

Montessori
Borealis
Public
School



Inspiring Children to Discover Learning



Montessori Borealis Elementary Handbook

MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of Montessori Borealis is to employ the philosophy and methods of Dr. Maria Montessori to educate young people to their fullest potential, instilling a deep sense of personal independence and social responsibility. With the knowledge that they are citizens of the world, they will contribute to that world by making decisions based on the highest order of ethics and conscience.

Montessori Borealis Public School Song

Waking up early for that uphill climb
We'll make it to the mountaintop, just give us some time
We're the golden goats we don't give up
So nobody can doubt us
Finding our own path at Montessori Borealis

Where we learn to make choices
Where we share our own voices
We got the gold, we got the gold, we got the golden goats

Learning geography, science math and botany
The challenge of discovery creates a strong community
Research art and music, and recess with friends
Read explore and even more before the school day end

Where we learn to make choices
Where we share our own voices
We got the gold, we got the gold, we got the golden goats

Arrival/Dismissal

School begins promptly at 8:30 a.m. and ends promptly at 3:00 p.m. It is helpful for your child to have time in the morning to connect socially with his/her peers prior to the beginning of lessons and intense work. If s/he arrives late, s/he will lose this opportunity and often have difficulty in developing concentration.

If your child is going to be absent or you have an alternate transportation plan for the day, please call the front office at (907) 796-5800. We will make sure messages get to teachers and students. You can also complete an absence form online on the website.

Please let your child know ahead of time what their transportation arrangements are for *after* school. Taking time to call home or work during the day to figure this out is disruptive to your child's learning and others, as well as your own. Knowledge is a powerful tool in preventing end of the day trauma - especially for younger children.

Non-bus riders are expected to be picked up outside the school no later than 3:10 pm. There is no supervision for non-bus riders after school. If your child requires supervision or will be picked up regularly after 3:10, s/he may be enrolled in RALLY at Harborview, and will take the bus to that location.

Children who ride the school bus home in the afternoons are supervised until 3:40 and will be escorted outside to the buses. **Only children riding the school bus that day are allowed in the school unless in a sponsored after school activity.**

Daily Schedule

Our daily schedule (1st-6th grades) is *usually* as follows:

8:30 a.m.	School Begins, Greeting by Guides (we usually line up outside around 8:20)
8:30-11:30 a.m.	Great Work Period
11:30-Noon	Lunch
Noon -12:45 p.m.	Recess
12:45-3:00 p.m.	Literacy & Reading
	Work Period, Specials (PE, Music, Library, Counseling), Jobs, Read Aloud
	Gathering and Dismissal

Elementary children all participate in music, p.e. & counseling at different times in the afternoons.

Food

Like you, we are guiding children toward healthy choices of all sorts.

Please keep snacks and lunch simple and nutritious. A couple good rules of thumb for healthy eating:

1. Any food with 5 or fewer ingredients is usually a great choice,
2. Anything with ingredients your grandmother would not recognize nor cook with in her own kitchen are best avoided.
3. Deeply sweet and sugary items are not allowed to be eaten at school: candy of any sort, pop and fizzy drinks, gum, etc.

By helping our children develop healthy eating habits *early* on and they will live healthy lives *later* on.

Snack

If your child wants and/or needs a snack s/he may bring one for the morning. Children self-monitor snack. S/he is free to eat snack when hungry and snack areas are not fully occupied. It helps to make snack look distinct from lunch items.

Lunch

Encourage independence! Elementary child are capable of great things given **time** and **opportunity**. Children of all elementary ages/grades are entirely ready to pack their own lunches under guidance for healthy choices. **School lunch is also available.**

Lunch is eaten is held in the classroom family style. You are always welcome to join us. Please help your child remember a drink and **utensils** if necessary. A cloth napkin is a nice addition. Try to limit microwave choices to once or twice a week. A small thermos will keep leftovers warmed at home until lunch.

We recycle! Please keep this in mind when choosing packaged items for lunch. We also ask children to return home uneaten food so that you have a good gauge of appetites and tastes.

Shoes

Each child needs indoor/gym shoes with non-marking soles and outdoor shoes for recess use and going to/from home & school.

