St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School
Family Handbook

St. Paul's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH &
MONTESSORI SCHOOL

St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School

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www.stpaulsmontessori.org

Updated August 2024

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This handbook is subject to change during the school year, as needed. Major changes will be communicated out by the school to the community. Otherwise, parents are responsible for revisiting the handbook each year before the start of the school year. Questions or concerns about the policies and procedures in this Parent handbook should be directed to the Head of School, Macleay Martinez (mmartinez@stpaulsmontessori.org).

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1018 E. Grayson Street
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Phone: (210) 271-2861 /Fax: (210) 226-2103

Background and Structure

History

Our founder, Kay Karcher Mijangos, had a dream of starting a culturally and economically diverse student body in a cozy, intimate setting. It became a reality with the opening of **St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School**. It is the only spiritually-based Montessori school in San Antonio. Centrally located in the Government Hill area just north of downtown San Antonio, the school opened its doors with five students in January 2005. Kay retired in July 2013, after leading the school through many successful and exciting years.

Today, St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School is a beacon in education, attracting nearly 100 students ranging from 18 months to 6th grade.

Mission

From its very humble beginnings, St. Paul's remains true to its original mission:

> *To educate a diverse community of children, nurturing mind, body, and spirit through a Montessori education in the Episcopal tradition.*

Philosophy

St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School is a ministry and outreach of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, a historic downtown parish founded in 1883. Since 1893 when Texas Military Institute was established across the street and the parish rector was its chaplain, St. Paul's Church has actively participated in educating children within a Christian environment. The establishment of St. Paul's School in 2005 represents the parish's most recent commitment to the preparation of young people for active roles as successful students and informed, ethical participants in the faith traditions of their own families as well as the civic life of our community and the world.

> *Some of you have heard and seen and touched and tasted the word [of God] in this very neighborhood. You saw the children who live here and sensed how God desired to bring fullness of life to the children and families who live around Grayson Street. You have begun a beautiful Episcopal Montessori school with the best teachers you could find – teachers with whom students would travel miles to study with. Surely, in this place the word of God is not returning empty, but is accomplishing that which God proposed from the beginning. Your hearts have been fertile ground for the word of God to spring up and you continue to cultivate the harvest of the word of God over the long haul for the good of these children whom God loves.*
>
> *- From a sermon at St. Paul's Church by the Rev. Dr. Jane Patterson, July 10, 2005*

Religion and Religious Instruction

It is not required that students be Episcopalian in their faith practice or tradition. However, all statements on matters of faith and/or religious instruction by school staff and volunteers are based on “An Outline of the Faith” as contained in The Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church (1979). Through its institutional policies, St. Paul’s Episcopal Montessori School intentionally honors its commitment to diversity and inclusion with a curriculum that integrates multiculturalism, ideals of equity and justice, professional development for faculty, community service and chapel. Working to create a more equitable world is part of the St. Paul’s Episcopal Montessori School student experience.

Children attend chapel at least once a week. Chapel is generally conducted by the parish rector or by the Head of School. During chapel time, students are engaged in song, prayer and stories from Hebrew and Christian scriptures, secular stories and seasonal celebrations that let the children know that "God made them and loves them" with the goal of preparing students for joyful participation in the faith tradition of their own families. As an Episcopal school, we draw students' attention to the celebrations or "feasts" of the Episcopal Church and of this parish, inviting them to know the richness and beauty of Anglican tradition. All Parents and children are invited to attend Sunday services at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church.

Non-Discrimination Policy

St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School is an inclusive and welcoming school and admits qualified students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin or religious practices to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally made available to students at our school. In accordance with state and federal laws, and based on our values, St. Paul's does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, preference, national and ethnic origin, religious practices or disability in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship programs and other school-sponsored programs. Our financial aid program enables us to enroll a socio-economically diverse community of students. We are willing to partner with families through our Financial Aid program in order to make the St. Paul’s Episcopal Montessori School opportunity possible for them.

Financial Funding and Support

The School does not receive any monetary support from the parish's annual budget. Funding must come from tuition, grants and the generous gifts of people committed to supporting the School.

Licensing

St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School is accredited by the Southwest Association of Episcopal Schools (SAES) and a member of the American Montessori Society (AMS). In addition, the Toddler classrooms are licensed by the state of Texas as a child care facility.

Governance

The affairs of **St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori Schoo**l is managed by the Board of Directors, which is composed of up to thirteen members, approved by the Vestry of St. Paul's Church, to serve for three-year terms. A majority of the Board members must be parishioners and/or clergy of St. Paul's Church. No employee of St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School is eligible to serve on the Board. Members of the Board volunteer their time and meet at least quarterly to conduct business. Supervision of the day-to-day operations is the responsibility of the Head of School, who is hired by the Board with the approval of St. Paul's Vestry.

The board selects and evaluates the Head of School and delegates responsibility for implementation of policies to the Head. The Head of School guides the Board in formulating the school's mission and in developing its strategic plan. She prepares and carries out the operating plan and the annual budget, as approved by the board. She also has the duty to report to the board on school matters, and is accountable to the board for effective, businesslike management of the school. The Head of School serves as the professional educational leader of the institution. She has complete responsibility for faculty, staff, and student selection, evaluation, and dismissal. The Head of School articulates the mission of the school to its constituents and is responsible for the professional quality and behavior of the faculty.

Board of Directors: 2025-2026

Officers:

Chair, Meghan Powell

Vice Chair, Ann Bolton-Brownlee

Treasurer, Marc Sandoval

Secretary, Malii Witten

Other Members:

April Hooper

Ben Wallace

Dante Suarez

Francisco Donaldson

Ex officio Members:

Rev. Brian Fox, *Rector*

Macleay Scaljon Martinez*, Head of School*

Staff

Head of School, Macleay Scaljon Martinez
School Business Administrator, Cathy Scherrey
Administrative Assistant + Admissions Manager, Conchita Sanchez Vigil
After School Coordinator, Susie Blaylock

Faculty

TODDLER
(Ages 18 months - 3 years)
Juniper Berry Community Guide, Renée Mijangos
Acorn Community Guide, Ashley Akers
Juniper Berry Community Assistant, Carrie Emereson-Price
Acorn Community Assistant, Lee Skinner
Toddler After School Care Guide, Victoria Castañedo

PRIMARY
(Ages 3 - 6 years)
Sunflower Community Guide, Mina Davis
Bluebonnet Community Guide, Carlota Madrazo
Sunflower Community Assistant, Kaislin Del Toro
Bluebonnet Community Assistant, Cecilia Cifuentes
Primary After School Care Instructors
Debra Enwereji
Vanessa Burnham
Carlos Santos

ELEMENTARY
(Ages 6 - 12 years)
Peach Tree Community Guide, Marsha Morrison
Cypress Tree Community Guide, Blanca Bird
Elementary After School Care Instructor, Rubi Garcia

SPECIALISTS

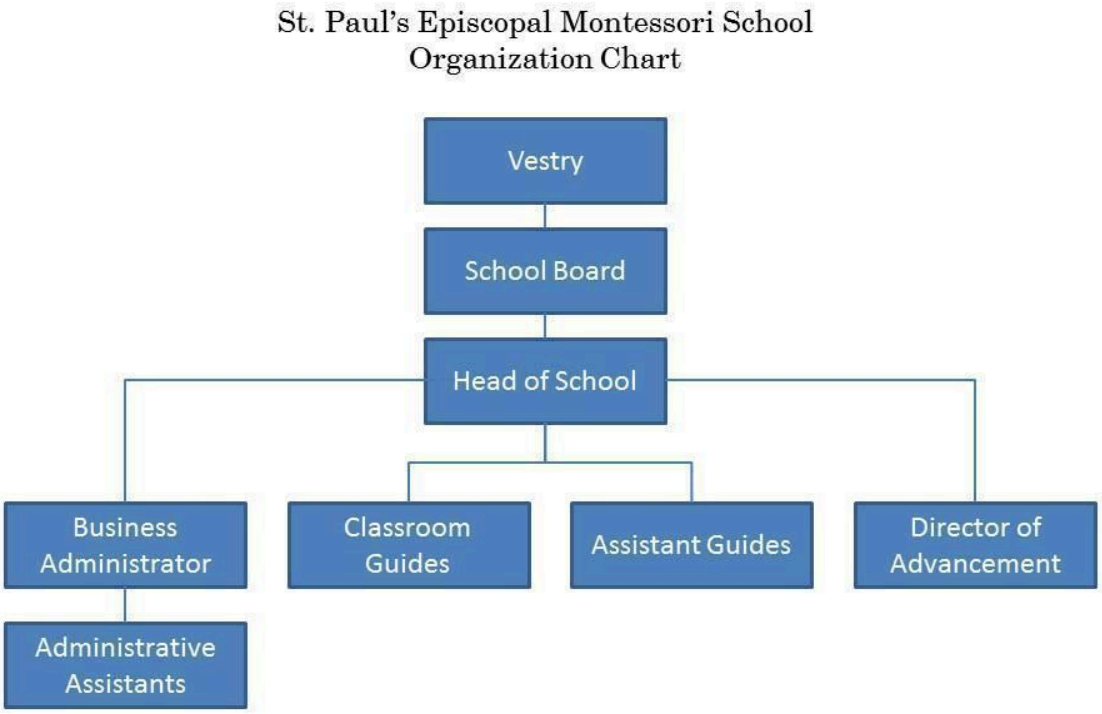
Elementary Art Director, Jane Laven
Primary and Elementary Music Director, Rebecca Koch
Godly Play Leader, Rebecca Koch
Spanish Teacher, Monica de las Razas
P.E. Coach, Gina Regan

Hours

- School Hours: M-F, 8:00 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. (Toddler, Primary, Elementary)
- Morning Care: M-F, 7:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. (Toddler, Primary, Elementary)
- After School Care: M-F 3:15 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. (Toddler, Primary, Elementary)

Holidays, breaks and months of care may vary. Please see our school website for a detailed calendar found here.

