dedicate ourselves to recognizing, addressing, and eradicating all forms of racism and systemic oppression within our organization and programs.

Represent one’s own professional qualifications with clarity and true intent.

Accept, offer, recommend, and assign professional positions and responsibilities on the basis of professional preparation and legal qualifications.

Use honest, equitable, and effective methods of administering duties and conducting business.

## Principle III: Commitment to the Montessori Movement

In fulfillment of the obligation to the Montessori Movement, AMS will:

Uphold and publicly support the greater vision of Dr. Maria Montessori through such initiatives as the development and promulgation of standards for affiliation of teacher education programs and accreditation of schools, the providing of professional development opportunities, and support of Montessori research and advocacy.

Ensure that our work honors the core components of Montessori education: properly trained Montessori teachers, multi-age classrooms, the uninterrupted work period, the prepared environment, and child-directed work.

## Principle IV: Commitment to the Public

In fulfillment of the obligation to the public, AMS will:

Share perspectives consistent with all of the items set forth in the principles above, when engaged in public discussion.

Distinguish private views from the official position of the American Montessori Society when engaged in public discussion.

*Adopted by the American Montessori Society Board of Directors January 2022*

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

West End Montessori School is committed to principles of equal education opportunities without regard to race, color, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or disability as provided by law and in accordance with our understanding of Montessori's respect for childhood.

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Peace Education is at the heart of Montessori Pedagogy. Maria Montessori said "Establishing lasting peace is the work of education."

Bullying is defined as "an intent to seek to harm, intimidate, or coerce someone perceived as vulnerable. This behavior is repeated over an extended period of time and the offender is aware that

the behavior is offensive”. This behavior is different from behaviors that are seen as mean (happen once or twice) or rude. The peaceful culture at WEMS is a priority and our no bullying policy is strictly enforced. It is important to the community that each person feels valued and supported.

At West End Montessori, learning begins with grace and courtesy; having peace and manners with others as well as one’s self. As part of our curriculum, students participate in lessons on self awareness, emotional regulation, expression of feelings and appropriate responses. Students are guided in accessing their feelings and developing strategies for positive interaction.

It is the work of the children in these lessons that builds mutual respect as well as self respect. Guided by the principle of the “Golden Rule”, many of these lessons are collaborative, meeting the developmental needs of the children at each level.

## LICENSING AND ACCREDITATION

WEMS is licensed by the Virginia Department of Education and receives two unannounced compliance review visits per year.

## ACCREDITATION

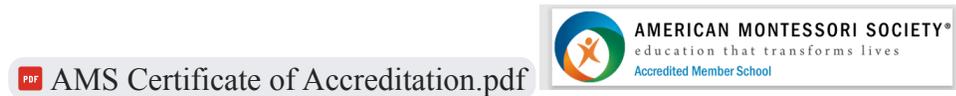
West End Montessori School (WEMS) was accredited by the American Montessori Society in June, 2023 for meeting well defined standards of excellence. Accreditation began with a voluntary two-year intensive self-study involving the school's entire community of students, parents, teachers, staff, administration, committee members, and alumni.

During the self-study every aspect of the school was thoroughly examined and documented, including leadership, educational nature of the school (implementing best practices in Montessori education), learner outcomes, personnel policies, facility resources, health and safety practices, teacher preparation, records, communications, finances and stability. At the end of the self-study, an intensive on-site review was conducted over several days. Through evaluation, the school's strengths and areas for improvement were identified. WEMS made a commitment to a path of continuous growth and improvement guided by recommendations made by the accreditation review team and our strategic plan.

“Achievement of accreditation is affirmation that the school represents an authentic model of the educational philosophy and practices of Dr. Maria Montessori and demonstrates compliance with the rigorous, qualitative standards prescribed by the American Montessori Society. It is an assurance of the excellence of the school, including its goals, programs, services, facility, financial stability, and

vision for the future, as well as its commitment to continued excellence through an ongoing program of self-examination, peer review, improvement, and growth.

Accreditation by the American Montessori Society is the gold standard of Montessori school excellence—the highest level of recognition your Montessori school can achieve, and a highly visible indicator of your school’s quality. Currently, about 15% of our member schools are AMS-accredited.”



## VIRGINIA CENTER FOR MONTESSORI STUDIES

Virginia Center for Montessori Studies (VCMS) provides training for adult learners who wish to receive a Montessori teaching credential. VCMS offers training at the Infant/ Toddler and Early Childhood levels. VCMS is accredited by the American Montessori Society (AMS) and Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE). For more information visit our website at [www.westendmontessori.com](http://www.westendmontessori.com) and select Virginia Center for Montessori Studies.

## CORE COMPONENTS OF MONTESSORI EDUCATION

As an authentic Montessori School, we adhere to the core components of Montessori education which are:

1. Trained Montessori Teachers – All of our teachers have received intensive training for the age level in which they work and hold American Montessori Society (AMS) credentials from accredited training centers.
2. The Multi-Age Classroom – Mixed aged groupings foster reinforcement of learning and leadership skills in older children while enabling younger children to observe and learn through their observations.
3. Using Montessori Materials – Beautiful, high quality materials give children a hands-on approach to learning. Each material is precisely crafted to teach a single skill or concept. WEMS equips each classroom with the full range of required Montessori materials.

4. Child-Directed Work – Children are free to communicate, move and explore on independent paths of learning, motivated by the lessons on which they have been presented.
  
5. Uninterrupted Work Periods – Creating quiet, respectful, orderly, and productive environments allow the children to have an extended period of time to self-select and concentrate on work at their own pace without interruption.

