



MINE

ME

&

US

An Organic

MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Family Handbook 2019-2020

MINE, ME & US Montessori School
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*As of right now, NGNS and the MINE, ME & US Montessori School food program are in the planning stages. Until it is launched, the MINE/MMUMS community will provide meals and snacks.

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Chapter

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

MINE, ME & US Montessori School Mission Statement

The MINE, ME & US Montessori School mission is to provide a nurturing, home-like, educational environment for the children wherein they are encouraged and supported to do the important lifework of becoming a fully developed, whole person who is mindful of individual, environmental, and community responsibilities.

The MINE, ME & US Montessori School aims to advocate for parents and families during the first years of parenthood, by providing a unique array of resources. These resources are comprised of the unmatched talents in our qualified staff, which enables us not only to provide quality care for your children, but also extend the care to your families through our exceptional family programs and classes. Our purpose is to be supportive of the local community entirely. We achieve this by fostering relationships with local farmers, nurturing collegiality with early childhood professionals, supporting holistic health and bringing it into the MINE, ME & US Montessori School facility, offering support of the whole family, and sustaining the development of the whole child. We are here to create school community by utilizing and supporting our local community. We thank you for being a part of this grand mission!

The Broader MINE, ME & US Montessori School Mission

The broader MINE, ME & US Montessori School mission is to be a change-agent for the greater culture, to re-value the first three years of children's lives, their parent's experiences, the worth of their caregivers, and the significance of their daycare/preschool experience. The goal of MINE is to change the culture of how we think about, what we expect, and how we regard educational experiences for children from birth to three years.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School houses four programs targeting specific areas of early childhood education.

“Nursery Garden to Nursery School: Revolutionizing Infant-Toddler Culinary Curriculum” works to redefine the possibilities of daycare and preschool food programs by creating a template of a food program that serves organic, local menus, complete with the funding sources and logistics of how to form partnerships with local farmers, merchants, vendors, etc. NGNS has developed a culinary curriculum for the youngest children in daycares, those ages 6 weeks through 18 months.

“Creating Green Habits: Environmental Stewardship for the Very Young” is a program designed for the purpose of incorporating environmental stewardship into the daily habits of early childhood curriculums. Based on Montessori Method and curriculum, CGH is creating a curriculum template to include age appropriate, environmentally responsible habits for children ages 6 weeks through 6 years in school, at home, and in their local community and beyond.

“Peace Building: Educating Our Youngest Citizens” is a program whose purpose is creating an early childhood curriculum based on building and fostering peace, compassion, empathy, tolerance, respect, conflict resolution, meditation, and responsibility as important components of home, school, community, and global citizenry even for the youngest children. The most notable work of EOYC is the “Difference is Normal” classroom materials that are used in the MINE, ME & US Montessori School classrooms. EOYC starts with the premise that Difference is Normal. From there, compassionate citizenry is possible and promising.

“Revaluing the Village” is a program whose purpose is championing and revaluing early childhood education for children, parents, caregivers, childhood professionals, and all the unrecognized contributors to care for the very young and their “villages.” Revaluing the Village educates about the importance of the first five years of life for children's development, informs the public about the inequality of pay for caregivers, advocates for parent and family support during the early years of parenthood, and offers and promotes need for fundamental changes in funding, laws, policies, etc. on a macro scale in order for the revaluing of early childhood to occur.

While these programs are still in their infancy, each of them represents important components of the broader mission of the creators of MINE, ME & US Montessori School. The policies and procedures at Montessori Infant Nido Environment reflect the specific MINE, ME & US Montessori School mission as well as the broader MINE mission.

Educational Philosophy

Our educational philosophy is rooted in the life work and pedagogy of Dr. Maria Montessori. We strongly believe that Dr. Montessori was proficient in evolving her educational theories by drawing on her academic training, professional background, and experience in medicine, clinical psychology, anthropology, and most importantly years of scientific observations of young children in group environments.

Montessori upheld that her most significant revolutionary discovery was distinguishing a teacher's role as one who pays devoted attention to her students rather than the other way around. A Montessori teacher acts as a guide, escorting the student through the curriculum and the prepared environment based upon the careful observations of the student's interest and strengths. Dr. Montessori's studies revealed that students work best when they are free to work without obstruction in a safe, hands-on learning environment. The most challenging aspect of a Montessorian's work is the balancing of personal freedom and collaborative responsibility in an environment where all people are equally respected and regarded with the non-negotiable rights to reach his or her personal potential. This aspect is one of the most profound ways that Montessori educates for peace and practical life. Internationally, many schools have successfully fulfilled Maria Montessori's grandiose vision for educational reform over the past century and MINE is proud to contribute. We are honoring this tradition of following the child through our approach to community and nutrition for the whole family and the youngest members of society.

At MINE, ME & US Montessori School, we understand that it is not enough for Montessori schools to exist or for the teachers to be painstaking, but families of the attending children must exude a passion for the program as well. We ask that, in return for our copious support and services, families understand what MINE, ME & US Montessori School is and what MINE, ME & US Montessori School is offering. Our team is comprised of trained, certified, and experienced professionals who keep abreast of the latest research and work vigorously to create and maintain the very best learning environment.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School is unique because it is a Montessori school for the very young. As a school, the community of children, teachers, and families is vital to the quality of the educational experience for the children and educational community experience for families and teachers. Therefore, the cooperation and mutual respect between faculty and parents must be preserved by all members of the school community.

Expectations

Choosing early education for your children is an important and difficult task for families. Leaving your youngest children in the care of others for the first time can be challenging and it's important to feel confident in the choice that you are making. We want you to know that you can feel safe and assured that your babies, toddlers, and preschoolers will be well cared for at MINE, ME & US Montessori School.

In order to best care for your kids, it is important that we – the faculty and staff – clearly communicate what we are, and what we are not, so that we start each year on the same page. We believe in the importance of educating the whole child, and our curriculum and practices are carefully designed to accomplish this goal. Please carefully consider your decision to enroll your child if any of these are uncomfortable for you. This school will be an amazing place to grow and learn, but only if parents, children, and staff trust and respect our education philosophy and methods.

What we expect from parents

Commitment: We expect parents will be committed to our practices and philosophy of what it means to engage and teach the whole child. In return, we commit to provide the highest quality of care to children and families.

We work very hard to create the very best learning environment. We are trained, certified, and experienced professionals who keep abreast of the latest research. In return, we expect that parents will do what they can to further our practices at home and to talk to us if issues arise.

What you can expect from us

- **Dirty bodies and dirty clothes:** Play – a child's work - is messy. We do not disrupt children while they are working and much of our work each day will occur outdoors (rain or shine). Please be prepared to see dirty clothes come home regularly and dress your children accordingly.
- **Approaching diversity as normal:** We celebrate differences, in all its forms, and present different experiences as having equal value.
- **Zero tolerance for harm:** We do not tolerate harm done to any living thing. This includes teachers, staff, and fellow students, but extends to animals, bugs, other creatures, plants, and trees.
- **Promoting independence:** Our deep respect for children leads to our belief that one of the greatest gifts we can give them is independence. As such, we expect that children who *can* put on their own shoes, for example, will. And we work hard to build, grow, and support these forms of independence with your children.

General Information

Montessori Infant Nido Environment, the daycare and preschool programs at MINE, ME & US Montessori School, are licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services. The school is in the process of becoming certified by the American Montessori Society.

Currently, Montessori Infant Nido Environment has:
Nido Environment (6 weeks – walking) (1:2-3 teacher student ratio)
Nido Community (walking–18 months) (1:3 teacher student ratio)
Toddler Community (18 – 36 months) (1:5 teacher student ratio)
Children’s House (3 – 6 years) (1:10 teacher student ratio)
Montessori Elementary (6 – 9 years) 1:18 teacher student ratio)

Montessori Infant Nido Environment and MINE, ME & US Montessori School admits children of any race, color, gender, religion and national origin, socio-economic level, physical ability or genetic information, and learning style to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

Admission is based on the availability of space in each classroom.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School
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Hours and Days of Operation

Monday-Friday
7:30 am – 5:30 pm
Year Round

Montessori Infant Nido Environment	EIN #46-3386160
MINE, ME & US Montessori School	EIN #82-1942685

Religious Affiliation

While MINE, ME & US Montessori School is not affiliated with any specific religion, we honor the religious beliefs of the world. We acknowledge the richness and diversity of our global community through classroom studies and celebrations of traditions and cultures across the globe. In each classroom, the children sing a song of thanks before eating. This is not religious, but rather a way to be mindful of the celebration of community and food. It also allows the children to calm their bodies and minds before enjoying their meal.

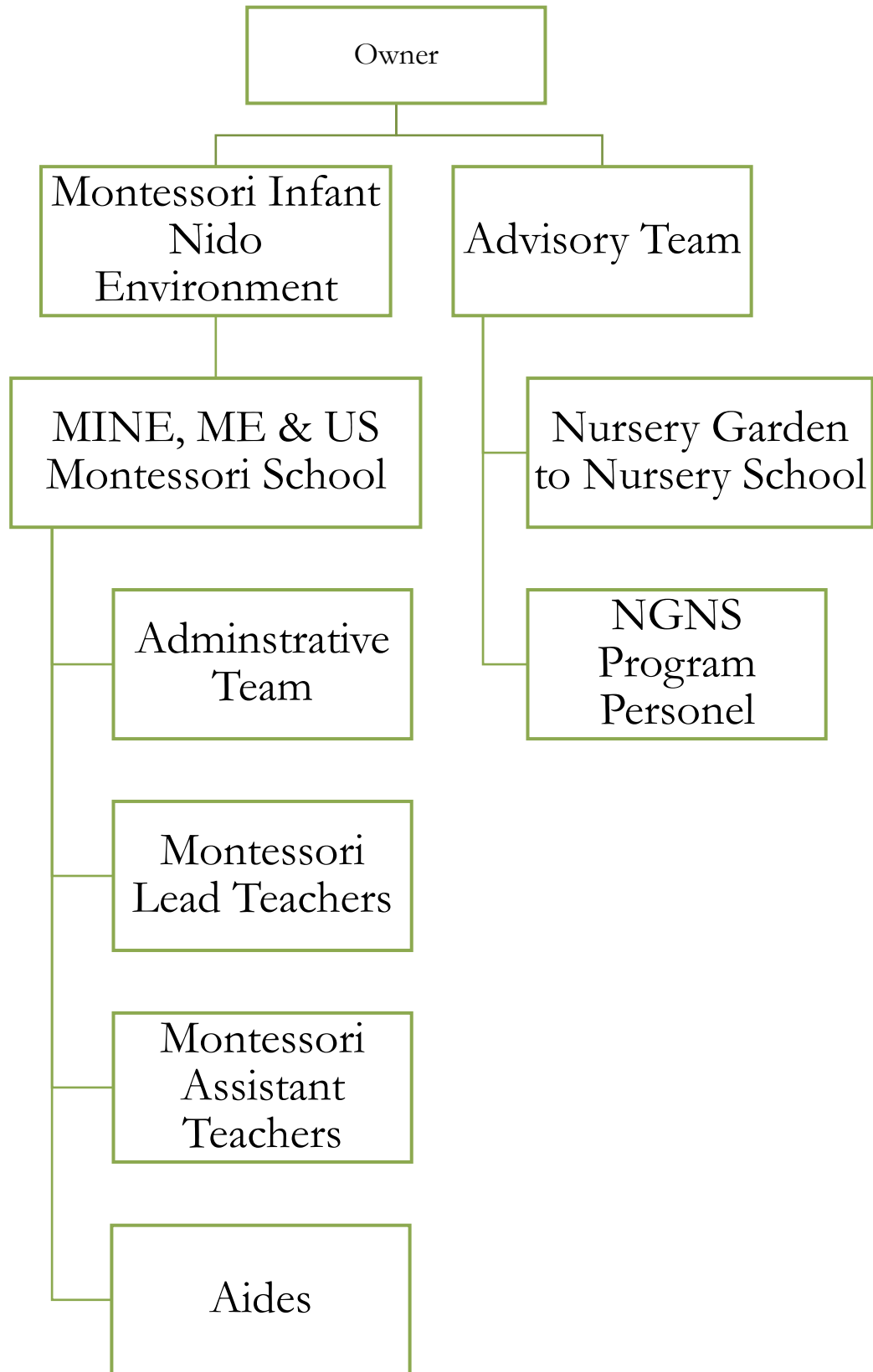
Faculty

At MINE, ME & US Montessori School, we consider our work to be more than just providing authentic Montessori education and excellent care for young children. We are Montessorians, and as such teaching is our career and early childhood Montessori education is our passion. In each MINE classroom, the Lead teacher is Montessori certified for that age group of children. If they are not yet certified, they are in a Montessori Mentorship in preparation for the goal of earning their Montessori training. Information regarding their specific job descriptions and duties is available upon request from the Head of School.

At MINE, ME & US Montessori School faculty/student ratios reflect the Montessori Philosophy and Method and are also within Virginia Department of Social Services licensing standards.

**Montessori Infant Nido Environment/
MINE, ME & US Montessori School**

Organizational Chart



Chapter

ENROLLMENT & FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Admission

MINE, ME & US Montessori School admits students of any race, color, sex, gender, religion, or national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, gender, or national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies and school administered programs. Children with learning disabilities or handicaps are accepted on a case-by-case basis according to MINE, ME & US Montessori School's ability to fully meet their specific needs.

Application, Registration, & Enrollment

To apply to MINE, ME & US Montessori School, parents must submit a completed application form and fee (per sibling if more than one child).

In the spring, to confirm intent to continue enrollment for the upcoming school year, parents must submit updated enrollment forms and fee (per sibling if more than one child).

Application Fee	\$100	Per child	Due with application	Non-refundable
Enrollment Fee	\$250	Per child	Due upon acceptance	Non-refundable
Re-Enrollment Fee	\$150	Per child	Due with Enrollment Packet	Annual and non-refundable

Tuition

The philosophy MINE, ME & US Montessori School is to include all expenses into one fee. This practice differs from other childcare organizations and preschools where the costs of materials, supplies, field trips, etc. are priced and paid separately.

In fact, our tuition philosophy extends to include many of your child's basic needs while at school. MINE, ME & US Montessori School tuition includes; all cloth diapers, wipes, diaper ointment, sunscreen, insect repellent, lip balm, and a nap blanket. The MINE, ME & US Montessori School Community provides organic, vegetarian menus.

Discounts:

Sibling discounts

10% for EACH sibling applied to the youngest sibling's tuition (or the most expensive tuition).

Annual Payment discount

3% discount for tuition paid in full (PIF) annually. Annual tuition must be paid within the first week of your child's first day in attendance in order to receive the 3% discount.

Waiting list

When you turn in the application forms and fees to MINE, ME & US Montessori School, your child is accepted at MINE, ME & US Montessori School and is officially on the waiting list. The application fee is \$100.

Enrollment decisions are based on classroom availability and demographic components of each class. Faculty childcare needs and siblings of current MINE, ME & US Montessori School families are given priority enrollment.

When there is not a waiting list, the "wait list" acts as an administrative tool. When this is the case, your child has guaranteed enrollment for your preferred start date-per agreement with Head of School.

Enrollment Process and Policy

When your child is offered enrollment at MINE, ME & US Montessori School, you have five business days to accept the offer of enrollment. Payment of the Enrollment fee is a commitment to enroll your child at MINE, ME & US Montessori School and begins the process of preparing for your child's first day of school. At that time, you become responsible for tuition for your child. Even though some new students do not begin school until a preferred date, the tuition is based on a place being held for that student. Monthly tuition begins

upon payment of confirmation of enrollment *and* Enrollment fee and no refund or credit will be given for that time. The Enrollment fee is \$250.

Tuition Plans

Tuition rates are calculated by each day the school is open per academic calendar year. That amount is then put into a monthly amount and annual amount for payment convenience. Please note that days that they school is closed are NOT included in the calculation MINE, ME & US Montessori School tuition. Full tuition is due each month regardless of your child’s attendance.

*All fees are non-refundable and are not part of tuition.

TUITION/FEES paid to MINE, ME & US Montessori School are based on the academic calendar year (August to August).

Current students are automatically re-enrolled upon return of Enrollment Packet, pending payment of fees, *unless otherwise notified.*

Children ages 6 weeks to one month after 3rd birthday

Annually	Monthly	10% Sibling discount/monthly	3% PIF discount	13% Sibling and PIF discount
\$14,400	\$1200	\$1080	\$13,968	\$12,528

Children ages 3 years-public school Kindergarten year

Annually	Monthly	10% Sibling discount/monthly	3% PIF discount	13% Sibling and PIF discount
\$12,000	\$1000	\$900	\$11,640	\$10,440

Children during their public-school Kindergarten year (August)

Annually	Monthly	10% Sibling discount/monthly	3% PIF discount	13% Sibling and PIF discount
\$9,600	\$800	\$776	\$9,312	\$8,532

Children ages 6-9 years

Annually	Monthly	10% Sibling discount/monthly	3% PIF discount	13% Sibling and PIF discount
\$9,600	\$800	\$776	\$9,312	\$8,532

Tuition is prorated during the first month and last month of enrollment only. The first tuition payment is due upon signing the enrollment contract. If a child’s first day of enrollment falls on the first through the 15th of the month, the tuition rate is for the full month. If a child’s first day of enrollment falls on the 16th through the end of the month, the tuition rate is for half (50%) of the monthly tuition. If the child’s last day of enrollment falls on the first through the 15th of the month, the tuition rate is for half (50%) of the monthly tuition. If a child’s last day of enrollment falls on the 16th through the end of the month, the tuition rate is the full monthly tuition amount.

Tuition Payment Guidelines

FOR NEW APPLICANTS: A one-time, non-refundable, \$100 application fee is due upon submission of each application. We accept applications year-round and add children to the wait list as of the date we receive their applications.

SIBLINGS: A one-time, non-refundable application fee (\$100) and registration fee (\$250), along with a completed/signed contract must be submitted to reserve a place at MINE, ME & US Montessori School. Current students are automatically re-enrolled upon return of application, pending payment of fees, unless otherwise notified.

RETURNING STUDENTS: A non-refundable Enrollment fee of \$150 is due annually to secure enrollment for the upcoming calendar year. Re-enrollment is in June of each year.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

BI-WEEKLY—Payment is due in 24 equal installments, due on the 1st and the 15th of each month. Tuition is considered late on the 5th and the 20th of each month. A \$50.00 late fee will be applied to the balance due on your account if paid on or after the 6th and 20th of the month.

First payment is due upon confirmation of enrollment *and* enrollment fee.

MONTHLY—Payment is due in 12 equal installments, due on the 1st of each month and is considered late of the 6th of each month. A \$50.00 late fee will be applied to the balance due on your account if paid on or after the 6th of the month.

