



**MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



**Making a World
of Difference**

Family–School Manual 2025-26 School Year

Fernwood Montessori School

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Principal

Katrina Davis

Assistant Principal Underfill

This manual is periodically updated. You will find the most recent version on the Fernwood Montessori website at <https://schools.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/fernwood/>

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

From the Principal

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year. It is going to be another great one!

Parents play a vital role in our Fernwood Montessori School community. This Family Manual is a quick source of information for you to use throughout the school year. Please take a few minutes to look through the booklet and then keep it in a handy place for future reference.

Each Tuesday we send home a Parent Newsletter via email. It can also be found on our website. Be sure to check it weekly so that you can stay informed about all of the events and special activities at Fernwood Montessori this year. Please provide your email information to us so that you can receive our weekly newsletter, send your email address to: 158@milwaukee.k12.wi.us. Please do not block any emails coming from MPS, as this will automatically unenroll you from receiving school communications.

Thank You,
Kristy Lowell, Principal

School's Mission, Vision, and Goals

Fernwood Montessori School will inspire all children to achieve their fullest potential through Montessori philosophy, principles, and specialized materials. Students will be prepared for active global citizenship through intrinsic development in an environment that fosters equity, inquiry, flexibility and responsibility.

Program Features and Goals:

- A prepared, orderly environment in which students have freedom to work on their own or in small groups.
- Self-correcting, sequenced learning materials which help the child develop a strong foundation in reading and mathematics skills.
- Development of self-discipline and independence built around respect for each other and the school environment.
- Parent sessions on the Montessori philosophy and methods, with a strong emphasis on how parents can support the program.
- Belief that learning is a life-long process. The importance of developing a love of learning is central to the Montessori Method of Education.

Our School Improvement Plan focuses on the following elements:

-Each student will meet their “Stretch Growth Goal” on the iReady Benchmark in the subjects of reading and math (our school will be specifically focusing on math, which is a relative area of weakness and teacher professional development and learning communities will center on this work)

-Our school will maintain a 95% attendance rate or higher

-We will reduce the number of behavior referrals by 10 from last school year (last year 44)

Staff Roster and Contact Information, including MPS Email Addresses

Room	Staff Name	School Phone	MPS email
	<i>Administration</i>		
Main Office	Ms. Kristen (Kristy) Lowell, <i>Principal</i>	294-1305	lowellkm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
10D	Ms. Katrina Davis, <i>Assistant Principal- Underfill</i>	294-1306	davik3@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	<i>Secretaries</i>		
Main Office	Ms. Kristin Johanneck	294-1312	johannk@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
Main Office	Ms. Cynthia Arias	294-1310	ariascg@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	<i>Primary</i>		
3	Ms. Anna Wetherbee	294-1377	wetheraj@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
5	Ms. Katherine (Katie) Walters	294-1372	walterk@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
11	Ms. Lorinda Flores	294-1357	floresl1@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
12	Ms. Kellie Krawczyk	294-1365	krawczka@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
13	Mrs. Lisa McLure	294-1362	samperld@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
15	Ms. Andrea (Andi) Getz	294-1334	getzal@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
17	Mrs. Shekeya Farmer	294-1330	parkerst@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	<i>Lower Elementary</i>		
22	Mrs. Jennifer (Jen) Sarnowski	294-1382	sawnowjl@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
24	Mrs. Lauren Schweiger	294-1358	mielkeln@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
34	Mrs. Lisa Balistreri-Geib	294-1346	balistla@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
35	Ms. Jessica Foster	294-1380	fosterjx@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
251	Mrs. Katharine (Kat) Toman	294-1392	tomankr@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
252	Mrs. Natasha Posey	294-1381	poseynl@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
253	Ms. Kelsey McCarron	294-1389	mccarrkj@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	<i>Upper Elementary</i>		
25	Ms. LaBernadette Ference	294-1378	ferencl@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
27	Ms. Caitlyn McWilliams	294-1339	mcwillc@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
31	Mr. Jeremy Kimble	294-1379	kimblejj@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
32	Ms. Kim Milligan	294-1341	milligkl@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
33	Mr. Nikolai Gurda	294-1324	gurdanj@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
37	Ms. Sangita Nayak	294-1371	navaksr@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
250	Ms. Kari Wellhausen	294-1387	wellhakx@milwaukee.k12.wi.us

	<i>Secondary</i>		
150	Mr. Jason Jerabek	294-1390	ierabecjc@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
151	Ms. Katrina Davis (substitute Bri Kiefer)	294-1397	davik3@milwaukee.k12.wi.us kieferbc@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
152	Mrs. Annie Zimmers	294-1384	brownfak@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
153	Ms. Chelsea Bussewitz	294-1383	schumace@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
7	Mx. Ryn Botsford	294-1352	botsfokm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	<i>Special Education</i>		
26	Tracy Maier	294-1385	maiert@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
16	Ms. Rebecca Feider <i>Early Childhood</i>	294-1376	shearj@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
38	Ms. Malgorzata (Malgo) Kutynia <i>Multi-Categorical-LE & UE</i>	294-1337	kutynimt@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
21	Ms. Michelle Wright <i>Multi-Categorical -LE & UE</i>	294-1368	wrightma@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
21	Ms. Kim O'Brien <i>Multi-Categorical-LE & Adol</i>	294-1369	johanskm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
6	Ms. Karen Gervais <i>Multi-Categorical-Adol & UE</i>	294-1350	kowalskm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	Ms. Heather Vargas <i>Spec Ed Supervisor</i>	414-294-1374	strosihl@milwaukee.k12.wi.us

	<i>AMP Specialists</i>		
2	Ms. Laura Zimmerman- <i>Art</i>	294-1348	makulall@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
23	Alissa Turner- <i>Music</i>	294-1370	turna2@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
Gymnasium	Mr. Robert (Rob) Comp- <i>Physical Ed.</i>	294-1367	compra@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
Aud/9	Mr. Zhi (Eric) Zhang- <i>Music</i>		zhangz@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	<i>Resource and Support</i>		
14	Grant Gehweiler- <i>Librarian</i>	294-1335	gehweigj@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
38	Ms. Kathleen (Kathie) Major- <i>Speech Pathologist</i>	294-1391	majorkm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us

2nd Floor Stage	Ms. Christina Chahal <i>School Social Worker</i>	294-1329	chahalcr@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
28	Ms. Tracy Redlich <i>School Psychologist</i>	294-1320	redlcta@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
2C	Ms. Gretchen Kuhnen <i>School Nurse</i>	294-1388	kuhnenga@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
10C	Mrs. Bianca Willingham <i>School Counselor</i>	294-1321	willinbc@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
Annex	Ms. Kari Hanson <i>Parent Coordinator</i>	294-1323	hansonks@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	<i>Montessori Assistants</i>		
	Ms. Brianna Bellinger		bellinbs@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	Ms. Jeannette Bree		breeje@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	Ms. Jennifer Dominguez		horwatji@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	Mr. Manuel Garcia		garciam@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	Ms. Antonia Haug		haugam@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	Mrs. Angela Hill		hilla2@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
Annex	Mr. Joel Jaecks		jaecksjl@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	Mr. Matthew Dahlstrom		dahlstme@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	Ms. Katy Gabor		baileyk@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	Ms. Molly McKee		mckeeme@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	Mrs. Maribel Martir-Steiber		martinm9@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	Ms. Hayley Werner		wernerh@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	Ms. Kayla Fellows		fellowkm@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	Mr. Kenneth Spears		spearskj@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	Mrs. Nikoll Wencka		bladenc@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	Vacant, CHA		

	<i>Engineer/Bldg. Svc. Helpers</i>		
Lower Level	Mr. Jermaine McCallister-Engineer	294-1345	mccalljp@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	<i>Food Service</i>		
Cafeteria	Ms. Rhonda Matthews	294-1319	matther@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	<i>Camp Fernwood</i>		
Office Annex	Ms. Nichole Abresch, Director	294-1313	abrescn@milwaukee.k12.wi.us
	Ms. Ofelia Rodriguez, Assistant Director	294-1314	rodrigo1@milwaukee.k12.wi.us

School Calendars/Events

A weekly calendar is available in the weekly newsletter. If you have information that you wish to have included in the school calendar, please send it to the office or Parent Coordinator as early as possible. Parents can find the calendar on our website: <https://schools.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/fernwood/>

***New this year: Please see this document for tentative dates for schoolwide events. Updates will be provided in the newsletters each week: [Fernwood Events 25-26](#)

School Daily Schedule

<u>School Location / Function</u>	<u>Hours / Start Time</u>
Office	7:00 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.
Breakfast	7:00 a.m. – 7:35 a.m. (enter through Falling Heath Entrance)
School starts	7:15 a.m.
Dismissal K3 & K4	10:15 a.m.
Dismissal K5-8 th	2:15 p.m.
Wrap Around Services: After-school Services & Programs:	10:15-2:00 p.m. 2:15 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.