**To learn more, please visit:**

<https://amshq.org/About-Montessori/What-Is-Montessori/Core-Components-of-Montessori>

## ADMINISTRATION

### OFFICE HOURS

- The office is open Monday through Friday from 8:15 am until 4:30 pm.
- The office phone number is (804) 523 -7536.

### SCHOOL WEBSITE

Our website is [www.westendmontessori.com](http://www.westendmontessori.com) Please share this website address with your friends or family members who are interested in our school. It is a great way for people to get information prior to coming in for a tour. The website also includes several password protected documents for WEMS parents only. The current password is **Trinomialcube25**. Please do not give this information to anyone whose child is not currently enrolled in the school.

### REQUIRED FORMS

The following documentation is required by the Virginia Department of Education and must be in your child's file for our school to be in compliance. The forms are provided in your Back to School email or upon receipt of your child's tuition contract for mid-year start dates.

#### 1. PROOF OF IDENTITY

Please provide your child's original birth certificate or a certified copy on or before the first day of the child's attendance. A staff member will document your information and return the birth certificate to you immediately. Please do not leave a birth certificate with a staff member at any time.

#### 2. SCHOOL ENTRANCE HEALTH FORM AND IMMUNIZATION RECORD

For new students, the School Health Form and Immunization Record must be completed by your physician and returned **on or before the first day of your child's attendance**. For returning students, a School Health Form and Immunization Record is required every two years. Kindergarten age children will need updated immunization schedules prior to beginning our Afternoon Class for Kindergarteners. For children under two, an updated immunization record is required every six months. [VA School Entrance Form](#)

#### 3. EMERGENCY INFORMATION FORM

The Emergency Information Form must be returned on or before the first day of your child's attendance. [PDF 2024-2025 WEMS Emergency Information Form \(2\).pdf](#)

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

While it is natural to want to share the many exciting things your child is doing at school, WEMS' policy requires no posting of photos, videos, or comments on social media in order to protect the privacy of students, staff and parents.

## ATTENDANCE AND ILLNESS

### **ABSENCE**

When your child is ill or will be absent for any reason, please call the school at (804) 523-7536 before 9 am. Please let us know what illness your child has as we are required to inform all families of any contagious illnesses. The information given pertains only to the illness and not the name of the student who is ill.

When an elementary student is unable to attend school due to his or her illness or that of a family member, assignments will be available and provided upon request via email or Google Classroom.

### **ILLNESS AT HOME**

Please assess your child's health **before** coming to school. It will be necessary to keep your child home from school when:

1. Discharge from the nose is profuse, regardless of color.
2. He/she has an elevated temperature (100 degrees F). Your child must be fever free without the use of fever reducing medication for 48 hours before returning to school.
3. He/she has diarrhea or is vomiting. You must wait a full 48 hours from the last episode before sending your child back to school.
4. He/she has anything that might be contagious until your physician has seen it and approves your child's return to school.
5. He/she has strep throat. Your child must be fever free and on an antibiotic for 48 hours before returning to school.
6. He/she has lice. WEMS has a "no – nits" policy that requires a child to be free of nits before returning to school..
7. The parent/guardian will inform the office within 24 hours or the next business day after the child or any member of the immediate household has developed any communicable disease, except for life threatening diseases which must be reported immediately.

## ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

### 1. DAILY HEALTH SCREEN

Students will be greeted at the school entrance door by a staff member. A visual health screening will be done with each student according to CDC and VDH guidelines. Students who evidence any of the following symptoms will be returned to the care of their parents: coughing, sneezing, fever, discharge from the nose or eyes (not related to diagnosed allergies), or reported sore throat, diarrhea, stomach ache or headache.

Teachers will be observing students throughout the day for the onset of symptoms.

Early identification of students who are ill will prevent the spread of illness.

### 2. ISOLATION

- A child who is exhibiting any symptoms of a contagious illness will be invited to leave the classroom.
- The child's parents will be called and the child picked up from school within 20 minutes.

### 3. EMERGENCY MEDICINE

WEMS only administers emergency medications.

Lead staff have successfully completed the Board of Nursing (BON) and VDOE approved Allergy & Anaphylaxis Medication Administration Training (AMAT) course, and are authorized to administer liquid Benadryl, metered-dose rescue inhalers, and epinephrine auto-injector to children to prevent asthma and allergy in emergencies only. If your child's pediatrician has prescribed emergency medication, you may use the following parent/physician medication authorization form and American Academy of Pediatrics Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan.