First payment is due upon confirmation of enrollment.

ANNUALLY—Full tuition payment will receive a 3% discount on tuition. Payment is due upon confirmation of enrollment *and* payment of Enrollment Fee. Payment is due on your child’s first day of enrollment

A SIBLING DISCOUNT of 10% for EACH sibling applied to the youngest sibling’s tuition (or the most expensive tuition).

A STUDENT’S ACCOUNT must be current on June 1 for the student’s place to be held upon submission of a completed re-enrollment packet and payment of re-enrollment fee.

EVEN THOUGH some new students do not begin school until a preferred date, the tuition is based on a place being held for that student. Monthly tuition begins upon payment of confirmation of enrollment *and* Enrollment Fee and no refund or credit will be given for that time.

A STUDENT may not continue enrollment if his/her account is 45 days past due. Other conditions and terms of credit, collection and financing are available through the MINE, ME & US Montessori School Office at (540) 808.3838.

ONCE YOUR FIRST TUITION PAYMENT has been submitted you are financially responsible for your child’s tuition for the entire time he/she is enrolled and through your child’s withdrawal. Withdrawals are effective from the date the notice and form are received and parents are responsible for tuition for 30 days.

IF A FAMILY has a history of chronic delinquency (defined to be the occurrence of at least one incident of “45 days past due” condition in the previous 12 months), the School, in its sole discretion, may **(a)** decline to enroll a student for succeeding academic years, or **(b)** require payment in full prior to the start of school, or **(c)** terminate child’s enrollment.

Tuition Payment Options

- Tuition paid to MINE, ME & US Montessori School, **due on the 1st of the month.**
- Tuition is **considered late on the 5th of the month** (unless other arrangements are made).
- Tuition may be paid monthly by check or cash.
- Tuition may be paid annually by check or cash.

Extra Hours

MINE, ME & US Montessori School does not offer care for extra hours.

Non-Montessori Care

MINE, ME & US Montessori School is first and foremost a Montessori school for children ages 6 weeks through 6 years. Although MINE is a year-round, full-day Montessori school and as such, operates with hours similar to a daycare, MINE, ME & US Montessori School is not a daycare. The school calendar reflects this distinction and allows for faculty breaks dispersed throughout the school year.

We recognize that while parents choose MINE, ME & US Montessori School for the authentic and quality Montessori education, they also often need full-time, year-round care for their children, so they can be successful at their jobs. To bridge family needs for childcare with faculty and school needs to ensure the highest quality of Montessori education, we offer Non-Montessori Care for the days in the calendar in which the school is closed and faculty are on break.

Non-Montessori Care is *not* part of the MINE, ME & US Montessori School curriculum and doesn’t offer the same educational experience as when school is in session. The care is provided by MINE, ME & US Montessori School teaching aides. Parents must provide meals, snacks, diapers, wipes, diaper ointment, sunscreen, and extra changes of clothes for Non-Montessori Care.

Non-Montessori Care is not included in MINE, ME & US Montessori School tuition. The cost is \$25.00 per day, per child. Care is from 9:30 am-5:30 pm. The spaces are limited and first-come-first-serve. Contact Head of Administration for details and reservations. The dates that Non-Montessori Care is offered are detailed in the School Calendar.

Late Payment Charge

Tuition is considered late on the 6th of the month for monthly schedules and on the 6th and 20th of the month for bi-weekly schedules. A \$50.00 late payment fee is charged for tuition received after the due date. If tuition is not paid by the end of the month, the child may not be able to continue his/her enrollment.

Returned Check Fee

A \$50.00 fee will be charged for returned checks.

Program Withdrawals

MINE, ME & US Montessori School recognizes that Blacksburg is a “University town” and with that comes a transient population. Families maintain enrollment in MINE, ME & US Montessori School each year upon receipt of re-enrollment forms and fees. Families must give the school a **30-day** written email. **Withdrawals are effective from the date the notice and form are received and parents are responsible for tuition for 30 days.** Please note that student records will *not* be release unless all financial obligations have been met.

Temporary Withdrawals

A child withdrawn for illness, vacations, or any other reason will lose his/her placement in the school unless tuition payments are continued during the period of the child’s absence or an arrangement is made with Administration. MINE, ME & US Montessori School recognizes sabbatical, however, we ask that we be given 60 days to work with you on a reenrollment plan.

Children’s Records

Virginia Department of Social Services and MINE, ME & US Montessori School require the following documents must be on file at MINE, ME & US Montessori School before your child enters the school.

- MINE, ME & US Montessori School Application Form
- Child Registration Form
- Proof of Child’s Identity and Age (Birth Certificate)
- Child Emergency Data Card
- Child Emergency Health Care Plan
- Commonwealth of Virginia Physical Health and Immunization Form
- Organic Ointment Permission Form
- Signed Tuition Contract with Tuition Plan
- Media Release Form
- Field Trip Permission Form
- Previous/Concurrent Schools Attended Form
- Signed acknowledgement of receipt of MINE, ME & US Montessori School Family Handbook.

It is the parents’ responsibility to keep all forms updated with all necessary telephone numbers and any new information pertinent to their child’s well-being.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School requires the following before your child enters school.

- All required paperwork on file.
- All fees and tuition paid.
- Home visit.

Each student file is kept confidential and the information is used for MINE, ME & US Montessori School to provide the best care and education to your child and support to your family. If other early childhood professionals need access to the information in your child’s file, MINE provides a form for parents to sign to authorize release of personal information.

Your child will not be permitted to attend school until all such documents are provided and other requirements completed.

Chapter 3

YOUR CHILD AT SCHOOL

School Schedule

Nido Environment

The Nido Environment does not have a set daily schedule, rather a rhythm. Instead we meet each child's individual needs for play, sleep, food, diapers, comfort, etc.

Nido Environment Daily Schedule

	Weather Permitting	Weather Prohibiting
7.30 am	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
8:00 am	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
8:30 am	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
9:00 am	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
9:30 am	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
10:00 am	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
10:30 am	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
11:00 am	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
11:30 am	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
12:00 pm	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
12:30 pm	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
1:00 pm	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
1:30 pm	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
2:00 pm	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
2:30 pm	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
3:00 pm	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
3:30 pm	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
4:00 pm	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
4:30 pm	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
5:00 pm	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time
5:30 pm	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal/Outdoor Time	Play/Work/Sleep/Meal Time

***The Nido schedule is more like a rhythm than a schedule. Infant needs are more individual during their first few months of life. Infants eat, sleep, and work/play as they are developmentally compelled to. MINE, ME & US Montessori School teachers follow each child's needs. As infants grow and change, so do their developmental needs. They will begin to have longer awake time and shorter sleep time. As this happens, they naturally fall into a more structured rhythm around 15-18 months.**



Nido Community Daily Schedule

	Weather Permitting	Weather Prohibiting
7:30 am	Outside Free Play	Work Time in Classroom
8:00 am	Diaper Change, Hand Washing, and Light Snack	Diaper Change, Hand Washing, and Light Snack
8:30 am	Montessori Work Cycle Morning Nap	Montessori Work Cycle Morning Nap
9:00 am	Montessori Work Cycle/Outdoor Free Play	Montessori Work Cycle/Outdoor Free Play
9:30 am	Montessori Work Cycle/Outdoor Free Play	Montessori Work Cycle/Outdoor Free Play
10:00 am	Montessori Work Cycle Diaper Change and Hand Washing, and Family Style Snack/Outdoor Free Play	Montessori Work Cycle Diaper Change and Hand Washing, and Family Style Snack/Outdoor Free Play
10:30 am	Montessori Work Cycle/Outdoor Free Play (Family Style Snack)	Montessori Work Cycle/Outdoor Free Play (Family Style Snack)
11:00 am	Montessori Work Cycle/Outdoor Free Play	Montessori Work Cycle/Outdoor Free Play
11:30 am	Montessori Work Cycle/Outdoor Free Play	Montessori Work Cycle/Outdoor Free Play
12:00 pm	Diaper Change, Hand Washing, and Family Style Lunch	Diaper Change, Hand Washing, and Family Style Lunch
12:30 pm	Family Style Lunch	Family Style Lunch
1:00 pm	Nap	Nap
1:30 pm	Nap	Nap
2:00 pm	Nap	Nap
2:30 pm	Diaper Change and Hand Washing	Diaper Change and Hand Washing
3:00 pm	Snack (Outside)	Individual or Family Style Snack
3:30 pm	Outside Free Play	Classroom Work
4:00 pm	Outside Free Play	Classroom Work
4:30 pm	Outside Free Play	Classroom Work
5:00 pm	Outside Free Play, Diaper Change, Hand Washing and Outside Tea Time	Classroom Work, Diaper Change, Hand Washing and Tea Time
5:30 pm	Outside Free Play	Classroom Work

***One of the important tenants of the Montessori Philosophy and Method is to “follow the child”. At MINE, ME & US Montessori School, we offer only full day options, so we can “follow the children”. If we are outside at 12:00pm and the children are, as a group, having a lot of fun, playing cooperatively, engaged in their environment, and/or not tiring yet, we will stay outside longer. Similarly, if the children, at 11:30am, are showing signs that they are tired, hungry, or ready to go inside, we will go ahead and go in for lunch. Full day schedules allow us to follow the rhythm of the children’s needs rather than an arbitrary time schedule.**



Toddler Community Daily Schedule

	Weather Permitting	Weather Prohibiting
7:30 am	Outside Free Play	Work Time in Classroom
8:00 am	Outside Free Play	Work Time in Classroom
8:30 am	Montessori Work Cycle (Diaper Change and Hand Washing)	Montessori Work Cycle (Diaper Change and Hand Washing)
9:00 am	Montessori Work Cycle (Family Style Snack)	Montessori Work Cycle (Individual or Family Style Snack)
9:30 am	Montessori Work Cycle (Family Style Snack)	Montessori Work Cycle (Individual or Family Style Snack)
10:00 am	Montessori Work Cycle	Montessori Work Cycle
10:30 am	Montessori Work Cycle	Montessori Work Cycle
11:00 am	Montessori Work Cycle	Montessori Work Cycle
11:30 am	Diaper Change and Hand Washing	Diaper Change and Hand Washing
12:00 pm	Family Style Lunch	Family Style Lunch
12:30 pm	Family Style Lunch	Family Style Lunch
1:00 pm	Nap	Nap
1:30 pm	Nap	Nap
2:00 pm	Nap	Nap
2:30 pm	Nap	Nap
3:00 pm	Diaper Change and Hand Washing	Diaper Change and Hand Washing
3:30 pm	Snack (Outside)	Individual or Family Style Snack
4:00 pm	Outside Free Play	Classroom Work
4:30 pm	Outside Free Play	Classroom Work
5:00 pm	Outside Free Play, Diaper Change, Hand Washing and Outside Tea Time	Classroom Work, Diaper Change, Hand Washing and Tea Time
5:30 pm	Outside Free Play	Classroom Work

***One of the important tenants of the Montessori Philosophy and Method is to “follow the child”. At MINE, ME & US Montessori School, we offer only full day options, so we can “follow the children”. If we are outside at 12:00pm and the children are, as a group, having a lot of fun, playing cooperatively, engaged in their environment, and/or not tiring yet, we will stay outside longer. Similarly, if the children, at 11:30am, are showing signs that they are tired, hungry, or ready to go inside, we will go ahead and go in for lunch. Full day schedules allow us to follow the rhythm of the children’s needs rather than an arbitrary time schedule.**



Children's House Daily Schedule

	Weather Permitting	Weather Prohibiting
7:30 am	Outdoor Free Play	Work Time in Classroom
8:00 am	Outdoor Free Play	Work Time in Classroom
8:30 am	Montessori Work Cycle	Montessori Work Cycle
9:00 am	Montessori Work Cycle (Individual or Family Style Snack)	Montessori Work Cycle (Individual or Family Style Snack)
9:30 am	Montessori Work Cycle (Individual or Family Style Snack)	Montessori Work Cycle (Individual or Family Style Snack)
10:00 am	Montessori Work Cycle	Montessori Work Cycle
10:30 am	Montessori Work Cycle	Montessori Work Cycle
11:00 am	Montessori Work Cycle	Montessori Work Cycle
11:30 am	Montessori Work Cycle	Montessori Work Cycle
12:00 pm	Outdoor Free Play	Outdoor Classroom Work/Play
12:30 pm	Outdoor Free Play	Outdoor Classroom Work/Play
1:00 pm	Family Style Lunch	Family Style Lunch
1:30 pm	Family Style Lunch	Family Style Lunch
2:00 pm	Nap/Rest Time	Nap/Rest Time
2:30 pm	Nap/Rest Time	Nap/Rest Time
3:00 pm	Nap/Rest Time	Nap/Rest Time
3:30 pm	Hand washing, and Snack (Outside)	Hand washing, and Snack (Outside)
4:00 pm	Outside Free Play	Outdoor Classroom Work/Play
4:30 pm	Outside Free Play	Classroom Work
5:00 pm	Outside Free Play or Hand Washing and Outside Tea Time	Classroom Work or Hand Washing and Tea Time
5:30 pm	Outside Free Play	Classroom Work

***One of the important tenants of the Montessori Philosophy and Method is to “follow the child”. At MINE, ME & US Montessori School, we offer only full day options, so we can “follow the children”. If we are outside at 12:00pm and the children are, as a group, having a lot of fun, playing cooperatively, engaged in their environment, and/or not tiring yet, we will stay outside longer. Similarly, if the children, at 11:30am, are showing signs that they are tired, hungry, or ready to go inside, we will go ahead and go in for lunch. Full day schedules allow us to follow the rhythm of the children’s needs rather than an arbitrary time schedule**



Montessori Elementary Daily Schedule

7.30 am - 8:30am	Montessori-Aligned Curriculum Activities includes working in the gardens, food preparations, nature walks, and an array of activities with the younger students.
8:30 am - 9:00 am	Arrival and settling in to the classroom
9:00 am – 9:20 am	Morning Meeting
9:30 am – 12:30 pm	Montessori Work Cycle This block of time is an uninterrupted time for interdisciplinary child-led work. The work may involve small group, individual, partner, or one-on-one lessons, work with materials, or research. The children are provided an opportunity to enjoy snack during this time of day. The children are also invited to choose work in the outdoor environment during this time.
12:30 am – 12:45 pm	Meal preparations and observing silence
12:45 pm – 1:20 pm	Family Style Lunch
1:20 pm – 2:00 pm	Outside Explorations and Free Play
2:00 pm – 2:20 pm	Read Aloud
2:20 pm – 3:20 pm	Montessori Afternoon Work Cycle
3:20 pm – 3:30 pm	Meal preparations and observing silence
3:30 pm – 4:00 pm	Family Style Afternoon Snack
4:00 pm – 4:45 pm	Integrate Specialties
4:45 pm – 5:30 pm	Down Time, Outdoor Exploration, Additional Study Time

MINE, ME & US Montessori School Calendar 2019-2020

July 2019						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

August 2019						
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
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September 2019						
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29	30					

October 2019						
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November 2019						
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December 2019						
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January 2020						
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February 2020						
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March 2020						
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April 2020						
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May 2020						
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

June 2020						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

July 2020						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

August 2020						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

 School Closed: Holidays	 School/Family Events	 School Closed: Faculty Professional Development
 Non-Montessori Care Offered	 Montessori Elementary	 Progress Reports and Conferences
 Parent Advisory Committee	 Parent Forum	



MINE, ME & US Montessori School Calendar 2019-2020

July 4-5	School Closed - (Independence Day)	
July 10	MMUMS Parent Advisory Committee	4:30 pm
July 10	MMUMS Parent Forum	5:00 pm
July 18	Family Ice Cream Social	4:30 pm
July 19	School Closed – Faculty Professional Development Day	
July 29-31	School Closed – Summer Term Break	NMC M – W
August 1-2	School Closed – Summer Term Break	NMC R & F
August 5-9	School Closed – Faculty Work Week	
August 12	First Day of School	
September 2	School Closed – (Labor Day)	
September 12	MMUMS Parent Advisory Committee	4:30 pm
September 12	MMUMS Parent Forum	5:00 pm
September 19	MMUMS Family Fall Cider Gathering	4:30 pm
September 20	School Closed – Faculty Professional Development Day	
October 4	Montessori Elementary – Progress Reports	
October 7-11	Montessori Elementary – Parent Teacher Conferences	
October 7	MMUMS Parent Advisory Committee	4:30 pm
October 7	MMUMS Parent Forum	5:00 pm
October 14-17	Montessori Elementary – Appalachian Trail Week	
October 18	School Closed – Faculty Professional Development Day	
October 21-25	Progress Reports and Parent Teacher Conferences	
October 26	MINE, ME & US Montessori Family Picnic	11:30 am – 1:30 pm, Nellie's Cave Park
November 5	MMUMS Parent Advisory Committee	4:30 pm
November 5	MMUMS Parent Forum	5:00 pm
November 14	Montessori Elementary –Stone Soup Bread Baking and Feast	
November 15	School Closed – Faculty Professional Development Day	
November 25-29	School Closed – Thanksgiving Break	NMC M – W
December 5	Montessori Elementary Holiday Caroling	4:30 pm
December 6	Montessori Elementary Progress Reports	
December 9-13	Montessori Elementary Parent Teacher Conferences	
December 11	MMUMS Parent Advisory Committee	4:30 pm
December 11	MMUMS Parent Forum	5:00 pm
December 19	MMUMS Family Winter Tea	4:30 pm
December 23-31	School Closed - Winter Break	
January 1-3	School Closed – Winter Break	
January 9	MMUMS Parent Advisory Committee	4:30 pm
January 9	MMUMS Parent Forum	5:00 pm
January 17	School Closed – Faculty Professional Development Day	
February 10	MMUMS Parent Advisory Committee	4:30 pm
February 10	MMUMS Parent Forum	5:00 pm
February 21	School Closed – Faculty Professional Development Day	
February 24-28	Progress Reports and Parent Teacher Conferences	
February 28	Montessori Elementary Progress Reports	
March 2-6	Montessori Elementary Parent Teacher Conferences	
March 9-13	School Closed – Spring Break	NMC M – F
March 20	School Closed – Faculty Professional Development Day	
April 8	MMUMS Parent Advisory Committee	4:30 pm
April 8	MMUMS Parent Forum	5:00 pm
April 17	School Closed – Faculty Professional Development Day	
April 25	MINE, ME & US Montessori Family Picnic	11:30 am – 1:30 pm, Nellie's Cave Park



MINE, ME & US Montessori School Calendar 2019-2020

May 7	MMUMS Parent Advisory Committee	4:30 pm
May 7	MMUMS Parent Forum	5:00 pm
May 8	Montessori Elementary Progress Reports	
May 11-14	Montessori Elementary Parent Teacher Conferences	
May 15	School Closed – Faculty Professional Development Day	
May 18-22	Montessori Elementary Appalachian Trail Week	
May 18-22	Progress Reports and Parent Teacher Conferences	
May 25	School Closed - (Memorial Day)	
May 26-29	School Closed-Term Break	NMC T – F
June 8	MMUMS Parent Advisory Committee	4:30 pm
June 8	MMUMS Parent Forum	5:00 pm
June 19	School Closed – Faculty Professional Development Day	
July 3	School Closed – (Independence Day)	
July 7	MMUMS Parent Advisory Committee	4:30 pm
July 7	MMUMS Parent Forum	5:00 pm
July 17	School Closed – Faculty Professional Development Day	
August 3-7	School Closed – Summer Term Break	NMC M – F
August 10	School Closed – Faculty Work Week	

MINE, ME & US Montessori School offers excellent childcare and the opportunity to learn in a Montessori environment for even the youngest children. The Montessori Philosophy and Method constitute an alternative education program and curriculum for children from birth through high school.