Please let gym shoes double for indoor shoes rather than dealing with multiple pairs. **Indoor shoes are to be left at school.**

Use of indoor and outdoor shoes are an example of caring for and respecting our built environment. They also need appropriate footwear for outside conditions, as an example of caring for and respecting themselves. Please do not send slippers (even those with soles) for indoor shoes. They do not work well for fire drills in the rain and snow and are slippery on the gym floor.

Supplies

We have posted our class supply lists on our Juneau School District website <www.mont.juneauschools.org>.

If you need help acquiring supplies or have a financial need, please let your child's classroom teacher know.

Clothing

Your child should be able to “use” all of his clothing appropriately and be selecting clothing and footwear (boots!) for the weather. Zippers, buttons, and ties that work easily ensure they will be used. The children wait outside until school begins and will go out to recess every day, except in *extreme* weather conditions. Please have your child check the morning weather and wear appropriate outdoor gear. Help him or her develop wise choices. If your child chooses not to dress for the weather s/he may be quite uncomfortable all day after coming indoors.

Symptom Free School and Health Needs

All JSD schools are symptom free schools - particularly if a student is exhibiting any symptoms on the COVID symptom list provided by the district - and parents will be called to pick up students as soon as symptoms develop while at school. Please do not send your student to school if they are sick.

If your student has medication needs during the school day, please contact the school nurse, Maureen Hall, at 523-1768. All medications must be dispensed through the school nurse and must have appropriate paperwork filed with her office.

Recess

All students prek-6 are outside for daily 45 minute recess right after lunch. Please help your child be prepared for the weather - we're sort of like the Post Office - rain, sleet, hail, snow, sun, wind - we go out! Rain gear is essential - if you need help with finding some, please let us know!

Lost and Found

Please **label** all of your child's possessions with first and last names. Please do not send valuable items to school. We are helping our children become independent and responsible for their own gear. We will periodically empty the lost and found by donating left-behind items.

Sharing & Toys

Help your child leave toys and valuables at home. Toys are a distraction to the school day's work and recess is an active experience for which the school provides active play equipment. Your child may bring such items as models, natural history specimens (rocks, shells, nests, etc.) and collections, art, special books for homework sharing.

Cell Phones

We have phones in every classroom and the office at our school. Please call the Montessori Borealis office phone (907) 796-5800 if you need to reach your child during the day. Your call will be transferred to our classrooms if needed. **Cell phones are off and in lockers** during the school day. They may not be turned on or used **until the children have left school at the end of the day.** We do allow students to briefly check their cell phones immediately after dismissal to ensure plans to get home. This is standard practice throughout our building.

Vacations

The Montessori classroom is a busy community where children connect and integrate their academic and social lives.

The school district has organized several times during the year around which vacations are encouraged. Missing even a week of school is difficult for your child and the rest of us! The nature of Montessori materials and stories make it nearly impossible for them to be taken along as "travel work" or homework. Do not expect individualized lessons to be prepared for your child when going out of town during the school year. Your child feels left out of their peer group and often has difficulty catching up. We miss the contributions of your child to lessons and friends. *Please* schedule vacations during regular school breaks.

Field Trips or "Going Out"

We will "go out" regularly through the year and have occasional field trips too. Going Out excursions are designed by small groups of children and follow their personal interests. Field trips are for the entire classroom community. Children Go Out in both lower and upper elementary. This is an important aspect of the Montessori elementary child "taking on" their culture and the universe. If you have contacts or ideas, please share them with your child! Children may call you to help with transportation. Helping them become confident using the telephone to take to strangers will aid them in the process of becoming more self-directed and responsible.

Observations

We welcome parents and visitors who are interested in the children's process to observe in the classroom. For the sake of maintaining the children's community first and foremost, as well as the daily ritual and schedule, we try to limit observations to a few mornings a week between 9:00 a.m. and 10 a.m. PLEASE CALL AT LEAST A DAY AHEAD TO THE OFFICE (796-5800) so we know when to expect observers. Observations generally start around late Sept./early Oct. when the children have had the opportunity to settle into their community and routines. **However, you are always welcome for lunch without prior arrangement.**

Birthdays

Your child's birthday or half-birthday (summer dates) will be celebrated in the community.