Organization Chart



Admission and Enrollment

Admission Procedures

1. **Tour of School and Prospective Class Visit -** All Parents involved in choosing the school for a child are required to tour the School before submitting an application. School tours are scheduled in the mornings throughout the year.

Applicants will also complete a morning class visit with their prospective class. Elementary students must provide test scores and academic records. The Head of School will also meet the child prior to making a final admissions decision.

2. **Application –** New applicants are required to submit an Application that is available on the website.
3. **Communication of Admission Decision & Enrollment -** The Head of School meets with each prospective student and family and examines the application, which may include test scores and academic record, to make an enrollment recommendation.

Paperwork and Fees Required for Enrollment

If a student is offered a place to join us at St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School, enrollment is considered complete when we have received the following:

1. Student Application Form
2. Toddler / Primary / Elementary Questionnaire
3. Non-refundable New Student Registration Fee
4. Tuition Agreement
5. Physician's Statement (including Vaccination Records)
6. Parent Handbook Contract
7. Seat Deposit Payment (see Seat Deposit)

Attendance Policy

Consistent attendance is important. The children who benefit most from the prepared environment are those who attend regularly. There are several reasons for this:

- A consistent routine provides security for children; a sense of security enables children to learn more readily.
- A child's experiences in the classroom and with the materials are cumulative; consistent attendance bolsters learning.
- Your own commitment to your child's presence in school affirms the importance of school and learning. If you often invite your child to stay out of school for different activities, you implicitly undermine the importance of school in his/her mind. This can affect your child's performance when he/she is present.
- Intermittent attendance, or periods of long absence, can affect both your child's adaptation to school and his/her learning.

Please make every effort to ensure your child's regular attendance. In this regard, we specifically request that you:

- Schedule family vacations and trips to coincide with school holidays
- Schedule appointments with the doctor, dentist, orthodontist, or other professionals outside of classroom hours

Excused Absences

Excused absences include illness, injury, or family emergency. Please call (210-271-2861) or email the School Office (school@stpaulsmontessori.org) by **9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence** to explain the reason for the absence and the expected return date. Absence for prolonged illness requires a physician's note for return to school.

Unexcused Absences

Absences for any other reason than illness, injury or family emergency are unexcused. **More than five unexcused absences in a year** may affect the school's decision to offer re-enrollment to a student.

Tardiness

School begins promptly at 8:20 a.m. When younger children arrive late, it violates their sense of order, their sense of what is right and what is expected, and of how things are supposed to be. For the older child, there is a sense of embarrassment and disorientation. In either case, arriving late gets the day off on the wrong foot. Late arrivals also disrupt the classroom community, the work of the other children, and the guide. Out of respect for your own child, the classroom community, the other children, and the guides, please help your child arrive at school on time. After the arrival time the doors are locked, then the driver must park and walk the student through the front office to the classroom. All tardy students must be signed in at the front office. Tardiness related to dental or physician visit requires a note to be excused.

We consider persistent late arrivals during the year to be problematic. Guides are expected to speak with Parents directly about late arrivals. If there is no improvement, then Guides are expected to inform the administration when tardiness becomes excessive. At that point, the Head of School will contact the Parent and together they will discuss how to manage more timely arrivals. ***Persistent tardiness may affect the decision to offer a child a re-enrollment contract for the following school year***.

Programs

A range of educational programs are offered to fit the needs of the child and the preferences of the Parents. All classrooms are equipped with Montessori furniture and materials, and all lead guides are Montessori-trained or in the process of receiving their Montessori certification. All programs are five days a week.

Toddler Program

The goal of the Toddler program is to provide the young child with a learning experience away from home and Parents, to foster self-confidence and a good self-image, and to develop a positive attitude toward learning. This is an introduction to the Montessori Method for both the Parent and the child.

Toddlers enjoy social interactions with children and adults, develop **independence** through practical life exercises, refine and classify sensorial impressions through gradation and matching exercises, and are introduced to other academic materials used in the early childhood class.

When assessing whether a young child is showing readiness for our Toddler program, we look for the following developmental skills:

- Walking with stability
- Able to consistently feed themselves with independence
- Ability to recover from separation and engage in the environment, at least for short spurts of time
- Can follow simple commands (come here, sit down, hold this, etc)

Based on the structure of the classroom and program, a child who has not yet developed these skills will likely need to wait to start in the Toddler program until they have reached those milestones.

Primary Program

Students in the Primary program are exposed to learning situations which include the major curriculum areas: Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Math, and Cultural Subjects. The basic academic curriculum is enriched by Art, Music, and movement experiences. The classroom is designed to be accessible in an age-appropriate way. Students are given responsibility for their own work, meaning that they need to display an awareness of others, keep the classroom clean and tidy, put things away when done, behave as role models for younger students, and more. They have freedom within limits.

Lower Elementary Program

In this class, students build upon skills and concepts introduced in the Primary program. They will also be introduced to many new materials and concepts, as well as extended use of materials used in Primary. The cultural subjects (Anthropology, Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Geography, Geology, Government, History, Philosophy, Physics, Political Sciences, Sociology, etc.) are not broken down into separate subject

matters, but are treated as a totally integrated curriculum. Development of skills in Language, Mathematics, Fine and Performing Arts, Fitness Education and Music are integrated as much as possible with the Cultural Subjects. This is the reason that Maria Montessori called the Elementary program “Cosmic Education". Children will also learn how to learn and how to take responsibility for their own education through a system of freedom balanced with responsibility. The curriculum in Lower Elementary conforms to state guidelines for each grade level.

Upper Elementary Program

In Upper Elementary, students build upon skills and concepts introduced in Lower Elementary. The cultural areas are used as a springboard for further study integrating all aspects of the curriculum: Language, Math Sciences, and Social Studies. Writing and research skills are developed using classroom resources, speakers, and local libraries. Emphasis is placed on cooperative group work involving the classroom and the school community as well as the outside community. Music, Art and Fitness Education are integrated with the classroom curriculum which develops appreciation for the arts as well as developing individual skills. The curriculum in the Upper Elementary conforms to state guidelines for each grade level.

Godly Play

Primary and elementary students attend chapel weekly. As staffing permits, all ages receive religious formation through Godly Play classes. Godly Play is a Montessori way of presenting Scripture and Liturgy to children in a prepared environment where the children are invited to work with materials and respond to Jesus Christ’s message in their own way. Our prepared environment is where the children work together to openly explore the lessons in the Bible and further their understanding of God’s message.

Our hope is that through the child’s work, whether it is music, art, reading of the scripture, prayer, care of the environment or through prayer, the child comes closer to the true teacher in Jesus Christ. Godly Play is intended to be a time to slow down and to take time to explore the riches of our faith that lead us closer to God.

Summer Program

The Summer Program is offered to families who are currently enrolled or who will be enrolled for the following school year; a limited number of spaces are available for former St. Paul’s students and non-St. Paul’s students. Our Summer Session takes place in July each year.

After-School Care Program

St. Paul's offers an After School Program from 3:15 pm - 5:15 pm, five days a week for primary and elementary students as a service to Parents of children in the school who need care of their children beyond the normal classroom hours. Guidelines and policies of the Montessori classrooms will also apply to after school care. All after school care students must be currently enrolled in St. Paul's school program.

A commitment for one semester is required at enrollment; fees are due on the first of the month. Changes to schedules can be made on a monthly basis. There is no credit for days not used. Parents enrolling their child for all five days of care are given priority. Parents enrolling their child for a particular day(s) are on a first come, first-served basis. Drop in after school care must be requested with the office and may be refused if enrollment exceeds required staff to student ratio.

Transition Process

Transitions to the next level are determined by a child's age as well as their academic, social, and emotional readiness.

Children who will move into Primary, Lower Elementary or Upper Elementary at the start of the next school year are prepared for the move by visiting classrooms at the next level during the spring semester. Visiting students are often paired with older students who serve as hosts.

Moving-up Observations

When a child is moving up to the next level mid-year, we recommend that the Parent observes a classroom at that level so that there will be a better understanding of the transition that the child will be making. (see Classroom Observations).

Moving-up Programs

A Parent can also gain information and help prepare a child for these transitions by attending Parent education events, designed for Parents of children who will be moving up the next school year. These programs include Kindergarten, Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary Open Houses, all held in the spring semester. These events will provide information about the curriculum and an opportunity to talk with teachers at the next level.

Back to School Orientation Meeting

During the week prior to the start of school in August there is an orientation meeting. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend, as it provides an opportunity to meet Classroom Guides as well as other Parents in the child's new class, learn about expectations and classroom procedures, and get answers to general questions about the beginning of the school year to prepare for the first day in a new classroom.