Although we offer full-day, year-round care, we are a school. Therefore, we do have time off for holidays, professional days, preparation for the new school year, conferences, etc. MINE, ME & US Montessori School does not follow the calendars of any other education institution, including Virginia Tech and Montgomery County Public Schools, as their needs are not the same as our needs. Despite our best efforts to plan the calendar, unforeseen events may cause changes to the schedule. We will try to give you as much advance notice as possible if changes are necessary. The 12-month calendar is posted throughout the school and is also available on the MINE, ME & US Montessori School website as a Google Calendar in which you can subscribe to. www.mmu.ms

As a young school, we are always looking for ways to make the MINE, ME & US Montessori School experience the best possible for all members of the MINE, ME & US Montessori School community, children, parents, and teachers. We hold a Parent Forum at the end of each semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer) for the entire MINE, ME & US Montessori School community to get together to identify successes as well as room for improvement from the previous semester.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School offers many opportunities throughout the year for children and families to socialize together in and out of school. From the Family Winter Tea to the Family Summer Ice Cream Social, MINE, ME & US Montessori School families enjoy each other's company in community events.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School, as part of the mission of education parents and the community about Montessori education, offers a Montessori Lecture Series.

The MINE, ME & US Montessori School calendar does not include possible snow days. See Inclement Weather School Closing policy for possible snow day closings.

Inclement Weather School Closing Policy

MINE, ME & US Montessori School does not follow Montgomery County Public School or Virginia Tech for weather-related closings. We understand that consistency in childcare and early education is important for children's routines and parents' employment. We weigh the decision to close school based on the safety of MINE, ME & US Montessori School faculty and families.

Decisions about school closings or delayed openings due to weather will be emailed to the parents, posted on Slack.com, texted, and posted on the front page of the MINE, ME & US Montessori School website.

For weather-related school closings during the day, we will email parents, post information on the front page of the MINE, ME & US Montessori School website, and call families as needed.

Parents and families must confirm with MINE, ME & US Montessori School administration that they are aware of the early closing and have made arrangements to pick up their children.

Teacher/Student Ratios

MINE, ME & US Montessori School adheres to Virginia Department of Social Services licensing standards for teacher/child ratios.

In the Nido Environment, Nido Community, and Toddler Community, the teachers work as a team. While the teachers primarily stay in their own classrooms, they all know all the children and can easily step into each classroom to help when needed. The team teaching works to build a community for all the children age three and under. All the children know all the teachers, making each child's village broader and stronger.

In the Nido Environment classroom, there are three (3) teachers for eight (8) children ages 6 weeks to mobile. This ratio of 3:8 is maintained at all times.

In the Nido Community, there are 3 teachers for eight (8) children ages mobile-18 months. This ratio of 3:8 is maintained at all times.

In the Toddler Community, there are three (3) teachers for fifteen (15 children) ages 18 months through 3 years. This ratio of 3:15 is maintained at all times.

In the Children's House classroom, there are two (2) teachers for twenty (20) children ages 3 – 6 years. This ratio of 1:10 is maintained at all times.

Sight and Sound Supervision

Sight and sound supervision for all children in all parts of the school is maintained at all times. The Head of School is often available to step in for transition periods and other needed times. Additionally, the Head of School spends time in each classroom every day. When faculty and administration are supervising children, they shall always ensure their care, protection, and guidance.

On the MINE, ME & US Montessori School premises at all times is an adult in charge of the administration of the center. This person will be the Head of School or a seasoned Lead Teacher from one of the classrooms.

Arrivals, Departures, and Transportation

Arrival

Drop off and pick up procedures are classroom specific.

Nido Environment

Parents dropping their infants off at school will come into the Nido Environment classroom through the back door. Parents will sign their child in on the sign-in sheet near the entrance. Parents will transfer their child's bottles, breast milk/formula, and any other belongings to one of the teachers.

When you enter the classroom, please remove your shoes at the door. At MINE, ME & US Montessori School, shoes are not worn in the classroom. You and your child may read together to create a school drop off routine that does not interfere with the children who have already begun their day and are working in the classroom. If you need to talk with your child's teacher briefly at drop off or pick up, she/he will step aside to chat.

Parents are welcome to breast or bottle feed at any time during the day. Parents who choose to stay to feed are welcomed into the classroom. Please be respectful of the teachers and children in the classroom.

Nido Community

Parents dropping off their infants at school will come into the Nido Community classroom through the back door of the classroom. Parents will sign their child in via the tablet available near the entrance. Parents will transfer their child's bottles, breast milk/formula, and any other belongings to one of the teachers.

When you enter the classroom, please remove your shoes at the door. At MINE, ME & US Montessori School, shoes are not worn in the classroom. You and your child may read together to create a school drop off routine that does not interfere with the children who have already begun their day and are working in the classroom. If you need to talk with your child's teacher briefly at drop off or pick up, she/he will step aside to chat.

Parents are welcome to breast or bottle feed at any time during the day. Parents who choose to stay to feed are welcomed into the classroom. Please be respectful of the teachers and children in the classroom.

Toddler Community

Parents dropping off their infants at school will come into the Toddler Community classroom through the back door of the classroom via the outdoor environment. Parents will sign their child in via the table available near the entrance.

The school rules for children outside the school building is that they must remain in the outdoor environment unless they are with a teacher, parent, or safety partner. Please be mindful of this rule and be your child's safety partner when leaving the building. The continuity of school rules whether parents are present or not is important for the children's safety at school.

The back doors of the Nido Community, Toddler Community and Children's House enter into the classrooms. When you enter with your child, please assist him/her to take off his/her shoes, coat, etc. If you choose to enter into the classroom, please remove your shoes at the back door. At MINE, ME & US Montessori School, shoes are not worn in the classroom. You and your child may read together to create a school drop off routine that remains in the outdoor environment or the cubby room of the classroom and does not interfere with the children who have already begun their day and are working in the classroom. If you need to talk with your child's teacher briefly at drop off or pick up, she/he will join you in the cubby room to chat. Please follow this same routine when you pick up your child.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School recognizes that children are different in their social and emotional needs. Many children handle these transitions well and some children are overwhelmed by these transitions. Our teachers will work with you to develop a drop off and pick up routine that works for your child and you.

In general, MINE, ME & US Montessori School encourages parents to come into the classroom for drop off and pick up to create a home-school/parent-teacher connection and allow for special moments with your child.

Please remember to respect the school and classroom environment. Children can get emotional when parents drop off, pick up or simply visit their school. Whether your child is elated or angry that you are there, please be mindful that school and classroom rules that encourage appropriate behavior still apply for your child. If your child needs reminding, gently remind him/her of the school and classroom expectations of behavior. Faculty and administration will also gently remind your child that, even though mom and dad are at school, they must still behave appropriately.

Children's House/Casa de Bambini

Parents dropping off their children at school will come into the outdoor environment or through the back door of the classroom. Parents will sign their child in via the table available near the entrance.

The school rules for children outside the school building is that they must remain in the outdoor environment unless they are with a teacher, parent, or safety partner. Please be mindful of this rule and be your child's safety partner when leaving the building. The continuity of school rules whether parents are present or not is important for the children's safety at school.

When you enter with your child, please assist him/her to take off his/her shoes, coat, etc. If you choose to enter into the classroom, please remove your shoes at the back door. At MINE, ME & US Montessori School, shoes are not worn in the classroom. You and your child may read together to create a school drop off routine that remains in the outdoor environment or the cubby room of the classroom and does not interfere with the children who have already begun their day and are working in the classroom. If you need to talk with your child's teacher briefly at drop off or pick up, she/he will join you in the cubby room to chat. Please follow this same routine when you pick up your child.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School recognizes that children are different in their social and emotional needs. Many children handle these transitions well and some children are overwhelmed by these transitions. Our teachers will work with you to develop a drop off and pick up routine that works for your child and you.

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Please remember to respect the school and classroom environment. Children can get emotional when parents drop off, pick up or simply visit their school. Whether your child is elated or angry that you are there, please be mindful that school and classroom rules that encourage appropriate behavior still apply for your child. If your child needs reminding, gently remind him/her of the school and classroom expectations of behavior. Faculty and administration will also gently remind your child that, even though mom and dad are at school, they must still behave appropriately.

For children in the Children's House, more specific drop off procedures will be worked out with the Lead Teacher.

Montessori Elementary

We have created the daily rhythm to include a thirty-minute arrival and settling in time, to meet the varying needs of ME children and community. Please understand that the classroom is the children's space and that we intend for our children to feel comfortable and confident entering into this space.

In the elementary it is developmentally appropriate for children to walk from the parking area to their classroom without the guidance of their families. It is also mentionable that this half hour time may be a suitable opportunity for families to join their child in the classroom for a brief check in, depending on how early it is and the parking situation. Your child's teachers are happy to assist in creating space for a visit as well. Routine visits by adults during the drop off part of the day, can however create a disturbance for children and guides. Please keep in mind that a routine should be established, and it should create the least amount of disturbance for everyone involved.

Drop off can be a tricky time to communicate with teachers. It is recommended that conversations during this time be brief. If a conversation is about the child and the child is within earshot, it should be directed to the child as well as to the guide. Please feel free to drop off notes, let a guide know to expect an email, suggest a good time for a phone call, or call the head of school.

The school rules for children outside the school building is that they must remain in the outdoor environment unless they are with a teacher, parent, or safety partner. Please be mindful of this rule and be your child's safety partner when leaving the building. The continuity of school rules whether parents are present or not is important for the children's safety at school.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School recognizes that children are different in their social and emotional needs. Many children handle these transitions well and some children are overwhelmed by these transitions. Our teachers will work with you to develop a drop off and pick up routine that works for your child and you.

Please remember to respect the school and classroom environment. Children can get emotional when parents drop off, pick up or simply visit their school. Whether your child is elated or angry that you are there, please be mindful that school and classroom rules that encourage appropriate behavior still apply for your child. If your child needs reminding, gently remind him/her of the school and classroom expectations of behavior. Faculty and administration will also gently remind your child that, even though mom and dad are at school, they must still behave appropriately.

General school and classroom expectations of behavior that you can model are:

- Using a quiet voice
- Walking easily and quietly in the classroom
- Refrain from entering a room with sleeping children
- Respect a child's concentration on an activity and do not distract him/her at work
- No cell phone use on school property

Young children find safety in routines and consistency. Often classroom visitors have an anxious effect on other children settling in for the morning or waiting for their parents at day's end. Please be mindful of this and be receptive to gentle cues from your child's teacher to leave the classroom, move to another, area or other such suggestions to make sure the other children feel safe and secure.

SCHOOL POLICY: Cell phone use is prohibited during drop off and pick up.

Attendance

We ask that you call or email the school by 9:00 am when your child will not be coming to school. Please *also* contact MINE, ME & US Montessori School via Transparent Classroom. In the event that you have verification that your child or anyone else in the family has a communicable disease (strep throat, pink eye, chicken pox, scarlet fever, H1N1, flu, etc.), please call the school immediately so that other parents can be informed, and we can help stop the spread of the disease.

Communication: Routine and Emergency

MINE, ME & US Montessori School will email parents for group routine reminders, such as upcoming events, etc. We will email, call, or text for individual routine reminders.

If a group emergency occurs during school hours and immediate action needs to be taken to close the school or communicate crucial information, we will email, call and text all numbers listed in the student's file (home, work, and cell phone). We will also post that information on the front page of the MINE, ME & US Montessori School website.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School uses Slack.com as a main form of communication with and among parents. Parents can use Slack.com as an app on their phone or computer, or online. There are different channels for MINE, ME & US Montessori School News, PTO, Babysitting, Play Dates, etc. Upon enrollment, the Head of Administration will provide each parent with the details to join the MINE, ME & US Montessori School team page at Slack.com.

Please also check the school's social media accounts for school updates.

Facebook: Montessori Infant Nido Environment and MINE, ME & US Montessori School

Twitter: @minemontessori

MINE, ME & US Montessori School has several outlets for routine communication between parents and the school. Email and phone for reaching the main school. MINE, ME & US Montessori School uses Transparent Classroom for direct communication to each classroom. Please allow 48 hours for responses to emails to the classroom emails. For faster communication with classroom teachers, calling or emailing the school and speaking with the Head of School, or if possible chatting at pick up time.

Sign-In and Sign-Out

State regulations require parents to sign their children in and out every day, include times when the child accompanies a parent out to lunch or to a doctor's appointment or any other activity during the day. Please check in with your child's teacher when you arrive and leave each day. The teachers have the sign-in/out sheets with them. Each parent is responsible for checking in with the teacher when they drop off/pick up their child. When the door is locked, knock for entrance.

Transportation

Transportation is the responsibility of the parents. The transportation method specified in your child's student file should be updated whenever necessary. If someone other than the regular drivers is to transport your child, proper notice must be provided to the administration as well as to the teachers. Please see the departure section for further details about transportation and pick up. The center does not transport children.

Parking/Parking Lot Safety

To ensure children's safety, we require that you park in designated parking spaces only. Please do not leave your car running or leave children unattended in your car while you are in the school. Please be respectful of parents removing children from their cars or buckling them back into car seats—sometimes it takes a few minutes to ensure the security of children.

The school rules for children outside the school building is that they must be holding a safety partner's hand when they enter the red zone to leave the fenced in outdoor environment. Please be mindful of this rule and be your child's safety partner when leaving the backyard. Children may not touch the red gates. The continuity of school rules whether parents are present or not is important for the children's safety at school.

Despite parents' best efforts, children may still at times run away from parents, trip and fall, have a meltdown, or dart quickly across the parking lot. We ask that you recognize these unforeseen events, slow down, and exercise extreme caution when backing out of a driving near the school.

Cell phone use is prohibited in the school and the parking areas.

Walking Field Trips and Safety Policy

MINE, ME & US Montessori School currently offers field trips for Montessori Elementary students only.

The Montessori Elementary community will take field trips quite frequently. There are several scheduled field trips that will appear on the MINE, ME & US Montessori School calendar, but there are also "going out trips" that will evolve organically through the children's studies. They are also a couple of field camp weeks scheduled that could include numerous consecutive field trips in one day.

By the start of the school year, MINE, ME & US Montessori School administration will have a fieldtrip waiver form on file for every student enrolled in the Montessori Elementary at MINE, ME & US Montessori School. Unlike walking fieldtrips, fieldtrips requiring transportation by vehicle will be planned well in advance and parents will be notified at least a week in advance. Transportation will be provided through our faculty, parent community, and public transportation. All drivers for school fieldtrips will have to verify through the MINE, ME & US Montessori School administration that they have a current and operable license to drive in the state of Virginia. Drivers or chaperones will carry a first aid kit in each vehicle and a necessary MAT trained faculty member will be present in a vehicle with a child that is perceived to potentially require medical attention. Drivers and chaperones will need to be knowledgeable of our sight and sound supervision policy and will adhere to this policy for each child in their charge through the duration of the field trip.

All field trips are an extension of Montessori Elementary at MINE, ME & US Montessori School and our conduct in the community on these trips reflects our school. It is important that Montessori Elementary at MINE, ME & US Montessori School is represented as a safe, kind, and respectful place for children and faculty alike. Children and adults are asked to adhere to our school rules and policies while on these outings. Montessori Elementary reserves the rights to revoke anyone's privilege of attending these events if the faculty feels that it is in the best interest for the children and community. Thanks for making MINE, ME & US Montessori School such an exceptional learning environment.

Departure

MINE, ME & US Montessori School will not release your child to any adult not listed as authorized in your child's student file to pick up. Written communication with the school via email or a note to your child's teacher and the administration is necessary if someone other than a listed authorized person is to pick up your child. If, in an emergency, a parent calls and says someone who is not listed in the child's file as an authorized person will pick up, then we will make a return call to that parent to confirm these arrangements. If we are unable to confirm the arrangements, we will not release the child. When filling the transportation and emergency forms, put as many emergency numbers as may be needed so that you will be covered in all situations. In the event of an emergency situation, if a parent or emergency contact cannot be made, the school will notify the Department of Social Services or Child Protective Services.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School maintains an open-door policy and encourages parents visit the school and participate any time. When the door is locked, knock for entrance.

Children will always be released to custodial parents. Appropriate legal paperwork must be in the student's file when the custodial parent requests that the school does not release the child to the other parent.

Please note that MINE, ME & US Montessori School has a responsibility and reserves the right to refuse release of a child to a parent, legal guardian, or person authorized to pick up if faculty or administration suspects the adult is impaired due to drug or alcohol use. If this occurs, we will call emergency contacts to pick up your child. Repeated occurrences will result in MINE, ME & US Montessori School contacting authorities for guidance.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School recognizes that children are different in their social and emotional needs. Many children handle these transitions well and some children are overwhelmed by these transitions. Our teachers will work with you to develop a pick-up routine that works for your child and you. In general, MINE, ME & US Montessori School encourages parents to come into the classroom to pick up to create a home-school/parent-teacher connection and allow for a special moment with your child.

Please remember to respect the school and classroom environment. Children can get emotional when parents arrive to pick up or simply visit their school. Whether your child is elated, hyper, angry, defiant, or indifferent that you are there, please be mindful that school and classroom rules that encourage appropriate behavior still apply for your child. If your child needs reminding, gently remind him/her of the school and classroom expectations of behavior. Faculty and administration will also gently remind your child that, even though mom and dad are at school, they must still behave appropriately.

General school and classroom expectations of behavior that you can model are:

- Using a quiet voice
- Walking easily and quietly in the classroom
- Refrain from entering a room with sleeping children
- Respect a child's concentration on an activity and do not distract him/her at work
- Be mindful that your child's teacher is responsible for all the children and does not have time to participate in mini-conferences during pick up times. There is time for pleasantries and a quick report on any pertinent information about your child's day, but bigger issues must be dealt with during conferences.