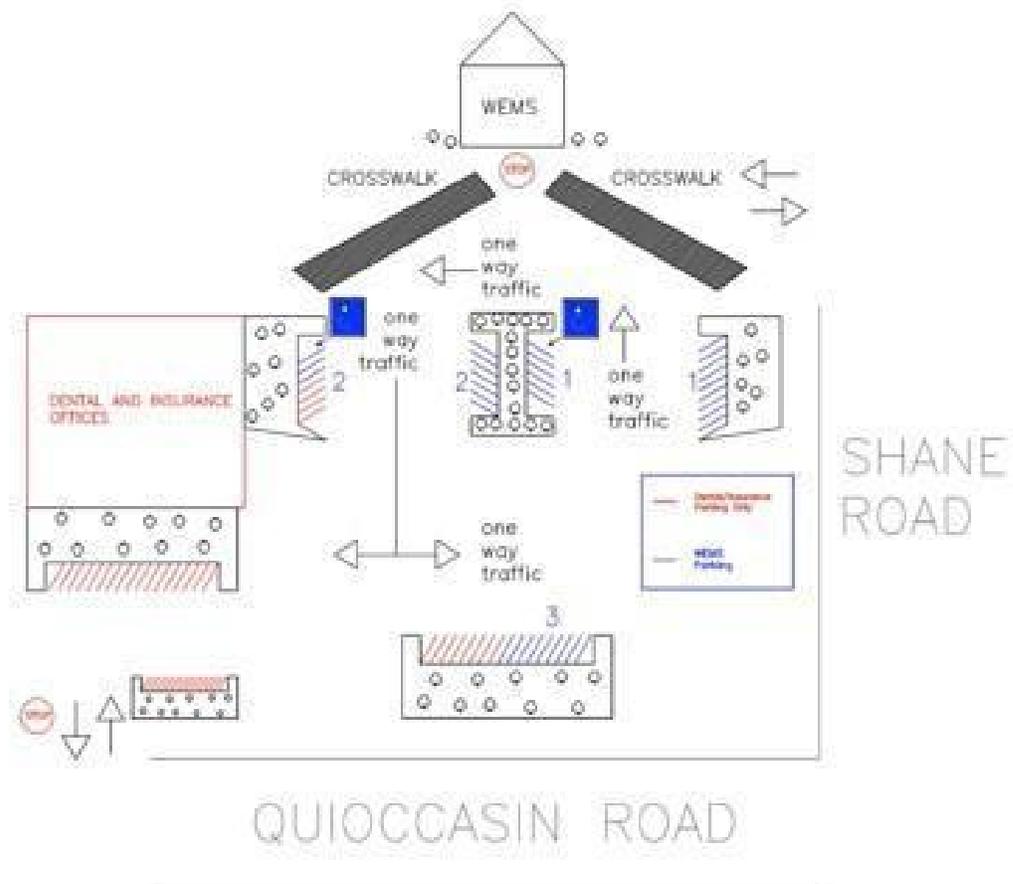
 medication authorization form 2024-2025.pdf

 AAP\_Allergy\_and\_Anaphylaxis\_Emergency\_Plan.pdf

# ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

## SAFETY IN THE PARKING LOT

## PARKING LOT DIAGRAM



Enter the parking lot from the Shane Road entrance and proceed to the stop sign at the crosswalk near the front door. All traffic will move slowly in one direction. Please follow the directional arrows (see diagram). Please be aware that people will be entering and exiting the building entrance as you are driving past the front door. Always look to see if someone is entering the crosswalks as you are pulling into the driveway. Please park in the designated spaces, as shown on the map. Use the spaces first (labeled as 1 on the diagram) to the right of the parking lot when facing the building. Be alert and aware of where people are walking when you are driving. Please use extreme caution when entering and exiting a parking space, as parents and children will be walking to and from the building as you are parking. When you are walking children to and from the building entrance, they must walk with you, not run or walk ahead of you.

You are responsible to be sure the children in your care abide by these rules. Children will be successful if they know the rules for the parking lot ahead of time, have been given specific instructions, and are aware of your expectations.

## **SAFETY ENTERING THE BUILDING**

Please enter the building through the front door. For security, the inner door is locked. **Please ring the bell and an office staff member will open the door for you.**

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT**

**Please be sure to leave an emergency contact number that will be answered should we need to contact you in the event of an emergency.**

## **ARRIVAL TIME**

It is important for your child to arrive at school on time in order to promote timeliness and avoid disrupting the class. When students arrive late, they will have less work time or may miss information presented at group time. It is also very important to be on time to pick up your child at dismissal. Our afternoon programs begin promptly at 12:30 pm and 3:00 pm and our staff needs to attend to the children enrolled in those programs.

In order to maximize our work time and create a peaceful classroom environment, we ask that you respect the procedures that follow below. Our arrival times not only affect the classrooms, but the traffic flow in the parking lot.

- Arrival time into the Elementary classroom is between 8:15 am and 8:30 am. Students are marked tardy at 8:30 am.
- Arrival time into the Early Childhood classrooms is between 8:30 am and 8:50 am.
- Arrival time into the Toddler classroom is 8:45 am.

If an Administrator is not at the outside door, please enter the building and ring the bell for entrance. As per the WEMS Emergency Preparedness Plan, only office staff open the locked inside door to let staff, parents and children into the building. This allows us to have an accurate count of people in the building at all times.

## **DISMISSAL TIME**

- Dismissal time from the Toddler classroom is at 11:45 am.
- Dismissal time from the Early Childhood classrooms is 12:30 pm.
- Dismissal time from the Early Childhood Afternoon class is between 2:45 and 3:00 pm.
- Dismissal time from the Elementary classroom is between 2:45 pm and 3:00 pm.

Please be sure that your child stays with you as you walk to and from your car. It becomes very dangerous when a child runs ahead of a parent in the parking lot. Your child must not enter the parking lot unless he or she is holding your hand.

Please remember that the driveway is right outside the front door and cars will be pulling up where parents and children are waiting.

**WEMS must be notified, by the parent, when your child is going to leave with someone other than you or your child's caregiver. WEMS will not release a child to another person, even if that person is listed as one of your authorized persons on the Emergency Information Form, unless we are notified by the child's parent.** If the person picking up your child is new to the WEMS staff, a government issued PHOTO ID WILL BE REQUIRED. Please have the person prepared to show their identification to staff upon arrival.