Listen to Your Child

To help prepare for transition, it is important to listen to your child. He or she will probably express a mixture of excitement and anxiety. Change can be scary and some children need more preparation for change than others. Listening to your child's feelings and expressing your support and confidence will make a difference.

Concerns about Readiness for Transition

If there are concerns about whether a child is ready for the next level, please contact the child's current Guide. If school faculty and staff have concerns about a child's readiness for the next level, Parents will be contacted so that a meeting can be arranged to discuss those concerns. Decisions will be made by what school faculty and staff determines to be in the best interest of the individual child.

Classroom Life

Nutrition

Children who stay all day are responsible for bringing their own lunches and water bottles. Each classroom is equipped with filtered water. **We do not allow sugary foods to be brought in for snack, lunch, or birthday celebrations. Only water is permitted for drinking during school.**

Snack

Children will be responsible for bringing a morning snack each day, as well as an After School Care snack if enrolled in extended care. Please ensure that this snack is packed separately from the child's lunch for easy access. **Acceptable snacks include healthy, wholesome foods: fruit, vegetables, crackers, yogurt, cheese, deli meat, etc.**

Lunch

Lunch should be nutritious (a protein, fruit, vegetable, and carbohydrate). Refrigeration and heating is NOT available. A cold pack may be added to the lunch box, which should be clearly labeled with each student's name. Please be sure to include a water bottle for your child to use throughout the day. The school is not responsible for the nourishment value of meals or for meeting the child's daily food needs.

Outdoor Play Guidelines

Our children go outside each day, unless there is severe cold, drenching rain, excessive heat, or unhealthy air quality. Real time conditions, specific to our area, are monitored by

front office personnel and teachers are notified when outdoor play is to be limited (amount of time or time of day) or canceled. If cancellation occurs, children will engage in gross motor activities in their classroom or designated area. Students will receive a minimum of 1 hour total, whether indoors or outdoors of physical activity per school day. Children need outdoor play throughout the year and they must be dressed appropriately. **Label all clothing and removable belongings to ensure its return if lost**. Parents are requested to keep children home if they do not want them to play outside on a given day.

We recognize the benefits of physical activity and outdoor play such as increased health, gross motor skills, opportunities to connect with nature and their peers outside of their academic times. Structured and unstructured physical activity and outdoor play may take place. This can include, but is not limited to: nature walks, gardening, playground time, or lessons outside.

Our outdoor and physical play guidelines are true for our entire program. Settings may take place on designated playgrounds, classrooms, and around campus as staff see safe and fit as long as it is within our regulation guidelines.

Naps {Primary and Toddlers Only}

Primary and toddler children will be supplied with a nap mat. A cover for the mat (body pillow cover) and small blanket may be brought for nap time. These will be sent home on Friday for laundering.

Birthdays: A Celebration of Life

We like to mark children's birthdays with a special celebration of life. Due to student allergies, bringing food for a birthday celebration is discouraged and, in some classrooms, is not permitted. The classroom community will work to create a fun and special day for the birthday child.

Each level has guidelines for birthday celebrations that will be shared from the classroom. When in doubt, contact the Guide. Children often like to leave their imprint on their class; it is special for them to know that they have given something to be kept permanently in the classroom. A child's birthday is a wonderful time to give a book or CD to the classroom. **Consult your child's Guide during birthday planning.** If you are giving a birthday party for your child and plan to invite children from the class, it is better to invite only a few or to invite them all. When many are invited, but not all, some

feelings get hurt. Please mail the invitations from your home and do not send them to school for distribution unless the whole class is invited.

Animals in the Classroom

Some classrooms contain animals, including: fish, snake, guinea pig.. All animals have been examined by a veterinarian and found to be in good health.

Things to Bring to School; Things to Leave at Home

Some children like to take something from their secure home environment to school, a part of themselves to place in the new environment. We want to honor this urge and, at the same time, be sure that what the child brings leads to a positive experience. Therefore, we ask that the following guidelines be followed:

- Flowers, things found in nature, and small plants are welcome.Other natural objects that are beautiful and interesting to a child can be shared. Please do not send any live animals unless arrangements have been made in advance with the teacher.
- Some children like to bring something that will remain in the classroom. Your child's teacher can make suggestions of small things needed by that classroom.
- **Please leave all toys, stickers, candy, gum, CDs, DVDs, electronic gaming devices, phones, and smart watches (that have games and/or communication apps) at home or in the car.**
- Elementary students may bring a backpack, but due to limited space storage, **primary and toddler students should not bring backpacks**.
- Nap items will be stored at school and sent home on Fridays.

Field Trips

The school plans several field trips for the elementary classes during the course of the year. To keep cost at a minimum, where possible the school applies for grants to cover the cost of the trips, however typically grants do not cover the cost of transportation.

Dress Code

While we do not require uniforms, there are some rules about clothing, jewelry, and personal appearance that help to promote safety and a positive learning environment for the children.

Students should dress comfortably and appropriately for the day's weather and activities. **Names should be permanently written on all coats, jackets, sweaters, mittens.** Every year, many clothing items are left unclaimed at the end of the school year.

Toddler and Primary Dress Code Guidelines

Primary and toddlers should wear clothes that are easy for the child to manage when needing to use the restroom. Keep in mind that some buckles and belts are difficult for little fingers to manage, especially when one is in a hurry.

- **Toddlers** are required to have two (2) extra pairs of underwear and two (2) complete changes of clothing. These should be in bags and labeled with the child's name.
- **Primary** students are required to have one (1) complete change of clothing at the school. This should be in a bag labeled with the child's name.

Toddler and Primary Dress Guidelines:

Pants - Jeans and other pants are sometimes hard to "stay up" on little bodies. Elastic waist bands help to keep pants up.

Skirts - If girls choose to wear skirts or dresses, they need to wear shorts or leggings underneath.

Shirts - We ask that all children wear shirts without distracting graphics such as scary animals, movie or show characters, cartoons, or offensive slogans. **Children may be requested to change their shirt or turn it inside out if they are sent to school wearing a shirt with graphics, cartoons, or slogans.**

Shoes - Shoes should be both safe and appropriate, such as tennis or rubber-soled shoes. The following shoes are not permitted:

- No flip-flops, clogs, Crocs or backless sandals are not allowed, as they fall off easily during active play or can be distracting in the classroom.
- We also ask that the children not wear cowboy boots or big rubber rain boots. Children cannot do motor skills exercises with boots on, and thick boot heels can hurt other children. .
- We ask that children do not wear shoes with flashing lights on them or anything audible. Children are easily distracted, and we are trying to create a classroom environment conducive to focus and concentration

Jewelry - Most jewelry is distracting and can be dangerous if caught on playground equipment. With the exception of pierced earring studs, children should leave jewelry at home.

Hair - Long hair should be restrained. Hair that continually falls onto the child's face distracts the child and can interfere with his/her ability to manipulate or see the materials clearly.

Body Markings - Please remove temporary tattoos before sending children to school.

Elementary Dress Code

The primary goal at St. Paul's is to provide a safe and positive learning environment. Student clothing and footwear should be safe, healthy, non-discriminatory, modest, and free of distractions to oneself or other students. Students will spend time outside every day that the weather permits and all students should be dressed in accordance with the weather and perform outdoor activities.

If a student's dress does not follow the guidelines he/she may be asked to contact Parents for a change of clothes or to wear a set of clothing provided by the school.

Elementary Dress Guidelines:

1. All clothing must be in good condition, not revealing or torn. Tight shirts and low cut pants that expose the midriff or undergarments are not acceptable. Halter top or spaghetti string dresses or shirts are not acceptable. Leggings are permitted but must be worn with a long shirt or dress.
2. Dresses and skirts are acceptable **only** if shorts are worn underneath. Shorts, dresses, and skirts must extend below the student's fingertips with shoulders in a relaxed position. Bike shorts are acceptable **only** if worn under a skirt or dress.
3. All clothing should be free of messages or graphics that are inappropriate for the school environment, including promoting illegal activity or discrimination of any kind.
4. Hats, hoods, and sunglasses may only be worn outside the building.
5. Shoes should be both safe and appropriate, such as tennis shoes or rubber soled shoes. No flip-flops, backless sandals, cowboy boots or big rubber rain boots.
6. Jewelry is distracting and can be dangerous if caught on the playground equipment. With the exception of pierced earring studs, children should leave jewelry at home.

7. Hair that continually falls onto the child's face distracts the child and can interfere with his ability to manipulate or see the work. Students may be required to tie up distracting hair.
8. For recess games and athletics class, all students must wear appropriate clothing for exercise and secure lace-up or Velcro sneakers that will not slip off.

Our students move about, sit on the floor, climb play equipment, run, play soccer and other sports. We do not wish for them to become embarrassed if their or another child's clothing does not fit properly. Please help us by purchasing the correct clothing and supervising what your child wears to school.

Arrival and Departure Procedure

All students must be signed in and out each day by the teacher.

Student Arrival

The school doors open at 8:00 a.m. each morning. **Carpool drop off is from 8:00 a.m. to 8:20 a.m.** Those arriving after **8:20 a.m.** are considered **tardy** and **must be signed in by a Parent or Guardian at the office** in the Main Building, prior to entering class. For the safety of the children, Parents are required to use the **carpool drop off procedure (refer to Drop Off and Pick Up Map)**

All traffic enters from Grayson Street and exits to Quitman Street.