Young children find safety in routines and consistency. Often classroom visitors have an anxious effect on other children waiting for their parents at day's end. Please be mindful of this and be receptive to gentle cues from your child's teacher to leave the classroom, move to another area or other suggestions of hers to make sure the other children feel safe and secure.

SCHOOL POLICY: Cell phone use is prohibited during pick up.

Late Pick Up Procedure and Policy

Children must be picked up promptly by the end of their school day.

Full Time is late at 5:31 pm. When the door is locked knock for entrance.

If you or an authorized person has not arrived to pick up your child by the end of your child's school day, we will call parents. After 15 minutes, we will begin calling your emergency contacts and family members to pick up your child. If you or an authorized person has not contacted MINE, ME & US Montessori School or picked up your child by 45 minutes after your child's school day, MINE, ME & US Montessori School will contact the authorities for guidance.

The fee begins accruing at the end of your child's school day. At the end of your child's day, there will be a \$10.00 fee for each five-minute interval up to 15 minutes past the end of the day. After 15 minutes, the fee continues accruing at \$15.00 for each 5-minute interval up to 30 minutes past the end of the day. After 30 minutes, the fee continues accruing at \$20.00 for each 5-minute interval. The late fee is calculated using the time on the clock on the school cell phone.

If you know in advance that you are going to be late, please call the school. The late fee still applies, but the faculty can reassure the child and avoid calling to locate the parent. Faculty and administration will make accommodations for children waiting for their parents, but parents need to be aware that in many cases, faculty and administration are unable to follow their normal schedule and meet their personal commitments until all children are picked up.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School has a strict policy about picking up your child late because it affects your child negatively, it disallows faculty and administration to care for other children effectively, and it encroaches upon faculty's personal time.

Failure to pay the late fee by the end of the week results in a \$50.00 fine. Repeated late pick up results in evaluation of your child's enrollment.

***Please remember that when you pick up your child close to the end of the school day, your child's teachers are at the end of their workday and are ready to go home to their children and families. Please respect their time and make sure that you and your child are ready to leave school no later than 5:30pm.**

Chapter

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Parent Involvement

MINE, ME & US Montessori School was envisioned and created as a quality Montessori School for infants, toddlers, and young children. Part of its core mission is to be a family and community resource. The administration and faculty at MINE, ME & US Montessori School strongly believe that parent involvement, engagement, education, and support should be a part of every early childhood education program.

While custodial parents **always** have the right to be admitted to the center as required by §63.2-1509 of the Code of Virginia, at MINE, ME & US Montessori School we welcome parents to be more intimately involved with our school. As such, we extend an open invitation to parents, family members, and important adults in children's lives to spend time with us. We are also open to and welcome a huge variety of participation from family and community members that promotes children's education and the well-being of children and their families.

Be creative! You may think you don't have skills or knowledge to offer but be assured that is not the case. Send an email or set up a time to chat with the Head of School or faculty about your ideas.

Each classroom has different participation opportunities based on the children's developmental stages. There is a myriad of ways that parents and families can participate.

Here are a few general suggestions.

1. Eat a meal with us.
2. Read a book to your child's class.
3. Help us in with gardening/planting projects.
4. Observe your child's class.
5. Introduce your personal talents, skills, and life experiences to your child's class (a foreign language, playing an instrument, a cultural meal or celebration, etc.)
6. Organize MINE, ME & US Montessori School activities and functions.
7. Create/make classroom materials.

Adjustment to School

MINE, ME & US Montessori School recognizes that a child's first transition to school can be an emotional time for both the child and the families. We take great care to prepare parents for their child's first day of school, so they can relay that confidence to their children.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School has implemented a process to ease the child's and family's transition to school. This information is also on the MINE, ME & US Montessori School website.

Home Visit

A few days before your child's scheduled first day of school, the Head of School and one of her teachers will come to your home for a home visit. The purpose of the home visit is to form a link between home and school for your child. It is in no way an assessment of your child, your parenting style, or your family values. Your child's teacher will ask you about your child's routine, history, personality, preferences, how you comfort your child, etc. This is for faculty to get an idea of how to best teach and care for your child at school. Home visits also give your child the opportunity to meet her teacher while in her *own* home. Your child's teacher might spend a bit of time chatting with your child and looking at toys with her. The goal is for your child to feel comfortable with her new teacher. You can expect that a home visit will take 60-90 minutes.

Prepare *yourself* for your child's first day

If this is your child's first time at school or in care outside your home, you will understandably be nervous about the separation. MINE, ME & US Montessori School has provided you, the parent, with this schedule of events leading up to your child's first day so that you can relax into the process of the transition to the big first day!

It is most important for a smooth transition and positive school experience that your child feels that MINE, ME & US Montessori School is a safe and fun place to spend his days. Your child needs to know that you feel good about him going to school. When you talk about

going to MINE, ME & US Montessori School and about the first day, make sure you are always positive and excited. The excitement that you express about his school experiences will become his own, and this will be reflected in happiness and love of learning.

Prepare your child for the first day

At MINE, ME & US Montessori School, we believe that part of quality childcare and education for the youngest children includes support for parents. At MINE, ME & US Montessori School we supply all cloth diapers, wipes, diaper ointments, sunscreen, bug spray, meals, blankets, and much more. All you need to bring for your child on the first day is two complete changes of clothes. MINE, ME & US Montessori School takes care of everything else, so you can spend your evenings enjoying your family instead of remembering items for your child for school the next day.

Transition Schedule

We suggest a transition schedule that increases over a two-week span. *

Week 1

Day 1 9:30 am-12:00 pm
 Day 2 9:30 am-12:00 pm
 Day 3 9:30 am-1:00 pm
 Day 4 9:30 am-2:00 pm
 Day 5 9:30 am-3:30 pm

Week 2

Day 1 9:30 am-3:30 pm
 Day 2 9:30 am-3:30 pm
 Day 3 9:30 am-4:00 pm
 Day 4 Regular Schedule
 Day 5 Regular Schedule

MINE, ME & US Montessori School recognizes that individual children and families have specific and varied emotional needs. Your child's teacher will communicate closely with you to assess your child's transition process and suggest any adjustments. Please be mindful that your child's teacher is certified, trained, and experienced to evaluate the transition process and make necessary suggestions.

*Not all children need a gradual transition into school. For example, children who have been in care outside the home before coming to MINE, ME & US Montessori School will likely not need a gradual transition because they are used to a daycare or school routine and environment. Transition schedules will be discussed and agreed upon on an individual basis with families, teachers, and Head of Administration.

Expectations of first day

Drop off: On your child's first day of school, remember to reintroduce your child to one of his/her teachers. Brevity at this point is essential for a smoother transition. Remind your child when you will be there to pick up (use an event of the day rather than a time on a clock, such as after lunch or after nap,) say your goodbyes and leave. Your natural tendency might be to stay and try to get your child to settle calmly into the environment. This, however, delays your child from participating in the group and, in fact, makes it difficult for the class to function normally. It is not uncommon that a child cry on the first day. MINE, ME & US Montessori School faculty and staff are trained and prepared for this, and we will comfort your child and direct him/her to an activity that will help him/her feel part of the group. It is important that you do not "sneak away" without his/her knowledge, even though you might like to avoid the pain you feel if he/she cries. Be assured that rarely does a child continue crying after a short period.

Parent Communication: At MINE, ME & US Montessori School we know that your child's first day at school is stressful for you. We will give you a call mid-morning to let you know how your child is doing. We will also email you a couple of pictures to put your mind at ease. Please feel free to call or email as many times as you need during the first few days to check on your child

Pick up: The first day of a new school is emotional for you and your child-whether everything went smoothly or there were occasional tears. You can expect a range of behaviors from your child when you pick her up from school during the first couple of weeks. Anything from extreme happiness, sadness, relief, anger, to completely ignoring you. Rest assured that all of these reactions are normal, and they usually have nothing to do with the kind of day they had at school and more to do with his/her individual emotional personality.

Everyone made it through the first day!! Yay!!

The first day can be a difficult transition for everyone. The emotional transition for you and your child will be longer than one day. Often there is a "Day 3 Phenomenon" in which the novelty of school wears off and children realize they have to go to school even when they don't want to. Remember that this too is part of the transition process and won't last long. Before you know it, happily going to school each day will become routine for everyone.

For children between the ages of 6 months 18 months, who have not been in care outside the home, the transition tends to be longer and more emotional. This is because children go through periods of separation anxiety in various forms during these ages. Remember that your

child's new teachers are experienced and equipped to help your child through the difficult and important transition into his/her first school experience.

Montessori Elementary Enrollment Process

Montessori Elementary has implemented a process to ease the child's and family's transition to school.

School Visits

The first school visit will be scheduled as soon as an application and application fees have been submitted. The child will visit the lead teacher(s) in the classroom while no other children are present. Parents may spend part of the visit with the child and guide(s) but we recommend that you step away for a portion of the visit. We understand that you may want to support your child through this new experience, but it has been our experience that many children will not open up to the guide with parents present. This is a crucial part of our transition process, and we greatly appreciate your cooperation. This is an excellent time for guardians to meet with head of school and/or review paperwork. During this first visit, the child will be introduced to the classroom and the general layout of the environment.

After you have decided to turn in the enrollment contract and fees, we will schedule the second school visit. This visit will take place during a school day while other children are present. We will invite you to drop your child off at the beginning of the 3-hour work cycle and stay until the end of outdoor exploration (9:30 am - 2:00 pm.) This is an opportunity for the child to meet new friends and experience the environment with all its moving parts. This part of the day allows the child to feel a couple of transitions, experience the work cycle, survey the outdoor environment, and relish the meals. The intention of the visit is for the child to get a sample of the school day. After this stay, we will schedule the home visit.

If your child is transitioning from the MINE, ME & US Montessori School Children's House, we will work with you to build both of these visits into his school day.

Home Visit

A few days before your child's scheduled first day of school and after both school visits, the lead teachers will come to your home for a home visit. The purpose of the home visit is to form a link between home and school for your child. It is in no way an assessment of your child, your parenting style, or your family values. Your child's teacher will ask you about your child's routine, history, personality, preferences, how you comfort your child, etc. This is for faculty to get an idea of how to best teach and care for your child at school. Home visits also give your child the opportunity to meet her teacher while in her own home. Your child's teacher might spend a bit of time chatting with your child and looking at toys, collections, books, and other favorite items with her. The goal is for your child to feel comfortable with her new teacher. You can expect that a home visit will take 60-90 minutes.

Prepare yourself for your child's first day

You've decided that Montessori Elementary is a great fit for your family and your child! Congratulations and welcome! It is most important for a smooth transition and positive school experience that your child feels that Montessori Elementary is a safe and fun place to spend his days. Your child needs to know that you feel good about him going to the school. When you talk about going to Montessori Elementary and about the first day, make sure you are always positive and excited. The excitement that you express about his school experiences will become his own, and this will be reflected in happiness and love of learning.

Prepare your child for the first day

At Montessori Elementary, we believe that part of quality education for the children includes support for parents. At Montessori Elementary, we supply all materials, papers, pencils, resources, sunscreen, bug spray, meals, provisions, and much more. All you need to bring for your child on the first day is a change of clothes, a pair of slippers and the appropriate outdoor layers and gear for the season. MINE, ME & US Montessori School takes care of everything else, so you can spend your evenings enjoying your family instead of remembering items for your child for school the next day.

Transition Schedule

1. Application Process
2. First School Visit
3. Enrollment Packet
4. Second School Visit
5. Home Visit
6. First Day of School

Expectations of first day

Drop off: Each new child to Montessori Elementary should be dropped off on his/her first day, even if he/she is transitioning from MINE, ME & US Montessori School. We will work with you and your family on transitioning to the child walking to the classroom on his/her own.

On your child's first day of school, remember to introduce your child to one of his/her teachers. Brevity at this point is essential for a smoother transition. Remind your child when you will be there to pick up (use an event of the day rather than a time on a clock, such as

after lunch or after nap,) say your goodbyes and leave. Your natural tendency might be to stay and try to get your child to settle calmly into the environment. This, however, delays your child from participating in the group and, in fact, makes it difficult for the class to function normally. It is not uncommon that a child cry on the first day. Montessori Elementary faculty and staff are trained and prepared for this, and we will comfort your child and direct him/her to an activity that will help him/her feel part of the group. It is important that you do not “sneak away” without his/her knowledge, even though you might like to avoid the pain you feel if he/she cries. Be assured that rarely does a child continue crying after a short period. Please arrive during the drop off and settling in time (8:30-9:00) on this day, especially to ensure

that the teachers are available to assist and that the child does not feel the additional stress of arriving late.

Parent Communication: At MINE, ME & US Montessori School we know that your child’s first day at school is stressful for you. We will give you a call mid-morning to let you know how your child is doing. We will also email you a couple of pictures to put your mind at ease. Please feel free to call or email as many times as you need during the first few days to check on your child

Pick up: The first day of a new school can be emotional for you and your child-whether everything went smoothly or there were occasional tears. You can expect a range of behaviors from your child when you pick her up from school during the first couple of weeks. Anything from extreme happiness, sadness, relief, anger, to completely ignoring you. Rest assured that all of these reactions are normal, and they usually have nothing to do with the kind of day they had at school and more to do with his/her individual emotional personality. Everyone made it through the first day!! Yay!! The first day can be a difficult transition for everyone. The emotional transition for you and your child will be longer than one day. Often there is a “Day 3 Phenomenon” in which the novelty of school wears off and children realize they have to go to school even when they don’t want to. Remember that this too is part of the transition process and won’t last long.

Before you know it, happily going to school each day will become routine for everyone. This routine will appear smoother for children that have been in a preschool or kindergarten environment and will be especially smooth for children that are transitioning from Montessori Infant Nido Environment. It is our hopes to prepare all parents anywhere on the spectrum for this new phase of development.

Classroom Observations

MINE, ME & US Montessori School welcomes and encourages parents and family members to observe each of our Montessori classrooms. In order to maintain the peace in the classroom, parents must make arrangements with the Head of School or your child’s teacher about when to come for an observation. We have observation guidelines in the school office and on the MINE, ME & US Montessori School website. Please stop by the office or print a copy so you can get the most out of your observation. No observations are scheduled during the month of September or January.

Montessori Elementary Classroom Observations

Montessori Elementary welcomes and encourages parents and family members to observe our Montessori classrooms. In order to maintain the peace in the classroom, parents must make arrangements with the Head of School or your child’s teacher about when to come for an observation. We have observation guidelines in the school office and on the MINE, ME & US Montessori School website. Please stop by the office or print a copy so you can get the most out of your observation. No observations are scheduled during the months of August, September, or January. We may also have a hard time scheduling observations during certain weeks due to our specialty and camp weeks, as well as “going out” trips. Please be patient with us in scheduling observations, we want to schedule them during a time that is optimal for you as well as the classroom community.

Please note that MINE, ME & US Montessori School & Montessori Elementary also invite community members, education students, Montessori colleagues, and other professionals to observe our classrooms as well.

Conferences and Progress Reports

MINE, ME & US Montessori School prides itself on offering full day and full year Montessori *education*. As such, MINE, ME & US Montessori School holds Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled three times per year. Parents will receive a developmental progress report shortly before the scheduled conference. Conferences are held during school hours and the school remains open for these conferences. In addition to scheduled conferences, MINE, ME & US Montessori School faculty and administration:

- Are available for conferences upon request from parents at any time during the year.
- Will request a conference with parents if the need arises.

Mandatory attendance by both parents is required for all conferences.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School publishes a regular newsletter to share information with parents and interested persons. Once enrolled, parents' emails are automatically signed up for the MINE, ME & US Montessori School newsletter. You can also sign up via the MINE, ME & US Montessori School website.

*Please note that MINE, ME & US Montessori School is a young school and is in the process of establishing the newsletter. Thank you for your patience.

Parent Forums

As a new school, we are always looking for ways to make the MINE, ME & US Montessori School experience the best possible for all members of the MINE, ME & US Montessori School community, children, parents, and teachers. We hold a Parent Forum at the end of each semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer) for the entire MINE, ME & US Montessori School community to get together to identify successes as well as room for improvement from the previous semester. See the MINE, ME & US Montessori School Calendar for Parent Forum dates.

Parent Classes

MINE, ME & US Montessori School and the Montessori Philosophy and Method include parent education as an important part of early childhood education. As such, the school offers many classes for parents. If you are interested in a particular class, contact Head of School for more information.

*Please note that MINE, ME & US Montessori School is a young school and is in the process of establishing the Parent Classes. Thank you for your patience.

Montessori Classes

Montessori Pregnancy Classes

This class is for expecting mothers to learn about pregnancy needs, birth options, and the first few months of infant development. The class includes presentation of information, making a Montessori material for your new child, and yummy organic refreshments from the MINE, ME & US Montessori School kitchen.

Montessori Parenting Classes

MINE, ME & US Montessori School teachers and staff offer parenting classes. The classes are opportunities to learn some new/alternative parenting strategies, get to know other parents going through the similar issues, and get some perspectives on children of various ages from MINE, ME & US Montessori School teachers.

*Please note that MINE, ME & US Montessori School is a young school and is in the process of establishing the Parent Classes. Thank you for your patience.

Montessori, Parenting, and Nutrition

Led by our Food Program Director, offers several classes for parents around food and nutrition. The material presented in the course is evidence-based and will include strategies for incorporating practices into daily life. Classes are subject to change based on enrollment and parent interest. Courses include:

***Beginning Solids**

The introduction of solid foods is a crucial time for ensuring proper nutrition and establishing habits that will (believe it or not!) last a lifetime. It is also a time when parents tend to feel a great deal of pressure, which can have unintended negative consequences on their feeding practices (how they feed their children) and ultimately their child's food preferences. This class will help to dispel many myths surrounding the introduction of solid foods, provide tips for beginning solids and strategies for dealing with the challenges that come from feeding a baby. The class will be offered once/semester or as needed based on the developmental needs of the infants enrolled. Individual consultations can be scheduled as needed. Forthcoming.

Montessori, "I Can Help": Cooking Together

There are numerous reasons children should be included in meal preparation and planning: it improves self-esteem and self-efficacy, is associated with better dietary habits, teaches kids important (life-long) skills, and provides an opportunity to spend quality time together. And children of all ages can be involved to one degree or another in food preparation and meal planning. This hands-on class will briefly describe the many benefits to engaging children in the processes of meal planning and preparation and provide strategies for involving children of all ages before going into the kitchen for a chance to prepare a healthy and delicious recipe. Children (and parents) of all ages are welcome! This class will be offered numerous times during the year. Forthcoming.