Our school's procedures are, first and foremost, designed to ensure the safety and well-being of your child/children. We need your cooperation, assistance, and support to ensure the safety of our students, especially during arrival and dismissal.

Student Entry Procedures

Early Arrival

Children are not to be dropped off at school before **7:15 a.m** (unless they are eating breakfast). There is no supervision for children before 7:15 a.m. unless they arrive by bus. Students who arrive early to school will have to wait outside unsupervised.

Please assist your child in making a smooth transition to school in the morning by saying “good-bye” at the door to the school. Ample staff will be available to help your child find his/her classroom. From the beginning of their K3 year, we teach the children to walk to class and hang up coats and backpacks on their own. In order to facilitate this lesson, teachers and classroom assistants greet the children at the door and make sure that they arrive safely to their classroom.

School begins **promptly at 7:15 a.m.** each morning. The children are expected to be in their classrooms and ready to work at that time. The Breakfast program starts at 7:00 a.m. and ends at 7:35 a.m. Any student arriving to class after 7:30 a.m. should report directly to the main office for a tardy slip. Please note that children will not be allowed to enter the building for breakfast until 7:00 a.m. and should do so via the Falling Heath entrance.

Adolescents are not to use their lockers before 7:15 when the bell rings and if they choose to come into the building for breakfast, must immediately report to the cafeteria.

Students will be allowed to enter the building at 7:15 a.m. To alleviate congestion when entering the building, students should abide by the following Entrance Procedures.

Door #1 (Northeast Entrance) - Rooms 22, 24, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35

Door #2 (Southeast Entrance) - All primary students (K3-K5 and siblings of primary students)

Falling Heath Glass Doors - Rooms 25, 27, 37, Adolescents

Door #6 (W. Playground) - Rooms 250, 251, 252, 253

Students in room 26 may enter the building prior to 7:15am. If arriving by bus, students will be escorted to class where assistants will be supervising. If arriving by other transportation, parents must bring in the students and escort them to class. Breakfast will be available for any student in the class who would like it.

The Main Door on Falling Heath Place will be used as the entrance for parents and visitors to the school. Please note that all visitors are required to make an appointment with the main office and must wear a mask at all times.

Remember to speak to your children about the importance of entering in an orderly and safe fashion.

Student Dismissal Procedures

End of the School Day for K3 and K4

K3 and K4 children finish at 10:15 a.m.. K5 through 8th grade students finish at 2:15 p.m. Please wait on the East playground to pick-up your child(ren). The teacher will escort each group out of the building. We ask that all families are on time to pick their children up as our staff must get to other duties and responsibilities. A late charge of \$1 per minute will be charged to families who are continuously late (2 or more instances).

Picking Up a Child at the End of the Day/Dismissal

Parents of children who do not ride the bus meet them on the East playground near Door #2. Do not park on Pennsylvania Avenue or Falling Heath Place; this is dangerous and interferes with the safety of the children who ride the buses. Students start boarding buses from 2:05 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. Buses will begin

pulling away from the school at 2:20 p.m. Our school's primary responsibility is to ensure the safety and well-being of your children. We need your cooperation, assistance and support to ensure students' safety especially during arrival and dismissal. **Please do not pick up your child by the Falling Heath doors near the greenhouse or West Playground as this slows down our bus line. Instead, meet your child"ren" on the East Playground. This prevents congestion and allows our staff to move students through the bus line in a safe and efficient manner.**

We ask that families refrain from early pick ups after 1:45pm; dismissal at Fernwood is a big process and it is very hard to locate children after 1:45pm. If you arrive after 1:45pm for early pick up, we will ask that you meet your child outside. We also ask that if you are picking your child"ren" up during lunch or recess, that you please prearrange this with the front office and homeroom teacher(s), as it also presents challenges to track students down during transitions.

Before- and After- School Programs

After-school programs provide students with a safe, supportive environment during out-of-school time. These programs offer engaging academic and recreational enrichment activities, homework assistance, and exposure to STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) programming, reading enrichment, art, music, and dance. Students are also given healthy snacks and meals.

In partnership with the MPS Department of Recreation and Community Services, our school offers after-school child care camp. The program includes homework help, academic enrichment activities, arts and crafts, sports, games and more. After-school activities provide students with a safe place to learn, play, develop creatively, and build strong bodies. A fee is charged for camp participation. Parents who are authorized for W-2 (Wisconsin Shares) can designate the school's child care camp as a childcare provider. To become authorized for W-2, parents must go to their W-2 region office. Students must be registered by a parent/guardian to participate in the child care Camp Program. Please contact our Camp Director, Nichole Abresch at abrescn@milwaukee.k12.wi.us or at **(414) 294-1313** for more information. The Wrap-Around program is for K3 and K4 students from 10:15 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. and the After-School Camp is from 2:15 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.

Extended Learning Opportunities:

MPS offers a variety of extended learning opportunities that provide more time for academics and enrichment during and beyond the conventional school day. These programs offer learning and development experiences that enhance and complement the school curriculum. The extended learning opportunities programs include but are not limited to the following:

Alternative Education Programs

- Alternative diploma pathways

 - Competency-based

 - General Educational Development Program (GEDO #2)

 - Wisconsin Challenge Academy

Summer Academy

- Free of charge for students who are city of Milwaukee residents

- Bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) services

- Elementary K5–grade 8

 - Engaging academics and hands-on enrichment opportunities, including arts-integrated activities, field trips, and in-school programs with community partners

Extended School Year (ESY)

- Provided for children with special education needs

- Grade 8 Promotional Program

Intended to strengthen the academic and social skills of current grade 8 students transitioning to high school. Principal recommendation is required to participate in this program.

High school

Credit acceleration

Credit recovery

Community service/service-learning

Internships

Community Assessment and Training Program (CATP) and On-the-Job Training (OJT)

Middle School and Freshman Bridge Programs

Enrichment Camps and Adventures

Students in K5–grade 12 have the opportunity to pursue new interests and engage in hands-on experiences during the summer months and on non-school days.

To find more information about extended learning opportunities, please visit mpsmke.com/elo or call (414) 475-8238.

Parking

Parking guidelines:

- To ensure the safety of all students, please avoid double parking, which causes heavy traffic congestion and is unsafe.
- The school is not responsible if a parking ticket is issued to a parent.
- We need to respect the rights of neighbors and **not park in front of their driveways**.
- The school parking lot is restricted and not open to the public.
- **Do not park on Pennsylvania Avenue or Falling Heath Place.** These spaces are reserved for buses only.
- To ensure the safety of all students please **avoid double parking**, which causes heavy traffic congestion. It is **unsafe** for your child **to run between vehicles**.
- The **school parking lot is not to be used** to drop off or pick up students.