- **Toddler –** Morning arrival under covered driveway; Afternoon departure for Pepitas and Acorn is on Willow Street from the Toddler playground; Afternoon departure for Juniper Berry is in front of the school.
- **Primary –** Morning arrival and afternoon departure under the covered driveway
- **Elementary –** Morning arrival and afternoon departure at Elementary gate by Pavilion Building

Parents wishing to walk their child to the classroom should hand them over to a Guide or Assistant at the appropriate playground or main building entrance. Primary children should only exit the car when a teacher is ready to receive them.

Children should not be left alone at the school door or playground.

Visitors will only be permitted into the school building when they have an appointment scheduled. Parents cannot walk children into the school building during the arrival period.

Student Release Procedure

A record of parents and other authorized persons to whom the child may be released is maintained through the office. Any individual, unknown to staff, picking up a child must provide a driver's license. If an individual not listed is to pick up a child, Parents will need to inform the school office in advance by completing the Child Pick-up Authorization form, by email, or by phone. The individual must provide a driver's license as identification and a photocopy will be kept on file. If identification cannot be verified, staff members must contact the child's Parent or Guardian.

Emergency Pick-up Procedure

When emergency conditions require a child to be released to an individual not identified on the Emergency Contact and Release form, Parents are required to notify the front office immediately (see Student Release Procedure). Proper identification is required for individuals authorized to pick up your child(ren).

In the case of a divorce, it shall be the responsibility of the one who is granted primary custody or possession of the child (being the one with whom the child primarily lives) to provide St. Paul's with a copy of the custody decree or agreement. It shall be the responsibility of a Parent to notify St. Paul's immediately if the other Parent or any other person has been placed under a protective order, restraining order, or other order of a court or agency, which prohibits or restricts that Parent's or other person's access to or possession of the child, and a copy of any such order should be provided to St. Paul's immediately.

Parent Involvement

Volunteering

St. Paul's has a talented and involved Parent body. The School depends on the support of Parent volunteers throughout the year. When you donate your time and talents, you make a valuable contribution to the children of St. Paul's and you get the opportunity to meet other Parents. Volunteers help to build community spirit and provide needed (and appreciated!) help to our faculty and staff. You can volunteer during the year in a variety of ways:

- Assist with special events, plays, and other class projects
- Assist with Parent education including planning programs, providing volunteers, and participating at events

- Assist with fundraising projects (Contact: advancement@stpaulsmontessori.org)
- Participate in beautification projects around the school

We ask that you participate in as many school events as your schedule permits.

Fundraising and Special Events

A long-term financial objective of St. Paul's is to cover basic operating expenses fully through tuition and other income. At the same time, the school engages in fundraising, as does virtually every independent school in San Antonio. Money raised through St. Paul's annual fund and specific fundraising events helps support:

- Student financial assistance
- Guide training and faculty development
- Building improvements
- Classroom technology
- Enrichment programs

Contact the Development Director (advancement@stpaulsmontessori.org) for more information about our fundraising efforts and how to get involved.

Tuition, Seat Deposits & Fees

Tuition

Tuition is due on the first (1st) day of every month and is billed in 10 installments, with the first installment being the "seat deposit, unless annual tuition is "pre-paid" in full by September 1st (see Pre-Paid Annual Tuition Credit). Checks are payable to "**St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School**" or "**SPEMS**" and we also accept electronic bill pay or cash payments, as well as online credit card payments. (Bank card transactions will incur an additional processing fee per transaction that the bank charges, and the school will pass those directly to families on the next month's invoice). For convenience, there is a locked tuition depository box near the School Desk area and at the Admin Office door for check payments, or we accept hand-delivered checks to the School Business Administrator or via the US Postal Service.

Tuition invoices are typically e-mailed on the first of each month and tuition is typically due on the first day of the following month. Please ensure a current email address is on file in the school office and notify the office immediately if changes occur.

Returning students must have an account in good standing to be accepted for the following year. If tuition is consistently late or an account is not kept current, this may affect a Head of School's decision to re-admit a child.

Pre-Paid Annual Tuition Credit

A two percent (2%) credit will be applied when families pay annual tuition in full by the first day of school. Credit is able to be applied to all siblings enrolled.

Seat Deposit

If you plan for your child to return to St. Paul's the following academic year, a non-refundable "seat deposit" will be invoiced in March and is due in full by May 7th to secure the student's place in the following year; the seat deposit is equivalent to one month's tuition at the following year's rates. The deposit is put towards the cost of the following year's tuition and will cover May's tuition payment for the *following* year. It can be paid in installments, but needs to be paid in full by May 7th. The remaining tuition payments will be made from August through April.

New Student Registration Fee

For students enrolling at St. Paul's for the first time, a non-refundable fee of $100.00 is due at registration.

Late Payment Fee

A late fee of $35 will be added if payments are received by the 5th day of the month.

Returned Check Fee

A fee of $25.00 will be added for returned checks to cover bank processing costs.

Changes in Financial Circumstances

In instances where a payment plan becomes necessary due to a change in financial circumstances during the academic year, please arrange a meeting with the Head of the School to discuss and (if necessary) agree to the terms of a payment plan.

After School Care Billing

After School Care payments are due on the first of the month for which the care is used. Any drop-in fees are billed with the following month's tuition.

Late Pick Up Fee

Students not picked up by 3:30 p.m. will be billed $2 per minute until 3:40pm, then they will be charged the daily After School drop-in rate.

After school care is available daily until 5:15 p.m. Parents picking up children **after 5:30 p.m**. **will be assessed a fee of $10.00 per minute per child.**

Discounts

Only one type of discount may be applied per account; discounts cannot be combined.

Sibling Discount

Families who enroll two or more children are eligible for a 10% sibling discount off the lowest monthly tuition rate(s).

Parishioner Discount

Families who have been pledging members of St. Paul's Episcopal Church for 12 months or more and enroll their children at the School are eligible to receive a 10% Parishioner discount. To qualify for this, it must be greater than other available discounts to be applied and cannot be combined with other types of tuition discounts.

Financial Assistance

St. Paul's makes a strong commitment to proven need-based financial aid in order to attract and support students who, otherwise, may not be able to enjoy the benefits of a St. Paul's education.

Need-based financial aid packages are intended to supplement a family's financial commitment to their child's education. It is important to note that St. Paul's does not offer full tuition scholarships.

Financial aid awards are based on demonstrated need. The difference between what a family can reasonably be expected to pay and the cost of tuition constitutes the family's demonstrated need. To demonstrate need, a family must complete an online financial aid application through TADS (Tuition Aid Data Services: http://www.tads.com. **Applications for Financial Aid should be submitted to TADS by the end of March.**

Once a financial aid application has been submitted and processed, TADS will send a financial report to St. Paul's. Financial aid reports are then reviewed by the Financial Aid Committee. Financial aid awards are funded from St. Paul's operating budget. Occasionally, foundations, individuals and businesses may make gifts to the annual financial aid budget, so the income from their gifts supports financial aid every year. Financial aid decisions are made separately from and independently of the admission process. The admission decision is made in advance of the financial aid review and the Financial Aid Committee has no involvement with an applicant's placement at the School.

Health and Safety

Physician's Statement Form

For the safety of your child, the State of Texas requires that all school age children and children attending a day care facility have a signed Physician's Statement form indicating the child is able to participate in school activities. **Children may not be admitted without this statement.**

Vaccination Records

The State of Texas also requires that children be vaccinated according to State requirements and a record kept at the school or day care facility. **The only allowable exclusion from immunization requirements will be for medical reasons**. More information about exemptions may be found at, https://dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/exemptions.aspx. **Children may not be admitted without this information.**

1. To claim an exclusion for medical reasons, the child or student must present a statement signed by the child's physician (M.D. or D.O.), duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States who has examined the child, in which it is stated that, in the physician's opinion, the vaccine required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the child or any member of the child's household. Unless it is written in the statement that a lifelong condition exists, the exemption statement is valid for only one year from the date signed by the physician.

For Health and Human Services needs please visit their website: Health | Texas Health and Human Services

Illness/Injury

The School cannot admit an ill child for care, if any of the following exists:

1. The illness is contagious or causing the child to feel unwell;
2. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities, including outdoor play;
3. The illness results in a greater need for care than staff can provide without compromising the health, safety and supervision of the other children in school;

The child has one of the following, unless medical evaluation by a health-care professional indicates that you can include the child in the child-care center's activities:

1. Oral temperature of above 100.4 degrees and accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness; child can return to school when the temperature has been normal for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications).
2. Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, sore throat, pink eye, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill; or

3. A health-care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.

If a child becomes ill while at school, Parents will be contacted and required to pick up the child immediately.

Children must be free from signs of illness for 24 hours before returning to School. Excludable diseases require a health care professional's statement before a child may return to school. Diseases requiring exclusion as defined by the Texas Department of State Health Services include: chicken pox, conjunctivitis (pink eye), COVID-19, head lice, impetigo, influenza, measles, mumps, scabies, streptococcal sore throat, whooping cough.

You are required to notify the School Office if your child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease as defined by the State of Texas Public Health Department. The School will alert Parents to the possibility of child exposure to disease(s).