*Please note that MINE, ME & US Montessori School is a young school and is in the process of establishing the Parent Classes. Thank you for your patience.

Parent Volunteers and Substitutes

See Parent Participation for information on parent volunteering and substituting.

School Website www.mmu.ms

The MINE, ME & US Montessori School website is a terrific resource for MINE, ME & US Montessori School families and others interested in Montessori, young children, early childhood education, early childhood development, and local community support. There is a wealth of information about all these topics. MINE, ME & US Montessori School invites you to utilize the website as a resource. The school uses pictures from the classrooms and activities during the day to enrich the website.

Social Media

Social media and networking have evolved into a primary source of news and other information for parents and has become a preferred medium for communication.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School has a larger mission to change the culture of early childhood education to include a revaluing of the first five years of life for children, parents, educators, caregivers, and professionals. The social media policy, guided by the MINE, ME & US Montessori School mission includes the use of social media outlets to share information about Montessori Philosophy and Method, child development research, parenting articles, and information about MINE, ME & US Montessori School (including news, upcoming events, daily activities, classroom work, etc.) Montessori Infant Nido Environment does not use children's names or identifying information in any public material (the MINE, ME & US Montessori School website, social media outlets, advertising materials, education materials and presentations, faculty development purposes, etc.) MINE, ME & US Montessori School will delete others' posts or comments and remove tagged photos that identify MINE, ME & US Montessori School students, whenever we are made aware of such occurrences.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School uses social media outlets to share information about Montessori Philosophy and Method, child development research, parenting articles, etc. We post information about MINE, ME & US Montessori School; including news, upcoming events, daily activities, classroom work, etc. These posts often include photographs of children working and playing at MINE, ME & US Montessori School. Parents and other visitors are welcome to post questions and comments to MINE, ME & US Montessori School social media outlets. Please familiarize yourself with MINE, ME & US Montessori School social media guidelines before posting.

We take student and family privacy very seriously. We ask that student names not be used in any post. MINE, ME & US Montessori School faculty and administration understand that they will be identified publicly through the MINE, ME & US Montessori School website and social media outlets. MINE, ME & US Montessori School administration will take down posts or comments that identify students. We understand that when parents share a MINE, ME & US Montessori School FB status on their personal page, that family and friends will identify the students. MINE, ME & US Montessori School is not responsible for student identification through shared posts.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School will make every attempt to respond to posts as quickly as possible, please allow a few days for a response to direct questions. Generally speaking, however, responses will be posted within the school day.

Facebook: (Montessori Infant Nido Environment and MINE, ME & US Montessori School)

Posts of original Montessori Education informational videos and videos of classroom work and MINE/MMUMS activities.

Twitter: (@minemontessori)

Posts of original Montessori Education informational videos and videos of classroom work and MINE MMUMS activities.

YouTube: (Montessori Infant Nido Environment)

Posts of original Montessori Education informational videos and videos of classroom work and MINE/MMUMS activities.

Pinterest: (Montessori Infant Nido Environment)

Used as an online gallery of Montessori works and quotes on Montessori Philosophy and Method

Google +: (Montessori Infant Nido Environment)

Used similar to Facebook

Instagram: (Montessori Infant Nido Environment)

Similar to Pinterest, but in real time and experiences throughout the school day.

Media Release Form

A media release form is included as part of your enrollment packet. Please sign and return to MINE, ME & US Montessori School.

Chapter

5

MEDICAL INFORMATION

First Aid and CPR

MINE, ME & US Montessori School requires faculty and administration to be CPR and First Aid certified. Faculty and administration are required to attend a Health Screening Class, so that they are familiar with the symptoms of common childhood illnesses. Faculty and administration are also encouraged to attend a Medication Administration Class, within two year of employment, to become certified to administer medications to students with parent consent.

Fully stocked First Aid kits are kept in each classroom, in the office, on the playground, and taken on all MINE, ME & US Montessori School outings. If a child is injured, the abrasion will be cleaned with soap and water and an accident report filled out. The original accident report will be available for parents when they pick up their child and a copy is kept at MINE, ME & US Montessori School in the student's file. It is school policy that if a child receives an injury to the head or mouth, the parent will be notified immediately.

Illness Policy

Germs are a reality in any group of young children. Please do not bring your child to school when he/she is contagious. If your child exhibits symptoms of illness during a 24-48-hour period prior to his/her scheduled attendance at school, then keep your child at home. In the event that a child shows symptoms of a fever or other illness, while at school, the child will be isolated, and the parents will be called immediately. The child must be picked up at this time. It is imperative that emergency forms be kept up to date, so parents can be reached immediately. Your child must be fever free or show no signs of a fever without the use of fever reducing medications for 48 hours before returning to school. Virginia Department of Social Service regulations require that you notify MINE, ME & US Montessori School within 24 hours of any communicable disease within your immediate household. Life threatening disease within your immediate household must be reported immediately.

If your child receives vaccination shots prior to coming into school, we ask that you keep them home the rest of the day to watch for any sort of reactions he or she may develop. They are able to come in the following day if no reactions have occurred. We suggest you schedule the vaccination appointments for later in the day, so you don't miss any work.

“Mommy Days” and “Daddy Days”

If your child is having an “off” day, in which he is weepy, cuddly, clingy, tired, etc., yet is not running a fever or vomiting, or exhibiting any other symptoms of illness, we will call you for a “Mommy Day” or “Daddy Day.” Even as adults, there are days in which we need to stay in bed and cuddle. Young children definitely have these days. As experienced teachers, we have observed that sometimes children are not sick, yet need to be at home with mom and dad for snuggles and one-on-one time. If we see that your child is not benefitting from being at school because they are in need of a “Mommy or Daddy Day”, we will call you and suggest that your child needs a special day with you.

Exclusion Guidelines

Appearance and Behavior

Child looks or acts differently; unusually tired, pale, lacking appetite, confused, irritable, difficult to awaken, or just not “themselves.”

Chicken Pox

Until all blisters have dried into scabs, about 6 days after rash onset.

Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)

Bacterial - until 24 hours after treatment begins.

Viral - until a letter from a physician is provided to verify that the child does not have bacterial conjunctivitis. In both situations, the child should be well enough to participate in normal daily activities.

Diarrhea

An increased number of abnormally loose stools in the previous 24 hours. Observe the child for other symptoms such as fever, abdominal pain, or vomiting.

Eye/Nose Drainage

Thick mucus or pus draining from the eyes or nose.

Fever

Oral temperature 100 degrees F or higher, especially if accompanied by other symptoms such as vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea, headache and stiff neck, or undiagnosed rash. The child should have no fever without the use of fever-reducing medication for 48 hours before returning to school. *Note: MINE, ME & US Montessori School uses an auxiliary temperature (under the arm) plus one degree to determine children's temperatures.

Head Lice

Until first treatment is completed, no live lice are seen, and children should be nit (lice eggs) free.

Influenza/H1N1

Until child is without fever or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications for 48 hours.

Respiratory Illness

Until child is without fever for 24 hours and is well enough to participate in normal daily schedule.

Respiratory Symptoms

Difficult or rapid breathing or severe coughing; child makes high-pitched croup-y or whooping sounds after he/she coughs; child is unable to lie comfortably due to continuous cough.

Skin Problems

Rash-skin rashes, undiagnosed or contagious. Hand, Foot, and Mouth disease included.

Sore Throat

Sore throat, especially when fever or swollen glands in the neck are present.

Streptococcal Sore Throat/Scarlet Fever (with rash)

Until at least a full 48 hours after treatment begins and the child is without fever for 48 hours.

Vomiting

One or more episodes of vomiting within the previous 24 hours.

Medicine

Your child must be kept at home for the first 24 hours while on an antibiotic. We discourage the administration of medication during school hours and we request that whenever possible, medication doses be scheduled during non-school hours. However, we realize that this may not always be possible or practical. In the event that your child needs to have a medication administered at school, we ask that you please adhere to the following guidelines:

A written authorization must be given to the school and signed by the parent, authorizing MINE, ME & US Montessori School faculty and administration to administer any medication. A school form containing the following essential information must be obtained from the office and completed by the parent:

The name of the drug
Dosage to be given
Time of administration
Proper storage (i.e., refrigeration)
Any special instructions or concerns

1. Any changes to the above require a new form filled out. The child must have had the first dose of the medication at home.
2. The medication must be in the original container with the pharmacy label affixed including the child's name, the name of the medication, the dosage amount, and the time to be administered.
3. In addition, please speak directly to your child's teacher, Head of School, or school administration about the medication in general.
4. Parents are responsible for bringing their child's medicine to the office. Children may not have possession of any medication (EpiPens, Inhalers, cough drops, fever reducers, lip balm, diaper ointment, sunscreen or insect repellent) in the classroom or in their cubbies or bags. All medications will be kept under lock and key and administered at the appropriate time by trained faculty or administration.
5. Please send the proper device to administer the medication.
6. It is imperative that parents monitor the expiration dates on EpiPens, inhalers, and nebulizer medications.

If any of the above guidelines are not complete or written directions are unclear concerning the administration of the medication, faculty and administration will not administer the medicine. We will attempt to contact you in this event.

Please be advised that the above state guidelines are intended for medications that are given on a “short term” basis (i.e. Less than 10 days). All other long-term medications require that physician fill out the information concerning administration of the medicine. Parents will need to fill out a form, to be kept in the student’s file, authorizing MINE, ME & US Montessori School faculty and administration to administer long-term medications.

Sunscreen, Diaper Ointment & Insect Repellent

MINE, ME & US Montessori School supplies sunscreen, insect repellent, and diaper ointment. The brand of this product may change, but it will always be all-natural or organic, hypoallergenic, DEET-free, and of SPF 30 or higher. Parents must fill out an authorization form for administering these items. Each item will be clearly marked for individual children and kept out of reach of the children. Sunscreen and insect repellent will be applied twice daily: once in the morning and once again in the afternoon. Diaper cream will be used on an as-needed basis, but all applications will be clearly noted. Any issues (including potential sensitivities or allergies) with application will be noted and communicated to parents. The authorization form is in your child’s enrollment packet.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School provides Burt’s Bees Multi-Purpose Ointment. The ointment must always remain in the proper container, be discarded when beyond the expiration date, and be kept inaccessible to children. A record shall be kept noting the child’s name, date of use, frequency of application and any adverse reactions. In the event provides specific ointment for their child, an additional form must be completed for the ointment and it must remain in the original container labeled with the child’s name. Burt’s Bees Multi-Purpose Ointment is provided for only children wearing diapers.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School provides Badger Broad Spectrum SPF 34 Anti Bug Sunscreen that must also be in the original container. Sunscreen beyond its expiration date shall be discarded. Sunscreen shall be kept out of reach of children and must be administered by an adult. If a parent wishes to provide sunscreen for their child, they must complete additional paperwork and the sunscreen must be in the original container labeled with the child’s name.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School also provides Badger Anti-Bug Shake and Spray insect repellent that must also be in the original container. Insect repellent beyond its expiration date shall be discarded. Insect repellent shall be kept out of reach of children and must be administered by an adult. If a parent wishes to provide repellent for their child, they must complete additional paperwork and the insect repellent must be in the original container labeled with the child’s name.

The permission forms for use of the above products is on each child’s enrollment contract and kept in the student files in the Head of School’s office.

Allergies

All allergies must be reported to MINE, ME & US Montessori School administration and your child’s teacher; an allergy reporting form is available in your registration packet. Please inform us as soon as new allergies are discovered. MINE, ME & US Montessori School, through its food program, Nursery Garden to Nursery School: Revolutionizing Infant-Toddler Culinary Curriculum, provides nutritious, organic, vegetarian meals and snacks. We are mindful of food allergies and this effort is evident in our menu. We will always accommodate food allergies and lists of these allergies will be prominently displayed in each classroom and the MINE, ME & US Montessori School kitchen. Speak with the Head of School and/or the MINE, ME & US Montessori School Director of Nutrition about the MINE, ME & US Montessori School menus and allergies.

Emergency Procedures

In case of serious injury/illness, the rescue squad will be called, and parents notified. Otherwise, you will be called immediately, and first aid will be administered to your child. If you cannot be reached, the emergency telephone numbers you listed will be called. If those people are not available, your child’s physician will be contacted. For this reason, we require that you sign an emergency form before your child enters school. It is essential that emergency names, telephone numbers, email addresses, and work information be current and accurate.

Outdoor Play & Physical Activity

Outdoor time is an essential component of the Montessori Philosophy and Method and the MINE, ME & US Montessori School curriculum, even for infants. Children will be outside for a large portion of **each day**. Even in inclement weather, the children will go outside-even if for only 15 minutes at a time. Be sure that your child is dressed properly for the weather. We ask that your child has appropriate clothing for ALL types of weather-raincoats and boots, snow pants, snow boots, hats, coats, mittens, etc. A child that is not well enough to play outside should not come to school. Teachers always participate in outdoor time: either in the MINE, ME & US Montessori School outdoor environment or through walking field trips with the children.

Physical activity happens throughout the day, but at a minimum, children are provided with 15 minutes of opportunity for light, moderate, and vigorous physical activity for every hour they are in care. The MINE, ME & US Montessori School outdoor environment is designed to maximize physical activity and free play by offering a variety of portable play equipment, elements including a grassy area, sand box, and

varying surfaces and terrain, and some shade. Children of all ages and abilities will be provided opportunities for physical activity in this space.

*The outdoor environment is essential to Montessori Education and Curriculum and is considered as an extension of the indoor classroom environment. MINE, ME & US Montessori School is an Organic Montessori School. This new concept of education for the very young mandates an organic outdoor environment complete with an edible landscape of vegetables, fruits, herbs and spices. Typical playground equipment is replaced with a natural landscape including a large grassy area and a large sand area woven in between paths and low level natural inclines. The outdoor environment will also have a small low wooden platform used as a stage and several child-sized benches for the children to sit on. Typical sand toys are replaced with kitchen materials such as cupcake tins, mixing bowls, colanders, etc. made from natural materials. The outdoor environment includes brooms, hand brooms, and dustpans.

*The outdoor environment is designed to protect children from hazards. MINE, ME & US Montessori School does not use any piece of typical playground equipment that would create a falling zone, including swings, slides, climbing structures, etc. The sand area of the MINE, ME & US Montessori School outdoor environment does not have a bottom that prevents drainage.

*Wooden “teacher chairs” are strategically placed in the outdoor environment to ensure sight and sound supervision of all children in the outdoor environment. Teachers are expected to continually scan the environment and children’s activities and circulate among the children to ensure all children’s safety and step in to ensure safety in all situations.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School policy requires that a first aid kit including first aid supplies and children’s emergency contact information in case of emergencies. There is always a phone available to teachers in the outdoor environment.

*The surface of the outdoor environment is grass and sand. There are no pieces of playground equipment that create a falling zone. The grass and sand surfaces shall be maintained for safety by keeping the areas clean and sanitized to prevent the spreading of germs. Grass will be kept neatly cut and sand will be organically sanitized periodically, and the area organically sprayed to prevent animals from coming into the children’s play area.

*Trees, a tent, and/or a structure will provide the required shady area for the months of June, July, and August. *

Rules for the outdoor environment are:

- Throwing of any objects is prohibited.
- Children must be accompanied into and out of the outdoor environment by an adult. Children must hold a safety partner’s hand until they reach the path.
- Children may not be dismissed to his/her parent until the teacher and parent identify that the parent is “ready for the child”.
- Children may play only on the path and the grass close to the woods/hill. They may not be on the grass close to the curb.
- Play and activities must be friendly to all children, teachers, parents, plants, and animals in the outdoor environment.
- If children cannot be friendly and safe, they must sit with a teacher until they are ready to be friendly.
- The outdoor environment must be left clean and tidy each time a group of children leave the outdoor environment.
- Children may not play with sticks that are taller than their bodies and only in the woods.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Under Virginia Law, all MINE, ME & US Montessori School employees are required to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to the Virginia Department of Social Services. As children’s advocates, we take this responsibility seriously, and any suspected abuse shall be reported to the authorities immediately.

Emergency Health Care Plan

If your child suffers from any chronic health problems that require special procedure or medications, there must be an Emergency Health Care Plan on file with MINE, ME & US Montessori School. The form is available in the school office and must be updated on a regular basis. It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that MINE, ME & US Montessori School is informed of potential emergency situations.

Chapter 6

MINE EMERGENCY POLICIES, PLANS, AND PROCEDURES

MINE, ME & US Montessori School considers the safety of all the children as our highest priority. MINE, ME & US Montessori School safety policy reflects our emphasis on child safety.

Teacher/Student Ratios

MINE, ME & US Montessori School adheres to Virginia Department of Social Services licensing standards for teacher/child ratios.

Nido Environment (6 weeks – mobile) (1:2.5 teacher student ratio)

Nido Community (mobile –18 months) (1:3 teacher student ratio)

Toddler Community (18 – 36 months) (1:5 teacher student ratio)

Children’s House (3 – 6 years) (1:10 teacher student ratio)

Montessori Elementary (6-9 years) (1:18 teacher student ratio)

Sight and Sound Supervision

Sight and sound supervision for all children in all parts of the school is maintained at all times. The Head of School is often available to step in for transition periods and other needed times. Additionally, the Head of Schools spends time in each classroom every day. When faculty and administration are supervising children, they shall always ensure their care, protection, and guidance.

On the MINE, ME & US Montessori School premises at all times is an adult in charge of the administration of the center. This person will be the Head of School or a seasoned Lead Teacher from one of the classrooms.

Outdoor Environment Safety Policy

MINE, ME & US Montessori School policy mandates that children may not enter or exit the building unattended by an adult. Children will always be supervised by an adult while in the outdoor environment, under the policy of sight and sound supervision. The children may work in the outdoor environment several times daily. There will be many daily opportunities for children to work in the schoolyard gardens and other features of the outdoor environment. The children are also invited to bring work out into the outdoor environment, so long as there is adequate supervision. Montessori Elementary children will have daily exploration periods in the outdoor environment and will frequently go on unplanned nature walks/ walking field trips.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School currently offers field trips for Montessori Elementary students only.

Medical Safety Policy

MINE, ME & US Montessori School faculty and administration are certified in CPR, First Aid, and Sight and Sound Supervision training. All MINE faculty and administration are familiar with and adhere to MINE, ME & US Montessori School policies concerning injury prevention, medical first aid, emergency procedures, etc. Faculty and administration are also encouraged to attend a Medication Administration Class, within one year of employment, to become certified to administer medications to students with parent consent.

Mandated First Aid kits are kept in each classroom, the school office and in travel packs for walking field trips. First Aid kits include all mandated medical supplies, emergency contact information for all children, and local emergency phone numbers, and when taken outdoors they have supplies for water breaks.