Student Attendance/Tardiness

Reference: *Parent/Student Handbook on Rights, Responsibilities, and Discipline*

Attendance is the most important factor that impacts student academic growth. Students are expected to be in school each day and on time for opening learning activities and instruction. Students arriving late (after 7:25 a.m.) must report to the Fernwood Main Office for a tardy slip.

When a student is absent, parents must call the school attendance line at (414) 294-1360 or send a written excuse within two days of the absence. Excessive absences and tardiness will result in a referral to the school social worker and may result in a referral to the district attorney, which could result in a court hearing and fines.

Students must attend the full school day. Appointments and vacations should be scheduled on non-school days as often as possible. In the event of a rare need to remove a child before the end of the school day, students must check out in the office by reporting to the Fernwood main office secretaries or principal to sign out and meet the guardian who is approved to remove the child from school.

Please review the attendance letter here for additional information: [Attendance Letter 25-26](#)

Transportation Policies

Walk-to-Stop Distance:

- Elementary school (K3, K4, and K5) – Riders will be picked up at the closest safe corner location to their residence and dropped off at that same location at the end of the school day.
- Elementary school (grades 1–8) – Riders may be required to walk up to a quarter mile to a corner stop.
- Middle school – Riders may be required to walk up to a half mile to a corner stop.
- High school – Riders may be required to walk up to one mile to a bus stop.

Assigned Bus Stops and Routes:

Students may board and leave only on the specified route and at the stop to which they are assigned.

Corner Stops:

Pick-up and drop-off sites for regular riders are at corner stops. Riders should be at their assigned corner stop **10** minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time. A student should wait at least 10 minutes past the pick-up time before returning home to inquire about a late bus.

Inclement Weather:

Traffic delays are to be expected on days of inclement weather. Please be sure that your child is dressed appropriately.

Address Changes:

When a child moves and there is no existing bus service from the new address, every effort will be made to adjust the route to allow the child to continue at the present school. If the child attends elementary school, the new address must be in the same transportation region as the school of attendance in order for the child to receive transportation. Parents are reminded that it can take up to two weeks to adjust bus service. Parents should notify the child's school of the change of address before the move takes place.

SECTION 2: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

MPS Family–School Partnership Pledge

MPS partners with families to support successful student academic and social outcomes.

The district will...	MPS families will...
Provide a safe environment that supports learning.	- Provide adequate space daily for learning. - Encourage their child to cooperate with the learning community.
Provide high-quality learning experiences.	- Encourage their child to do their best. - Engage their child in learning opportunities daily.
Provide student progress updates.	- Attend conferences as often as possible, at least once a year. - Communicate with school as needed, regarding student progress.
Provide resources and information.	Engage district in understanding the needs of families.
Provide information to families as frequently as possible and in ways that are accessible and understandable.	- Provide current contact information and alternate ways to notify families. - Communicate their ideas to MPS.

MPS Family and Community Engagement Framework

Families play a vital role in the education of their children. Milwaukee Public Schools provides tools for engagement between families and staff to be equal partners in supporting student achievement and school improvement. When families and schools work together, students are more successful and the entire community benefits. All schools are working to meet the Six Standards of Family and Community Engagement:



Family–School Compact (also referred to as School–Parent Compact)

As of the 2023-2024 school year, Fernwood is not eligible for Title I funding. Based on paperwork completed by families at the beginning of this year, we may or may not be eligible again. The compact below is therefore not required, but helpful in sharing key information with stakeholders.

Fernwood Montessori - School-Family-Student Compact – 2025-2026

Our school and the families of the students participating in activities, services, and programs funded by Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), agree that this compact outline how the families, the entire school staff, and the students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and how the school and parents will build and develop a partnership that will help children achieve the State's high standards.

It is the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables children to meet the challenging State academic standards. It is the parent's responsibility to support their children's learning. For each to do these things, the school and families must have strong, ongoing communication and work to be equal partners in supporting student success. The MPS Family and Community Engagement Framework includes six standards that when met, allow for this partnership to flourish. The following compact will serve as our action plan around family and community engagement for this school year.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES:

We, as school staff, will support families by working to meet the MPS standards of family and community engagement so we can partner to support student learning. We will implement the following strategies to achieve each standard this year.

Our school will be a welcoming and culturally relevant environment:

- Kari Hanson is the Fernwood Montessori parent coordinator. She can be reached at (414) 294-1323 or at hansonks@milwaukee.k12.wi.us. Please contact the parent coordinator with any questions.
- The office hours for Fernwood Montessori are 7:00am-3:15pm. Families are encouraged to visit and ask questions.
- Fernwood Montessori is a resource center and information site for immigrant students and families.

Our school will be connected to the community:

- Fernwood Montessori has a website that is full of resources including a calendar of events, staff contact information, weekly newsletters, and forms. Our Tuesday newsletters are published each week on the website. Please check it out at <https://mps.school/fernwood/>.
- Fernwood Montessori School is dedicated to helping children become good citizens not only of our school community, but also of our neighborhood and city. Community partnerships include

service projects and a variety of vocational education opportunities for the students. Notable community and business partners in recent years have included:

- o Marquette High School-Senior Life Program, Wisconsin Bicycle Federation, MPS Recreation Department, Compost Crusaders LLC,, The Fernwood Fund (MPS Foundation),, Safari Club International (Archery Club), The Urban Ecology Center, the Bay View Historical Society, the United Community Center, Character Kids, LLC., Futura Language Professionals, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, Compost Crusader, Girl Scouts of America, Boy Scouts of America and many more.

Our school will have the tools and knowledge needed to build relationships with families and the community:

- Our School Engagement Council (SEC) meets the last Thursday of each month. This group works to review school policies, the budget, and planning for the future of Fernwood. All meetings are open to the public. SEC minutes are posted on the school website.
- Fernwood Montessori has a weekly newsletter that is sent home by email each Tuesday. This newsletter can also be found on the website. This newsletter is packed with information on Fernwood events and activities for families. When applicable, Fernwood Montessori also sends home a folder each Tuesday with information from classroom teachers, handouts, and reminders.
- Fernwood PTO hosts a variety of events throughout the school year for families to come together and build connections. Examples include the Fernwood Fest, Halloween Dance, and Family Game Night.

PARENT AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES:

We, as families, will support students and school staff by working to meet the MPS standards of family and community engagement to partner and support student learning. We will implement the following strategies to reach parents and families this year.

Our families will have the tools and knowledge needed to be active in our child's education.

- Each guardian can set up a Parent Portal account to view their student's academic information. Please contact parent coordinator Kari Hanson or Cynthia Arias, School Secretary for assistance.
- Family/teacher conferences will be held on dates TBA. Please watch the Family Newsletter for the online sign up.
- Fernwood students receive report cards each trimester. The dates report cards will be distributed are as follows:

Trimester 1: December 16, 2025

Trimester 2: April 7, 2026

Trimester 3/Final: June 15, 2026

Interim Report Cards can be viewed on the Parent Portal by the following dates. Note that these will not be printed and sent home with students. Interims will be available for students K5-8th grade:

Interim 1: October 14, 2025

Interim 2: February 3, 2026

Interim 3: May 5, 2026

- Families are welcome to visit the school. Please contact the student's teacher prior to the visit and check in the office upon arrival. Please note that appointments must be made with administration or teaching staff.
- Teachers can be contacted by both email and phone. Email addresses for all Fernwood staff can be found on the Fernwood Montessori website and at the beginning of this manual.
- Fernwood hosts educational nights for families to learn more about Montessori education. Additionally, families are encouraged to join the Montessori Advisory Council to become part of sustaining Montessori education in MPS.

Our families will have opportunities to build peer networks.

- Fernwood PTO hosts a variety of events throughout the school year for families to come together and build connections. Examples include the Fernwood Family Picnic, Halloween Dance, and Family Game Night.