A letter will be sent home near the time of celebration for the lower elementary children. You need *not* send anything, unless you wish. Children who bring treats are asked to keep them simple - cookies, muffins, veggies, fruit, etc. (there are nut allergies and gluten allergies in our community). Some children prefer to present the class with a gift of a book or game. Involve your child in the preparation process. With help, even the youngest children can follow a recipe, cook/bake, *and* clean up!

Work at Home (what you might have called Homework)

Work at home information will be shared with you by your child's teacher.

However, we create writers by practicing the discipline of writing. We create readers by reading. We know our addition, subtraction, multiplication, division facts by practicing them and using them. We create the literate person through interaction with the written and symbolic word. Your support of these activities at home go a long way to promote a literate citizen.

Encouraging and supporting at home writing, reading, spelling, math fact practice is a good way to connect to your child's work in the classroom. If it turns into a struggle, feel free to disengage and try again later.

Positive study habits can be developed by:

1. Regularly scheduled time and day(s): There are no surprises if expectations are clearly set.
2. A designated place to work: Choose a corner of the kitchen table, a personal desk, mom or dad's study/work place, etc. This will also help in "expectation management."
3. A designated adult to answer questions if necessary & participate in activities as requested by the child.

It is not necessary to sit next to your child as they write every word, but it may be necessary to drive them to an activity, help build a model, teach a lesson in how to use a tool, encourage their best writing, proper spelling and punctuation. Please do not correct every word as this often causes stress for both of you and makes the whole experience difficult. We are working on skills and mechanics in the classroom. You can help by asking your child whether you can help them find "words that need help." Always do this after they have shared their initial work with you. If corrections become the first focus, they will be the primary focus for the child - they will see it as what they have done wrong, not right - not what they have actually accomplished and written about.

Rule of Respect

Montessori discipline is rooted in the Rule of Respect. The four guidelines for behavior in the classroom are:

1. Care and Respect of Myself
2. Care and Respect of Others
3. Care and Respect of the Tools one uses
4. Care and Respect of the Environments one finds him/herself in.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict and struggle are natural and expected parts of any human interaction. The peaceful Montessori community strives to act proactively by having a system in place to deal with those conflicts. Children are encouraged to act in their own self-interests balanced by the self-interests of the community. When dangerous behavior is apparent, the Guide always intervenes immediately. Our steps in conflict resolution:

1. Choose to speak assertively to other(s) about your feelings.
2. Choose to ignore the conflict and walk away.
3. Choose to enlist the aid of a peer-arbiter (rotating classroom job) to help resolve the conflict. The arbiter listens to all sides involved and makes a decision. If the decision is not mutually acceptable, then as a *last* step the children may:
4. Choose to enlist the aid and direction of an adult.

Keep in touch!

We work hard to communicate with you in a variety of ways to best reach you. We also expect elementary aged children to be developing independence and responsibility in managing communication with you about school events and activities. Please expect this of them and help support this by ...

- Asking them as soon as you see them after school if they have any papers for you. Ask them to check their lunchboxes and/or backpacks **everyday**. In this way you are helping them develop a habit of communication that will last long into their years beyond elementary school.

The calendar in this packet has most of our year's activities listed. The school district calendar is also in this packet with many events. We tend to send home hard copies of important notices, note them through our website, and sometimes through the phone message service the school district uses. If you are not hearing about things you think you ought to be – first – ask your child, then send an email or leave a phone message at the office or with your child's guide.

We tend to send papers home on Fridays. Expect your child to have them and ask him/her to be responsible to get them to you. **Have you identified a place where papers belong at home?** Does your child unpack his/her backpack and/or lunch box each day (they can and should!).

Please call the Montessori Borealis Office: 796-5800 with emergency messages.

We kindly request that you do not call the classrooms for communicating about transportation. We are happy to hear from you and look forward to communicating with you at times when our attention is not with the children. Children and teachers rarely are available to answer the phone during school hours. The office will get us messages if needed.

Website and weekly newsletter

Check our website <www.mont.juneauschools.org> to stay posted on all manner of news, notes and interesting tidbits. The school will send information to you via email each week in the Montessori Minute and the occasional robo-calls home with important information.

You can find a regularly updated list of staff and contact information on the website - please do not hesitate to contact us with questions, concerns, or feedback.

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