Safety

MINE, ME & US Montessori School has an emergency NOAA Weather radio in the office and several battery-powered flashlights throughout the school for emergency use.

Potential Evacuation Shelter

Corporate Research Center
1715 Pratt Drive, Suite 1000
Blacksburg, Virginia 24060
(540) 961.3600

NEAREST HOSPITAL:

Lewis Gale Hospital Montgomery
3700 S Main Street
Blacksburg, VA 24060
(540) 951-1111

Training and Drills

In accordance with Virginia Department of Social Services, fire drills are conducted monthly. Building evacuation drills to our Safe Haven are conducted at least annually. All students and staff are required to participate in these mandated drills. The MINE, ME & US Montessori School administration will maintain a record of these drills. Faculty and administration will receive annual training on the MINE, ME & US Montessori School Emergency Plan implementation, including their respective assigned emergency response functions and use of supplies in the disaster kits.

The children will practice fire drills at least once per month. Each classroom has the emergency evacuation exits posted. We prepare the children for emergency safety by discussing the procedures in an age-appropriate manner emphasizing expectations of events during emergencies. During each monthly mandated fire drill, the children will exit the building with their teachers through the front door and meet on the curb across from the school. The Assistant teacher is responsible for securing the room; bringing special healthcare supplies (first aid and child medications) for students and is the last person to leave the class. Lead teachers are responsible for bringing the attendance book, taking roll and ensuring that all children are accounted for. Each teacher and the Head of School take the opportunity during fire drills to further explain what is happening and why and are careful to keep these explanations positive and productive. The Head of School is present to assist with and record these drills, including the time of the fire drill, children's attendance, time it takes to safely evacuate all the children, and note any areas for improvement. These records remain in the MINE, ME & US Montessori School VDSS licensing binder.

Emergency Communication with Parents

Each year all parents are asked to complete and sign the emergency contact and release forms that provide emergency and trip releases for the child and designate persons who are authorized to pick up their child. Parents are informed of the center's emergency preparedness plan through its inclusion in this handbook. Receipt of this information is recorded through a signed statement that the handbook has been read in its entirety and all policies and procedures are understood and agreed to. Families will receive a phone call notifying them of the emergency as soon as faculty members can safely do so. Additional information concerning emergencies will be disseminated via Slack.com, email, and Transparent Classroom as warranted.

In all situations, MINE, ME & US Montessori School faculty and administration will listen to the radio for instructions from emergency personnel, MINE, ME & US Montessori School Administration communicates with Blacksburg Police Department and other emergency personnel as needed during emergencies.

Evacuate

Fire Evacuate to meeting place at

FIRE EVACUATE TO MEETING PLACE AT:

Corporate Research Center
1715 Pratt Drive, Suite 1000
Blacksburg, Virginia 24060
(540) 961.3600

- Evacuate building and take roll.
- Head of School or Senior Person in Charge must stay to meet emergency personnel at the front of the school to explain the situation, assure them that all the children are safe and accounted for and await instructions concerning safety of the school, etc.
- Close all doors and windows to rooms when evacuating.
- If smoke deepens, stay low to the ground.
- When approaching a closed door, feel with back of hand before opening; feel temperature along crack between door and floor or frame.
- Shut down HVAC system (air conditioners and fans).
- Approval must be received from fire officials before reentering building.
- Parents will be notified of the emergency and further instructions for picking up children, etc. will be given at that time.

Fire Safety Tips

- Each teacher should know at every moment where each child in his/her group is.
- Safe, orderly leaving is to be observed; there is much danger in running.
- Keep calm. Never try to hide. If the room is smoky, crawl along the floor.
- Feel the doors. If they are warm, do not open them.
- If your clothes catch on fire, **stop, drop** to the ground, **and roll** around to smother the flames.
- Follow the procedures posted in each room.
- Never block doors or exits with furniture, strollers, or toys.

Bomb Scare - Evacuate

- Evacuate building and go to our Safe Haven.
- Turn off cell phones and walkie-talkies.
- Do NOT touch thermostats and light switches.
- Deactivate bells and fire alarm systems.
- Do not use PA system or battery-powered megaphones.
- Approval must be received from Police or Fire officials before reentering building.

Localized Chemical Attack/Spill (Agent released inside a building) – Evacuate the Building

- Evacuate building and take roll.
- If vapors are migrating, take children to our Safe Haven.
- Approval must be received from Emergency Service/Health Department officials before reentering building.

Shelter in Place

Tornado Lock Down – Shelter in Place

- Call all students and employees into buildings.
- Guide the children to shelter in designated safe places in classrooms, away from windows.
- If time is short, guide the children to seek shelter in an interior room with few windows or in a hallway, close all doors to room or hallway, and try to get as many walls between children and the outside as possible.
- Guide the children to use their hands and arms to protect their head and neck.
- If outside and unable to reach shelter indoors, guide children to lie flat, ideally in a ditch or depression.
- Check for hazardous materials spills in damaged buildings.
- Approval must be received from Fire Department officials and the Head of School before entering damaged buildings.

*During thunderstorms, the children are moved to work back of the classrooms and/or in the cubby rooms-away from the glass front window.

Earthquake Lock Down – Shelter in Place

- Do NOT attempt to leave the building you are inside at the time of the quake.
- Take cover with the children where you are, if possible, under a heavy piece of furniture, inside a doorframe, or against an inside wall.
- Keep children away from windows.
- Guide children to use their arms and hands to protect their head and neck.
- If outdoors, move children away from buildings, trees, and power lines.
- Keep children in place until shaking stops.
- Approval must be received from officials of the Fire Department and utilities companies, as well as the Head of School, before entering damaged buildings.

Armed Intruder/Threatening Individual Lock Down, Shelter in Place

- Summon students and employees into lockable classrooms and offices.
- Take care not to lock out students or employees still in hallways or bathrooms.
- Lock doors to classrooms and offices.
- Cover glass on interior classroom or office doors.
- Turn off lights.
- Sit on floor away from windows and remain quiet.
- Deactivate bell and fire alarm systems (if possible).
- Keep other students and employees away from building.

- Lock exterior doors.
- Do not leave a secured classroom, office, or building without approval from the police or Executive Director.
- Do not attempt to confront or subdue intruder.

Chemical Attack (Area-Wide) – Lock Down – Shelter in Place

- Call students and employees into building.
- Guide children to seek shelter in your classroom and take roll.
- Close all windows and doors.
- Shut down HVAC systems (air conditioners and fans).
- Tape plastic sheeting over windows and doors in all rooms used as shelter.
- Place wet towels or clothing in cracks under exterior doors and under doors to rooms used as shelter.

Nuclear Weapon Lock Down – Shelter in Place

- Call students and employees into building.
- Guide children to seek shelter in classrooms, away from windows.
- If time is short, guide children to seek shelter in hallways (close doors leading to hallways).
- Guide children to kneel on ground in the “duck and cover” position.
- If time allows, shut down gas, water, and electrical service to buildings used for shelter.

Conventional Weapons (Non-nuclear explosives)

- Follow procedures for Nuclear Weapons above and lock exterior doors.

Seal It Up

Biological Attack (Area-wide) – Lock Down – Seal It Up

- Call students and employees into our building.
- Guide children to seek shelter in classrooms and take attendance.
- Shut down HVAC systems (air conditioners and fans).
- Close windows and doors.

Radiological Release (“Dirty Bomb,” Nuclear reactor breach) Lock Down – Seal It Up

- Call students and employees into buildings.
- Guide children to seek shelter in safe rooms and take roll.
- Close all windows and lock exterior doors.
- Shut down HVAC systems (air conditioners and fans).
- Tape plastic sheeting over windows and doors, exhaust fans, electrical outlets, and vents in all rooms used as shelter.
- Tape plastic sheeting over exterior doors.
- Place wet towels or clothing in cracks under exterior doors and under doors to rooms used as shelter.

Call the Administration

Localized Biological Attack (Agent found inside a building) – Call the Administration

Place a plastic sheet, towel, or cloth over the item or substance and guide children to leave the room.

- Evacuate all children from the building and take attendance.
- Close and, if possible, lock door to room where item or substance was found.
- Tape plastic sheeting at entry to room where item or substance was found.
- Shut down HVAC system (air conditioners and fans) and lock exterior doors
- Do NOT handle, shake, touch, or in any way disturb the item or substance.
- If item must be handled, wear surgical gloves.
- Record names of all persons who came in direct contact with the item or substance or were in the room at the time of discovery.
- All persons who came in direct contact with the item or substance should wash hands with soap and water.
- Approval must be received from Emergency Service/Health Department officials before reentering building.

Dismissal of Children Policy

ON WALK TO SAFE HAVEN: Once we are en route to our Safe Haven, no child will be released until we have reached our destination. A parent’s responsibility, should s/he arrive during our safe movement to our site, is to assist in whatever may be needed. We will release children only when we have received advisement from the Montgomery County and Town of Blacksburg Emergency Services.

SHELTERING IN PLACE: Should we need to 'shelter in place' or 'lock down,' no parents will be allowed in or out of the building until we receive advisement from the Montgomery County and Town of Blacksburg Emergency Services (listen to the radio).

PARENT NOTIFICATION: If possible, parents will be notified by e-mail and we will leave a message on the answering machine in the school office. Teachers will use their classroom lists to make calls by cellular phone should there not be enough time to notify parents by e-mail or change the message on the answering machine. If cellular phones are inoperable, the children will remain with their teachers at the Safe Haven until a parent or approved adult arrives to retrieve them.

NOTE: Whether we are in our Safe Haven or in our building, we will ONLY release children to those whose names are on the approved pick-up lists provided by the parents.

EMERGENCY CONDITIONS: CLASSIFICATIONS
From the Department of Homeland Security
<http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?theme=29&content=320>

LEVEL 1: Low Condition (Green)

This condition is declared when there is a low risk of terrorist attacks.

LEVEL 2: Guarded Condition (Blue)

This condition is declared when there is a general risk of terrorist attacks. In addition to the protective measures taken in the previous threat condition, Federal departments and agencies consider the following general measures in addition to agency-specific protective measures: checking communications with designated emergency response or command locations; reviewing and updating emergency response procedures; and providing the public with any information that would strengthen its ability to act appropriately.

LEVEL 3: Elevated Condition (Yellow)

An elevated condition is declared when there is a significant risk of terrorist attacks. This includes any event outside our area OR within our area that may affect commerce, transportation, and communication AND utilities, like electric power and gas. This includes public lighting, traffic lights, etc. as well as residential utilities.

LEVEL 4: High Condition (Orange)

A high condition signifies an event outside or within our area that may require immediate evacuation. This situation includes any event that presents an immediate danger to area residents. Such events may include explosions, chemical/biological, and nuclear events that may pose an immediate threat to life, property, and safety in our area.

Law enforcement personnel and State/Federal authorities will coordinate all evacuations.

Note: Unless directed otherwise, the best form of security during an emergency is to stay local and remain at school.

Chapter

7

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Clothing

Practical clothing is a must at school. Montessori Philosophy and MINE, ME & US Montessori School curriculum emphasizes independence. From the moment children are developmentally capable of successfully accomplishing tasks, beginning with self-care in the Nido Environment, they are allowed and encouraged to take care of their person. *Please send your child to school in and with clothes that he/she can put on and take off with little to no assistance. This means pants with elastic waistbands without snaps or buttons, no overalls, and no button-down shirts. Please label your child's clothing.*

Please send your children to school in shoes that are safe for running and walking and that they are able to put on and take off with little or no assistance. Shoes with Velcro fasteners are the best. *Please do not send your child to school in shoes with shoelaces until he/she can tie them unassisted.*

Please do not send your children to school in apparel or accessories with characters on them. Cartoon, superhero, and other characters are fantasy based. Montessori philosophy and curriculum emphasizes the real world. For young children, especially under age three, the distinction between fantasy and reality is difficult to make. At MINE, ME & US Montessori School we strive to introduce children to the wonders of the real and natural world through experiences, materials, and conversations. Part of the role of a school or educational environment is to offer experiences that children do not get otherwise.

SCHOOL POLICIES: No shoes in the classroom (Socks, slippers or barefoot). Barefoot or shoes outside.

Items from Home

Do not allow your child to bring money, toys, candy, gum, toys, jewelry, or other possessions to school. We cannot be responsible for such items and they invariably cause issues in the classroom or are easily lost.

Additionally, please return any items that your child brings home that belong to the classroom. Even the smallest bead or cube may mean the loss of the whole classroom material/work.

Birthdays

The school keeps a record of each child's birthday and celebrates each in a special manner called *Celebration of Life*. Pictures of students from birth to present are an excellent lesson in history that is personal and fun. Your child will share these at line time. You and your child's family members and special people in his/her life are encouraged and welcome to join in your child's *Celebration of Life* ceremony. You can discuss arrangements with your child's teacher.

Please do not bring birthday treats to school for your child. MINE, ME & US Montessori School provides lovely delicious special food daily. We will find a culinary way to enrich the *Celebration of Life* for your child's special day that is appropriate and the least distracting.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School does not have a formal or group celebration for children's birthdays in the Nido Environment and the Toddler Community. However, we encourage and welcome you and your child's family members and special people in his/her life to join your child for a school meal on his/her special day.

Non-School Party Invitations

Parties outside of school are a great way for children's families to meet and celebrate with classmates and other parents. Parents should mail party invitations rather than distribute them in school. Also, talk to your children about limiting their birthday conversations to home and not at school. Your cooperation with this rule will save other students from having their feelings hurt.

Kindergarten Policy

MINE, ME & US Montessori School follows Montessori classroom cycles and structure and does not deviate for Kindergarten age children. Montessori Philosophy and Method clearly lay out the benefits of multi-age classrooms and the 3-year cycle.

There are great pedagogical advantages to avoiding the “Kindergarten” label in a Montessori Children’s House classroom. Our primary classroom is a community, working together. The children practice responsibility, kindness, and leadership skills, by teaching, helping, and consoling others. Older children become self-possessed learners and leaders, reinforcing their own skills (cognitive, social, emotional, and physical) by working with younger children. MINE, ME & US Montessori School teachers do remain aware of the current Standards of Learning to ensure children are fully prepared for elementary education. However, as we value the development of the whole child, we present academic challenges as the child is ready not based on public school timelines.

Approach to Discipline-Redirection

The educational philosophy of MINE, ME & US Montessori School is that real, effective discipline is one that comes from within a person. Developing this inner discipline is one of the objectives of MINE, ME & US Montessori School. It is our belief that inner discipline develops in a child through active involvement in self-chosen tasks and the development of self-control. The development of inner discipline in a child is always the goal of a Montessori school. The clear organization of the physical environment; the structure, consistency, and predictability of daily school life; the indirect manner of teaching interpersonal skills through the lessons of "grace and courtesy"; the reliance on peer modeling and coaching channel positive behavior and appreciation and empathy help to limit difficulties.

It is our belief that if the ground rules are consistently followed and positively reinforced, the necessity of external discipline will be diminished. Use redirection in the case that external discipline is necessary. Inherent in the approach to redirection is the utmost respect for children.

At MINE, ME & US Montessori School a fundamental responsibility of being a teacher is knowing when you have reached your limits. MINE, ME & US Montessori School culture is structured so that a teacher has the support to be able to walk out of a classroom upon reaching such limits. Under no circumstances shall any child be subjected to corporal punishment in any manner upon the body or to verbal abuse; such abuse includes shaming, embarrassing, belittling and threatening. Any verbal or physical is grounds for immediate termination, no exceptions.

Children are encouraged to express their feelings and opinions in a non-judgmental atmosphere, and adults use active listening and empathic understanding to help interpret a situation with those involved. The teacher sets the tone for bringing the child into harmony by avoiding harsh words, bribes, and generalizations. As children feel accepted for who they are and what they feel, they develop positive self-esteem. The happier children are with themselves, the more likely they are to reach out and interact cooperatively with others.

With Toddlers

Living peacefully with others is an overwhelming challenge for toddlers when their strongest and most impulsive language is through their bodies and not their words. Cognitively, motor messages override verbal messages at this developmental age. Even when words do come, sometimes they do not accurately or effectively express what the child is trying to say.

Toddlers expend enormous amounts of energy getting their bodies to do what they want them to do and to go where they want them to go. Frustration can precipitate tears or whining and even biting, pushing, or pinching. Though not acceptable behaviors, these responses are effective toddler ways of communicating frustration. Thankfully, most toddlers do usually develop acceptable ways of venting these feelings as they become more comfortable in the environment.

For minor, nonchalant misbehaviors, gentle redirection toward work, which will re-engage the interest of the student, is often all that is necessary.

For recurring, minor misbehaviors, a teacher may temporarily limit the child's choice of workspace and/or quietly state the impact of such behavior on class materials or on other children's feelings. We help the child use language to describe what s/he needs or wants. When a toddler persists in aggressive behavior, the adult stays by the child’s side until the child has calmed and can refocus his/her attention positively. During periods of unacceptable behavior, teachers continue to interact with the child, using gentle, positive support and clear, simple language.

1. Teachers may meet with parents to share concerns and discuss ways to replace the aggression with positive coping mechanisms.
2. Teachers must also inform the Head of School of any concerns and decide together an appropriate course of action if follow-up is needed.

Children’s House

For minor, nonchalant misbehaviors, gentle redirection toward work, which will re-engage the interest of the student, is still often all that is necessary.

For recurring, minor misbehaviors, a teacher may temporarily limit the child's choice of workspace and/or quietly discuss the impact of such behavior on class materials or on other children's feelings.

For more serious misbehaviors, staff members will immediately intervene to protect the child from the harmful consequences of his/her own actions, to ensure the safety of others, and to prevent serious damage to the environment. The child may be temporarily removed from the group activity to reflect with a teacher on what happened and on what s/he can do to remedy the situation. A phone call or conference **must** be convened with the parents to inform and decide together an appropriate course of action if follow-up is needed. Teachers must also inform the Education Director and Child Development Consultant of concerns and decide together an appropriate course of action if follow-up is needed.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School Biting-Incident Policy

As we all know, infants are quite oral, mouthing and exploring everything. Sometimes this also includes mouthing other infant's bodies and may occur between children in other developmental stages. That is why MINE teachers must be very aware of the possibility for biting incidents. Biting is a natural and normal behavior and should not be met with any response that would make the child feel shameful.

At MINE, ME & US Montessori School we will deal with biting as we would any other natural response that we are trying to shift; we first approach biting with redirection. At the point that redirection is not effective, we will then provide alternatives for your child to satisfy the need to bite, yet in the event that the alternatives are deemed ineffective as well, we can move forward with having the child sit away from other children. It is imperative for a MINE, ME & US Montessori School faculty member to understand that this is not a subjection of isolation, but rather an opportunity for space for the child to choose friendliness towards others. This situation requires language such as "Right now you are not being friendly towards other friends, so you may sit away until you are ready to be friendly."

