



Family Handbook

Table of Contents

Section 1. Introduction and Welcome

Section 2. Childcare and Teaching Philosophies

- 2.1 The Montessori Method
- 2.2 Montessori Philosophy
- 2.3 Multi-Age Classrooms
- 2.4 The Prepared Environment
- 2.5 Work, Play, and Experiential Learning

Section 3. Operating Information

- 3.1 Hours of Operation
- 3.2 Contact Information
- 3.3 Tax ID
- 3.4 Partnership with Mountain City Public Montessori
 - 3.4a Mountain City lottery
- 3.5 Classroom Ratios

Section 4. Enrollment, Waitlist, and Withdrawing Policies

- 4.1 Enrollment Period
- 4.2 Student Placement
- 4.3 Enrollment Priorities
- 4.4 Waitlist
- 4.5 Interest for Future Years
- 4.6 Termination of Enrollment
 - 4.6a Withdrawal/Termination by Caregiver
 - 4.6b Termination by Little Grove Preschool

Section 5. Curriculum and the Montessori Work Cycle

- 5.1 Curriculum
- 5.2 The Montessori Work Cycle

Section 6. Daily Schedule

Section 7. Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

- 7.1 Arrival
- 7.2 Dismissal
 - 7.2a Car Seat Policy
 - 7.2b Child Release Policy
 - 7.2c Release of Children to Impaired or Unsafe Caregiver
- 7.3 Arrival/Dismissal Outside of Regular Hours

Section 8. What to Bring

- 8.1 Required Items
- 8.2 Toys From Home

Section 9. Snacks and Meals

- 9.1 Optional Snack Donation
- 9.2 Lunch

9.3 Food Allergies and Dietary Restrictions

Section 10. Special Classroom Activities

10.1 Holiday Celebrations

10.1a Working with Children and Families who Don't Celebrate Holidays

10.2 Birthday Celebrations

10.3 Field Trips

Section 11. Sick Days and Other Schedule Interruptions

11.1 Illness Policy

11.1a Sending a Sick Child Home

11.2 How to Notify the School of Planned or Unplanned Absences

11.3 Tuition Adjustments Due to Absences

11.4 Weather Closure Policies

Section 12. Discipline and Codes of Conduct

12.1 Behavior and Discipline Philosophy

12.2 Nautilus Approach to Discipline

12.3 Policy Against Corporal Punishment

12.4 Student Code of Conduct

12.4a Policy on Biting

12.5 Adult Code of Conduct

Section 13. School and Family Partnership

13.1 Family and School Communication

13.2 Family-Teacher Conferences

13.3 Family Education Opportunities

13.4 Service to the School

13.5 Family-Teacher Collective

13.6 Visitor and Volunteer Guidelines

13.7 Photographing of Children

13.8 Family Directory

13.9 Staff and Babysitting

13.10 Social Media Policy

13.11 Family Grievance Policy

Section 14. Health and Safety Regulations

14.1 Covid Policy

14.2 Immunization Policy

14.2a Immunization Requirements

14.2b Vaccine Schedule

14.2c Exemptions

14.2d Immunization Record Keeping and Confidentiality

14.3 Medication Policy and Procedures

14.4 Incident Reports

14.5 Child Abuse

14.6 Fire and Safety Drills

14.7 Security Measures on Campus

14.8 Smoke Free Environment

14.9 Illegal Drugs

14.10 Weapons

Section 15. Billing Policies

- 15.1 Pay Structure
- 15.2 Payment Due Dates
- 15.3 Late Payment Policies
- 15.4 Methods of Payment
- 15.5 Additional Charges
- 15.6 Termination of Enrollment
- 15.7 Tuition Assistance

Section 16. Attachments and Forms

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Welcome to Little Grove Preschool!

We are pleased to welcome you to our school community. Little Grove Preschool is an early education program which follows the Montessori method and focuses on the development of the whole child.

Our mission is to provide an enriching community where children can learn and grow. Through our Montessori approach, collaboration with families and the local community, and dedication to respectful, developmentally appropriate care, we seek to nurture children's growth and instill a love of learning and a strong foundation for their future.

We are honored to be a part of your family's journey, and value you as an integral part of our work with your child.

SECTION 2. CHILDCARE AND TEACHING PHILOSOPHIES

At Little Grove Preschool, we believe play is the work of childhood.

We further believe that every child has the right to be seen, heard, and valued for who they are. We recognize children as unique, creative, capable, and worthy of respect. It is our goal to provide children with a learning environment which will nurture and support their growth and development, and which will address their unique social, emotional, academic, cultural, spiritual, and physical needs. Authentic connection which affirms each child's safety and inherent value is paramount to their experience at Little Grove Preschool.

We prioritize providing evidence-based care and education that centers the child. To achieve this, our school follows the Montessori Method of education.

2.1 THE MONTESSORI METHOD

Over a century ago, Dr. Maria Montessori developed a comprehensive approach to education based on her observations of children's needs and her understanding of children's natural learning tendencies. The Montessori method draws its principles from the natural development of the child and is designed to help children with their task of inner construction as they grow from childhood to maturity. The child's innate passion for learning is encouraged by giving them opportunities to engage in

spontaneous, purposeful activities with the guidance of a trained adult. Through their work, children develop concentration and joyful self-discipline. Within a framework of order, children progress at their own pace and rhythm, according to their individual capabilities.

2.2 MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY

Montessori educational methods develop out of the philosophy that all children are natural learners who are motivated by an internal drive to build skills and understand the world. Children are seen as people who desire independence and are capable of doing a great deal for themselves when they are given clear and concise lessons and allowed to experiment for themselves. Students are not considered empty vessels who gain all their knowledge from the teachers and textbooks. Rather, they are seen as active constructors of knowledge who bring knowledge with them from past experiences and build on it everyday through interacting with their teachers, peers, families, and learning materials. A deep understanding of child development is intrinsic to this method. Classrooms, learning materials, and lessons are purposefully designed in order to appeal to children based on the unique characteristics of their age.

2.3 MULTI-AGE CLASSROOMS

One of the hallmarks of the Montessori method is that children of mixed ages work together in the same class. Age groupings are based on developmental planes. Children from 3-6 years of age learn together in our Primary classrooms, in partnership with Mountain City Public Montessori. Because the work is individual, children progress at their own pace; there is cooperation rather than competition between the ages. Younger children learn from older children and older children naturally become classroom leaders.

2.4 THE PREPARED ENVIRONMENT

The “prepared environment” is Dr. Montessori’s concept that the classroom environment should be designed by the adult to facilitate maximum, independent learning and exploration by the child. Attributes of a prepared environment include order and reality, beauty and simplicity. Everything is child-sized to enhance children’s independent functioning. In the Montessori classroom, learning materials are arranged invitingly on low, open shelves. Children may choose any materials they have had lessons on, and may work for as long as the material holds their interest. When they are finished with each material, they return it to the shelf from which it came.

2.5 WORK, PLAY, AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Dr. Montessori wrote “[The child] does it [learning] with [their] hands, by experience, first in play and then through work. The hands are the instruments of [hu]man’s intelligence.”

Montessori educators will often refer to children’s tasks as “works” in the classroom. This does not detract from the importance of play in early childhood. Rather, it is a term of reverence used to denote a child’s focused attention on the task at hand.

Learning materials in the Montessori classroom are designed to be hands-on and self-correcting in order to support engagement, curiosity, independence, and self-guided learning. Through playing and working with the hands-on classroom materials, children regard their tasks as having the same importance as adults’, and through repetition, they build focus, skill, and understanding.

SECTION 3. OPERATING INFORMATION

3.1 HOURS OF OPERATION

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Monday - Friday

3.2 CONTACT INFORMATION

Campus Address:

Little Grove Preschool
27 Church Street
Asheville, NC 28801

Mailing Address:

Little Grove Preschool
PO Box 1186
Asheville, NC 28802

Phone: 828-229-2303

Email: info@LittleGrovePreschool.org

3.3 TAX ID

Should you need our tax ID, you can find it in the Billing section of your Brightwheel account. Alternatively, you can request this from the Director.