### **LATE PICK UP POLICY**

In order for our programs to function effectively and for the welfare of the children, we ask that you make every effort to arrive on time for dismissal. At the dismissal time of one program, another begins which requires our staff to be present with another group of children and often in another classroom. Also, when a child is left waiting it can cause fear and anxiety that the parent is not going to arrive. For these reasons, when a child is not picked up by the designated dismissal time:

**A late fee of \$10.00 will be charged after 5 minutes of the scheduled dismissal time.**

**Students who are not picked up by 15 minutes past their scheduled dismissal time will join Extended Day and your account will be charged accordingly.**

Should an emergency occur preventing you from picking up your child on time at dismissal, please contact the school. If a child is not picked up by 15 minutes after dismissal and we are unable to contact either parent, we will contact the persons listed on the emergency form. If the school is not contacted and we are unable to reach any of the persons listed as emergency contacts after two hours, we are required to call Child Protective Services.

## COMMUNICATION

Communication between the home and school is an important goal. We welcome your questions and input and invite you to contact us at the school phone, (804) 523-7536.

- **Notices**

All notices will be sent via email. They can be returned by mail or given to an administrator at arrival or dismissal. Forms can also be faxed to (804) 740-0285 during school hours or emailed to [moderator@westendmontessori.com](mailto:moderator@westendmontessori.com)

- **Administrative Questions**

Please contact our office staff with all questions pertaining to **arrival, dismissal, notification of absences, required forms, medication, and student record requests\*** at (804) 523-7536 between the hours of 8:15 - 4:30 or email [moderator@westendmontessori.com](mailto:moderator@westendmontessori.com)

\*Please note all tuition and fees must be paid in full prior to the release of student records.

Requests for records and Teacher Evaluation forms from other schools and professionals must be sent to the office and will be processed confidentially and in a timely manner.

- **Billing Questions**

Please email your question directly to [billing@westendmontessori.com](mailto:billing@westendmontessori.com) Please note that our part-time bookkeeper works remotely. You will receive a response to your email as soon as possible.

- **Classroom Questions**

**Please contact your child's Lead Teachers with any questions about your child's progress, classroom procedures, birthday walk and food preparation information** by leaving a message at the office at (804) 523-7536. Your call will be returned as soon as possible. You can also use the emails listed in the Current Parents Section of the website.

## **PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES AND PROGRESS REPORTS**

Parent teacher conferences will be conducted twice a year for all students to provide opportunities to review each student's progress. Written reports will be provided two times per year for Toddler and Early Childhood and four times for Elementary students per academic year. Opportunities will be available for both in-person and virtual conferences.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

When the possibility of inclement weather exists, please check your email for an update or the WEMS website for information about our school's closing or delayed opening.

Every attempt is made to notify our families of a delay or closing as early as possible. However, in order to make sure that the school parking lot is safe and that the building is operational after a storm, we may still be assessing the situation in the morning.

- **You will receive an email and the information will be posted on our website, [www.westendmontessori.com](http://www.westendmontessori.com) and NBC12 by 7 am.**

If you are unable to access any of these options, please call 804-564-6350 to obtain the information.

In the event that WEMS is closed in excess of five days for inclement weather, the makeup days as scheduled on the WEMS School Calendar will be used as needed.

## HOLIDAYS

A calendar is provided in the Back to School email and on the website detailing our holiday schedule.

 2024-2025 WEMS Calendar-Revised 7-22-24.pdf      Narrative PDF

 WEMS Calendar 2024-25 School Year.pdf      Year at a Glance PDF

The calendar is also available on the website as an .ical file to download

[2024-2025 WEMS Calendar](#)

## QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

WEMS sees its role as being partners with our students' parents. Our goal is to ensure that each family's experience at WEMS is a positive one. If a classroom question or concern arises, please contact your child's lead teacher by emailing them directly or leaving a message with the school office. An administrator is always at the door to greet you at arrival or dismissal at which time you can also address your concern or schedule a meeting. Should your question or concern not be resolved after speaking with your child's teacher and the Head of School, a Grievance Committee consisting of a Lead Teacher, a parent, and an administrator will be established. This committee will meet to discuss the situation of concern until a resolution is achieved.

## PARENTS AS PARTNERS

### **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

We encourage parents to volunteer in our classroom on a scheduled basis. We will need parents to assist the children working on special projects, cooking groups, and holiday celebrations. We will also need parents to help take care of the grounds around our school building that will include pulling weeds, watering, and mulching. Sign-up sheets will be sent via e-mail as volunteers are needed. It is an important way for the home and school to come together and for your child to see you as a part of his or her school. Please make an effort to sign up for one of our events throughout the year. In addition, we encourage you to offer to share any expertise you may have in cooking, gardening, weaving, pottery, etc., that we can incorporate into our cultural units.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Early Childhood and Toddler parents will be required to attend field trips with their children. This is one of the ways in which we bring the home and school together. WEMS will provide as much notice as possible for these trips. Elementary students will attend field trips with chaperones. Parents will be asked to volunteer to be a chaperone or driver for field trips and going outs which are scheduled monthly.

### **ROOM PARENTS**

Each year the teachers will invite a parent from each class to serve as room parents. The room parents will help coordinate volunteers and activities throughout the school year.

### **PARENT EVENINGS**

At least four parent information evenings are scheduled throughout the school year. These meetings provide information about the Montessori Method, curriculum areas, child development, and other child related issues. It is expected that at least one parent from each family will attend these classes as they will provide information about the materials that your child will be using and how they are presented. It is an opportunity

for parents to see the classroom, talk with teachers about the materials with which your child is currently working and how to incorporate these skills at home. Most of the questions you will have about materials, why they are used, and how they are presented will be answered at these meetings.