Throughout the entire extent that we are implementing strategies for biting occurrences we will be thoroughly documenting our observations and actions using a clear and comprehensive written log. As a team, we will be meeting in discussions and sharing wisdom and insight regarding the incidents. Parents will also be notified throughout the various stages of the process. We never want to alarm parents by bringing them into a situation after it has escalated; however, we also do not want to burden them with so many details as to create worry and anxiety. Up until the point that we have temporarily provided the child with space away from friends and we have notified parents that the child has bitten a friend, we are using developmentally appropriate strategies to discourage this behavior.

Upon the instance that the biting ensues post a period of separation from friends, it is time to bring in the parents to address alternate plans. Physical and health related reasons would be addressed. Home and school strategies will be shared in order to provide consistency. The continuation of the behavior will require faculty to meet with experts (child development specialist, physicians, etc.) Parents will then also meet with these specialists. A child will not be asked to seek other educational options until all possibilities have been exhausted and it is CLEAR that an educational alternative is the only solution.

It cannot be emphasized enough, that no child should be shamed for exhibiting what is natural behavior. Here at MINE, ME & US Montessori School we view children and all challenging behavior as an opportunity for growth for the children and ourselves. We are here to serve the needs of the children!

Forbidden Actions in Discipline

When it comes to mistreatment of children we have a zero-tolerance policy at MINE, ME & US Montessori School. The following actions or threats thereof are forbidden and shall result in immediate termination of employment:

1. Physical punishment, striking a child, roughly handling or shaking a child, restricting movement through binding or tying, forcing a child to assume an uncomfortable position, or exercise as punishment;
2. Enclosure in a small confined space or any space that the child cannot freely exit himself; however, this does not apply to the use of equipment such as cribs, play yards, high chairs, and safety gates when used with children preschool age or younger for their intended purpose;
3. Punishment by another child;
4. Separation from the group so that the child is away from the hearing and vision of a staff member;
5. Withholding or forcing of food or rest;
6. Withholding physical activity as punishment for other behaviors;
7. Punishment for being (appropriately) physically active (this does not include behaviors that put other children at risk of injury);
8. Verbal remarks which are demeaning to the child;
9. Punishment for toileting accidents; and
10. Punishment by applying unpleasant or harmful substances.

Dismissal Policy

At MINE, ME & US Montessori School, we believe in supporting children and families. As Montessorians, we believe that a Montessori environment works for every child because one of the fundamental tenets of Montessori education is to “follow the child.” This means that flexibility is built into the Montessori Philosophy and Method. MINE, ME & US Montessori School teachers carefully observe and document each child, so she can best meet their developmental needs.

However, as experienced teachers, we also know that while we strongly believe that Montessori works for every child, we know and respect that Montessori does not work for every family. All families have different values, schedules, needs, and preferences. Montessori and MINE, ME & US Montessori School is one option for early childhood education and care. There are many other education and care options in the NRV that might meet a family’s needs better than MINE, ME & US Montessori School can. It is important that parents be willing to support the philosophical and educational approach of MINE, ME & US Montessori School and Montessori. If a situation arises where a child is struggling due to a lack of consistency between his home and school environments, it may be necessary to arrange a conference between the Head of School and the parents. Should at-home advice and suggestions be made by the school to help reinforce or contribute to the child’s progress at MINE, ME & US Montessori School, and a family is not putting the advice or suggestions into practice, it may be determined that the enrollment relationship between MINE, ME & US Montessori School and that family should dissolve.

An essential component of the MINE, ME & US Montessori School curriculum policy is the promotion of community within the classrooms and the school as a whole. To this end we teach and model respect for everyone—children, teachers, parents, visitors, etc. As such, MINE, ME & US Montessori School reserves the right to terminate a family due to the behavior of the parents. Parents who are rude, disrespectful, or abusive to other parents, teachers, or students either verbally or physically, parents who consistently disregard school policy and procedure, parents who work against creating a positive and nurturing school community comprising of children, families, faculty, and administration, or parents who fail to meet financial obligations to MINE, ME & US Montessori School will be dismissed. Such cases will be dealt with on an individual basis and can result in action from written warning to immediate dismissal.

Financial Dismissal Policy

A student may not continue enrollment if his/her account is 45 days past due. Other conditions and terms of credit, collection and financing are available through the MINE, ME & US Montessori School Office at (540) 808.3838.

If a family has a history of chronic delinquency (defined to be the occurrence of at least one incident of “60 days past due” condition in the previous 12 months), the School, in its sole discretion, may (a) decline to enroll a student for succeeding academic years, or (b) require payment in full prior to the start of school, or (c) terminate child’s enrollment.

Babysitting and Outside Care Conflict of Interest

It is inappropriate for parents to employ MINE, ME & US Montessori School faculty and staff for in-home child care. This policy is furnished in order to maintain the professional integrity of our school program. Parents that employ MINE, ME & US Montessori School faculty for in-home child care are liable to MINE, ME & US Montessori School for a finder’s fee of \$1000. This policy will be enforced legally if needed.

Salary employees of MINE, ME & US Montessori School may not provide babysitting or childcare for MINE, ME & US Montessori School students at any time. Part time hourly employees are encouraged to babysit, but are held to MINE, ME & US Montessori School standards. They must also adhere to confidentiality agreements and the violation of these are subject to disciplinary actions.

Employees of MINE, ME & US Montessori School must refrain from discussing MINE, ME & US Montessori School students or issues when they are in the company of MINE, ME & US Montessori School parents before or after school hours, e.g., birthday parties, sports events, public encounters.

Mini-conferences must not occur away from school.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School Food Philosophy

Nursery Garden to Nursery School: Revolutionizing Infant-Toddler Culinary Curriculum

We all know that *what* we eat is important, but at MINE, ME & US Montessori School we believe that *when* and *how* we eat are equally, if not more, important and all of the experiences MINE, ME & US Montessori School children will have around food are direct outgrowths of this belief. Our practices regarding food and nutrition - which are fundamental parts of the MINE, ME & US Montessori School educational curriculum - are rooted in several other beliefs.

First, we believe in meeting children's nutritional needs by serving healthy vegetarian fare that is organic and locally sourced whenever possible. Through this practice, we provide the highest quality food to our students and staff while also supporting our Peace Building and Creating Green Habits efforts.

Second, we believe that children *do know* and *can learn* to listen to their body's natural signals of hunger and fullness. This ability is present at birth and we will do everything we can to trust, nurture, and respect this ability in our students, starting from day one in the Nido Environment. This is fundamental to the success of the culinary curriculum.

Third we believe in helping children establish a healthy relationship with food. While this is intimately connected to letting children listen to their internal signals (and to giving them language they need in order to describe those feelings), we believe that it also develops through regular interaction with food from seed to table.

Lastly, we fundamentally believe that toddler food should look like adult food – there are no “children’s menus” here. Quinoa patties with avocado slices and a mint yogurt sauce, kale chips, apple cider and roasted butternut squash soup, and homemade granola with organic yogurt are just samples of the meals and snacks your children will enjoy during school. We believe that good food is good food, regardless of your age.

The Nursery Garden to Nursery School (NGNS) program defines the best practices necessary to support these beliefs in each MINE, ME & US Montessori School classroom. It is also a valuable resource for parents interested in knowing more about why we do what we do at school, and how you can support or adopt these practices at home.

As parents and caregivers, we of course want our children to get the proper nutrition for their growing bodies. But at MINE, ME & US Montessori School we also believe that focusing only on what, at the exclusion of when and why, can have unintended consequences. Our goal is to establish healthy habits, not a healthy diet, because those are the foundation of health and happiness.

Our Food Mission

NGNS: Revolutionizing Infant-Toddler Culinary Curriculum is pilot food program created and housed in MINE, ME & US Montessori School.

Our mission is simple: to change the way we think about feeding our children by shifting the focus from *what* we are feeding them, to *how* we are feeding them. Our goal is to teach children about food from the seed to the table, allowing them to explore and experience it in numerous settings and contexts. We do this through our culinary curriculums, which you can learn more about here. Daily at MINE, ME & US Montessori School, we offer an organic, vegetarian, menu. Through this process of growing, preparing, and tasting food children will learn to celebrate the world of food, from seed-to-table.

It is our hope that the curriculums designed for MINE, ME & US Montessori School's Nursery Garden to Nursery School Program will serve as a template that other preschools and childcare centers can use to implement their own organic, seed-to-table culinary curriculums across the nation.

Seed-to-Table at NGNS

At MINE, ME & US Montessori School E we take the Nutrition and Food curriculum from the classroom to the outside environment. Year-round the children participate in the seed-to-table experience of food.

During the cold months of winter, they begin with the “seed” experience. They choose which foods they want to plant and start the seeds in the classroom. As the ground thaws and the seedlings gain strength, the children move their herbs and vegetables outside. While the days get warmer and longer, the children daily care for the vegetable and herb gardens on their school grounds. Harvesting the spring crops, they enjoy preparing raw and cooked snacks including spinach, broccoli, lettuce, collards and rhubarb from the school's garden plot that they share the care of. A range of summer berries and tomatoes provide scrumptious fruit salads and smoothies, delicious taste tests and interesting canning opportunities.

As the school year begins, more vegetables are ready for harvesting and preparing. Finally, as the autumn months wear on, the root vegetables, squashes and pumpkins are abundant. Pies, stews, and roasted vegetables appear on the menu and vegetable chopping and pastry-mixing become food preparation works in the classrooms.

Our chef invites pairs and small groups of children to join in the snack and lunch preparations that take place in the kitchen. A simple task of sorting fruits and vegetables or stirring batter gives the children such joy. Additionally, teaching children in age-appropriate ways about how to prepare meals provides the missing link from the seed, plants and vegetables to the meal on the table. The process of changing a raw indigo potato into purple mashed potatoes with butter, salt and pepper becomes magical when you see the child make the connections from her year-long efforts in the classroom and the garden to the beautiful meal that they helped prepare for their friends at school.

Including the children in the seed-to-table experience respects children's capacity for curiosity, exploration, comprehension, and initiative, as well as honors the innate investment they have in their own experiences in their lives. Food is an important part of life, not only for life-sustaining purposes, but also for the treasures that nurturing life, creating beauty and providing delicious meals for friends. In the age of packaged and processed foods, our children are denied these treasures. At MINE, ME & US Montessori School, we celebrate food and all of its marvels.

Schedules and Sample Menus

Lunch

All students enrolled in our programs will enjoy organic, vegetarian meals prepared by our school's Chef in the *Nursery Garden to Nursery School Culinary Curriculum* offered through MINE, ME & US Montessori School. Lunchtime is somewhat dependent on teachers' classroom schedules, but generally takes place between 12:00 and 1:00 pm. Weekly menus will be posted in your child's classroom and on Slack.com. Previous menus will remain on file at the school. Food allergies will be accommodated, but children are not permitted to bring food from home. The reason is simple: At MINE, ME & US Montessori School we are very conscientious of the value of food and the entire mealtime experience. Our mission is to change the way we think about feeding our children by shifting the focus from *what* we are feeding them to *how* we are feeding them. Our goal is to teach children about food from the seed to the table, allowing them to explore and experience it in numerous settings and contexts. Through this process of growing, preparing, and tasting food, children will learn to celebrate the world of food in all its forms.

We serve all meals using plates, napkins, cups, and silverware. Meals are served at child-sized tables and chairs. We practice grace, courtesy, independence, and caring for self-essential elements of the Montessori education experience – through practices such as a pre-meal song, family style self-served meals, and expecting “please” and “thank you.”

Snacks

The school provides snacks in the morning and afternoon as well as an afternoon tea* for those students who stay past 5:00 pm. The schedule for snack times will be posted in your child's classroom, but generally follows during the hours: morning snack (9:30 am - 10:15 am), afternoon snack (3:00 pm - 5:00 pm). Snacks are served in the same manner as lunch, and as with lunch foods from home are not permitted.

*Afternoon Tea is served as the children as a group show signs of needing it. Tea is not served daily.

Food in the Nido Environment

Some important points about food and feeding in the NIDO.

- We take pride in creating a welcoming and nurturing environment for parents/caregivers and children, so parents/caregivers are always welcome for bottle and breastfeeding their little ones in the NIDO.
- A refrigerator is provided for all bottles/feeding supplies
- **Please CLEARLY label all bottles with your child's full name and the date.** If the bottles should be served in a particular order, please label CLEARLY with a number as well.
- **Parents must supply 24 hours of breast milk or formula to be kept at school at all times, per Virginia Department of Social Service licensing requirements.**

The process of introducing solid foods can be equally amazing, exciting, terrifying, and sad. At MINE we understand this and are here to help make this transition as smoothly and effectively as possible for both parents/caregivers and children. When infants are ready to start solid foods, they will be fed just as the older children are: at child-sized tables and chairs with plates, cups, and cloth napkins. Assistance with eating will be provided as needed and all children, during meal and snack times, will be closely monitored. Infants will be fed the same food items that are on the menu for the older children, modified as needed for allergies and abilities. At MINE, ME & US Montessori School we also believe that *exposure* to solid food can start well before children are actually ready to *eat*. Younger infants who are not yet eating but beginning to show interest will take part in meal times in various ways: by sitting with a teacher at the table with children who are eating, holding and using spoons and napkins, getting to touch and mouth (clean) foods in their raw form, and participating in the outdoor/gardening experience.

MINE, ME & US Sample Menu

Sample Menu	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1					
AM Snack	Rice cakes, avocado slices, homemade black bean spread, fresh cilantro, and limes. Cow milk and water to drink.	Homemade bread pudding with mangoes and bananas, dried cranberries, blueberries, currants, walnuts, flax seeds, and chia seeds. Prune juice, cow milk and water to drink.	Plain Greek yogurt, locally-made pumpkin butter, blueberry, and pomegranate aril medley, oats, hemp seeds, and chia seeds. Cow milk and water to drink.	Mini rye bread slices, local Amish butter, sunflower seed butter, sliced fresh Ruby Red grapefruit and Cara Cara oranges. Cow milk and water to drink.	Vine ripe tomatoes, fresh basil, and fresh mozzarella on whole grain crackers. Carrot juice, cow milk and water to drink.
Lunch	Almond and pecan gluten-free crackers, chunky hummus, sliced sharp white Vermont cheddar cheese, sliced Gala apples, julienned raw carrots and celery, yogurt dip, sliced Cara Cara oranges. Cow milk and water to drink.	Thai spring rolls with julienne sliced carrots and Fuji apples, creamy peanut and soy dressing, steamed rice, Cara Cara orange slices and toasted coconut flakes. Cow milk and water to drink.	Potato leek soup with spinach, quinoa, and brown rice, sweet peas and broccoli, topped with hemp seeds and chia seeds. Cow milk and water to drink.	Goat cheese and fig spread mini sandwiches on pumpernickel bread, mango and Thompson raisin salad, and raw broccoli florets. Cow milk and water to drink.	A sampling of seeded wheat crackers, pickled Beets, roasted red and yellow bell peppers, sliced Gouda cheese, avocado slices, multi-bean salad, and exotic vegetable chips. Cow milk and water to drink.
PM Snack	Raw whole carrots, whole mini cucumbers, yogurt dip with fresh dill, and rosemary crackers. Cow milk and water to drink.	Whole Clementine oranges, in-the-shell edamame, falafel chips. Cow milk and water to drink.	A whole Gala Apple, Gouda cheese slices, local fig bars. Cow milk and water to drink.	Whole yellow bananas, chunky peanut butter, sliced French bread. Cow milk and water to drink.	A Citrus fruit medley of Pumeloes, Ruby Red Grapefruits, Navel oranges, Meyer lemons, and Key limes, and homemade granola. Almond milk, cow milk and water drink.
Week 2					
AM Snack	Croissants, local Amish butter, blackberry fruit spread, and mango-strawberry fruit salad topped with fresh mint leaves. Cow milk and water to drink.	Whole Red bananas, Portuguese sweet bread, sliced Gouda, and a nut and seed mix. Cow milk and water to drink.	Halved Honey Crisp apple, cashew nut butter, and homemade granola. Cow milk and water to drink.	Mini Bagels with Sunflower Seed Butter and Fresh Apple Rings, and Cow milk and water to drink	Parmesan cheese polenta spread, sliced Beefeater tomatoes, and pistachios. Cow milk and water to drink.
Lunch	Strawberry and goat cheese salad with dried cranberries, pecans, avocado slices tossed in Newman's Poppy Seed dressing, with sliced sourdough bread and local Amish butter. Cow milk and water to drink.	Tofu sausage, sauerkraut, diced red cabbage, pickled beets, pumpernickel bread slices, mustard cream cheese, and sliced bananas. Cow milk and water to drink.	Corn tortillas, guacamole, sliced Beefeater tomatoes, black bean and sweet corn salsa, romaine lettuce, and crumbled Vermont sharp white cheddar cheese. Cow milk and water to drink.	Vegetarian chili, cornbread, butter, sour cream, crumbled white sharp cheddar cheese, chopped fresh chives, and diced raw red onions. Cow milk and water to drink.	Naan, tomato sauce, crumbled Vermont sharp cheddar cheese, artichoke hearts, sliced raw button mushrooms, halved Kalamata olives, diced raw yellow and orange bell peppers, and baby spinach leaves. Cow milk and water to drink.
PM Snack	Whole Pink Lady apples, in-the-shell peanuts, flax seed corn chips. Cow milk and water to drink.	Raw cauliflower florets, grape tomatoes, sour cream and chive dip, herbed crackers. Cow milk and water to drink.	Whole peaches, smoked Gouda and butter sandwiches on French bread. Cow milk and water to drink.	Sliced raw pineapple, almond butter, and stoneground wheat crackers. Cow milk and water to drink.	Thai-inspired slaw with red cabbage, broccoli florets, edamame tossed with minced ginger, soy sauce, and sesame seeds topped with fresh Thai basil leaves, rice and garbanzo beans. Cow milk to drink and water.