Procedures for Handling Medical Emergencies:

If a critical illness or injury requires immediate attention of a physician, the following steps will be followed:

1. Emergency medical services (911) will be contacted
2. Action plan will be enacted (if applicable)
3. Parents or emergency contacts will be notified
4. First-aid treatment or CPR will be administered, if needed
5. Physician identified in the child's medical record will be contacted

The child will be taken to the medical facility identified in the child's medical record. If none is specified, the child will be taken to Santa Rosa downtown.

Minor injuries may be treated with first aid:

- First aid will be performed
- The Parents will be notified when the child is picked up from school
- If necessary, Parents will be called immediately and asked to pick up the child as soon as possible

Parents will always be called in case of even a mild head injury.

Medications

Oral medication is given to children only with written parental permission. It is dispensed as stated on the label directions or as amended by a physician. All medication must be in the original container and labeled. No medication is administered if the expiration date has expired. All unused medication will be thrown away after one month.

Prescription medications must be in the original container labeled with:

1. The child's name
2. The date of administration
3. Directions stating dosage amount and times
4. The prescribing physician's name

Non-prescription medication may be given only with the parent's written directions for administration. (These must be in accordance with the label's instructions.) The instructions and written permission must be provided daily. The medicine must be labeled with:

1. The child's name and
2. The date of administration

Topical Medication

Sunscreen and insect repellant should be applied by Parents before arrival at School. If this is to be applied at School, it should be supplied by the Parent, labeled with the child's name and instructions for application. This goes for diaper rash cream, sunscreen and insect repellent. In providing topical creams for your child and signing this handbook acknowledgement, you will granting access for us to apply these at school.

Allergies

Parents are required to alert the school for any allergies. If a child has been diagnosed by a physician, an emergency plan must be provided to the school.

Our school allows students to pack all types of food; anyone enrolling with a known food allergy must be aware that food allergens will be present on campus.

Hearing and Vision

All children who are four years old by September 1st, Kindergarten and first time entrants to the School must be screened for hearing and vision. This must be completed within 120 days of admission. First, third, fifth and seventh graders must be screened during the school year. Screening is carried out by the School's Language Therapist.

Policy Regarding Children with Learning Differences

St. Paul's recognizes and responds to students who learn differently. Children who have diagnosed learning differences will be mainstreamed into the classroom and will be referred for specific services to outside specialists, as needed. The number of students in a classroom with diagnosed learning differences will be limited to ensure that all children's needs can be met. Factors affecting the number of students with diagnosed learning differences placed in a classroom include teacher experience and expertise as well as number and type of learning differences.

While the Montessori philosophy advocates modification to meet individual needs, the staff is constrained by the student/teacher ratio as to the extent and duration of modifications that can be implemented and sustained within the school's curriculum standards. Ultimately, the Head of School makes the decision regarding the extent of modification that is workable within a specific classroom. Consistent with Montessori philosophy, the student is accountable for bringing forth the will to complete work once the appropriate modifications are made.

Request for Outside Professional Assistance

St. Paul's faculty and staff will work diligently with students and families, following the school's procedures, to address behavior issues and to ensure academic progress. St. Paul's, through the Head of School, may request outside professional assistance to obtain more information regarding the underlying causes of inappropriate behavior and/or the nature of a difficulty in learning; and to make recommendations to facilitate student development and progress.

When the school requests outside professional assistance, the family must comply with the school's request within a specified reasonable time frame. Failure to comply can result in the student being removed from the school during the current year, following the school's guidelines, or not being accepted for re-enrollment for the next academic year.

Procedure for Requesting Outside Professional Assistance

In general, St. Paul's will utilize resources within the school for observation, problem-solving, and curriculum modification before requesting outside professional assistance for a student who is not making anticipated progress in social, emotional, physical, or cognitive development. Steps may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. At Guide or Parent request, the Head of School, or designated administrator, will observe the student. Modifications may be suggested and teachers may be requested to document progress made or keep a behavior log.
2. The Head of School may request that other education professionals, including other staff and/or outside specialists, observe the student and make recommendations regarding next steps. Parents will be notified prior to the involvement of education professionals other than the student's classroom teachers.
3. A plan for modification may be developed in collaboration with the student's family. Following the conference, a meeting summary will be provided to all participants.
4. A follow-up conference will be held to discuss progress.
5. If outside professional assistance is requested by St. Paul's, families may be provided with a list of professional resources for evaluations and diagnosis.
6. Families will choose the outside professional assistance that they determine suits the student's needs and the family's resources.
7. The outside professional's evaluation must address teacher-identified concerns and involve teacher input in the process.
8. Upon receipt of the outside professional's report, Parents will provide St. Paul's with a copy of the complete report.
9. A conference will be held to determine appropriate modifications. Conference participants may include classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, support staff, Parents, Head of School, and student. Following the conference, a meeting summary will be provided to all participants.
10. St. Paul's staff will document success of the implemented modifications and the student's progress will be discussed with the Parents.

Supporting Inclusive Services

At St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School, we want to create an environment that is inclusive of all of our students. We will implement supports and accommodations in order to meet a student's needs. Students with special education needs are able to receive services from their therapists and specialists while in our care, with parental approval and consent. These sessions should be scheduled through the front office so that school staff is aware of them. Additionally, St. Paul's staff will implement use of special equipment, procedures, and methods that are recommended or required for a child with special needs.

Communication between Home and School

Contact Information

St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School
1018 E. Grayson Street San Antonio TX 78208

Website: ***www.stpaulsmontessori.org***
Email: school@stpaulsmontessori.org
Phone: (210) 271-2861 / *Fax*: (210) 226-2103

Office Hours

The front desk is staffed from 8:00 am until 5:15 pm, Monday through Friday, throughout the year. The school office is closed on national holidays and hours may be modified when children are not in attendance. The school year runs from mid August to the end of May.

Changes to Parent Contact Information

Please notify School administration of a change of address, email, or phone number by emailing school@stpaulsmontessori.org. **It is vital that we have current contact information, especially phone numbers, to be able to reach you if your child is ill.**

Website

Our St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School website (www.stpaulsmontessori.org) includes relevant events, blog, links to social media, enrollment forms and news. It is updated regularly and includes information for current as well as prospective families.

One Call Now

For emergency or short notice communication the school uses a text/phone service called One Call Now. You will be invited to join this service at the beginning of the year.

Communication with Second Families

In situations where Parents are separated or divorced, please advise the school of additional addresses for mailing purposes so that everyone is fully informed about school functions, Parent-Guide conferences, etc.

Classroom Observation

Parents may visit the school at any time during the school's hours to observe their child, school operations or program activities without prior approval. However, to limit the disruption in the classroom, we ask that only one of the child's Parents be in the classroom at any one time. It is recommended that a time be scheduled with the School Office.

Contacting Your Child's Guide

We value frequent, timely, and open communication with you about your child. We will use many media to communicate with you (phone, email, newsletters, written notes, conferences, progress reports, etc.). Each Guide will let you know the preferred forms of contact.

Please avoid:

- Dropping by the classroom to speak to the Guide during the school day
- Holding extended conversations with the Guide in the carpool line

Changes in Home Situation

Please inform your child's Guide by note or personal conversation if there is a change in the home situation: death, divorce, or relocation (even within San Antonio), a new baby, friends or relatives visiting, either Parent leaving for a trip, a new baby-sitter or care-giver, a change in carpool or in the child's daily routine, or any fears, bad dreams or fantasies. A change at home probably will be reflected simultaneously or subsequently in behavior at school. Communication from parents will enable the guide to help the child as the need arises.

Relationship with Staff

As partners, Guides and Parents will often develop a close and long-term relationship. We deeply honor and respect these bonds, and we feel that these relationships make our school a unique and special place. Due to the close-knit nature of our community, there may be situations where Parents know private information about a staff member's personal life. However, we ask that Parents not gossip or talk about these personal matters with other Parents or staff members. If a Parent has a concern, they should discuss it directly with the Head of School.

Brightwheel

Brightwheel is used as the primary form of communication between school and home. Please check Brightwheel often for reminders, paperwork, parental notifications (such as communicable diseases), and overall communication.

Parent's Rights

A parent or guardian of a child at a child care facility has the right to:
(1) enter and examine the child care facility during the facility's hours of operation without advanced notice;
(2) review the child care facility's publicly accessible records;
(3) receive inspection reports for the child care facility and information about how to access the facility's online compliance history;
(4) obtain a copy of the child care facility's policies and procedures;
(5) review, at the request of the parent or guardian, the facility's:
    (A) staff training records; and

(B) any in-house staff training curriculum used by the facility;
(6) review the child care facility's written records concerning the parent's or guardian's child;
(7) inspect any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving the parent's or guardian's child, provided that:
(A) video recordings of the alleged incident are available;
(B) the parent or guardian of the child does not retain any part of the video recording depicting a child that is not their own; and
(C) the parent or guardian of any other child captured in the video recording receives written notice from the facility before allowing a parent to inspect a recording;
(8) have the child care facility comply with a court order preventing another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the parent's or guardian's child;
(9) be provided the contact information for the child care facility's local Child Care Regulation office;
(10) file a complaint against the child care facility by contacting the local Child Care Regulation office; and
(11) be free from any retaliatory action by the child care facility for exercising any of the parent's or guardian's rights.