Our families will have avenues to serve as leaders.

- There are many family-led organizations to get involved with at Fernwood Montessori. All meeting dates are listed in the weekly newsletter. Please feel free to join any meeting and check them out.

*Fernwood PTO, Parent Teacher Organization: The Fernwood Parent Teacher Organization is our parent-led organization that directly supports our teachers and their classrooms. Funds raised by the PTO are used to purchase appreciation gifts for teachers throughout the school year. All teachers also receive funds from the PTO for classroom purchases for items they need throughout the school year.

*Fernwood Fund: The Fernwood Fund was established in 2011 by parents of Fernwood, in order to lead grant development and pursue additional fundraising opportunities. The Fernwood Fund is our parent-led organization that is part of the MPS Foundation, who provides ample funding for amazing opportunities for our students including grounds updating, the Arts in Community Education/Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra program for our K5-6th grade students, the Schlitz Audubon trips for our K5 students, the Urban Ecology Center trips for our 1st-6th grade students, Spanish classes for 4th-6th grade, Greenhouse maintenance and sustainability activities, the end of year Secondary trip (7th-8th) and much more.

*Fernwood PAC (Parent's Athletic Council): This group works to support our athletic teams by helping with coach recruitment and scheduling and through financial assistance for equipment and registration fees. Their first meeting will be in October.

*Fernwood Music Parents: Music Parents seeks to design tangible goals that can become action items to create and expand music opportunities and access for music education and the broader arts for students at Fernwood Montessori.

- Families who wish to serve on the School Engagement Council or the District Advisory Council should contact parent coordinator Kari Hanson.
- Families are encouraged to volunteer at Fernwood in a variety of capacities. Please contact the parent coordinator for more information.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

We, as students, will share the responsibility to improve our academic achievement and achieve the state's high standards. Specifically, we will:

- I will speak respectfully to adults and other students.
- I will arrive at 7:15 a.m. to be ready to work by 7:20 a.m.
- I will follow the health and safety guidelines of the school.
- I will try to solve problems peacefully.
- I will walk quietly in the stairways and halls.
- I will not intentionally disturb or damage others' work or property.
- I will not bring gum, candy, toys or electronic devices to school.
- I will follow the school's dress code (as delineated in the Family Manual).

Open House

Open House is held twice a year; dates and times will be announced.

Family–Teacher Conferences

It is important that all parents/guardians attend family-teacher conferences. Research indicates parental involvement impacts and increases student achievement. Our school welcomes all parents to participate in parent-teacher conferences. These will be held in the fall and in the spring. Dates, times, and information will be announced.

Rights of Non-Custodial Parents

If you are a noncustodial parent, you have the same rights to student records, progress reports, school mailings, school visits, and parent-teacher conferences as a custodial parent unless a court order restricts such rights. If a court order is in place, the custodial parent must provide a copy to the school principal. It is the responsibility of a noncustodial parent, if desired, to give the school his/her address and contact information, request to be consulted regarding their child, and be placed on school mailing lists. Only the custodial parent/legal guardian can remove a child from school or give permission for the child to be removed from school by another adult.

Rights of Foster Parents

As a foster parent, you have many of the same rights as biological parents or legal guardians for the duration of the child's placement in your home. In some cases, however, these rights are restricted by law. One such case is the authorization of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) evaluation for the child. A foster parent cannot authorize an IEP evaluation unless all attempts to contact the biological parent or legal guardian have failed or the biological parents' rights have been terminated. In addition, foster parents generally cannot change a student's school placement. Contact the Department of Student Services for details.

Family Volunteers

Persons interested in volunteering are encouraged to follow the appropriate volunteer application process defined by the district. MPS defines a volunteer as a person who provides services on an ongoing or

one-time basis. Persons looking to serve on an ongoing basis or for more than 5 hours a week or for an overnight field-trip, must complete an online volunteer application, pass a criminal background check (for those 18 years of age or older) and be provided with a volunteer assignment by the school administrator or parent coordinator. Persons looking to participate in a day field-trip or other one-time activity, must complete a volunteer waiver form. A link to the online volunteer application can be found on the district's volunteer webpage under the **Community** tab. Please contact Kari Hanson for more information.

School Engagement Council

The purpose of the School Engagement Council is to provide a forum for parents, teachers, community members, students and principals to work together in providing continued analysis and improvement of public school policies, curriculum and School Improvement Plan. The council's decision-making authority is advisory with respect to all duties, powers and responsibilities, with the sole exception of the council's authority and responsibility to submit a signature page with its school's annual budget and the school's annual School Improvement Plan. Council participation is on a voluntary basis via a school-based election process. The council is not intended to replace a parent organization.

2025-2026 School Engagement Council Members

Kristy Lowell- Principal
Kari Hanson- Parent Coordinator
Jen Sarnowski- Teacher
Katie Walters- Teacher
Jennifer Cramer- Parent
Kristin Adler- Parent
Ryan Baumer- Parent
Karen Lemke- Community Rep

Title I: District Advisory Council

In accordance with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Section 1118) and the *Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Title I Parental Involvement Guidelines*, Milwaukee Public Schools established the District Advisory Council (DAC) as a means to ensure the opportunity for parents of all students to share their ideas on the needs of children, assist in the planning and operation of Title I programs for children, and participate in evaluating the success of Title I efforts. Our school is required to have two parent delegates. If you are interested in representing our school in this area please contact the school administrator or visit the Parent link on the MPS home page for more information. The Department of Strategic Partnerships & Customer Service (formerly Business, Community & Family Partnerships) is responsible for the oversight of all DAC functions. The SPC department is in Room 131 of the Central Services Building.

Fernwood Montessori Family Space

For further information please contact Kari Hanson at hansonks@milwaukee.k12.wi.us. Building permits can be obtained to utilize shared spaces at Fernwood after school hours.

Department of Student Services

Central Services, 5225 W. Vliet St., Room 133; (414) 475-8448

Parent/Student Handbook on Rights, Responsibilities and Discipline

The Parent/Student Handbook on Rights, Responsibilities and Discipline will be sent home with students at the beginning of each school year. Handbooks are also available at each school, at Central Services and on the district website under the **Families** tab.

<https://mps.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/en/Families/Education-Resources/Handbooks-Discipline.htm>

Tips for Parents

- Make sure that your child is in school every day and on time; school starts at 7:15 a.m.
- Call the school when your child is absent at (414) 294 1360.
- Make sure that your child gets the proper amount of sleep every night.
- If your child brings a cold lunch, make sure that it is nutritious.
- Check your child's book bag every day.
- Read with or have your child read every day.
- Assist your child with homework/practice.
- Encourage your child to keep a writing journal.
- Attend fall and spring Family–Teacher Conferences.
- Make sure that your child stays to the end of every school day at **2:15 p.m.** Every minute of instruction, from the start to the end of each school day, is important.
- Contact the teacher with academic concerns or recognized growth you see.
- Provide your child with comments of encouragement regularly.
- Ensure your child is dressed appropriately.
- Help in your child's classroom when you are able.

Handling of Discipline

In accordance with Administrative Policy 8.28: Student Discipline, administration must provide documentation of suspension prior to suspension beginning and all efforts to contact the family must take place. If your child has been suspended and you have not received documentation, please contact the school's administration.

If you have any concerns with how discipline is handled with your student after a behavior incident occurs, please contact school administration. If you are not satisfied with the school-based resolution, please contact

<https://mps.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/en/Families/Family-Services/Dispute-Resolution-Form.htm>

Complaints/Disagreements with Schools

How to Resolve Regular Education Complaints/Disagreements with Schools: MPS wants to help parents and families find solutions when there is a problem or disagreement about their child's education. The process is called "dispute resolution". By working in partnership with your child's school, parents and school staff can quickly find solutions. All MPS staff members working on complaints are required to keep information confidential.