3.4 PARTNERSHIP WITH MOUNTAIN CITY PUBLIC MONTESSORI

Little Grove Preschool is an independently owned and operated early childhood education program. Our program operates in partnership with Mountain City Public Montessori, a non-profit, publicly funded, K-8 charter school.

Our students learn in multi-age Montessori classrooms. Because the Montessori early childhood curriculum spans ages 3-6, our classrooms are combined to serve students enrolled at Little Grove Preschool as well as Kindergarten students enrolled at Mountain City Public Montessori.

Teaching staff in these combined classrooms are employed by both Little Grove Preschool and Mountain City Public Montessori. Administrators and other staff members of MCPM will be present on the shared campus, and may occasionally be in the classroom with students of Little Grove Preschool. For more information about the partnership between Little Grove Preschool and Mountain City Public Montessori, please refer to the Partner Schools Agreement in your registration packet.

3.4A MOUNTAIN CITY LOTTERY

Mountain City Public Montessori uses an enrollment lottery to enroll new students. Rising Kindergarten students should apply to the Mountain City lottery during their open enrollment period for the appropriate school year.

Students graduating from Little Grove may be given an enrollment priority in the lottery; this is at the discretion of the Mountain City Public Montessori Board of Directors. Please see enrollment information on their website or contact the school directly.

3.5 CLASSROOM RATIOS

In partnership with Mountain City Public Montessori, our classrooms house 21 students between the ages of 3-6 years old. 50% of these children are Kindergarten students ages 5-6, and 50% are Preschool students between ages 3-5.

There are two designated educators in each classroom, along with a multi-classroom assistant educator, for a ratio of around 8:1.

SECTION 4. ENROLLMENT, WAITLIST, AND WITHDRAWING POLICIES

4.1 ENROLLMENT PERIOD

Enrollment begins in January of each year.

Priority Re-enrollment is first offered to returning students, with Open Enrollment to follow. Little Grove Preschool will send a written request for confirmation of re-enrollment or withdrawal to caregivers of all currently enrolled students. If we do not receive written confirmation of re-enrollment by the end of the Priority Re-enrollment period, we will open the spot for new applicants.

During the Open Enrollment period, applications are accepted for the upcoming school year. Interested applicants should complete the application online. After the Open Enrollment period closes, applicants will either be offered enrollment or placed on the Little Grove Preschool waitlist.

Applications received after the Open Enrollment period has closed will be added to the waitlist in the order received.

4.2 STUDENT PLACEMENT

In an effort to provide fair and equitable opportunity for enrollment, applications received during the Open Enrollment period will be considered equally. Enrollment during this period is not assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

Upon the closing of Open Enrollment, student placement will be determined by a randomized lottery. The names to be drawn first will be offered enrollment, with all remaining applicants to be placed on the Little Grove waitlist.

4.3 ENROLLMENT PRIORITY

Certain individuals receive preference toward enrollment prior to the lottery drawing. Should an applicant belong to any of these groups, they will automatically be offered enrollment, provided there is room in the program.

These include:

- Siblings of current or past Little Grove Preschool students
- Siblings of current Mountain City Public Montessori (MCPM) students
- Children of Little Grove staff or MCPM staff or Board members

4.4 WAITLIST

Applicants who are not offered enrollment after the lottery drawing will be placed on our Wait List/ Wait Pool. Any applications received after the closing of the Open Enrollment period and lottery drawing will be added to the waitlist.

The Little Grove Preschool waitlist is maintained for the full school year. Families on the waitlist will be offered enrollment as openings become available. The waitlist expires at the end of the school year. If a family wishes to reapply for the following year, they may do so during Open Enrollment.

4.5 INTEREST FOR FUTURE YEARS

We accept applications for the current school year, and for the immediate upcoming school year after the enrollment period opens. Families interested in enrollment for any future year should sign up to receive our email newsletter. Those receiving this newsletter will be notified about upcoming enrollment dates so that they can submit an application.

4.6 TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

4.6A WITHDRAWAL FROM LITTLE GROVE PRESCHOOL/ TERMINATION BY A CAREGIVER

Should a family wish to terminate their enrollment prior to the end of the school year, written notice must be submitted to the Director. Please include the effective date of termination, and any pertinent information.

We request a minimum of 30 days notice of withdrawal. If less than 30 days notice is provided, tuition will be billed for the following month. No refunds will be given due to early withdrawal.

4.6B TERMINATION BY LITTLE GROVE PRESCHOOL

Little Grove Preschool reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment with or without notice for the following reasons:

- The child(ren)'s behavior is destructive, violent, or threatening to the other children or staff at the school. This determination is made at the sole discretion of the provider. Please see the Little Grove Preschool Code of Conduct for more information on our behavior and discipline policies.

- A parent's/guardian's behavior is threatening or abusive to the other children or staff at the school.

- Tuition fees are two weeks or more delinquent.

All terminations of this type can be made effective immediately. If Little Grove Preschool terminates enrollment, no refunds will be given for tuition paid.

SECTION 5. CURRICULUM AND THE MONTESSORI WORK CYCLE

5.1 CURRICULUM

The Montessori Curriculum offers children five key areas of study: Sensorial Learning, Language, Mathematics, Practical Life, and Cultural Studies. Each area of study is made up of a set of educational materials that increase in complexity. Children progress through the Montessori Curriculum at their own pace based on their stage of development and interests.

Montessori educators present lessons one-on-one or in small groups. After a child has been given a lesson with a material, they are free to choose that material from the shelf and work with it whenever they like.

The teacher's work is to observe when a child is ready for the next step and to then give the next lesson. Over the course of two to three years in the Primary classroom, children progress from simple tasks such as buttoning and counting to complex reading, writing, math, and beyond.

Sensorial Learning

Children explore Montessori materials with all their senses, learning through direct hands-on experiences to differentiate sounds, textures, tastes, smells and colors. Children refine their judgment with these activities, while the skills of observation and differentiation they are learning set the foundation for later academics.

Language

The classroom is a language-rich environment, with vocabulary building activities for even the youngest children. Children learn to identify sounds, trace letter shapes, and build words with hands-on materials. Reading and writing are a joy rather than a struggle.

Mathematics

Big numbers hold a thrill at this age and children work their way from counting from one to ten, to teens, hundreds, and thousands. They learn addition, subtraction, and even multiplication and division using concrete “manipulative” materials.

Practical Life, Social Development and Life Skills

Montessori education speaks of “Grace and Courtesy” as children learn to function in a group, taking turns, interacting peacefully, and working together.

Students build practical life skills such as pouring, sweeping, and tying their shoes, as they care for themselves, the classroom, and their community.

These activities hold deep interest and joy for children as they begin to find their way in the world of peers and adults.

Cultural Studies, Music and Art

The Culture Curriculum incorporates a wide range of subjects, including: Geography, Botany, Zoology, Science, History, Music and Art. Through explorations of culture, children develop an understanding of their community, their world, and their social responsibilities. Children learn to respond to diversity with respect, appreciate music and art, and develop awareness of sustainability.

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5.2 THE MONTESSORI WORK CYCLE

The Montessori Work Cycle is an essential component of the educational approach developed by Dr. Maria Montessori. The Work Cycle refers to a dedicated and uninterrupted period of time during which children engage in independent, purposeful, and self-directed activities.

The Montessori Work Cycle is characterized by the following key principles:

Choice and Autonomy

Children are encouraged to choose their own work based on their individual interests, needs, and current developmental stage.

Self-Directed Learning

Montessori education emphasizes self-directed learning, allowing children to take ownership of their education. They learn at their own pace, exploring concepts and skills independently, and seeking guidance from the teacher when necessary.