## **POSITIVE DISCIPLINE CLASSES FOR PARENTS**

WEMS trains its staff to use the Positive Discipline model in all classrooms. Positive Discipline classes are also offered to parents. WEMS families are invited to participate at a reduced rate. We encourage attendance as it provides consistency between home and school. We find when children are receiving consistent messages and expectations from the adults in their lives, they are better able to self-regulate and build intrinsic motivation.

## **FAMILY CELEBRATIONS**

During the year we provide opportunities for the entire school and their families to join together. Our field trips and Family Gatherings provide time to socialize and participate in a whole school activity.

## **WELCOME BABY MEAL**

Upon the birth of a sibling, the staff of WEMS provides a meal or gift card for a meal for the family. It is our way of congratulating the family and welcoming our future student!

## **TRANSPORTATION**

WEMS will not provide transportation for students at any time. Parents are required to provide transportation for their children, and any children for whom they assume responsibility, including field trips.

## CLASSROOM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### **POSITIVE DISCIPLINE**

Our teachers have the responsibility to guide, redirect and socialize our students toward appropriate behavior. To accomplish this, our teachers are trained in Positive Discipline which is a proactive, non-punitive, solution based approach to classroom management. Positive Discipline is based on the work of Alfred Adler, Rudolf Dreikurs and most recently, Dr. Jane Nelsen. It provides opportunities for the child to learn the life skills to become independent, accountable, responsible, and respectful members of the classroom and community. The Positive Discipline approach enables teachers to create a consistent social/emotional environment that encourages the child to make thoughtful choices, develop self-regulation, discover how capable he or she is while finding a sense of belonging and significance. It is an approach that is both kind and firm at the same time.

Positive discipline methods guide and redirect unsafe or inappropriate behavior in a manner that is respectful, encouraging, and cognitively stimulating for children, teachers, and parents. It gives insight to understand the roots and motives driving the behavior and deals with both the behavior and the reasons or beliefs causing the behavior. By understanding the “whole picture” our teachers are able to develop proactive strategies to encourage positive changes that are effective long term. Some of the strategies include clear and consistent ground rules, redirection, natural consequences, and meaningful choices (within limits) which preserves the child’s self esteem and dignity. This helps the child build the skills he or she needs to be successful in the classroom. Acknowledgment of efforts and progress encourage the child’s cooperation. Our teachers focus on the desired behaviors rather than the ones to be avoided.

There are times when maturity, impulsivity, or simply the need to test interfere with appropriate behavior. When behaviors are unsafe, disruptive, or destructive and redirection or natural consequences are not effective, the child may be asked to stay with a teacher until the behavior is under control and he or she is able to independently interact in a safe manner. If inappropriate behaviors become consistent and the child is struggling in the classroom, the parent will be informed so collaborative strategies and a plan can be developed to build the skills necessary to modify the behavior. Montessori pedagogy and Positive Discipline both assume the best of the child and empower the child to develop self-discipline and problem solving skills through collaboration. We see ourselves as partners with parents to achieve life-long goals for our students. You can learn more about this approach from Jane Nelsen’s Positive Discipline series of books and at [www.positivediscipline.com](http://www.positivediscipline.com)

# Toddler and Early Childhood Students

## WEMS TOTE BAGS

Each new **Toddler** student will receive his or her own WEMS tote bag during orientation. This bag will remain at school. It must contain all items necessary for a diaper change, if applicable, and three complete sets of labeled clothes. The bag should contain everything needed to make your child's diaper change self-contained: diapers, baby wipes, and a plastic changing pad. This backpack or bag will remain at school. Any soiled clothes will be sent home in a separate bag.

Each new **Early Childhood** student will receive his or her own WEMS tote bag during orientation. This bag will remain at school. It must contain a zip-loc bag containing a complete set of clothes labeled with your child's name. These clothes are not only for toileting accidents, but also for classroom spills or messes that necessitate a change.

## CLOTHING

Please dress your child in clothing that will help develop independence. These clothes should be comfortable for your child to move, play and get messy in!

### Inside Shoes

Upon arriving in the classroom, the Toddler and Early Childhood children will be changing into "inside shoes". These shoes provide a concrete way for the children to transition from the outdoors into the quiet, peaceful classroom environment. Please send in a pair of shoes for your child to wear in the classroom which will be stored in their cubby. When choosing "inside shoes" please look for shoes that have velcro closures or a soft elastic band around the ankle/heel to aid independence in putting on and removing shoes. The soles of the shoes should be made of a flexible slip resistant material. While there are many good options on the market the examples featured below are from these websites: [See Kai Run](#) and [Starry Knight Design](#)



## Outside Shoes

We ask that the children wear rubber sole shoes to school because they are safer on the playground. Velcro shoes allow a great deal of independence at this age and are preferred. Open-toe sandals, flip-flops, and Crocs are not safe for children to wear on the playground. The children have outdoor time daily. Please be sure to send your child properly attired for outdoor time even when it is cold. This should include a coat, hat and gloves.

Further details about clothing are provided in the letter you received from your child's teacher upon enrollment. In order for the children to enjoy our outdoor classrooms and playground even when it is raining, please provide the following:

### Toddler

- Please provide rain boots and a rain suit on the first day of school that will stay at school for use when our playground is wet or we go outside in the rain. Rain suits or rain pants and jackets can be purchased through a variety of online vendors.

### Early Childhood

- Please provide rain boots labeled on the first day of school that will stay at school.
- On days when it is raining or the forecast is calling for a drizzle, please send your child in a raincoat so that we can go outside and play in the rain. The raincoat will not stay at school, just the boots.

Having boots and raincoats has enabled us to capture many more days outdoors, including those days when it is not rainy, but wet on the playground. By doing this the children will be able to explore our outdoor environment when it is wet and discover how it differs from a sunny, dry day!