In addition, parents have the right to breastfeed or provide breastmilk for their child while in care. We will provide a comfortable place with an adult sized seat in our Nido room that allows this. For breastmilk outside of the Nido room, please see the Head of School for coordination.

Emergency Information

Inclement Weather

St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School will follow the decision of the San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD) on whether or not to close school due to weather conditions. Be sure to check our website and communication channels for school closings. Please use your judgment to determine your safety and the safety of your child when deciding whether or not to drive to the school in severe weather.

Plan for Extreme Weather Conditions

St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School maintains a written plan to ensure the safety and well-being of children and staff during extreme weather conditions. Extreme weather may include, but is not limited to, severe heat or cold, thunderstorms, lightning, high winds, flooding, ice, snow, tornado warnings, or other weather events that could impact normal school operations.

Monitoring Weather Conditions
School leadership actively monitors weather forecasts and alerts through local news outlets and official emergency management sources. Decisions regarding schedule changes, early dismissal, delayed opening, or school closure will be made with student safety as the highest priority.

Severe Weather During the School Day
If extreme weather occurs while children are in attendance:

- Children and staff will move to designated safe areas of the building as appropriate for the specific weather event.
- Classroom routines will be adjusted to keep children calm, supervised, and engaged.
- Outdoor activities will be limited or canceled when weather conditions pose a safety risk, including extreme temperatures or poor air quality.
- Staff will follow all emergency procedures and remain with assigned groups at all times.

Heat and Cold Precautions
During periods of extreme heat or cold, we utilize a temperature monitoring chart provided by Child Care Licensing to help determine whether the conditions are too hot or too cold for children to be outside. Outdoor playtime may be shortened, rescheduled, or moved indoors. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather, including layers, appropriate shoes (our dress code requires close-toe shoes and socks).

- Children will always have access to drinking water throughout the day.
- Staff will monitor children for signs of heat- or cold-related distress and respond as needed.

If it is weather conditions prevent us from being able to go outside, we will still allow opportunities for children to move and play by: leading gross motor activities (step climbers, low balance beam, Pickler, dance/games, etc) in classrooms that have an open area, doing gross motor activities in the Parish Hall, or taking group walks around the school campus.

Communication with Families
Families will be notified of weather-related schedule changes, closures, or emergencies through the school's established communication channels (email, phone, or messaging system). Families are encouraged to monitor communications closely during periods of severe weather.

Emergency Preparedness
The school maintains emergency supplies and conducts regular staff training on emergency and weather-related procedures. All actions taken during extreme weather events are guided by licensing requirements, local emergency recommendations, and the school's commitment to maintaining a safe and secure environment for children.

Emergency Relocation
Should it become necessary to evacuate the campus, students will be evacuated to the Lambermont Events Building across Willow Street from the School (950 E. Grayson St, 78208).

Fire Drills
St. Paul's School practices evacuation and emergency drills monthly. Students exit the building and remain on St. Paul's campus.

Shelter in Place/Lockdown/Severe Weather
Drills are practiced throughout the School year. Students and Guides will shelter in the Church building and/or the food pantry in the event of a tornado or severe wind event.

In the event of a Lockdown, nearby chemical spill or other events that require us to seek shelter indoors, staff and students will shelter-in-place.

In the event of a spill or other air-borne hazard, the ventilation system carrying outside air will be shut down. While sheltering in place, the School will be open as long as students need to be here. In the event that a shelter-in-place is declared, we strongly discourage parents from coming to the School until instructed to do so.

Communication during an Emergency
The School will communicate with Parents via Brightwheel and, if possible, through email. It is important that Parents provide the School with up-to-date emergency contact information. Depending on the circumstances, communications may be limited; even if the School phone lines remain open, they will be tied up if there are multiple calls that come in at the same time. Our first priority, in the event of an emergency, is to ensure that

children and School staff are safe. Our second priority is to contact Parents and to keep you informed.

In the event of an emergency, the School maintains contact with the San Antonio Police Department and the San Antonio Fire Department and follows their instructions.

Continuity of Care During Emergencies

In the event of extreme weather or another emergency that requires children to remain on campus beyond normal routines, staff will follow the school's Emergency Preparedness Plan to ensure continuity of care until children are safely released to their families.

Because children have limited attention spans, staff are prepared to keep children calm, supervised, and engaged while awaiting further instructions from emergency services or school leadership. This may include:

- Familiar classroom routines and comfort measures
- Quiet activities, stories, music, or conversation
- Age-appropriate games or movement as space allows

Emergency supplies are maintained on campus to support children's basic needs during extended stays. Children will remain with their assigned caregivers whenever possible to provide consistency, reassurance, and a sense of security.

Families will be contacted with clear instructions if early pickup or alternative arrangements are required.

Building Security

St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School takes security very seriously. All external doors are locked to outside visitors at all times. Even though locked to the outside, doors are unlocked on the inside so anyone can exit any door at any time. (Some are equipped to alert teachers that a door has been opened.) Visitors are required to push the buzzer to be admitted and then, only if there is a valid reason to enter. Persons other than custodial Parents or guardians must be listed as an authorized person to pick up a child and must be known or furnish ID. Repair and maintenance personnel must be in uniform and expected by the Office.

Gang Free Zone

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child care center is a gang free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalties.

Weapons

Firearms, hunting knives, bows and arrows, and other weapons are prohibited on the premises.

Student Conduct

Guidelines and Discipline

St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School does not use any harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. Types of discipline and guidance or punishment that are prohibited include:

1. Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment
2. Punishment associated with food, naps or toilet training
3. Pinching, shaking or biting a child
4. Hitting a child with a hand or instrument
5. Putting anything in or on a child's mouth
6. Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting or yelling at a child
7. Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive or profane language
8. Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom or closet with the door closed

Guides and assistants use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. The goal is to help the child develop inner discipline. The guides and assistants use praise and encouragement and remind the child of behavior expectations. They also redirect inappropriate behavior using positive statements.

The following steps are followed when negative behavior occurs:

1. The Guide or Assistant will calmly and carefully inform the child of the rule/limit involved.
2. If appropriate behavior is not achieved after the reminder, a natural or logical consequence will be applied in order for the child to see that some behavior will not be allowed and as a means of helping the child gain some self-control.
3. In some cases, it may be necessary to give the child some "recovery time" by removing the child from the distractions of the classroom or the playground.
4. If the behavior continues, the Parent or Parent-designated adult will be called for a conference with the Teacher and Head of School. The aim of the conference is to

exchange ideas, establish interventions, and establish a period for review.

5. In rare cases, a Parent or Parent-designated adult may be called to pick up the child during the course of the day without a previous warning. This may occur when:
    a) The child's behavior is serious or dangerous enough to warrant immediate removal, and/or
    b) The child's behavior is deemed serious or dangerous enough to affect the psychological or physical well-being of the classroom community.
6. Continued disruptive and/or aggressive behavior cannot be permitted. The School reserves the right to request the parents withdraw a disruptive student.

Unacceptable Behavior

The following is a list of behaviors that are unacceptable for St. Paul's students:

- Refusal to participate in the life of the classroom for an extended period of time
- Temper tantrums
- Throwing objects
- Biting
- Aggressive behavior toward other students or Guides
- Out-of-control or hurtful hitting and kicking
- Damaging school property
- Inappropriate touching of another child
- Damaging another child's property
- Inappropriate language

Technology in the Classroom

Technology use by elementary students is carefully monitored. There is controlled access to the internet at all times. Use of the internet must be consistent with the educational objectives of the School. If a student's use does not support School objectives or if technology is misused, then the student may be given limited or no access to technology for a specific amount of time.

Anti-Bullying Policy

St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School will not tolerate bullying, as it is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. All members of the School community have the right to work and learn in a secure and caring environment. Faculty and staff also have a responsibility to contribute to the protection and maintenance of a nurturing Christian environment. At St. Paul's, children will be listened to; and reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

Bullying is repeated acts of aggression, causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to

someone. It can be physical, verbal, making gestures, mocking or taunting, extortion or unintentional. Examples of bullying behaviors are:

- Hitting, pushing or spitting
- Stealing, hiding or damaging another child's property
- Name-calling
- Teasing or spreading rumors about a child or her family
- Belittling a child's abilities and/or achievements
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about a child
- Excluding a child from a group activity
- Ridiculing a child's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms
- Misusing technology (internet or cell phones) to hurt or humiliate another

Records

Posted Information

The State Licensing agency requires that the following items be posted at all times. Reports are posted in the main building hallway on the board by the Toddler playground. The minimum standards for child care licensing can be accessed at the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (txdfps.org).

State Licensing

- Child-care center's license from Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
- Letter or form from the most recent State Licensing inspection or investigation
- State Licensing notice "Keeping Children Safe"
- Emergency and evacuation relocation plans in each classroom
- Activity plans- in each classroom
- Lunch Menu- by Jones Astoria Office
- Parent Notification Poster
- Important telephone numbers
- Most recent sanitation inspection report
- List entitled "Current Employees"

Records Available Upon Request

Parents and licensing personnel may request any time to see the following:

- The minimum standards for state childcare licensing can be accessed at Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (www.txdfps.org).
- Gas Inspection (if applicable)
- Most recent fire inspection
- Liability insurance

Student Records

Student records are confidential. Student records are stored in the School office. Requests to see a child's file must be made to the School Business Manager. Records will not be disclosed to anyone without Parent consent. The only exceptions are:

- School faculty
- State agencies
- Accrediting organizations

With the exception of the above, the School must have Parent permission to release material from a child's records to anyone other than the Parent or **authorized Guardian.** Likewise, if a Parent wants someone outside the School to see a child' records, the Parent will be asked to sign a release granting permission to do so.