Concentration and Focus

The Work Block provides a quiet, uninterrupted period of time for children to engage in their chosen activities. This allows them to develop concentration, focus, and deep engagement with their work, promoting a sense of inner discipline and satisfaction.

Hands-on Learning

Montessori materials are specifically designed to be manipulative and sensorially appealing. Children use their hands and senses to explore concepts and develop concrete understandings before moving on to abstract thinking. The materials are self-correcting, enabling children to learn from their mistakes and develop problem solving skills.

Mixed-Age Groups

Montessori classrooms typically have mixed-age groups, with children of different ages learning together. This allows for peer learning and collaboration, as older children often mentor and assist younger ones, fostering a supportive and cooperative learning environment.

Overall, the Work Cycle in Montessori education promotes independence, self-motivation, and a love for learning. It recognizes the uniqueness of each child and provides them with the freedom to explore and grow according to their individual abilities and interests.

SECTION 6. DAILY SCHEDULE

We believe that a predictable and consistent routine can help to create a sense of safety and ease. Our daily schedule is structured to provide the children with periods of directed and indirect activities, while minimizing transition as much as possible.

Our usual daily schedule is as follows:

8:00 AM Arrival and settling in

Children are welcomed and escorted inside the building by familiar staff members,

and place their belongings on their hook or in their cubby outside the classroom. Upon entering the classroom, each child is greeted by the teacher, and given an invitation to select their starting work for the day.

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Work Cycle and Morning Snack

Children work with hands-on, self-correcting materials in all areas of curriculum, at their own pace Teachers present lessons one-on-one or in small groups. Once a child has received a lesson with a material, they are free to choose it at any time.

A healthy snack is available throughout the morning workcycle. Children may choose to eat snack when they are ready. This helps them to develop a healthy awareness of their own hunger cues, and reduces adult-imposed transitions during focused learning.

Children serve themselves and eat at a designated table alone or with a few friends. When they are finished, they clean up their dishes before moving on. In this way, snack time presents its own lesson, and children strengthen fine motor coordination and practical life skills, and develop a sense of independence, responsibility, and pride.

11:00 AM - 11:15 AM Community Circle

The class gathers together for a circle time including stories, songs, and movement. Community Circle is also an opportunity for class-wide discussion and/or problem-solving.

11:15 AM - 12:00 PM Outdoor Play

Children finish their day on our playground. Outdoor play offers opportunities for physical activity, collaboration, curiosity, and observance of the natural world.

11:50-12:00 PM Pickup

Children are dismissed to an authorized caregiver.

SECTION 7. DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES

The safety of our students is top priority at all times. Please be sure to follow the drop-off and pick-up procedures to ensure safe practice.

7.1 ARRIVAL

Morning drop-off begins at 7:50 AM. All students should arrive by 8:00 AM.

Punctual arrival is a sign of respect to oneself and the classroom community and therefore is a cornerstone of Montessori education. Late arrivals adversely impact not only the learning of the individual child but of the whole learning community. Please

ensure that your child arrives on time each day. Tardy students will be required to sign in upon arrival by a guardian and tardies will be tracked. Excessive unexcused tardies will require follow up with school leaders and the classroom teacher.

Car Line

Parents are invited to participate in the morning car line to drop off children. Cars may queue along Church Street and drop children off at the designated area. Staff will be on hand to greet children and help them into the building and safely to their classroom. Adults should plan to stay in their vehicles to help the car line move smoothly. We encourage families to prepare their children in advance for a quick goodbye in the car line. If you anticipate that your child may need a longer goodbye, especially in the first few weeks of school, please plan to park and walk them to the door (see "Walk-up" below).

For safety reasons, children should never exit a car in the car line without a staff member present to assist them. Please do not release children from your vehicle prior to reaching the designated area.

Please note that the morning car line is open to families of both Little Grove Preschool and Mountain City Public Montessori. Although we aim to keep things moving to reduce wait time for families, the safety of the children is our first concern. Please plan to have a short wait.

Walk-Up

As an alternative to the car line, families may choose a walk-up drop off.

If you wish to walk up, please park in a designated space on Church Street, Aston Street, or the lot behind our school. For safety reasons, **please do not park in our front lot during these times.**

You may walk your child to the front door and check them in with a staff member. We will assist them with getting safely to their classroom. For security purposes, we ask that parents do not enter the building during morning drop-off.

7.2 DISMISSAL

Dismissal begins at 11:50 PM from our playground gate, and all children should be picked up by 12:00 PM.

Walk-Up

For afternoon pickup, please wait outside of the playground gate for a staff member to bring your child out to meet you.

On inclement weather days, children will be dismissed from the main entrance.

Parking is available in our front lot during this time. Additional parking can be found

on Church Street, Aston Street, or in the public lot behind our campus.

7.2.A CAR SEAT POLICY

For liability reasons, our staff members cannot place children in car seats or fasten car seat buckles. A parent or guardian must assist the child with getting properly secured in their car seat.

Our staff may NOT put a child in a car without a car seat, due to safety issues.

7.2.B CHILD RELEASE POLICY

Children will be released for pick-up only to persons designated as “approved pickup” in the child’s Brightwheel account. In the event that any other person is to pick up the child, written notice from the parent or guardian is required. Parents/guardians are requested not to phone with this information, except in the case of an emergency.

Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the person who will pick up the child that they will be asked for a photo I.D. before the child will be released to them. Employees are responsible for checking identification on any adult with whom they are not familiar and who is picking up a child from the center.

A child will never be dismissed to the care of a sibling or other minor.

7.2.C RELEASE OF CHILDREN TO UNSAFE OR IMPAIRED CAREGIVERS

Our preschool is committed to safeguarding every child in our care. If a caregiver arrives to pick up a child and appears to be impaired or in an unsafe condition to transport the child, staff will take immediate action in accordance with this policy.

Procedures:

- **Assessment of the Situation**

If a staff member reasonably suspects that a caregiver is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is otherwise unfit to drive (e.g., severe emotional distress, medical condition, etc.), they must notify the director or senior staff member immediately.

Staff will not make a medical or legal judgment but will rely on observable behaviors (e.g., smell of alcohol or drugs, slurred speech, unsteady movements,

erratic behavior).

- **Engage the Caregiver Calmly and Respectfully**

The director or designated staff member will speak privately with the caregiver. Staff will express concern for the child's safety and explain that releasing the child under these circumstances could put the child at risk.

- **Offer Alternatives**

Staff will offer to call another authorized adult listed on the child's emergency contact form to pick up the child.

If the caregiver insists on leaving with the child but agrees not to drive, staff may assist in arranging alternative transportation (e.g., calling a cab, rideshare service, or a friend/family member).

If the Caregiver Insists on Leaving While Impaired

Staff will not use physical force to stop the caregiver but will:

- Call local law enforcement to report the situation and seek assistance.
- Document the incident in detail, including observations, conversations, and actions taken.
- Notify the appropriate child protective services agency if the child's safety is believed to be at risk.

Documentation

A written incident report must be completed as soon as possible, signed by all staff involved, and submitted to the director. The report will be kept on file in accordance with licensing regulations.

Follow-Up

The director will schedule a meeting with the caregiver to review the incident and reinforce the preschool's commitment to child safety.

Depending on the severity or recurrence, the school may require a safety plan, temporary suspension of pick-up privileges, or further action.

Important Notes:

- This policy applies to all individuals authorized to pick up children, including parents, legal guardians, and emergency contacts.
- All staff are trained on this policy during onboarding and receive periodic refreshers.
- The safety of the child is always the top priority. Staff will act in a manner that prioritizes compassion, professionalism, and responsibility.

7.3 ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL OUTSIDE OF REGULAR HOURS

Late arrivals

Morning drop-off is between 7:50 - 8:00 AM. If you must arrive after the morning car line is closed, please park and enter the building with your child to sign them in.