STEP 1	
<i>Where should I start my complaint?</i>	Contact the school principal or leader. You may make a verbal or written complaint. An attempt will be made to address the complaint within five business days. If the school leader cannot address the complaint within five days, he or she should inform the parent and resolve the issue expeditiously.
STEP 2	
<i>What if I am not satisfied with the school-based resolution?</i>	You can file a complaint online at https://mps.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/en/Families/Family-Services/Dispute-Resolution-Form.htm Once filed, the complaint will be directed to a designated MPS employee who will

	investigate and follow up with the problem.
STEP 3	
<i>What if I am not satisfied with the resolution of my complaint by the school or other personnel?</i>	You can contact the Office of Board Governance with a written complaint at governance@milwaukee.k12.wi.us or at (414) 475-8284.

If a complaint has already had an attempted resolution at Steps 1 and 2 of this process, and now the complaint is with district policies or a family member believes policy has not been followed in the resolution, then the Office of Board Governance will route to applicable chief administrators in order to coordinate a response.

SECTION 3: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Report Card for the School



OVERVIEW

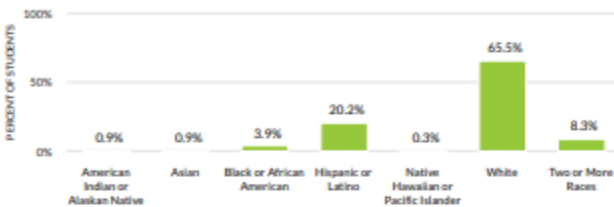
School Details

Grades : K3-8
Enrollment : 772
Percent open enrollment : 6%

Fernwood is a high-performing Montessori school with certified AMI/AMS staff. In the Montessori classroom, children use instruction materials to help them learn practical skills and participate in activities that promote concentration, math concepts, and problem solving. Through research and project-based learning, students are prepared for active and involved citizenship in the larger community.

The statement above is provided by the school. It is not an evaluation by the Wisconsin DPI.

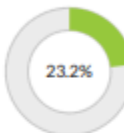
Student Groups



STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES



ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED



ENGLISH LEARNERS



Score Summary

Please use caution when interpreting scores and ratings. Multiple years of data are used throughout the report card, including updated 2023-24 assessments. For more information, see <https://dpi.wi.gov/accountability/resources>.

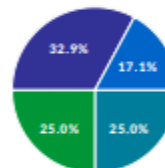
Overall Score

76.8

Exceeds Expectations



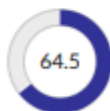
PRIORITY AREA WEIGHTS



ACHIEVEMENT
GROWTH
TARGET GROUP OUTCOMES
ON-TRACK TO GRADUATION

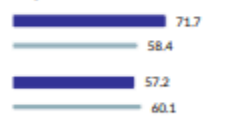
Priority Area Scores

ACHIEVEMENT

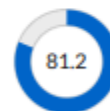


English Language Arts
Mathematics

Subject Area Scores

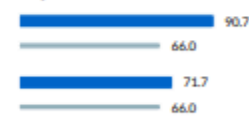


GROWTH



English Language Arts
Mathematics

Subject Area Scores

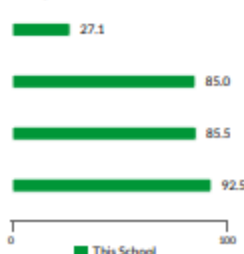


TARGET GROUP OUTCOMES



Achievement
Growth
Chronic Absenteeism
Attendance

Group Scores

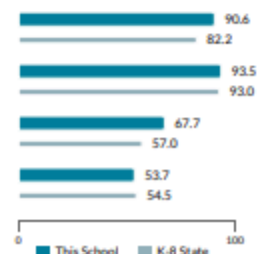


ON-TRACK TO GRADUATION



Chronic Absenteeism
School-wide Attendance
3rd Grade English Language Arts
8th Grade Mathematics

Area Scores



Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP)

A copy of the school's improvement plan can be requested from the school principal at any time.

Top Grade Completion

Secondary Teachers will share their student/parent/teacher agreement for the Secondary Program in the first few weeks of school.

High School Graduation Requirements

Students need “whole child” support to become aware of the pathways to their careers of interest, they must be academically ready to follow those pathways, and they must be prepared with the life skills needed to navigate their chosen pathway. MPS coordinates available resources, including community organizations and postsecondary institutions, to support MPS faculty, families, and students in fostering a college-going culture. This department includes college and career planning, career and technical education, extended learning opportunities, and school counseling and academic planning. A listing of the current graduation requirements can be accessed on the MPS website at this link:

<https://mps.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/en/Students/Resources/Graduation-Requirements.htm>

Standards-Based Report Cards/Progress Reports

To ensure that parents/guardians are kept informed of their children's progress in school, elementary and K–grade 8 parents at Fernwood Montessori School will receive three standards-based report cards and three interim progress reports. Students do not receive a letter grade for each subject but will be provided with marks that indicate levels of proficiency. Traditional middle and high school report cards will be distributed to parents/guardians at the snapshot date and end of each semester, based on each school's course schedule. High school report cards will include traditional letter grades and GPA.

Infinite Campus Parent/Infinite Campus Student apps are available for any smart device or personal computer, allowing full access to attendance, grades, schedules, report cards, transcripts, etc. Please contact the school's parent coordinator for assistance.

MPS continues to implement new, more rigorous standards for what every child should know and be able to do in each subject area and grade level.

The Standards-Based Report Card does the following:

- Provides accurate and meaningful information about a student's strengths, challenges, and performance
- Clarifies and reinforces consistent high expectations for students and schools
- Helps teachers, students, and families focus on standards throughout the year
- Provides specific feedback toward the standards
- Allows students, families, and teachers to work together to set meaningful goals for improvement
- Provides information about a student's work habits, behaviors, and efforts

Achieving these college- and career-ready standards requires continuous monitoring of progress and additional support targeted to those who need it.

School Homework Policy

Homework is an important part of the learning process that should be viewed as an opportunity for students to practice new skills and reinforce classroom lessons. Most homework is considered practice, which will not be graded. Instead, students will receive feedback that allows them to improve their skills before being graded. Some extended homework or projects may receive a grade or proficiency-level

feedback.

Dr. Maria Montessori, who developed the ideas for Montessori Schools, believed that the most important homework for a child is actual work around the home. By participating in housework children learn to be independent and they learn to appreciate that it takes a lot of work to take care of a home and family. Your child's teacher may or may not assign schoolwork to be done at home. Homework in the lower grades is usually designed as follow-up on class lessons and as practice so that children can build their academic skill. Homework for children in the upper grades also includes long term projects that your child may work on alone or with your assistance. Homework for students with special needs is adapted to fit the child's individual needs.

The best way to help your child to do well at school is to be sure that they have a quiet place and time to read and write at home. Children of all ages benefit when parents read to them or read with them. Children are able to take out reading books from the school library. We also encourage every child to get a free library card from the public library. A trip to the library every two to three weeks can really encourage your child to develop good reading habits.

Textbooks/Instructional Materials and Equipment

All students will be provided with the necessary textbooks/instructional materials by the school textbook coordinator. All issued textbooks and instructional materials must be returned undamaged at the end of the school year or at the time of withdrawal. Chromebooks may be provided to students to use during the school day and/or to take home to support instruction. Chromebooks will be assigned to an individual student in the same way as a textbook, and it is the responsibility of each individual student to care for and appropriately use the Chromebook during the school year. As with textbooks, Chromebooks should be returned undamaged to the school at the end of the school year.