In order to maintain our alumni database, we are not deleting or destroying records of former students at this time.

Child Abuse

At St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School, professional attitudes and ethical considerations are the basis for all interactions with children. St. Paul's expects all persons connected with the school to hold and maintain the highest standards of concern and behavior toward all children. A violation of these standards is cause for immediate dismissal. Conduct that may be characterized as known or suspected child abuse will be reported to the appropriate authorities, as required by law.

All members of staff are trained in Episcopal Diocesan "Safeguarding God's Children" which includes recognizing warning signs of abuse and neglect in children. Guides and assistants receive annual training in responding to abuse and neglect of children.

How to Report Child Abuse

A parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect should report to **http://www.txchildcaresearch.org** or **The Texas Abuse and Neglect Hotline:** 1-800-252-5400

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Local Office: (210) 337-3399

The Texas Abuse and Neglect Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400

Types of Abuse

There are four major types of child maltreatment: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse.

Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse is physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child. The physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) can result from punching, beating, shaking, kicking, biting, throwing, stabbing, hitting, burning, choking, or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caretaker intended to hurt the child.

Suspect Physical Abuse When You See:

- Frequent injuries: bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations
- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
- Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body

- Lack of reaction to pain
- Aggressive, disruptive, and destructive behavior
- Passive, withdrawn, and emotionless behavior
- Fear of going home or seeing Parents
- Injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days
- Unreasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or legs

Neglect

Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs necessary to sustain the life or health of the child, excluding failure caused primarily by financial inability unless relief services have been offered and refused.

Suspect Neglect When You See:

- Obvious malnourishment
- Lack of personal cleanliness
- Torn or dirty clothing
- Stealing or begging for food
- Child unattended for long periods of time
- Need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
- Frequent tardiness or absence from school

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse includes fondling a child's genitals, penetration, incest, rape, sodomy, indecent exposure, and exploitation through prostitution or producing pornographic materials.

Suspect Sexual Abuse When You See:

- Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases
- Evidence of injury to the genital area
- Pregnancy in a young girl
- Difficulty in sitting or walking
- Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex
- Sexual comments, behaviors or play
- Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child's age
- Sexual victimization of other children

Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse is mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material

impairment in a child's growth, development, or psychological functioning. It includes extreme forms of punishment such as confining a child in a dark closet, habitual scapegoating, belittling, and rejecting treatment for a child.

Suspect Emotional Abuse When You See:

- Over compliance
- Low self-esteem
- Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression
- Difficulty making friends or doing things with other children
- Lagging in physical, emotional, and intellectual development
- Caregiver who belittles the child, withholds love, and seems unconcerned about the child's problems.

For more information on factors indicating a child is at risk of abuse or neglect, please visit the CDC website here.

For more information on warning signs and increasing awareness, please visit the DFPS site found here. In addition, St.Paul's staff is trained to use strategies such as appropriate body part language and visual body scans to help identify possible abuse and neglect. Please also see our required posting board for resources on abuse and neglect.

For community organizations that have training programs available for employees, children and parents please visit the CDC resources page on Abuse and Neglect found here and for local help and resources please visit the DFPS find local support found here.

Parent Consents

- **External Marketing Photos**: Parents will indicate on the student enrollment form whether they give consent for their child to be photographed on campus for public viewing (including but not limited to website, social media, marketing and promotions, etc).
- **Field Trips and Transportation**: Parents will indicate on the student enrollment form whether they give consent for their child to participate in St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School sponsored field trips. Students are transported using a hired transportation service or parent and staff chaperones. If you do not wish for your child to be transported by another person, you are also able to drive them yourself.
- **Family Directory**: Contact information for all students will be published in the school-wide family directory, which would be sent out electronically to

all families who have children actively enrolled at St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School.
- **Water Activities:** Parents will indicate on the student enrollment form whether they give consent for their child to participate in water table play and sprinkler play.

Nido Addendum

Our Infant Community, often called *Nido* (“nest” in Italian), is designed to provide a peaceful, responsive, and developmentally appropriate environment for our youngest children. This addendum outlines the daily care practices and safety procedures specific to the Infant Community, in harmony with both the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) requirements and Montessori philosophy.

The policies below detail how we meet each child’s needs with respect, consistency, and mindfulness—honoring each infant’s natural rhythms for sleep, feeding, and movement. These procedures work alongside our main school policies to ensure safety, communication, and continuity of care for every family.

Individualized Infant Care Plan

Compliant with Texas Minimum Standards §746.3303

Our program provides individualized care for each infant (0–18 months). Upon enrollment—and at least every 30 days thereafter—families complete or update an Infant Care Plan that details the child’s feeding, sleep rhythms, diapering needs, comfort strategies, allergies, and developmental notes. Staff follow each child’s plan throughout the day and document care provided in the Daily Infant Report. The daily report (paper or electronic) includes the times slept, the times/amounts of foods and liquids consumed, diaper changes, and the child’s general mood, and is shared with families by pickup each day.

Feeding

Compliant with Texas Minimum Standards §§746.3315–746.3317

Feeding schedules and volumes follow the parent-provided plan and applicable DFPS infant feeding guidelines. Bottles are never propped; infants unable to sit unassisted are held for feeding, and seated feeding equipment is used only when

developmentally appropriate. Plans are reviewed/updated at least every 30 days or sooner if needs change.

Diapering and Sanitation Policy

Compliant with Texas Minimum Standards (§§ 746.3505–746.3515) for health and safety.

Diapering takes place in a designated area separate from any food-preparation surfaces. The changing surface is smooth, non-absorbent, and sanitized after every use. Staff wash their hands before and after each diaper change, and assist children in washing their hands afterward if soiled.

Parents provide their child's own diapers, wipes, and creams, all labeled with the child's full name. Staff use only those products supplied for that child. A signed parent authorization is required for any ointment or topical product. Disposable diapers are placed in a covered, hands-free container that is emptied and sanitized daily. Children are never left unattended during diaper changes.

Children who are able to walk, at the discretion of the Guide(s)/assistant(s) will diaper standing up. This promotes dignity and respect, freedom of movement, independence and prepares the child for toilet learning.

Updates & Communication:

Compliant with Texas Minimum Standards (§746.501)

Open and consistent communication between families and staff is essential to each child's success. Our school maintains daily and ongoing communication to ensure parents are informed about their child's well-being, development, and classroom experiences.

- **Daily Communication**
  For infants, parents receive a **Daily Infant Report** summarizing feedings, diapering, naps, and highlights of the day. Teachers communicate any changes in routine, supply needs, or health observations at pick-up or through the school's communication app.
- **Health and Safety Updates**
  Parents are notified **immediately** of any injury, illness, allergic reaction, or incident requiring attention. A written report is completed for all injuries or incidents, signed by staff and parents.

- **Ongoing Communication**
  Teachers share updates about developmental milestones, emerging skills, and classroom observations. Families are encouraged to schedule conferences, phone calls, or written updates anytime they wish to discuss their child's progress.
- **Respectful Collaboration**
  Communication is always conducted with professionalism and respect. Montessori education values partnership between home and school; we welcome parent input and encourage consistent routines between environments.
- **Changes to Family Information**
  Parents must promptly update the school regarding any changes to contact information, authorized pick-ups, feeding instructions, allergies, or medical conditions. Staff will request updates at least every 30 days and as needed. Urgent changes are implemented the same day once communicated to classroom staff.

Transition to Solid Foods/Weaning
Compliant with Texas Minimum Standards §746.3305

Our approach to introducing solid foods is guided by each child's individual development and family preferences, following Texas Minimum Standards (§§ 746.3305 and 746.3315). Solid foods are introduced only with written parental authorization per the Infant Care Plan and in coordination. We ask that the child be exposed to new foods at **home first,** at a minimum of 3 days to ensure there are no sensitivities or allergy risks. Teachers ensure that all foods are appropriate for the child's age and ability, and infants are always supervised while eating. Families are informed of the child's progress as they transition to self-feeding at the weaning table.

Bottle Preparation and Storage
Compliant with Texas Minimum Standards §§746.3315–746.3317

All bottles must be brought to school pre-filled and ready for the day's feedings. Each bottle must be labeled with the infant's first and last name and the date prepared, and must arrive with a cap securely covering the nipple to prevent contamination.

Bottles are stored in a designated refrigerator space labeled for each child and maintained at the appropriate temperature. Teachers will warm bottles using a

bottle warmer or warm water bath only—never a microwave. Bottles that have been warmed and not finished within one hour will be discarded.

Families will indicate on the Infant Feeding Plan how their child prefers bottles to be served (cold, room temperature, or warm). All bottles are sent home at the end of each day for washing and replacement.

This procedure ensures safe handling and freshness of milk or formula in accordance with Texas Minimum Standards §746.3317.

Safe Sleep Policy

C*ompliant with Texas Minimum Standards 746.2401–746.2431 and DFPS Safe Sleep Guidelines*

Purpose:

The purpose of this Safe Sleep Policy is to protect the health and safety of infants in our care by following the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Minimum Standards and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendations for safe sleep.