Late Pick-Up and Fees

Little Grove Preschool does not provide extended care beyond our program hours of 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM. Children should be picked up promptly at the end of the school day. In the event of late pickup after 12:00 PM, your account will be billed \$10. After the first 10 minutes, parents/guardians will be billed at a rate of an additional \$1 per minute until pickup.

Repeated late pickups cause a violation of our licensing conditions, and may result in your child's dismissal from Little Grove Preschool.

Early Dismissals

If you are picking up your child at any other time during the school day, please park and come to the front door. We appreciate advance notice if you plan to pick your child up early, so we can have them prepared when you arrive.

SECTION 8. WHAT TO BRING

8.1 REQUIRED ITEMS

Backpack/Bag

Your child is encouraged to bring a small backpack or other bag which is designated for their belongings. This may hold their water bottle, extra clothing, and snack. A backpack is not required as long as your child can safely carry their belongings without assistance.

Water bottles

Children should bring a sealed, spill-proof water bottle to school each day. The water bottle should meet the following criteria:

- Child-friendly spout or straw
- Spill-proof (no open top or gaps around the straw)
- Labeled with the child's first and last name
- Non-breakable (plastic or stainless steel; no glass)

Only water should be sent with children to school; please no milk, juice, or soft drinks.

Clothing/Attire

Please send your child to school in comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing that allows free movement, and which is OK for messy play.

Extra clothing

Children should keep a minimum of one full set of spare clothes at school at all times. This includes undergarments, socks, and seasonally-appropriate pants and a top. Please also include a plastic bag for sending home any wet or soiled clothing. A sealable gallon-size freezer bag is ideal for this.

If your child is not fully comfortable or consistent with using the bathroom, please send additional clothes in case of accidents.

All clothing items should be labeled with the child's name or initials.

8.2 TOYS FROM HOME

The classroom is prepared with enriching materials for the children to use at school. ***Toys should not be brought from home.***

SECTION 9. SNACKS AND MEALS

9.1 OPTIONAL SNACK DONATION

Children will be offered a healthy snack each morning during their workcycle. Families are invited to contribute snacks for our classrooms. Your child's classroom teacher will provide guidelines and more information at the beginning of the school year. Contributing is optional as your family is able.

9.2 LUNCH

We do not include lunch as a part of our school day. If your family wishes to bring a packed lunch for your child to eat after dismissal, we have benches available for them to sit and enjoy a picnic with you and/or other families.

9.3 FOOD ALLERGIES AND DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

Please be sure to update your child's classroom teacher, as well as their Brightwheel account with any food allergies or dietary needs so that our staff can be aware. We take food allergies seriously and will not serve a child any food to which they are allergic.

Little Grove staff will make reasonable efforts to accommodate dietary preferences when providing snack options. In certain circumstances, a family may be asked to provide food from home as a safe or preferred alternative.

We are a nut-aware school; your child's classroom teacher will notify you if nuts are not to be allowed in class due to allergies.

SECTION 10 SPECIAL CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

10.1 HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Celebration and observation of holidays can be an important part of learning, and developing our classroom communities.

Some of the reasons we teach and celebrate holidays are:

- To make all children feel accepted and to validate the cultures and experiences of their homes
- To teach about time and cycles of life
- To have fun
- To teach diversity and tolerance by learning about other cultures, traditions and religions
- To teach the virtues associated with particular holidays- peace, friendship, love, etc.
- To create a sense of family or community within classrooms and within our school

Holiday activities can be as simple as reading a book about a holiday and as elaborate as having a party in the classroom. The amount of time spent on holidays will vary according to the age, interests and needs of the children, and be determined by the grade level teams to best fit their curriculum and classes. Teachers may recognize or teach holidays in a brief manner, such as simply reading a book on Presidents' Day or in a more in-depth manner such as teaching about civil rights around Martin Luther King Day. Activities often involve a group discussion and art- or music-related projects.

As our school decides on which holidays to include, we will want to consider our enrolled students and families. Families will be asked to complete a family traditions survey to help guide the school's decision making around holidays and celebrations. Teachers may also choose to consider including holidays that are outside of the knowledge base or experiences of their class and themselves to include those that are important to our larger community and city. We will involve families as much as possible and as is age-appropriate in the implementation of holiday activities. We will keep families informed of upcoming holiday activities and events.

10.1A WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WHO DON'T CELEBRATE HOLIDAYS

If a child in a classroom does not celebrate a particular holiday, the teacher(s) will work with an administrator and the family to devise a plan so that the child does not feel left out or uncomfortable during the holiday teaching or celebration. Families should contact their child's teacher in advance to let them know of any issues.

10.2 BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We like to honor children on their special day with a Montessori "walk around the sun" celebration. If you wish to send something from home in recognition of your child's birthday, we suggest gifting a book or plant to the classroom. Please check with your child's teacher for more classroom-specific guidance.

10.3 FIELD TRIPS

Field trips, or "going outs" are an important part of the Montessori curriculum. We have both in-house & off-campus field trips. Field Trips are chosen with care and with the intention that it is developmentally appropriate for our students.

Each child must have written permission from their parent or guardian in order to participate. You will be given advance notification as well as a permission form to sign before we take children on field trips.

When going off-site, and beyond walking distance, we may rely on parent volunteers for transportation. This is a wonderful way to volunteer and experience a special school memory with your child.

If a parent or guardian does not wish for their child to participate in a field trip, the school personnel will work with the family to arrange alternative care for the child on that day.

SECTION 11 SICK DAYS AND OTHER SCHEDULE INTERRUPTIONS

11.1 ILLNESS POLICY - WHEN TO STAY HOME, WHEN TO RETURN

The health and well-being of our school community is a high priority for us at Little Grove Preschool. We take every effort to maintain a healthy learning environment, and we ask for your assistance in keeping our school illness-free.

Children should not come to school within 24 hours of experiencing any of the following:

- Fever of 100 degrees or greater
- **Any** instance of vomiting or
- **Any** instance of diarrhea (unless caused by a medication, and/or as explained by a doctor's note)
- Communicable diseases- chickenpox, strep throat, etc. (see exclusion policy)
- Chronic and excessive runny nose with thick mucus (unless caused by allergies, and/or as explained by a doctor's note.)
- Persistent cough, especially with the presence of phlegm
- Pink eye
- Rash

Children with these symptoms should be kept home to rest and recover. We understand that keeping a child home when they are ill may present a hardship for working adults, however, we ask that you keep children home when they are unwell to prevent the spread of germs.

Children must remain home for 24 hours after the last instance of vomiting, diarrhea, or unmedicated fever of 100 degrees. A doctor's note may be required for return to school.

Please refer to the attached Exclusion Criteria Form (in Section 16) for guidelines around specific conditions, including when to return to school.

11.1.A SENDING A SICK CHILD HOME

Children presenting signs of illness will be dismissed from school. This may include any of the symptoms or illnesses described above, as well as complaints of pain or not feeling well, and/or inability to participate in regular classroom activities.

Little Grove will contact parents/guardians to pick up a child who is not feeling well. The child may be removed from the classroom while they wait to be picked up. Children must remain home for 24 hours after the last instance of vomiting, diarrhea, or unmedicated fever of 100 degrees. A doctor's note may be required for return to school.

11.2 HOW TO NOTIFY THE SCHOOL OF PLANNED OR UNPLANNED ABSENCES

Please notify us if your child will be absent from school. You may do this in any of the following ways:

- Send a message through the Brightwheel App to your child's classroom teacher and/or to the school's Director
- Call the school phone number and speak with the Director or leave a voicemail
- Email info@LittleGrovePreschool.org (this is preferred for advanced notice of planned absences)

11.3 TUITION ADJUSTMENT DUE TO ABSENCES

Tuition is not affected by either planned or unplanned absences. No adjustments will be made. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with the Director.