Assessment

The MPS Strategic Assessment Systems measure progress toward college and career readiness through formative, interim, and summative measures. We believe in ethical use of assessments and data, decisions based on facts, collaboration, and connectivity between curriculum, assessment, instruction, and continuous improvement. We are committed to providing accurate, timely, and meaningful data that is easily accessible and user-friendly for educators, parents, and the community. More information is available for families about the assessments given at each grade level at this link:

<https://mps.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/en/Families/Education-Resources/Family-Academic-Resources.htm>

Advanced Math/Advanced Academics

The Montessori method is tried and true in supporting students in both remediation and acceleration. From an early age, students are exposed to lessons, skills and concepts that meet their needs and provide challenges as needed.

Fernwood does offer an advanced math option for Upper El and Secondary students. In the spirit of transparency and equity, the plan for advanced math can be found here: [Advanced Mathematics Plan Fernwood Montessori](#)

Fernwood piloted a 9th grade English Language Arts online class with some success during the 24-25 school year. For the 25-26 school year, English 9 will be taught in house by an appropriately licensed teacher. Since this is our pilot year, we may make some adaptations to the plan, but wanted to be transparent with families about our current plan: [Advanced English Plan Fernwood Montessori](#)

On top of the work that Fernwood is doing around interventions for students in need of support, some students have also been identified as needing acceleration based on assessment scores and teacher observations. Teachers are required to develop plans to meet their unique needs.

SECTION 4: MAINTAINING A SAFE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Our school is committed to providing a safe and effective learning environment. The safety of all students, teachers, and staff at our school is of utmost importance. It is the expectation that all district and school rules and policies be followed.

The *MPS Parent/Student Handbook on Rights, Responsibilities, and Discipline* is sent home with each MPS student at the start of each school year and is also available online at mpsmke.com/rights. This handbook provides families with detailed information regarding the MPS discipline policy.

School Discipline Rules/Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

All students have the right to feel safe and the obligation to respect each other and all adults in and outside the school building. All students are expected to be at their best behavior in order to create a safe learning environment conducive to learning. Please contact your classroom teacher to learn about classroom-specific expectations, rules, and procedures.

Expectations

It is important that our school be a safe and peaceful place for all. Children and adults may not behave in ways that interfere with teaching and learning. Everyone is to be treated with respect and courtesy. School and personal property must be respected at all times. Everyone is expected to walk quietly and safely wherever they are in the school building. Playground activities must be safe, age-appropriate and supervised. We have three major school-wide expectations:

- ***Be Safe***
- ***Be Respectful***
- ***Be Responsible***

Policy

The following specific rules are designed to support the above expectations:

- 1) No candy, gum or toys should be brought to school.
- 2) Students should be in their classrooms by 7:20 a.m. or directly after breakfast.
- 3) Students must have a hall pass when moving from room to room.
- 4) Theft or intentional damage to school or personal property will not be tolerated.
- 5) Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times.

General Behavior

Staff members deal with most behavior problems as soon as they occur. Each classroom meets to discuss and agree on specific expectations that are appropriate for the children's age and grade level. There are also school-wide expectations for recess periods, school events and field trips. The teacher will contact the parents if support from home is needed to solve a problem with behavior.

Lunch Behavior Expectations

Students who disrupt the lunchroom program will remain in the lunchroom, seated away from their classmates, until all other students have been dismissed. These students will then be dismissed to the playground (or classroom) depending upon the time of day.

Fernwood students will be practicing expectations in shared spaces in the first few weeks of school.

Playground Behavior Expectations and Procedures

1. Students are to respect the rights and personal property of others.
2. Students are to play away from the school building, including stairs, windows and doors.

3. Students will use respectful language at all times, to other students and staff.
4. Students will not fight, trip, tackle or engage in horseplay, including pushing, pretend fighting, karate, and wrestling.
5. Students are to walk peacefully in the labyrinth, no stones are to be overturned or picked up.
6. Students should bring appropriate outerwear for recess; you may not return to the classroom before recess.
7. Students must wear snow pants, boots and gloves in order to play in the snow.
8. Students are to avoid stepping in puddles, mud, and ice and climbing snow mounds.
9. Students are prohibited from throwing ice, snow, stones, wood chips or any other projectiles.
10. Students should ask an adult for help when they have a conflict with another student on the playground if it cannot be resolved independently or if an injury has occurred.
11. Students should not bring any playground equipment from home without permission.
12. Students are not allowed to utilize roller blades, skateboards, bikes, scooters, skate sneakers, etc. on the playground or on school premises during school hours.
13. Students are to use jump ropes for their intended purpose. Jump ropes should not be used to pull anyone, play horse, tug-o-war, or twirl overhead.
14. Students should avoid climbing on fences, trees, bike racks or stone walls.
15. Students are not allowed to jump off the tot-lot bridge and must slide down the slides, feet first.
16. Students should practice inclusion of others during game play at recess.
17. Students are to respect the school gardens; do not pull on plants or trees and do not pick berries, apples or chives.
18. All electronics devices are to remain inside the school.
19. Students must stay on the playground at all times and follow the instructions of adults.
20. When the entry bell rings, play activity must stop. Students using playground equipment are to line up quietly at their assigned room number and put equipment away as they walk in.

Fernwood students will be practicing expectations in shared spaces in the first few weeks of school.

School Bus Behavior Expectations and Procedures

This information will give you a better understanding of what you as parents/guardians can do to help your child enjoy a safe bus ride to and from school.

Since the time before and after school is as crucial to your child's health and safety as the time during school, a safe bus ride is a key element of your child's education. A safe bus ride for your child is our main priority. However, we need your help. Parents, please review the following bus rules and safety guidelines with your child:

- Remain seated at all times.
- Follow any directions given by the school bus driver.
- Respect your neighbor (no fighting, pushing, or shoving).
- Never throw objects in the bus or out of the bus windows.
- Keep head, hands, and arms inside the bus at all times.
- Profanity is not allowed.
- No yelling or shouting (loud noises distract the driver).
- Respect your neighbor's property when waiting for the bus.

Bus Disciplinary Procedures:

Students who disobey bus rules will be subject to the same disciplinary actions as at school. If the student violates the bus rules, the driver will file a written report with your child's school. Parents will be notified

when riders break the rules. A rider may have bus riding privileges suspended by school officials when the unacceptable behavior jeopardizes other passengers and the safe operation of the school bus.

School Bus Stops:

Parents/guardians should instruct their child not to cross the street diagonally or behind the bus. Parents picking up and/or dropping off students at the bus stop should park safely away from the stop but on the same side of the street as the bus stop to avoid the possibility of a student being hit by a vehicle while crossing the street. Parents should remind the child to stay out of the DANGER ZONE (*the area in front of the bus, area in back of the bus, and the area around the side of the bus where the driver is unable to see the child*).

As the child nears their corner or drop-off site, the child should begin to gather belongings and wait for the bus to come to a complete stop.

After leaving the bus, the child is to remain on the sidewalk until the bus pulls away. This allows the child to have an unobstructed view of any oncoming traffic. The child should then proceed directly to their residence.

Bus Accidents:

School bus transportation is the safest form of passenger transportation. Bus drivers are specially trained and licensed as school bus drivers. School buses are regularly inspected to ensure that each bus meets all safety standards. If your child is involved in an accident, your school will contact you within 24 hours of the accident. If your child complains of an injury, seek medical attention immediately.

Absence of a Responsible Person:

K3, K4, K5, and certain students with special needs must be received by a responsible person when they leave the school bus at the end of the day. If there is not a responsible person to receive the child, the bus company will attempt to contact the parent or guardian. If unsuccessful, the company will transport the child to the MPS Child Care Center at the MPS administration building, 5225 West Vliet Street. The Child Care phone number is (414) 475-8462. The parent will be required to pick up the child from that location. If a parent receives three *Absence of Responsible Person* notices in a year, bus service for that child may be canceled.