## **Items from Home**

Toys, jewelry, lip balm, purses, etc. are easily lost or broken and can be a distraction in the classroom; therefore, please leave these items at home.

## **TOILETING**

If your Toddler Class child is in diapers, please bring a bag that contains everything needed to make your child's diaper change self-contained: diapers, baby wipes, and a plastic changing pad. This bag will stay at school. When you are ready to begin toilet learning with your child, please let the

teachers know. We have many helpful strategies and want to be your partner in this process.

If your Toddler or Early Childhood class child is toilet learning and in the early stages of wearing underwear, please send several complete changes of clothes, including shoes. We recommend using cloth training underwear instead of Pull-Ups so the child can feel wet as they begin urinating.

Encourage your child to take responsibility for the complete toileting process including dressing, undressing and cleaning up after bowel movements. At home, set up the bathroom so that hand washing can be independently accomplished by using a stool, a towel where your child can reach it, and fun soap.

**Please see linked information:**

 [2024 - 2025 Toddler Teachers' Letter to Parents F.pdf](#)

 [2024 - 2025 All EC Teacher Letter to Parents F.pdf](#)

## **OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS**

We continue to incorporate some of the research and information received from the Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens' "No Child Left Inside" symposium. This research bears out the educational, social and emotional value of children spending time exploring their outdoor environment. It supports what we have always believed and practiced: get children outside as much as possible!

Toddler and Early Childhood students have an opportunity to work in the indoor and outdoor classrooms during work time. Elementary students can work in the garden, have snacks, and do classwork in their outdoor environment.

We will use the school grounds to make field journals and have nature "sightings". Our goal is to provide as much time outdoors as possible for the children to engage in a variety of activities as an extension of the indoor classroom.

## **PLAYGROUND**

The handicapped accessible playground area consists of swings for all students, a "Supernova" and "Trample Path" for elementary students and climbing apparatus for students 2-5 years of age. Each class has a daily scheduled playground time. Elementary students also have playground time at arrival and dismissal. Montessori Extended Day has additional playground times in the afternoon.

## **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Birthdays are very special at WEMS! For **Early Childhood** class students, the birthday timeline for the Birthday Walk celebration is intended to be done in a linear format. It should contain one picture for each of the child's years (from birth to the child's current age) and the number of the year under the picture (for example, a picture of your child when he or she was born and "Birth" written under or over the picture). In this way the timeline is a clear, visual representation of your child's life to be shared with his or her class. You and your child can then choose one picture for each of your child's years and make the timeline together as described. Please bring the timeline to school for his or her Birthday Walk.

On the day designated for celebration, parents are invited to join the class for your child's birthday walk. The Birthday Walk is a special time when your child walks around the "sun" with a globe for each of the years that he or she has been on earth. This makes a very concrete impression that it takes a whole year for the earth to orbit the sun. Each rotation provides an opportunity to use the timeline to see the growth of the child each year and discuss milestones achieved during that year of the child's life. We celebrate the birthday walk at your child's classroom group time. Your child's Lead Teacher will give you an information sheet with details about the date and exact time of your child's birthday walk approximately one month prior to the celebration. It will also list flowers and the food preparation items your child can provide for the class during that week and possibly a second week during the school year.

Please do not send in treats to be handed out after your child's birthday walk as it takes the emphasis off of the child and the celebration of his or her life through the birthday walk. You are welcome to take pictures of your child during the birthday walk; however, to respect and protect our children's privacy, we ask that pictures are not posted on any social media outlets.

**Toddlers** are typically too young to understand birthday celebrations at school. Please refrain from sending in any special birthday treats.

In the **Elementary** class the birthday child will be the "Person of the Week" in celebration of his or her life.

In order to avoid hurt feelings, please do not distribute birthday invitations at school unless you are inviting every child in the class. Our **WEMS Family Directory** is available online by late September so that you can mail the invitations when the entire class is not invited.

## OBSERVATIONS

WEMS takes pride in providing a quality authentic Montessori education to our students. We understand our responsibility to model exemplary Montessori pedagogy. We strive to deliver an exceptional intellectual experience for parents, community members and adult learners that seek to learn more about the Montessori method. WEMS schedules classroom observations for VCMS adult learners and staff from other Montessori schools. Observations are scheduled for parents seeking information for initial enrollment or enrollment at the next level. Therapists or other licensed professionals working with our students are also encouraged to observe within our classroom.

## SNACK AND LUNCH GUIDELINES

- No food will be served by WEMS.
- **WEMS is a nut-free school. Since we have children with severe allergies to nuts, do not send a snack or lunch that contains nuts or nut butters.** This does not include items that have been processed in a plant containing nuts, such as crackers; just whole nuts and butters.
- Please provide a reusable plastic water bottle, morning snack and lunch packed in a lunchbox for your **Early Childhood and Elementary** class child each day. **Metal water bottles are not recommended for Toddler or Early Childhood.** If your child stays for the Extended Day, an afternoon snack should also be provided.
- **Toddler** children should bring a morning snack and only bring lunch if enrolled in the Extended Day program.
- A cold pack or thermos in the lunchbox should be used to keep foods at the necessary temperature. We do not microwave or refrigerate foods for Early Childhood or Toddler classes.
- Please choose items that allow for independent eating in order to be philosophically consistent with the rest of the day.
- Please consider packing food items in labeled reusable containers rather than disposable. Your child's name should be on his or her lunchbox and all of its contents.
- The lunch box and water bottle are the only items that will travel to and from school each day.
- Your child's lunchbox and water bottle must be washed with soap and water at home each day.
- Children will be sitting at two person tables while eating their snacks and lunches.
- **No Candy or Dessert Please - A Request for Healthy Choices**  
We kindly ask that you leave sugary temptations at home. While a dessert may seem like a special treat for your child, it can often become a distraction to enjoying a nutritious snack or lunch. Healthy alternatives to dessert could include items such as a nut-free granola bar or fruit snacks. These alternatives not only satisfy sweet cravings but also instill a love for nutritious food and support focus in the classroom.