11.4 WEATHER CLOSURE POLICIES

In the event of inclement weather, Little Grove Preschool may close for the day. We will work with our partner school Mountain City Public Montessori to make determinations around school weather closures or delayed opening. If MCPM closes or operates on a delay, Little Grove Preschool will as well.

In the event of a school closure or delayed opening, families will be notified directly via Brightwheel and email. Local news organizations will also be notified.

In the event of a delayed opening, the school day will not be extended, and dismissal will still occur at 12:00 PM.

SECTION 12 DISCIPLINE AND CODES OF CONDUCT

12.1 BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY

We believe that when children's needs are met within their environment, there is little need for "behavior management". Our educators prepare the classroom to meet children's needs, pique their curiosity, and hold their attention. Social-emotional learning is woven into everything we do. Children learn how to be a part of their community through Grace and Courtesy lessons. They are free to move about the classroom, and to select works which appeal to them, reducing boredom, restlessness, or resistance. The highly individualized and developmentally appropriate Montessori curriculum assures that each child is working at their own level, so that all children can feel successful and able to meet expectations.

Our educators use Positive Discipline practices in the classroom, demonstrating mutual respect, effective communication, and problem-solving skills. We offer encouragement instead of praise or rewards, and focus on solutions rather than punishment.

When a child is in need of a quiet space to settle their mind or body, they may take time to calm down and reconnect in the classroom's Peace Center. Our educators assist children in working through conflicts with peers, and support social and emotional learning in developmentally appropriate ways.

When there is a need for a formal discipline strategy, we will implement the Nautilus Approach designed by Public Montessori in Action International. Like the Montessori method, this is a constructivist approach which focuses on the whole human and aims to reconnect the child to their environment.

Little Grove Preschool does not use points systems, clip charts, time out, or other forms of punishment. With caring, engaged educators to guide them, we trust children to do well when they can.

12.2 NAUTILUS APPROACH TO DISCIPLINE

Little Grove Preschool, in alignment with our partner school Mountain City Public Montessori, implements the Nautilus Approach developed by Public Montessori in Action. This is a constructivist approach to discipline wherein intervention and solutions work to help bring the child back to center, rather than implementing a punitive model of escalating consequences.

"The Nautilus Approach is a framework for proactive and responsive support for the whole school through fidelity to the Montessori method, respectful relationships with children, and support for children who need it most. It offers step-by-step guidance to reconnection to work through set phases during which the child is always welcome to return to their work. [...] Like the Montessori method, it is a constructivist approach, focuses on the whole-human (rather than other discipline policies or systems which use a behaviorist approach), and aims to reconnect the child to their environment." - Public Montessori in Action

Building relationships with students and families that are based on trust and respect forms the foundation of our discipline practices. It is critical that each child and family feels that they belong in the school and are a valued member of the community.

Each classroom establishes community agreements at the beginning of the school year. These are a set of behavior standards that the students, teacher, and instructional assistant agree to uphold throughout the year.

When actions or words present obstacles to learning or show a lack of respect in the environment, the teacher and classroom assistant will first seek to resolve conflicts within the classroom community. Strategies for addressing this behavior in the classroom include the use of the classroom Peace Center, community meetings, and one-on-one or small group conflict resolution. The Peace Center in a Montessori classroom is a place with explicit calming and centering activities where children can take time to de-escalate and prepare themselves to reconnect with the learning environment. Methods for conflict resolution are taught to all students and practiced in role-plays throughout the year. When individual students have a conflict, they are encouraged to have a conversation in the Peace Center in which they each have a turn to speak and listen to the other and come to a resolution.

On occasion, a child may benefit from being temporarily removed from the classroom. A student may be removed from the classroom for behaviors that are dangerous, such as potential or actual physical harm to self or others; or distress at a level that is disturbing others in the learning environment and cannot be addressed with time at the peace table, such as yelling, banging, hitting objects, etc. Students in these situations will be accompanied by an adult to a calming place outside of the classroom to settle and reflect, and when ready, prepare to re-enter the learning environment. School staff guide children through the process of managing emotions, making safe choices, and repairing conflict with peers.

If needed, a Nautilus referral form will be completed by a classroom-based adult, the adult who worked with the child outside of the classroom, and the child. If a student has three Nautilus referrals, they go to the next tier of support: Child Study. This process begins with a meeting between the classroom teacher, the family of the child, and the Director. In this meeting the concerning behaviors are discussed in objective language and the child's caregiver(s) are asked for their insights. The adults brainstorm solutions and develop a plan for addressing the behavior in school and at

home. If the behavior continues after 4-6 weeks, the classroom teacher and Director will take the next step in the process: conducting a Child Study meeting with the other classroom teachers at the same level. This meeting follows a protocol for investigating the behavior, sharing what has been tried and other ideas for solutions, and developing a plan. If the behavior continues without improvement after the plan has been in place for 4-6 weeks, the child may be referred to assessment for special education or other specialists.

Actions which result in meetings with parents before three referrals have been completed, and can lead to further disciplinary action, up to and including removal from Little Grove Preschool, are: bringing weapons or illegal substances to school or school events, violence that causes physical harm, physical fighting, and demeaning behavior that is not resolved through in-classroom strategies.

12.3 POLICY AGAINST CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

In accordance with NC Child Care Rule 10A NCAC 09 .1803:

(a) No child shall be subjected to any form of corporal punishment by the owner, operator, director, or staff of any child care center. For purposes of this Rule, "staff" shall mean any regular or substitute caregiver, any volunteer, and any auxiliary personnel, including cooks, secretaries, janitors, maids, or vehicle drivers.

- (1) no child shall be handled roughly in any way, including shaking, pushing, shoving, pinching, slapping, biting, kicking, or spanking;
- (2) no child shall be placed in a locked room, closet, or box or be left alone in a room separated from staff;
- (3) no discipline shall be delegated to another child;
- (4) no food shall be withheld as punishment or given as a means of reward;
- (5) no child shall be disciplined for toileting accidents;
- (6) no child shall be disciplined for not sleeping during rest period;
- (7) no child shall be disciplined by assigning chores that require contact with or use of hazardous materials, such as cleaning bathrooms, floors, or emptying diaper pails;
- (8) physical activity, such as running laps and doing push-ups, shall not be withheld as punishment or required as punishment;
- (9) no child shall be yelled at, shamed, humiliated, frightened, threatened, or bullied; and
- (10) no child shall be restrained as a form of discipline unless the child's safety or the safety of others is at risk. For purposes of this Rule, "restraining" shall mean that a caregiver physically holds a child in a manner that restricts the child's movement, for a minimum amount of time necessary to ensure a safe environment. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Rule, no child shall be restrained through the use of heavy objects, including a caregiver's body, or any device such as straps, blankets, car seats, or cribs.

(b) Discipline practices shall be age and developmentally appropriate.

12.4 STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

As members of a community, it is important for students to have agreements about what behaviors are and are not appropriate. At the beginning of each school year, students and teachers will work together to establish classroom rules. Among these will be the school-wide values of:

- Respect for oneself,
- Respect for others, and
- Respect for our shared environment.

We recognize that young children are in the process of learning to identify and manage their emotions, develop communication skills, and develop impulse control. While the Montessori environment is prepared to proactively avert problematic behaviors, there will be occasions when a child struggles. We will intervene in any behaviors that are dangerous, destructive, or demeaning. This can include any of the following:

- Hitting, kicking, or biting
- Destruction of school property or materials
- Destruction of another student's personal property
- Harmful or foul language
- Any other behaviors determined to be dangerous or destructive by Little Grove Staff

12.4.A POLICY ON BITING

It is our belief that a young child who bites usually does so without malice. Biting can occur due to high emotion and/or sensory needs. Nonetheless, biting is extremely dangerous. A child who bites will be separated from the group, then soothed and comforted, and shown ways to express his/her feelings safely. Because biting is a harmful behavior, caregivers of both children involved will be notified, and a plan of remediation will be enacted. A meeting with the Director will follow if further biting occurs. If biting continues with no improvement over a period of 6 to 8 weeks, we will need to evaluate whether our school is a match for this child's developmental needs at this time.