Our program adheres to all required safe sleep practices and maintains an environment that supports each child's development and wellbeing.

Infant Sleep Environment

- All infants under 12 months of age will be placed on their backs to sleep, unless a physician's written order states otherwise.
- Infants will be placed in a safety-approved sleep surface that meets DFPS standards or an approved Montessori floor bed under a licensing waiver.
- Each infant has their own designated sleep space, labeled with their name.
- The sleep environment is free of:
    - Loose bedding, blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, and bumper pads
    - Hanging objects or cords within reach
    - Smoking, vapors, or strong fragrances
- Room temperature will be kept comfortable to prevent overheating.

Supervision During Sleep

- Direct visual supervision is maintained for all sleeping infants at all times.
- Staff will remain in the same room as sleeping infants and will be able to observe breathing and color.
- Infants will never be left unsupervised while asleep.

Positioning and Practices

- Infants are always placed on their backs to sleep.
- Once an infant is able to roll independently from back to stomach and stomach to back, they may assume a different position on their own, and staff will not reposition them.
- Pacifiers are allowed during sleep if requested by parents and are free of attachments or strings.
- Infants will not be swaddled or covered with blankets under the age of 12 months.
- Sheets are disinfected after every use, changed weekly or immediately if soiled.

Montessori Floor Bed Clause

Montessori Floor Beds Policy (under approved DFPS Waiver):

Our program has received or is seeking approval from Texas Child Care Licensing to utilize Montessori-style floor beds in the infant environment in place of traditional cribs.

These beds support independence and free movement while maintaining all DFPS safe-sleep and supervision standards. The following conditions apply:

- Floor beds are low to the ground (2–4 inches) with firm mattresses and fitted sheets only and no loose objects in or around the floor bed area.
- The sleep area is enclosed or gated to prevent access to unsafe areas.
- The room is designed to be completely free of choking, suffocation, or entrapment hazards.
- Infants are placed on their backs to sleep, and staff maintain constant visual supervision.
- Each infant's bed is labeled and sanitized between uses.

- Staff receive annual training in safe sleep and Montessori floor bed supervision.

Parents are notified of this approach through the Montessori Floor Bed Acknowledgment Form.

Staff Training and Documentation

- All staff working with infants complete DFPS-approved Safe Sleep training prior to being left alone with infants and annually thereafter.
- Documentation of training is maintained in staff files.
- Sleep supervision and environmental safety checks are done during each rest time and throughout the day.

Parental Communication

- Parents receive this Safe Sleep Policy upon enrollment and must sign the acknowledgment form.
- Staff communicate daily about each infant's sleep times, routines, and any concerns.
- Parents are encouraged to practice similar safe sleep guidelines at home.
- Parents will document sleep rhythms and patterns at least every 30 days per the Infant Care Plan.

Sleep/Nap Times

For infants 0-12 months of age, nap time is designated on the monthly Infant Care Plan by the parent. We follow each individual infant's designated nap time(s). For children 12-18 months we encourage transitioning to one nap a day that resembles what the toddler communities adhere to. This will lead to a smooth transition into those communities.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or as changes occur in Texas Minimum Standards or AAP safe-sleep recommendations. Updates will be shared with staff and families.

This Safe Sleep Policy also serves as the Infant Nap/Rest Policy as required by Texas Minimum Standards §§746.2401–746.2431.

Pacifier Use

Compliant with Texas Minimum Standards §§746.2427, 746.3317, and 746.3515)

Pacifiers may be used in the Infant Community when part of a child's comfort routine at home. Each pacifier must be labeled with the child's first and last name, kept in a clean individual container, and free of attachments, clips, or strings. Pacifiers are sanitized daily or replaced as needed.

Pacifiers may be offered at sleep times or moments of transition, in keeping with the child's care plan and family preference. If a pacifier falls from the mouth during sleep, it will not be reinserted until the child is awake.

In the Montessori environment, we gently support each child's independence and self-regulation. As the child grows, guides and families work together to reduce pacifier dependence naturally through comfort, routine, and connection.

Health Practices

(Compliant with Texas Minimum Standards §746.3603)

Our community promotes the wellbeing of every child through preventive care, cleanliness, and respectful observation. Teachers monitor each infant for signs of illness throughout the day and respond promptly and gently if symptoms appear.

If a child becomes ill while at school, they will rest in a supervised, comfortable area until a parent arrives. Families will be notified immediately of fever, vomiting, rash, unusual behavior, or any contagious symptoms. Children must remain home until they are symptom-free for 24 hours without medication or cleared by a physician.

We encourage consistent handwashing, sanitizing of materials, and healthy routines that support each child's independence and comfort in the Montessori environment.

Clothing and Comfort Items

(Compliant with Texas Minimum Standards §746.3407 for cleanliness and safety)

Children should arrive dressed in comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing that allows for free movement, exploration, and independence. We ask that clothing

be free of characters, slogans, or distracting prints to maintain the calm and purposeful tone of our Montessori environment.

Each family provides three complete changes of clothing, including socks, to be kept at school and replaced as needed. All clothing items must be labeled with the child's full name.

A small comfort item,such as a soft cloth or small lovey, may be kept in the child's cubby for transitions or quiet moments, in alignment with family preference and developmental readiness. Comfort items are not used during sleep for infants under 12 months, in accordance with safe-sleep standards. Weaning from that comfort item should happen between 12-18 months and be fully weaned between 15-18 months to join the toddler community.

Barefoot/Footwear Policy

Compliant with Texas Minimum Standards §746.3407 and §746.5201

In the Infant Community, freedom of movement is essential for developing balance, strength, and coordination. For this reason, infants who are not yet walking remain barefoot or wear soft socks to allow full contact with the floor and natural movement of the feet.

Once a child begins pulling up, cruising, or walking independently, grip socks are required for safety and stability. When a child demonstrates consistent walking, the Guide will initiate a conversation with parents about introducing soft-soled shoes, typically around 12 months. However, families may choose to provide shoes at any point, and the Guide will support that choice.

Shoes, when worn, should be lightweight, flexible, and free of characters or lights, allowing the child to move naturally and transition smoothly into the Toddler Community expectations.

Supervision

Compliant with Texas Minimum Standards §§746.1201–746.1205

Children are supervised at all times through direct visual and auditory awareness. Guides maintain constant, active observation of each child while allowing freedom of movement and independence within a carefully prepared environment.

Staff remain positioned to see and hear every child, including those resting or in adjacent areas such as the bathroom or sleep space. Children are never left unattended, including during diapering, feeding, or transitions.

Supervision in our Montessori environment is purposeful and respectful—guides observe quietly, support safety, and intervene only as needed to protect and assist, ensuring each child's natural development unfolds in a secure and nurturing setting.

Soothing/Comfort

Aligned with Texas Minimum Standards §§746.1205 & 746.3601

In the Infant Community, comfort and security are offered through calm, responsive interactions. Guides observe each child's cues and respond promptly with gentle touch, reassuring voice, and connection. Infants are never left to cry without comfort; instead, teachers provide soothing through presence, eye contact, and physical reassurance in a manner that supports trust and emotional regulation.

Families are encouraged to share their child's soothing preferences—such as holding positions, songs, or comfort routines—so that care at school feels familiar and consistent with home. A small comfort item may be offered when developmentally appropriate and in accordance with the classroom's safety and sleep policies.

Our goal is to help each child feel secure, understood, and nurtured, laying the foundation for independence and peaceful exploration.

Sensory and Movement

Compliant with Texas Minimum Standards §§746.2201–746.2207

In the Infant Community, movement and sensory exploration are essential parts of healthy development. The environment is prepared to allow infants to move freely, explore safely, and engage their senses through real, meaningful experiences rather than overstimulation.

Infants are given freedom of movement throughout the day—tummy time, rolling, crawling, cruising, and walking—according to their own readiness and pace. Equipment that restricts movement, such as swings, walkers, or bouncers, is not

used. Instead, low shelves, mirrors, and developmentally appropriate materials support coordination, balance, and confidence.

Sensory experiences are offered through natural textures, light, sound, and simple cause-and-effect materials. Teachers observe each child's responses and ensure that all materials are safe, clean, and non-toxic.

Outdoor exploration and gross motor time are part of the daily routine, weather permitting. Through movement and sensory discovery, infants build body awareness, independence, and joyful connection with their environment.

Outdoor Play Policy for Infants

Compliant with Texas Minimum Standards §746.5201

Infants benefit from daily fresh air and time in nature, which supports healthy development of the body, mind, and senses. Weather permitting, children go outdoors each day for gentle movement, observation, and exploration.

Non-mobile infants may enjoy time outdoors on blankets, soft mats, or in the arms of a caregiver, observing light, wind, and natural sounds. Crawlers and walkers engage in safe, supervised exploration on grass or turf, developing coordination and confidence.

Outdoor play may be limited or moved indoors during extreme temperatures, rain, or unsafe air quality. Parents are asked to provide weather-appropriate clothing, such as hats, jackets, or sun protection, as needed.

Teachers maintain constant supervision outdoors, ensuring that all play areas are clean, safe, and free of hazards. Outdoor experiences are peaceful and purposeful, supporting the Montessori principle of harmony with nature.

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