## LUNCH SUGGESTIONS

CUT UP OR WHOLE FRUIT	VEGGIES AND DIP	APPLESAUCE (NOT COLORED)
CHEESE CUBES AND CRACKERS	YOGURT	MEAT AND/ OR CHEESE ROLLUPS
HARD BOILED EGGS	SANDWICH	PASTA
BAGEL AND CREAM CHEESE	HUMMUS AND VEGETABLES	PIZZA

## PIZZA for LUNCH FUNDRAISER

Our fourth- and fifth-year Elementary students are responsible for running our WEMS pizza for lunch program. The proceeds will be used for our students participating in the Montessori Model United Nations program.

Order forms will be sent out in September and February to place an order for your child to receive pizza every Tuesday and/or Thursday at lunchtime. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Further information about MMUN can be found at [www.montessori-mun.org](http://www.montessori-mun.org)

## CLASSROOM PROGRAMS

- **Art.** An art class is provided weekly during class time for all Elementary students by Kelly Rauscher.
- **Elementary Music** is provided weekly by Dr. David Eslick.
- **Music Together.** Early Childhood Classrooms enjoy a weekly music class with a Music Together Specialist, Kelley Granger. This program offers creative, research- based music and movement activities. Our classroom teachers use this music throughout the day during transition time and group time. Parents will receive a copy of the Music Together CD and a songbook to support your child's music education.
- **Spanish** is provided during class time for all students enrolled in our Early Childhood by a native Spanish speaker, Marleney Gaitan.
- **Art, music and Spanish** are explored with the Toddlers by their classroom teachers

## AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT

- **Private Music Lessons.** Parents can individually contract with Dr. David Eslick for private piano, guitar, voice, and other music lessons here at West End Montessori

School. Dr. Esleck may be reached at 804 350-4893.  Music Lessons with Dr. E.pdf

## OTHER

### **ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

The staff at WEMS is mandated by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services. This could occur without prior parental notification.

### **WITHDRAWAL**

In the event that WEMS determines that it cannot meet the needs of a child enrolled, or should a consistent problem arise with a child or parent that cannot be resolved, WEMS reserves the right to make the decision to terminate the contract.

## CLASSROOM SCHEDULES

Below, please find the daily schedules for our Toddler, Early Childhood, Elementary and Montessori Extended Day Programs. These schedules may be modified based on the needs of the children and classroom.

## TODDLER DAILY SCHEDULE

8:45	The children arrive, say goodbye to their parents, enter the classroom and greet their teacher and friends.
8:45-10:55	<p>Child-directed work cycle designed to help the child become familiar with surroundings and a deeper awareness of self. Children are free to choose activities from the prepared environment.</p> <p>During this period the child is introduced to everyday activities that promote self-esteem, independence while helping to establish community. Lessons are presented to individuals or small groups. The work period includes social skills, toileting, language development, snack prep, care of self, care for the environment and clean up.</p> <p>The children can choose to have a snack at any time during the work cycle.</p>
10:55 – 11:00	<p><b>TRANSITION TIME</b> Children are invited to clean-up work, sit down around the group rug, and prepare for outside time with a quick song or two before getting on coats, rain boots, etc. and meeting at the door to go outside.</p>
11:00-11:30	During outside time, children have the opportunity to stretch, flex, and exercise with various types of age-appropriate play equipment that we have to offer as well as take nature walks and care for the outside environment.
11:30 -11:35	<p><b>TRANSITION TIME</b> Children come inside, remove coats and gather around the group rug in preparation for group time.</p>
11:35-11:45	Group time activities (variety of movement, music/song, story time and lessons).
11:45	Dismissal and the beginning of Extended Day

## EARLY CHILDHOOD DAILY SCHEDULE

8:30 - 8:50	Arrival. Teachers quietly greet each child. The children put away their belongings, wash their hands and choose work. Each class has assigned days to work in the Outdoor Classroom
8:30 – 11:00	Morning work cycle (Individual or small group lessons with the teachers and children can choose to have snack)
11:00	Group time (birthday walks, music, calendar, Spanish, etc.)
11:20	Outside time
11:50-12:15	Lunch and Clean- up
12:20	Morning dismissal/Group (calendar, games, singing, etc.)

## EARLY CHILDHOOD AFTERNOON CLASS SCHEDULE

**Afternoon Class (12:30-2:45)** Afternoon Class is the kindergarten extension of the day for children turning five by September 30th. Children who will be turning five by December may also participate if they have been deemed developmentally ready by their teachers.