Because we believe that children do well when they can, and that all children are valuable members of our learning community, it is our goal to support children in ways

that allow them to remain included and enrolled in our program. However, there may be instances where we determine that a child must be removed from Little Grove Preschool for the safety of themselves or others.

12.5 ADULT CODE OF CONDUCT

We believe that one of the most effective tools of education is modeling. As adults, we strive to model the behavior we wish to see from the children in our care.

Little Grove Staff and Director pledge to:

- Treat all children and their caregivers with respect
- Establish and maintain an inclusive, welcoming environment for *all* members of our school community
- Practice open, honest, and frequent communication with caregivers
- Welcome feedback from caregivers and/or other school-based adults

We expect all parents and caregivers to:

- Treat school-based staff with respect
- Treat other children and their caregivers with respect
- Respect school property and materials
- Practice open and honest communication with school staff
- Abide by all traffic and safety laws while on campus
- Refrain from bringing weapons, alcohol, or illegal substances on school grounds
- Refrain from smoking on school grounds

Under no circumstances will verbal or physical threats, violence toward staff or other students/caregivers, destruction of school or personal property, or hate speech be tolerated within our school community. These actions may result in the removal of the child from Little Grove Preschool.

SECTION 13 SCHOOL AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

13.1 FAMILY AND SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

At Little Grove, we believe frequent and clear communication is part of a healthy relationship between home and school. Forming a strong partnership between school and home has been shown to lead to positive outcomes for children.

We will communicate regularly with caregivers to ensure that you are informed of goings-on at school and with your child. In turn, we invite you to share communication from home, including questions or updates that you feel may be relevant to your child's development and/or success at school.

Communication with your child's teacher should take place in your Brightwheel account. Should you wish to schedule a phone call or conference with your child's teacher, you may request one at any time.

At Little Grove, we value our teachers' personal time, and encourage them to practice healthy work-life balance. Parents and caregivers should not call or text any staff member at their personal phone number, nor should they use a staff member's personal email address. Any messages sent through Brightwheel before or after school hours may not be answered right away. We thank you for your understanding.

13.2 FAMILY-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Family-teacher conferences are conducted twice each school year in October and March. In addition, guardians are encouraged to inquire about their child's progress any time during the school year. We believe that by continually monitoring students' progress, the family-teacher conferences will serve as a review with very few surprises. During each conference, teachers review the student's progress and discuss his/her strengths and opportunities. Families are encouraged to ask questions in order to learn as much as possible about their child's performance. We aim to make family-teacher conferences a positive experience for everyone involved.

13.3 FAMILY EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

We recognize that the Montessori curriculum may be new to many families. Little Grove Preschool teachers and staff will hold Family Education Opportunities in the evenings where teachers, staff, and family members will come together to discuss Montessori theory, the work your children are doing in the classroom, and strategies for continuing this work at home. These events will provide a great opportunity for parents to get to know one another and gain additional insight into Montessori teaching methods.

13.4 SERVICE TO THE SCHOOL

Service to the community is another aspect of the Montessori curriculum that can be modeled by its adult members. By participating in service to the school, families become a part of the school's community and a practical piece of their child's education. It is suggested that most families will engage with the school in whatever way they can.

13.5 SCHOOL-FAMILY ORGANIZATION

All families are invited to join monthly School-Family Organization (SFO) meetings to facilitate family engagement through volunteering, fundraising, and establishing community partnerships. The School-Family Organization is an organization that spans both Little Grove and our partner school Mountain City Public Montessori. The SFO aids in such things as planning and execution of fundraising events, and assisting with school-wide events that are accessible to all families to build relationships between families and the school. The SFO reports to the Directors and teacher liaison. All interested parents or legal guardians of current students, as well as currently employed staff are invited to be a part of the SFO. The SFO acts as an independent entity with its own elected leadership body, but may be assigned tasks or duties by the combined school leadership.

13.6 VISITOR AND VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

Visitors and volunteers are expected to review and honor the following guidelines while visiting or volunteering for the school. Violation of these guidelines endangers the safety of students and their right to an education. Those not abiding by these guidelines may be barred from the building and/or prevented from participating in future volunteer opportunities. Please contact the Director for information on becoming a volunteer.

General

1. Potential volunteers are required to complete the appropriate level of background check before a volunteer assignment begins. Parents or guardians interested in volunteering may request a Volunteer Authorization and Release form from the Director to begin the background check process.
2. All visitors and volunteers must be processed through the electronic visitor management system, using their driver's license, and must wear a form of identification provided by the school. They may also be required to submit to a criminal background check.
3. All visitors and volunteers must sign both in and out in the school office. They may not walk directly to any classroom unless given permission by the office staff.
4. The distribution of literature, without prior approval from the classroom teacher or the principal, is prohibited.
5. Visitors and volunteers must abide by staff instructions, asking for clarification if necessary.
6. Corporal punishment is prohibited.
7. Little Grove Preschool has a policy of neutrality regarding religion. Visitors and volunteers may neither show preference for any one religion over any other religion nor share their personal religious views with students.
8. Visitors and volunteers must maintain confidentiality of student information.

9. Volunteers must follow school photography guidelines and may not post photos of children on their personal social media accounts, unless the only face shown is that of their own child.
10. Appropriate dress is required at all times.
11. Smoking, tobacco, and alcohol use are prohibited anywhere on school property, in all indoor facilities, and in the presence of students.

Classroom

1. The teacher is ultimately responsible for the students and activities in his/her/their classroom.
2. Volunteers should enter classrooms quietly and wait for a break in the activity before communicating with the teacher and students.
3. Student infractions must be addressed by the classroom teacher.
4. Classroom issues regarding students are confidential. Visitors and volunteers may not talk with others about the learning or disciplinary needs of any child other than their own.
5. Classroom visitors are allowed for a limited time and must have the Director's permission.

13.7 PHOTOGRAPHING OF CHILDREN

Staff may sometimes take and share photographs of children and our classroom. Classroom photographs may be shared privately among the classroom community via Brightwheel or other non-public forums. Occasionally, Little Grove Preschool may share photographs publicly via our website, school social media accounts, or marketing materials. Employees are prohibited from posting photographs or videos of students or other Little Grove employees on their personal social media accounts.

Parents and guardians have a choice of how they allow images of their child to be shared. Please see the photo release at the end of this document.

Parents/guardians should not share images of children other than their own, including on their personal social media or any other forum. Photographs of children shared via internal, private media through Little Grove Preschool should be kept private within the school community.

If a parent or guardian takes photographs at school-wide events, which show the faces of children other than their own, such photographs must not be shared publicly.

13.8 FAMILY DIRECTORY

Little Grove Preschool will compile and make available a Family Directory. The Directory will provide contact information for other parents and caregivers at Little Grove. This information can be used to discuss school-related topics, schedule

playdates or share birthday invitations, coordinate childcare or carpooling, or other parenting-related issues.

Please use appropriate and respectful language when communicating with other Little Grove families. Spam messages, political content, and hate speech of any kind is prohibited.

To opt-out of having your contact information included in the Family Directory, please send a request in writing via email.

13.9 STAFF AND BABYSITTING

It is our policy that our staff may not provide baby-sitting service to those families currently enrolled in the school. Babysitting can create a conflict of interest for our staff, a blurring of boundaries for our students, and liability issues for our school. If you have any questions, please speak to the director.

13.10 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

It is our policy that staff of Little Grove Preschool may not accept “friend” requests from or otherwise directly interact with parents or guardians of currently enrolled students on social media. This may create a conflict of interest for our staff, and/or compromise the professional relationship between the individual and the staff member or Little Grove Preschool.

13.11 FAMILY GRIEVANCE POLICY

Little Grove Preschool seeks to establish and maintain a responsive partnership with all families of children in our care. Should you have a concern for your child’s teacher or for the school Director, we encourage you to bring it to our attention.