Emergency Contact Information:

Bus companies may access the emergency contact information furnished to your child's school. This information is provided to them to help ensure the safe and timely return of children who may have become lost or confused. The bus companies are aware that any information they obtain is to be used only for that purpose and is to be treated in a highly confidential manner. Please be sure that this information is accurate and up to date. Notify your child's school of any changes.

Behavior Problems on Bus:

If you feel that your child's safety is being jeopardized by the behavior of other riders, you should contact your child's school.

Inappropriate Driver Behavior:

If you suspect that your child's bus driver is engaging in inappropriate behavior, you should first contact your child's bus company. If the problem continues, contact your child's school. If you notice a bus speeding or traveling in an unsafe manner, or the driver is talking on a cell phone, call Pupil Transportation Services at (414) 475-8922. Please note the name of the bus company, the bus number, and the time and location of the bus.

Driver/Parent/Student Conflict Prevention Tips:

Cooperation between parents and the bus driver will ensure a safe bus ride for all riders. Please follow these simple guidelines:

- Be at your child's stop on a regular basis and get to know the bus driver.
- Speak to the driver from the curb or sidewalk.
- Wait for all students to board before speaking to the driver.
- Do not board your child's bus unless authorized.
- Do not request route changes with the driver.
- Do not threaten the driver or other riders at the bus stop or on the bus.

Milwaukee County Transit System Bus Pass Distribution Procedures

Schools are responsible for the distribution of bus tickets and or assistance in troubleshooting issues related to MCTS card usage. Most schools utilize yellow school buses as the student's primary means to and from school. Schools do, however, utilize MCTS bus cards for as-needed situations that require emergency rides home or for transportation after school events. Only students eligible for transportation services according to school board policy are to be issued transportation bus cards.

SECTION 5: EXPECTATIONS

Our school is committed to providing a safe and effective learning environment. All students in the school must follow the Code of Conduct/Classroom Conduct and meet the following expectations:

Student Dress Code

District or school uniform should be worn with the exception of where a guardian or school has opted out of the district uniform policy. Each individual school will address inappropriate attire if it disrupts the teaching and learning of others.

Fernwood Montessori expects that all students will dress in a way that is appropriate for the school day or for any school sponsored event. Student dress choices should respect the school and district's intent to sustain a community that is inclusive of a diverse range of identities. The primary responsibility for a student's attire resides with the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s). As a Montessori school, we value children being able to express themselves in a way that aligns with their own development and does not violate educational, health or safety guidelines. Student attire should not contribute to a hostile or intimidating atmosphere for any student and dress code enforcement must ensure that it does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income, or body type/size.

- Students are not permitted to wear hats or hoods, or any headwear that obscures school staff's ability to identify the student, or that prevents students or staff from sightlines necessary to see and move in classrooms and common spaces.
- Clothing should cover your genitals, breasts, buttocks, nipples, and undergarments with opaque fabric.
- Any attire and accessories should not display any of the following:
 - drugs, alcohol, or tobacco;
 - vulgarity or inappropriate language;
 - sexual references or explicit images or language;
 - references to violence;
 - images, symbols, or language that is considered derogatory to any group of people; or
 - gang related images, symbols, or language.
- Students may be required to follow specific dress codes for participation in some classes such as gym or when working with safety equipment/participating in certain science lessons.
- Fernwood administrators will make final decisions as to what is appropriate school attire.

*Exceptions to the above dress code will be made for students for religious, medical, or other reasons deemed acceptable by Fernwood administration. Also, exceptions will be made during school-wide spirit days when approved by Fernwood administration.

Dress Code Enforcement

To ensure effective and equitable enforcement of this dress code, school staff shall enforce the dress code consistently using the requirements below. School administration and staff shall not have discretion to vary the requirements in ways that lead to discriminatory enforcement.

- Students will only be removed from spaces, hallways, or classrooms as a result of a dress code violation as outlined above. Students in violation of the dress code will be provided three (3) options to be dressed more to code during the school day:
 - Students will be asked to put on their own alternative clothing, if already available at school, to be dressed more to code for the remainder of the day.
 - Students will be provided with temporary school clothing to be dressed more to code for the remainder of the day.
 - If necessary, students' parents may be called during the school day to bring alternative clothing for the student to wear for the remainder of the day.
- No student should be affected by dress code enforcement because of racial identity, sex assigned at birth, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, cultural or religious identity, household income, body size/type, or body maturity.
- School staff shall not enforce the school's dress code more strictly against transgender and gender nonconforming students than other students.
- Students should not be shamed or required to display their body in front of others (students, parents, or staff) in school. "Shaming" includes, but is not limited to:
 - kneeling or bending over to check attire fit;
 - measuring straps or skirt length;
 - asking students to account for their attire in the classroom or in hallways in front of others;
 - calling out students in spaces, in hallways, or in classrooms about perceived dress code violations in front of others; in particular, directing students to correct sagged pants that do not expose the entire undergarment, or confronting students about visible bra straps, since visible waistbands and straps on undergarments are permitted; and,
 - accusing students of "distracting" other students with their clothing.
- These dress code guidelines shall apply to regular school days, as well as any school-related events and activities.
- Students who feel they have been subject to discriminatory enforcement of the dress code should contact the principal.
- Note: The dress code was composed with language from Nicolet High School's Dress Code policy

Inappropriate Personal Property

Possession of personal property prohibited by school rules and otherwise disruptive to the teaching and learning of others such as food, beverages, laser pointers, electronic and communication devices, all toys, games, cards, large amounts of money, and expensive jewelry and jackets should not be brought to school. The school is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

Equipment from Home

All equipment needed for recess and physical education is furnished by the school district. Items such as balls, jump ropes, or other play equipment should not be brought to school and are not the responsibility of the school.

Cell Phones/Communication Devices

While on premises controlled by Milwaukee Public Schools, students are not allowed to activate, use, or display electronic communication devices, such as cell phones and pagers, for a purpose other than an approved educational purpose. Violation of this rule will result in discipline according to district policy.

Individual schools may implement a cell phone collection process at the beginning of each school day to ensure that devices are not used by students. This process is implemented to protect the learning environment. Schools that collect devices will secure the device during the school day and return devices in an orderly fashion at the end of each school day. If devices are activated, used, or displayed in violation

of this policy, they will be confiscated. If a student activates, uses, or displays a communication device to endanger the physical safety or mental well-being of others, the student will be recommended for expulsion. This includes capturing, distributing, displaying, sharing, and posting inappropriate images that disrupt the learning environment.

In the event that communication devices are brought to school, the school and school district will not be financially responsible for lost or stolen items.

Telephone Calls for Students

It is the goal of our school to offer all students an environment of uninterrupted learning so that they can achieve academically. In order to protect learning, the school requests that if a parent/guardian needs to communicate with their child during the school day, they leave a message at the school office, which will convey the message to the student. If there is a home emergency, please ask to speak to an administrator.

Student IDs (Middle and High School)

This is not applicable to our school at this time.

School Communication with Families/Family Newsletter

Our school believes that it is important to keep parents informed of school news, services, activities, and events. The school will send regular correspondence to families. Families should also subscribe to the quarterly district eNewsletter for families on the bottom of the MPS home page.

When parents/guardians wish to contact their child's teacher, please call the main office at 414-294-1300 or the classroom at the numbers listed above to leave a voice message. The teacher will return the call.

Parent/Guardian Concerns and Visiting Your Child's Classroom

Families are always welcome to observe their child's classroom. *Because the safety of all children is important to us, MPS requires that all visitors do the following:*

- A staff member must accompany any tour or visit to a classroom during instructional time.
- Staff must stay with the visitor to escort them back to the office once the observation concludes.
- Family members looking to meet with staff must schedule meetings in advance.
- Meetings should occur during non-instructional time to avoid disruptions to the school day.
- During meetings, conferences, and classroom visits, each student may have TWO visitors present, unless additional visitors are approved in advance. The school leader, or a designee, must approve any additional visitors.
- Meetings with families should be scheduled to take place in the office or another designated space that will not interfere with school activities.
- Visitors must always be accompanied by the school leader, or a designee, while touring a school.
- When dropping off items at school, students will be called to the office to meet visitors.