12:30	Work time begins
	Group One: Outdoor Classroom and Playground  Group Two: Classroom Work Time
1:30 - 2:30	Group Two: Outdoor Classroom and Playground  Group One: Classroom Work Time
2:30	Group Lesson for all students Monday Music Tuesday Practical Life Wednesday Math / Science Thursday Language Friday Art
2:45	Dismissal and stories

## LOWER ELEMENTARY DAILY SCHEDULE

8:15-8:30	Arrival and outdoor time
8:30	Morning meeting
8:45-11:45	<p>Work Period.</p> <p>Each Monday morning, work plans are handed out with a listing of all academic areas and the possible work choices within those areas.</p> <p>The morning work period provides children the time to work on their individual plans, which may include individual work, time in small groups, and individual or group presentations.</p>
11:45-12:15	<p>Clean-Up and Group Time.</p> <p>After individual work time, the class comes together to prepare for lunch by cleaning and setting the tables.</p> <p>This also is a time for group lessons, sharing of news and stories.</p>
12:15- 12:45	<p>Lunch Time.</p> <p>Hand washing, good table manners, and proper conversation are part of the lunchtime experience and the Montessori "practical living" education.</p>
12:45-1:15	<p>After lunch, the children have outside time, in all kinds of weather.</p> <p>We believe the fresh air and sunshine is vital; they just need to be dressed for it!</p>
1:15-2:30	<p>Afternoon Work Period.</p> <p>This time includes specials such as Art, Music, Spanish, and Writer's Workshop.</p>
2:45-3:00	Dismissal

## UPPER ELEMENTARY DAILY SCHEDULE

8:15-8:30	Arrival and outdoor time
8:30	Morning meeting
8:45-11:45	<p>Work Period.</p> <p>Each Monday morning, work plans are handed out with a listing of all academic areas and the possible work choices within those areas.</p> <p>The morning work period provides children the time to work on their individual plans, which may include individual work, time in small groups, and individual or group presentations.</p>
11:45-12:15	<p>After individual work time, the class comes together to prepare for lunch by cleaning and setting the tables.</p> <p>Lunch Time.</p> <p>Hand washing, good table manners, and proper conversation are part of the lunchtime experience and the Montessori "practical living" education</p>
12:15- 12:45	<p>After lunch, the children have outside time, in all kinds of weather.</p> <p>We believe the fresh air and sunshine is vital; they just need to be dressed for it!</p>
12:45-1:15	<p>Group Time.</p> <p>This also is a time for group lessons, sharing of news and stories.</p>
1:15-2:30	<p>Afternoon Work Period.</p> <p>This time includes specials such as Art, Music, Spanish, and Writer's Workshop.</p>
2:45-3:00	Dismissal

## MONTESSORI EARLY MORNING AND EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS

**Extended Day (12:30-5:30)** is for children under 5 not attending Kindergarten who are enrolled until 2:45 (Half Extended Day Program) or 5:30 (Full Extended Day Program).

**WEMS offers extended hours before and after our regular hours.** It is an extension of our Montessori program so that we can provide a consistent Montessori environment throughout the day.

### **MONTESSORI EARLY MORNING**

The morning session begins at 7:30 am and is a time of preparation for the day. The children may choose work from the Montessori classroom shelves or help the teacher prepare for the day.

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD EARLY MORNING**

7:30	Children arrive and are welcomed by a teacher. Children begin work time and assist with classroom preparation activities.
8:30	Early Childhood children are escorted to their classes by a teacher.

### **TODDLER EARLY MORNING**

7:30	Children arrive and are welcomed by a teacher. Children begin work time and assist with classroom preparation activities.
8:45	Children and teachers welcome friends arriving for the morning program.

## **MONTESSORI EXTENDED DAY**

Our Montessori Extended Day program is a continuation of our Montessori Morning program. Children who are under the age of five have a rest time. During rest time quiet music will be played to create a calm, peaceful atmosphere. Children who need an extended period of rest will be given a quiet environment to sleep. After thirty minutes, children who do not fall asleep will be invited to get up and begin work time. **A vinyl rest mat is provided by WEMS for all children.** Your account will be charged an annual \$15 rental fee for the rest mat.

### **You will need to provide:**

- A nap mat to cover the vinyl rest mat. See [Nap Mat Notice](#) (google doc). **Please note sleeping bags do not meet the licensing standards and may not be used.** The nap mat is stored at school. The nap mat will be sent home at the end of each week for laundering. Please return it at the beginning of the following week.
- Please have your child leave all toys, blankets, stuffed animals, etc. at home.

## TODDLER EXTENDED DAY SCHEDULE

11:40	Wash hands for Lunch.
11:45	Lunch
12:30	Children get settled on their mats for rest/nap time.
2:20	Wake up time.
2:45	Group time. Half Extended Day dismissal.
3:00	Snack time
3:30	Outdoor time.
4:30	Group and work time.
5:20	Children clean up, gather their belongings and prepare for dismissal.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EXTENDED DAY SCHEDULE

12:30	Children transition to Extended Day Classroom and put belongings in designated cubbies. Children get settled on their mats for rest time.
1:10	Work Time - Non-sleeping children are invited to get up and begin work time, sleeping children continue to sleep.
2:00	Sleeping children get up, put their mats away.
2:25	Outdoor Time
2:45	Group time. Dismissal for children leaving at 3:00.

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EXTENDED DAY SCHEDULE 3:00 – 5:30 pm**

Students may be picked up at any time during the Extended Day Hours

3:05	Snack time
3:30	Outdoor time
4:20	Work time
5:20	Clean up and Group Story Time

**ELEMENTARY EXTENDED DAY SCHEDULE 3:00 – 5:30 pm**

Students may be picked up at any time during the Extended Day Hours

3:00	Snack time
3:15	Skill Review, Work time and Independent Reading
3:45	Group Lesson
4:30	Outdoor time
5:15	Clean up



## 2024 - 2025 Parent Handbook Signature Form

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I, the undersigned, have read and agree to abide by all the policies, procedures, and information provided in the Parent Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Please return this sheet to WEMS by August 19, 2024**