Bringing a Concern to the Teacher

If you have a concern to discuss with your child’s classroom teacher, you may request a time to connect with them by sending a message through the Brightwheel app or by asking in person.

Please note that morning drop-off and afternoon pickup are busy times when teachers’ attention is focused on safely transitioning the children. These times are not ideal for an important conversation, but can be used to request scheduling a time to talk.

Bringing a Concern to the Director

Should you have a concern you wish to address with the Director, you may do so by phone, email, sending a message through the Brightwheel app, or by simply coming

into the office. Little Grove Preschool has an Open Door Policy and we welcome your concerns or feedback.

SECTION 14. HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS

14.1 COVID POLICY

We recognize the evolving nature of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on both individual and community health. As we continue to navigate the challenges of COVID-19, Little Grove Preschool is committed to following the guidelines and regulations set forth by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) to ensure a safe learning environment for everyone involved. Below are the current measures we are enacting as of July, 2023. These guidelines and policies are subject to change if deemed necessary due to increased Covid-19 activity locally or change in local or state guidelines.

Air Quality

Our classrooms have new ionizing air filters and brand new window A/C units installed.

Face Coverings

At this time, face coverings are optional for staff and students. We reserve the right to require masks if local infections increase or public health indicators are present. N95 and KN95 masks are recommended for best protection.

Cleaning and Sanitation

All classrooms, materials, and common areas will be cleaned and disinfected regularly. We implement enhanced cleaning and disinfection during outbreaks of any illness within our school.

Daily Health Checks

Parents/guardians are required to conduct daily health screenings of their child(ren) prior to arrival. Children showing any symptoms of illness should not be brought to school.

Exclusion of Sick Children

Children with a confirmed or suspected case of Covid-19 will be required to stay home from school.

Please refer to the attached Covid Exclusion chart to determine when a sick child may return to school.

Communication

Little Grove Preschool will maintain open and transparent communication with families regarding confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the school community. We will also notify families of any changes to policies or procedures related to Covid-19 promptly.

14.2 IMMUNIZATION POLICY

At Little Grove Preschool, the health and safety of our students, staff, and community are of utmost importance. We recognize the critical role that immunizations play in preventing the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases. This policy outlines our immunization requirements for all children attending our preschool, in alignment with local and national guidelines.

14.2.A IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

All children must provide proof of immunization in accordance with the schedule recommended by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and any other relevant regulatory bodies. The immunization records must be submitted within the first 30 days of the school year, and they must be kept up to date throughout their attendance at Little Grove Preschool.

14.2B VACCINE SCHEDULE

The specific vaccine schedule will be determined based on the recommendations of local, state, and national authorities. These schedules are designed to provide the best protection against vaccine-preventable diseases.

The schedule will include, but not be limited to, vaccines such as measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTaP), polio, hepatitis B, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV), and varicella (chickenpox).

Children receiving vaccinations on a delayed or otherwise modified schedule must supply a written note from their healthcare provider explaining the modified schedule.

14.2C EXEMPTIONS

North Carolina law provides for two types of exemptions from required immunizations. They are medical and religious. Little Grove Preschool accepts these

exemptions in compliance with NC state law. We do not grant any exemptions to immunization based on non-religious personal or philosophical beliefs.

G.S.130A-156. Medical Exemption.

If a **physician licensed to practice medicine in this State** certifies that a required immunization is or may be detrimental to a person's health due to the presence of one of the contraindications adopted by the Commission, the person is not required to receive the specified immunization as long as the contraindication persists. The State Health Director may, upon request by a physician licensed to practice medicine in this State, grant a medical exemption to a required immunization for a contraindication not on the list adopted by the Commission.

Medical exemptions can only be requested by a **physician licensed to practice medicine in North Carolina**.

G.S.130A-157. Religious exemption

If the bona fide religious beliefs of an adult or the parent, guardian or person in loco parentis of a child are contrary to the immunization requirements contained in this Part, the adult or the child shall be exempt from the requirements. Upon submission of a written statement of the bona fide religious beliefs and opposition to the immunization requirements, the person may attend the college, university, school or facility without presenting a certificate of immunization.

There is no form for requesting religious exemptions in North Carolina. To claim a religious exemption, the parent or person requesting the exemption must write a statement of their religious objection to immunization, including the name and date of birth of the person for whom the exemption is being requested. This statement would then be provided to schools, child care programs, camps, etc. in place of an immunization record. If a family is requesting a religious exemption for more than one child, a separate statement should be prepared for each child. Statements of religious objection to immunization do not need to be notarized, signed by a religious leader, or prepared by an attorney. They do not need to be submitted to the state for review or approval.

10A NCAC 41A .0403 Non-Religious Personal Belief No Exemption:

Except as provided in G.S. 130A-156 and G.S. 130A-157, and 10A NCAC 41A .0404 and .0405, no child shall be exempt from the requirements of 10A NCAC 41 .0401; there is no exception to these requirements for the case of a personal belief or philosophy of a parent or guardian not founded upon a religious belief.

14.2d IMMUNIZATION RECORD KEEPING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Little Grove Preschool will maintain a confidential record of each child's immunization status. The records will be securely stored and accessible only to authorized personnel.

All immunization records will be treated with strict confidentiality and in accordance with applicable privacy laws and regulations. Personally identifiable information will only be disclosed to authorized individuals when necessary for public health purposes or as required by law.

Parents/guardians are responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date immunization records to the preschool. This includes any changes or updates to their child's immunization status.

If there are missing or incomplete immunization records, parents/guardians will be notified and provided with a grace period to submit the required documentation. During this time, the child may be temporarily excluded from the preschool to protect the health of other students.

14.3 MEDICATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

If your child must be given medication during the school day, the parent/guardian must fill out a form giving us specific permission to do so. These forms are available on request. Medication must be in its original bottle or packaging. Prescription medication must be labeled with the name of the child. Medication with another individual's name on it will not be administered. All medication is locked away, except for the time it is being administered to your child. (The exception to this is an EpiPen or inhaler. Because of the need to administer immediately, it is stored 5 ft. above the floor.)

This policy applies to insect repellent, sunscreen, and lip balm as well. (You must supply insect repellent and sunscreen; we are not allowed to provide those items per the state of NC.)

14.4 INCIDENT REPORTS

If your child is injured while at school, staff will notify parents/guardians, and complete an incident report. A parent or guardian will be asked to sign the incident report form upon picking up the child, in order to indicate that you have been informed of the injury.

14.5 CHILD ABUSE

The law requires all citizens to report suspected child abuse to the appropriate agencies. If our staff have valid reason to suspect abuse, they are mandated to report it to Child Protective Services. All staff receive required training on this matter.

14.6 FIRE AND SAFETY DRILLS

Little Grove Preschool and Mountain City Public Montessori perform regular fire- and safety drills as required by law.

It is important to us to prepare our staff, students, and campus to meet any unsafe circumstances calmly and confidently. It is also important to us to recognize and meet the developmental needs of our students. Our safety drills are intentionally planned by educators, school directors, and pediatric mental health specialists to be developmentally appropriate for our student community. We will notify families of safety drills performed, and any relevant language or other details that may be helpful to know. Should you ever have a question or concern, please feel free to reach out to your child's classroom teacher or the school.

14.7 SECURITY MEASURES ON CAMPUS

The safety and well-being of students and staff are a priority for both Little Grove Preschool and Mountain City Public Montessori.

Only authorized staff or approved visitors are allowed in the building during school hours. All staff and volunteers have undergone thorough background checks before being employed by either school.

All entrances to the building are kept locked at all times. Our main entrance has video monitoring connected to the school office. Visitors to the campus must use the intercom and speak to a school director before being admitted.

There are locking interior doors at each end of the hallways where classrooms are located. This provides an additional layer of security for our students.