Lack of cooperation may constitute trespassing.

It is important to remember that because the Montessori Method of teaching is based on the natural tendencies of the child, it is impossible to dictate what each classroom and individual will do at a given time. Each child is unique, so lessons are directed towards small groups or individual children. Children

who are not in lessons are expected to make work choices based on lessons they have already received.

Our school believes in assisting parents/guardians in resolving any concern they may have. A parent may come to the school office to express either verbal or written concerns. Parents are asked to make appointments with the principal or assistant principal to ensure adequate time and attention is given to any concerns.

SECTION 6: SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Census Verification Report

The Census Verification Report has replaced the Emergency Contact Card. The Census Verification Report is used to verify that the current guardian, household, and non-household contact information is correct. It is also used to identify any person listed in the household or non-household who **should not** be able to pick up a student. The Census Verification Report also lists current health conditions that have been entered into the student record. The parent/guardian either verifies that the household, demographic, and health information is accurate or makes the appropriate changes and returns the Census Verification Form to the school. It is important to complete and return the Census Verification Form at the beginning of the school year. When there is a change of address, phone number, or guardian at any time during the school year, these changes should also be communicated to the school in a timely manner as well.

Breakfast and Lunch Procedures

All students are able to receive breakfast and lunch at no charge each day of the school year. However, if your child chooses not to participate in the meal program, they may bring a breakfast or lunch from home. Students are encouraged to bring nutritious foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, etc.

Parents/guardians who want their child to be able to purchase additional milk or à la carte menu items to supplement the school meal or the meal from home may choose to set up an account at www.MyPaymentsPlus.com.

All schools have a closed campus for meal times. Students are not allowed to leave the building during their breakfast or lunch hour. Meal delivery services (DoorDash, Uber Eats, etc.) **are not allowed** for students during the school day. This includes meals ordered by parents/families for delivery to the school.

Fernwood Montessori offers breakfast for all children who have not had breakfast at home. Children can enter at the Falling Heath Glass Doors and go to the cafeteria between 7:00 -7:35 a.m. to eat their breakfast. We encourage families to feed their children breakfast before they come to school because the children who eat breakfast at school enter their classes after the school day has begun and lose out on valuable social and instructional time. Please note that children will not be allowed in the building until 7:00 am.

Field Trips

Field trips are an extension of units of study being taught by the teacher and become an essential part of the total learning experience for students. Field trips assist in the teaching and learning process and have learning objectives for these experiences. They are an important part of the student's education.

Our school encourages all students to participate. Parents/guardians must sign a permission form for each field trip and return it to the classroom teacher. The signed form will be filed at the school.

Fundraisers

Fundraisers are conducted by our school and parent organization to raise money for the benefit of our students and school. Student participation is voluntary with parental permission. Students participating in sponsored fundraising activities are not allowed to be involved in door-to-door sales. Fundraising activities will not impose on instructional time during the regular school day.

School Bookstore

Fernwood does not have a bookstore, but does offer some swag sales throughout the school year. Please read the weekly newsletter for information about this.

School Supplies (Preschool–Grade 8)

All children need to be prepared with their school supplies on the first day of school. Each grade level has a special supplies list. Our school will distribute the school supplies list at the start of the school year. The list can be found on our website: <https://mps.school/fernwood/2025/06/03/school-supply-lists-2025-2026/>

Emergency Drills

Our school will hold emergency drills on a regular basis. Fire drills and emergency lockdown drills are held once a month. Tornado drills are held once a year in April. Bus evacuation drills are held twice a year.

SECTION 7: EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Athletics and Other Activities

Fernwood students participate in a number of intramural sports including soccer, volleyball, cross-country and basketball as well as additional after-school activities including but not limited to Spanish, theater, math club, yoga, archery and many others. All of our sports teams are coached by parent volunteers or staff. There is a small participation fee that covers costs for uniforms, practices and games. Many of our after-school clubs include partnerships with vendors, who will charge fees for their services to families. Scholarships are always available, as supported by the Fernwood budget.

Please see Chanda Miller– Sports Coordinator for athletics entry forms or more information about the fees and teams: chandamiller@hotmail.com

Fernwood parents support our teams through the Pirates Athletic Council. To receive information from the PAC, send an email to: info@fernwoodpac.org

Please contact Ms. Kari Hanson and hansonks@milwaukee.k12.wi.us for information about our other after-school programs and offerings.

We will keep you informed through our Family Newsletter when these clubs will become available.

SECTION 8: NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE

It is the policy of the Milwaukee Public Schools, as required by section 118.13, Wisconsin Statutes, that no person will be denied admission to any public school or be denied the benefits of, or be discriminated against in any curricular extracurricular, pupil services, recreational, or other program or activity because of the person's sex, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability.

This policy also prohibits discrimination under related federal statutes, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, and national origin), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (sex), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (disability), and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (disability).

The following individuals have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies:

For section 118.13, Wisconsin Statutes, federal Title IX: Matthew Boswell, Senior Director, Department of Student Services, Room 133, Milwaukee Public Schools, 5225 W. Vliet St., P.O. Box 2181, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53201-2181.

For Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), federal Title II: Jessica Coyle, Section 504/ADA Coordinator, Department of Specialized Services, 6620 W. Capitol Dr., Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53216, (414) 438-3677.
ASL: (414) 438-3458

Fernwood Montessori's Policy on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Credit to Aidan Montessori School for some of the language listed below

The needs of humankind are universal. Our means of meeting them create the richness and diversity of the planet. The Montessori child should come to relish the texture of that diversity.

-Maria Montessori

Fernwood Montessori adheres to the Milwaukee Public Schools vision which includes equitable education that embraces diversity. We truly believe that the most meaningful Montessori education is one that champions and celebrates the diversity of the world. We believe that our differences, including but not limited to those of culture, race, ethnicity, religion, age, family structure, sex, and sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomics, learning style, and world view, form and inform a rich environment that is essential to carrying out our school mission around preparing our students to realize their full potential and to be active, global citizens. Our interactions across our entire community center around respect, equity, justice, humanity, peace, and personal responsibility.

Fernwood Montessori vehemently opposes discrimination and consciously recognizes the value of diversity throughout all elements of school functioning including but not limited to hiring practices, the admission process, classroom composition, professional development and community activities. Our Anti-Biased, Anti-Racist (ABAR) Team works diligently to gather student voice, think strategically about preparing our classroom and school environments to be inclusive of all students, and provide resources to all Fernwood Montessori stakeholders to encourage and promote open-mindedness, kindness, and anti-racist dialogue.

SECTION 9: ATTACHMENT

Acknowledgment for the Family–School Compact and acknowledgement for the *Family–School Manual*

ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

The Family–School Compact (also referred to as School – Parent Compact)

In the school compact, families and school staff agree how to work together. Every Title I school must develop a Family – School Compact. The purpose of this agreement is to help parents and teachers come to a consensus on the responsibilities that impact student achievement. The underlying assumption is that a student's academic success will improve when the home and school work together.

It is important that parents/guardians review and discuss the Family – School Compact with their child/children. We request that the parents/guardians and students sign and return the bottom portion of this form to the classroom teacher.

.....

We have reviewed and discussed the Family–School Compact with our child.

Student Name _____ Room # _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Family–School Manual

It is important that parents/guardians review and discuss the *Family–School Manual* with their child/children. We request that the parents/guardians and students sign and return the bottom portion of this form to the classroom teacher.

.....

We have reviewed and discussed the *Family–School Manual* and agree to follow all rules and expectations set by the school.

Student Name _____ Room # _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