Our outdoor learning space is securely fenced for student safety.

14.8 SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENT

Little Grove Preschool is a smoke free environment. All parents, staff & visitors are asked not to use tobacco products or vaping anywhere on our campus.

14.9 ILLEGAL DRUGS

Little Grove Preschool policy prohibits the possession and/or use of illegal drugs on our school grounds or in our building.

14.10 WEAPONS

Little Grove Preschool is committed to ensuring the safety of its employees, clients, visitors, and the public. Our policy prohibits the possession of weapons within the building or on the school grounds.

SECTION 15. BILLING POLICIES

15.1 PAY STRUCTURE

Little Grove Preschool's annual tuition is divided into monthly installments over the course of the 10-month school year. Tuition is a fixed rate for the school year, and no adjustments are made due to a child's illness or absence; holidays; or for scheduled or weather-related school closures.

15.2 PAYMENT DUE DATES

Tuition payments are due on or before the first of each month during the billing period.

15.3 LATE PAYMENT POLICIES

A \$15 late fee will be incurred if monthly tuition is not paid in full and on time. This fee will be billed on the 3rd of the month. If an account remains unpaid after 14 days, the child(ren) will not be allowed to attend the facility until payment is made in full.

15.4 METHODS OF PAYMENT

Online Payment

Tuition will be billed monthly via the Brightwheel platform.

Payment can be made through this platform by credit/debit card or automatic withdrawal. Brightwheel does charge a processing fee of 2.9% for payments made by card, or \$.90 per transaction for ACH debit.

We recommend setting up automatic tuition payments to ensure your account stays up to date. If you choose not to enroll in autopay, please be sure payment is made on or before the first of each month.

Paying by Check

Checks can be made payable to Little Grove Preschool, LLC.

They can be handed directly to the school's Director, or mailed to Little Grove Preschool at PO Box 1186, Asheville NC 28802.

Please do not hand checks to teachers, place checks in your child's backpack, or leave a check on a desk without direct personal contact.

Checks received later than the first of the month will incur a \$15 late fee to your account. Returned checks will be subject to a \$25 fee. After 2 returned checks, you must pay in cash or enroll in automatic billing.

Cash Payments

Cash payments should only be handed to the school's Director. Under no circumstances should cash payments be submitted by any other means.

15.5 ADDITIONAL CHARGES

Enrollment Deposit

A deposit is due at the time of enrollment. The enrollment deposit holds your child's place in our program, and is nonrefundable in the event of withdrawal prior to the beginning of the school year. The enrollment deposit will be applied toward the final month's tuition.

Late Pick-Up Fees

Little Grove Preschool does not provide extended care beyond our program hours of 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM. Children should be picked up promptly. In the event of late pickup after 12:00 PM, parents/guardians will be billed \$10. After the first 10 minutes, parents/guardians will be billed at a rate of an additional \$1 per minute until pickup. Repeated late pickups cause a violation of our licensing requirements, and may result in your child's dismissal from Little Grove Preschool.

15.6 TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

Should a parent/guardian wish to terminate their child's enrollment, 30 days written notice is required in order to stop billing. If less than 30 days written notice is given, you will still be billed for the coming month. Tuition will not be prorated, and no refunds will be given due to withdrawal.

15.7 TUITION ASSISTANCE

Little Grove Preschool believes all children deserve access to high quality early education opportunities. We have prioritized funds to support a percentage of our enrolled families. This assistance is provided directly by Little Grove Preschool as a part of our annual operating budget. We are not able to accept childcare vouchers at this time.

Families applying for tuition assistance must demonstrate financial need.

SECTION 16. ATTACHMENTS AND FORMS

Exclusion Criteria Form

Condition:	If your child has been diagnosed with this disease, our program will:	When to allow child to return:
Chicken Pox	* Temporarily exclude the sick child from child care * Notify all parents regarding possible outbreak if 3 or more cases occur within the school * Contact the Child Care Health Consultant if needed to find out other preventative measures to take * Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures	Approximately 6-7 days after the rash begins or when ALL blisters have scabbed over
Diarrheal Disease	* Temporarily exclude the sick child from child care * Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures	When child is diarrhea-free for 24 hours (without medication)
Hand-Foot-and-Mouth Disease	* Exclude if child has open, draining lesion on hands or has lesions in the mouth and is drooling. * Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures	When lesions heal or drooling ceases
Head Lice	* Temporarily exclude the child from care	24 hours after treatment and no signs of nits or lice
Ringworm	* Temporarily exclude the child if the lesion cannot be covered. * Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures	If unable to cover lesion, after treatment begins and the lesion starts to shrink.
Strep Throat	* Temporarily exclude the child * Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures	24 hours after antibiotics are begun
Pink eye	* Temporarily exclude the child with eye drainage and itching * Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures	24 hours after 1 st dose of medication and symptoms are mild.
Fifth Disease	* Temporarily excluded the child from child care if the child is unable to participate in center activities or has a fever. * Program will notify all parents * Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures	Until child is able to participate in program activities

Impetigo	* Temporarily exclude from child care * Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures	Until treatment has been started
Fever	* Temporarily exclude child from child care if child has a fever above 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the ear, or above 100 maxillary	Until child has been fever-free for 24 hours without medication
Vomiting	* Temporarily exclude child	Until child has not vomited for a 24 hour period
Covid-19	* Temporarily exclude from child care * Carefully follow hand washing and cleaning procedures * Notify all parents of possible outbreak if 3 or more cases occur simultaneously in the school * Enforce masking requirements if deemed necessary by school staff or local health agencies.	Until a minimum of 5 days have passed since first positive test AND child is asymptomatic/fever free for a minimum of 24 hours without medication.

Photo Release

I understand that staff of Little Grove Preschool may take photos of children during the school day. These photos may be used in a variety of ways, including: teacher records and documentation of learning; to share with caregivers or other LGP families (through the Brightwheel app or school newsletters); or in marketing materials such as flyers, social media, or our website.

I give permission for Little Grove Preschool to use photographs of my child for (please initial):

----- sharing with other Little Grove families securely and privately via classroom Brightwheel and/or school newsletters.

----- use on Little Grove Preschool's social media accounts, website, and/or print marketing.

----- I do not give permission for photographs of my child to be shared with anyone other than myself and other approved adults in my Brightwheel account.

Child Name:: -----

Parent/Guardian Name (print): -----

Parent/Guardian Signature: -----

Date: -----

Authorization for Emergency Medical Care:

I, the undersigned parent/guardian of _____, hereby authorize Little Grove Preschool and its staff to obtain emergency medical care for my child in the event of an accident, injury, or sudden illness that may occur during the child's time at the preschool.

In the event of an emergency, if I cannot be reached at the contact numbers provided above, I authorize the preschool staff to seek medical treatment for my child, including but not limited to calling 911, administering first aid, and transporting my child to the nearest medical facility.

I understand that every effort will be made to contact me or the emergency contacts listed before any medical treatment is administered. However, in the event that it is not possible to reach any of the listed contacts, I grant Little Grove Preschool staff the authority to act in the best interest of my child's health and safety.

I grant this same authorization to qualified staff of Mountain City Public Montessori, in the event that Little Grove Preschool staff are unavailable at the time of the illness or emergency.

I further authorize the release of my child's medical information, if required, to medical professionals providing treatment to my child during the emergency.

This authorization is valid for the duration of my child's enrollment at Little Grove Preschool and will remain in effect until a new form is submitted in writing.

Child Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Handbook

Please initial each item below and sign this form at the bottom.

I have read, understood, and had the opportunity to discuss with the Director all information contained in the Little Grove Preschool (LGP) Family Handbook, including:

- The LGP Code of Conduct for students and adults;
- The LGP Discipline policy;
- The LGP Health and Safety policies, including Immunization Policy;
- The LGP Tuition and Billing policies.

Child Name: -----

Parent/Guardian Name (print): -----

Signature: -----

Date: -----