<i>Sample Menu</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>
Week 3					
AM Snack	Crumpets, butter, strawberry fruit spread, fresh strawberries, walnuts and pecans. Cow milk and water to drink.	Cottage cheese, banana and strawberry fruit salad, pepitas and almond slivers, and mini toasts. Cow milk and water.	Sliced cantaloupe, Gorgonzola cheese crumble, and fresh mint leaves salad, brown rice cakes. Cow milk and water to drink.	Fresh raspberries and blackberries, sliced brown bread, cashew nut butter. Cow milk and water to drink.	Parmesan cheese polenta spread, sliced Beefeater tomatoes, and pistachios. Cow milk and water to drink.
Lunch	Multi-grain crackers, crumbled blue cheese, crumbled feta cheese, sliced Anjou and Bosc pears, white, yellow and purple raw cauliflower florets, and roasted red pepper hummus. Cow milk and water to drink.	Zucchini pasta with two-tomatoes pesto (raw zucchini cut into noodles, fresh yellow pear tomatoes, sun-dried tomatoes, fresh basil, fresh lemon juice and garlic), slice of hearty grain bread with local Amish butter. Cow milk and water to drink.	Garam masala and cumin wild rice and lentils, naan, homemade raita, a small salad of romaine lettuce, sliced Roma tomatoes, and thinly sliced cucumber, and mango ream with Thompson raisins. Cow milk water to drink	Pita bread sandwiches, with olive tapenade spread, sliced fennel and celery, kohlrabi and fennel bulb, feta cheese crumbles, hemp seeds. Cow milk and water to drink	Red cabbage and apple salad with ginger-tahini dressing, comprised of raw red cabbage, Granny Smith apples, red onions, fresh chives, and ginger slivers, dried cranberries, tahini, freshly squeezed lemon and orange Juice), served with vegetarian sausages, and stone-ground mustard sandwiches on Chabbah bread. Cow milk and water to drink.
PM Snack	Whole strawberries, sliced Parmesan cheese, stoneground wheat crackers. Cow milk and water to drink.	Whole local peaches, brie and whole wheat crackers. Cow milk and water to drink.	Banana ice cream (frozen mashed bananas) with honey, black walnuts and crushed almond thin crackers as toppings. Cow milk and water to drink.	Watermelon chunks with fresh mint leaves and chia seeds, homemade granola. Cow milk and water to drink.	Almond butter and raspberry fruit spread mini rye sandwiches, sweet potato chips. Coconut milk, cow milk and water to drink.
Week 4					
AM Snack	Sugar snap peas, garbanzo beans, whole mini multi-color bell peppers, sour cream and honey dip, and stone ground wheat crackers. Cow milk and water to drink.	Whole grain waffles, local honey, and strawberry, blueberry, and raspberry cream cheese spread. Prune juice, cow milk and water to drink.	Bread pudding with dried blueberries, walnuts, and chia seeds, fresh sliced pineapple, golden and brown flax seed toppings. Cow milk and water to drink.	Ruby Red grapefruit slices, plain Greek yogurt, puffed millet, kamut, and barley toppings. Cow milk and water to drink.	Whole wheat English muffins, herbed cream cheese spread, and a fresh raspberry and mint salad. Cow milk and water to drink.
Lunch	Assorted cheese plate with baby Swiss, creamy Havarti, and sharp white New York cheddar cheese and an apple tasting with Gala, Red Delicious, and Pink Lady apples, pretzel bread slices with local Amish butter. Apple cider, cow milk, and water to drink.	Cucumber and chickpea salad with lemon-tahini dressing served in Roma tomato halves (chickpeas, diced English cucumber, chopped fresh mint leaves, freshly squeezed lemon juice, and tahini), with locally made focaccia, and whole Clementine oranges. Cow milk and water to drink.	Herbed tomato bisque, cheddar cheese sandwiches on whole wheat bread, and whole New Zealand apples. Cow milk and water to drink.	Romaine lettuce wraps with sweet potato couscous with black seedless grape halves, an assortment of olives, and cannellini bean and sweet pea salad. Cow milk and water to drink.	Baby spinach, walnuts, raisins, crumbled Blue and Gorgonzola cheeses, halved red seedless grapes, sliced sourdough bread, and local Amish butter. Cow milk and water to drink.
PM Snack	Watermelon slices, almond slivers, almond butter, sliced Ciabatta bread. Cow milk and water to drink.	Sweet potato tortilla chips, guacamole with grape tomatoes and fresh cilantro and roasted red pepper hummus. Cow milk and water to drink.	Fresh chives, fennel and dill cream cheese sandwiches on rye bread and sliced honeydew melon. Cow milk and water to drink.	Whole apricots, popcorn, and in-the-shell peanuts. Cow milk and water to drink.	Whole Roma tomatoes, fresh mini mozzarella balls, pesto with whole grain crackers. Cow milk and water to drink.

Chapter

8

MONTESSORI EDUCATION

Montessori Philosophy

MINE, ME & US Montessori School is a school with a specific educational philosophy. Our educational philosophy is rooted in the life work and pedagogy of Dr. Maria Montessori. We strongly believe that Dr. Montessori was proficient in evolving her educational theories by drawing on her academic training, professional background, and experience in medicine, clinical psychology, and anthropology. Montessori upheld that her most significant revolutionary discovery was distinguishing a teacher's role to pay devoted attention to her students rather than the other way around. A Montessori teacher acts as a guide, escorting the student through the curriculum and the prepared environment based upon the careful observations of the student's interest and strengths. Dr. Montessori's studies revealed that students work best when they are free to work without obstruction in a safe, hands-on, learning environment. The most challenging aspect of a Montessorian's work is the balancing of personal freedom and collaborative responsibility in an environment where all people are equally respected and regarded with the non-negotiable rights to reach his or her personal potential. This aspect is one of the most profound ways that Montessori educates for peace and practical life.

The Work Cycle

At MINE, ME & US Montessori School we honor Montessori tradition of a three-hour uninterrupted work cycle. The purpose of long, uninterrupted blocks of work time is to allow students to freely select work, eventually becoming absorbed in work that has a particular fascination for them at any given point in their development. Interruptions disturb the development of the child's focus, concentration, and opportunity to deeply delve into work. During this uninterrupted work time, teachers also have the opportunity to present lessons to the children, ensuring that lessons are given, and work is explored in all areas of the classroom.

MINE, ME & US Montessori School will observe the following guidelines for uninterrupted work cycles. *Please note that the work cycle begins when the majority of children have arrived and be mindful of classroom start times.*

Nido Community/Toddler Community/ Children's House

The Child

1. Children may work alone or in spontaneous groups. No one may touch another's work without being invited; therefore, there is no forced sharing.
2. Everyone walks around the work rugs.
3. Children serve themselves refreshments and are in charge of cleaning the environment.
4. Children are directors of work and teachers are there to serve their needs.
5. Children talk quietly and ask for help on a one-to-one basis, not by yelling across the room. They do not interrupt a lesson but wait quietly in close proximity to the teacher until noticed before asking for help or direction.
6. Children remove their shoes while working in the classroom.
7. Children's work takes place in the indoor and outdoor environment and should have clothing that allows them to work comfortably in both.

Parents

1. Please leave toys at home and don't fight with children over leaving them in the car at the school door. Children are grumpy when this happens.
2. Please try to bring happy, relaxed children to school by allowing adequate time and a very slow pace in preparing for school.
3. Talk about ground rules with children in a "positive" manner, and practice talking quietly at home.
4. Encourage the ability to distinguish between appropriate indoor behavior and outdoor behavior. There is a difference.
5. Parent conferences are scheduled twice each year. A parent or teacher may schedule other conferences or meetings as needed.
6. Please avoid tangible rewards for accomplishments children naturally receive pleasure from.
7. Order is very important to children to give them a sense of security and peace.
8. Return teacher and MINE, ME & US Montessori School communications promptly.
9. Notify the lead teacher if you have a question or concern. A telephone message can be left with the office.

10. Parents are the child's primary teacher. The faculty and staff at Montessori Infant Nido Environment can love, support, and encourage parents best by setting excellent examples. We must address parents' needs as well as the needs of our children. We must also trust one another and share the goal of providing the best educational environment for children to develop.

Montessori Elementary

Montessori Elementary provides the elementary child with authentic all day, year-round Montessori education and supports each child's development according to individual potential and innate love of learning. Rich with explorations in the natural environment, impressionistic lessons discovering the disciplines and the universe, opportunities for social exploration and growth, and an organic hands-on food program, Montessori Elementary is unique in the New River Valley. Montessori Elementary accomplishes these goals with highly trained and well-rounded faculty devoted to serving the whole child through nature, Montessori, and nutrition.

Montessori Curriculum & Classroom

Maria Montessori developed her philosophy and method based upon keen scientific observation, and then designed an educational environment to accommodate her pedagogy. It is clear that she embraced a constructivists' view of the child, not as a blank slate, but as a unique being containing a boundless enthusiasm for learning. Montessori's predominant goal is to nourish an aptitude for lifelong learning. The classroom culture establishes the adult as the instructional guide. Through the thoughtful preparation of the learning environment as well as respectful demeanor, the classroom teacher introduces the child to the many lessons and materials that speak to the child's interest and development. Work in the Montessori classroom is interdisciplinary and encompasses all disciplines while not adhering to superficial boundaries. MINE, ME & US Montessori School children are free to work on any subject matter at any point in their work cycle. MINE, ME & US Montessori School prepared environments include work in practical life, cultural, history, science, arts, health, wellness, language, and mathematics. Again, all work is valued equally and presented with respect for its role as a part of a whole. At MINE, ME & US Montessori School, we see the outside classroom as equally important to the indoor prepared environment and children spend a great deal of time outside.

Learning Environments

Nido Environment and Nido Community

We acknowledge that your infant has huge goals. He wants to grow in abilities encompassing a freedom of movement to independent feats. The MINE, ME & US Montessori School environment has everything needed to safely sustain these goals. Important to our school is the concept of the nest, a secure place from which to explore. It begins with a pristine, orderly environment: a place to move, a place to sleep, a place to eat and a place for physical care. MINE, ME & US Montessori School environments include ample:

- Open floor space for movement, including scooting and crawling
- Low shelving with compelling materials that encourage visual perception, grasping, batting, kicking and mouthing
- Materials for climbing
- Daily opportunities for safe exploration of the outdoors to experience sensory changes

At MINE, ME & US Montessori School, you and your child will not see devices that confine movement; no bouncy seats, swings or highchairs. Our care and attention make it possible to do without these. Teachers will engage with infants on the ground each day and those infants who are not capable of getting into the position by themselves (generally those under 6 months) will be provided with "tummy time" daily.

Toddler Community

Everything about this stage in your child's development is remarkable, especially the keen attentiveness she has in the surrounding environment. To be a toddler is to be curious and MINE, ME & US Montessori School provides a nurturing environment where her drive to explore independently can find a jubilant outlet.

At MINE, ME & US Montessori School, your child will discover the freedom within structure that satisfies his developmental needs and facilitates his discovery of new abilities. An enormous amount of learning and change happens in this small amount of time. The toddler community facilitates growth and activities in the following areas:

Physical

Developing large muscles and fine motor skills, dressing and undressing, independent feeding, using the toilet.

Social

To engage in parallel and cooperative play, learn a respect limits, and begin the use of tools of daily life and to participate.

Linguistic

To develop expressive and receptive language, develop vocabulary, learn songs and rhymes create complex and carry on a conversation.

Cognitive

Thinking and solving problems independently, making choices, concentrating, remembering sequences, categorizing, following instructions, and developing the senses.

Emotional

To separate from parents in a healthy way and develop a respectful relationship with MINE guides, to express feelings in words and gestures, to take pride in accomplishments, to develop autonomy and creation of self, to begin to respect limits, to begin reasoning about feelings.

The daily program for the toddlers consists of the previously mentioned work cycle, optional group times for singing and dancing, reading, being together; outdoor time, and preparing and eating snack and lunch.

The individual work time allows children time to work on language enrichment activities, eye/hand coordination materials, practical life activities that emphasize care of self and the environment, simple mathematics activities, and activities that develop the senses. MINE, ME & US Montessori School community is small, intimate, and flexible with regard to planned activities, so that the needs of the children are adhered to at all times rather than a time schedule created by the adult.

Toilet learning is an integrated part of the toddler curriculum. We work in partnership with families for a successful toilet learning experience for the child. Our environment is prepared in such a way that when a child becomes aware of bodily functions, handling them is made easier. No rewards or punishments are used because using the bathroom is a very normal function that all people carry out. We encourage visiting one of these communities to see all these features first hand.

Children's House

Independence, coordination, order, self-discipline and concentration are developed in our Children's House. The MINE, ME & US Montessori School Children's House also comprises an organized approach to problem solving and academic skills. As a child moves throughout the environment, there is freedom to choose from a range of activities and experiences that satisfy his or her unique interests. This freedom of movement to allow for social interactions and creates a small community where an emphasis is placed on care and respect of oneself and of others.

Kinesthetic, auditory, and visual methods are integrated into the challenging curriculum, and children understand abstract concepts through the introduction and use of ingenious manipulative learning tools. We focus on nurturing each child's sense of accomplishment and believe self-motivation is the only valid impulse to learn. Within our walls, children find learning a life-long process, a journey of discovery--not merely a matter of completing assignments.

The Children's House at MINE, ME & US Montessori School features an uninterrupted work period in the morning, as previously described. This extended time allows for children to focus and concentrate without distraction. Activities such as washing dishes, dusting, and mopping help young children learn to work independently and prepare them for work with reading and mathematics. Children initiate projects and activities, collaborate with classmates and take full advantage of the learning materials.

In keeping with the proven Montessori approach, mixed-age groups in each classroom create a community of learning where students become mentors to each other. The Children's House is designed specifically for children of this age and beautifully prepared each morning to facilitate the student's learning process. Our classrooms are crafted to take advantage of a child's ability to absorb and learn from their environment. Spanish, music, art, and dance are part of the MINE, ME & US Montessori School Children's House curriculum.

Montessori Elementary**Sustain the Six to Nine-Year-Old as a Philosopher**

The comprehensive Montessori education that we provide at Montessori Elementary prepares the child for a lifelong love of learning by imparting a collection of interrelated knowledges on the child's wildly susceptible imagination. Montessori Elementary guides each child toward the initial investigation of the question "Who am I?" At Montessori Elementary, we believe that this question is one of the most profound philosophical questions we can present about the nature of self and life. We believe that the child between the ages of 6-9 is characteristic of a great philosopher and we foster this intrinsic sense of wonder through exploring great questions of purpose, matter, and justice. Interrogations such as "Where did I come from?" and "What are the stars made of?" provide the foundation for the Montessori Method at this age. Montessori Elementary acknowledges the elementary child's natural tendency to employ a vast evaluation of sciences, arts, and social studies.

Maintain a Love of Learning Through Meaningful Exploration

At Montessori Elementary, we believe strongly in the teacher's role as a guide. Rather than being the main instrument in the child's learning, a Montessori guide directs the child through the prepared environment (classroom,) towards engaging lessons and concrete materials. The Montessori approach in the elementary years, balances the child's emergent imagination and growing propensity for abstract thinking with grounded, hands-on materials. The elementary classroom continues the child's passage from concrete to abstract that began in the primary classroom. The path reveals itself so naturally because of the child's sensorial exploration with the materials in previous years, the guide's aptitude for storytelling, and the child's highly fertile imagination.

At Montessori Elementary, we do not provide the child with a collection of trivial facts, nor do we disregard basic skills and facts. Our work is to polish and build upon the foundation of literacy, writing, and numbers that was created in the primary years in the meaningful context of a big picture. Montessori Elementary utilizes the child's capacity to imagine and philosophize as a motivation towards skill mastery. Montessori pedagogy employs diverse and creative passages to abstraction and provides a classroom environment where children

pursue their own interests at their own pace with opportunities for social collaboration. The student is ultimately able to acquire a well-rounded education because of the Montessori Elementary guide's careful observation and inclination to arouse curiosity, along with the interdisciplinary nature of Montessori curriculum. The Montessori three-year cycle allows time and flexibility for the child to develop at his own pace and for the guide to truly follow the child on this journey.

Support the Child's Acquisition of Culture

Montessori Elementary supports the child and the family through the child's quest of self-discovery. We provide a supportive environment rich with opportunity to socialize and resolve interpersonal conflicts. Montessori Elementary is a multicultural environment that welcomes families from varying ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds to be a part of our community and share values and experiences with the children. At Montessori Elementary, we honor the child in his/her acquisition of culture and provide varied learning opportunities that support the child's need to explore the world outside of the classroom. The "going out" experience is one that Montessori Elementary children will enjoy routinely, and each occurrence will evolve from the children's natural desires to expand upon their classroom explorations.

Facilitate Healthy Nutrition and Understanding of Food

At Montessori Elementary, we believe in the nourishment of the whole child and trust that the organic vegetarian food program is at the heart of this undertaking. The MINE, ME, & US Montessori School food program provided through Nursery Garden to Nursery School enables children to explore the beautiful culinary processes of growing food, preparing meals, and the community aspect of breaking bread together. This facet of the program is truly garden-to-table and gives the child a comprehensive experience. Our food program integrates all the other qualities of the program as it supports the major disciplines, cultural studies, and the child's overall developmental well-being. The children are not only partaking in exemplary culinary experiences together with their learning community, but they are also participating in the harvesting, planning, and preparation of these dynamic meals. This aspect allows for truly authentic experiences in the practical life curriculum area.

Preserve the Child's Connection to Nature

At Montessori Elementary, we profoundly believe in the interconnectedness of all things, and our natural world is the best place to grasp this certainty. The daily explorations available to Montessori Elementary students assimilate their classroom experiences through their interaction with natural phenomenon. These experiences create solid foundations for further studies in the sciences, mathematics, and language. In a culture where children are facing a "nature deficit disorder," we are advocating for the importance of a child's relationship to the outdoor environment. Montessori Elementary children commune daily with nature through outdoor work opportunities, nature walks, and trips to explore the natural wonders in and around the New River Valley.

Home and School Connections

At MINE, ME & US Montessori School we understand that it is not enough for Montessori schools to exist or for the teachers to be painstaking, but families of the attending children must exude a passion for the program as well. We ask in return for our copious support and services that families understand what MINE, ME & US Montessori School is and what MINE, ME & US Montessori School offers. Our team is comprised of trained, certified, and experience professionals who keep abreast of the latest research and work vigorously to create and maintain the very best learning environment. The information provided by a member of our faculty will be presented with immense care and consideration of your child. Please provide honest and necessary material for MINE, ME & US Montessori School faculty as well.

Our success relies, in large part, on our families. We ask that you honor our mission to serve and that you participate in the activities and take interest in our daily routines. Please respect our guiding principles and communicate with our faculty regularly. We will issue regular communications and it is our desire that you will regard them seriously and enthusiastically. You are welcomed to observe our classrooms and our only request is that you schedule these visits in advance.

The additional programs that are offered at MINE, ME & US Montessori School can create a bridge between home and school. We acknowledge that there are differences between the activities of the home and those of school. MINE, ME & US Montessori School provides tools to guide you in supporting our work at school and many of those tools are available in these additional programs, which the cost is already considered in your tuition.

Maria Montessori Biography

Please visit <http://www.montessori-namta.org/maria-montessori> for more information on the life of Dr. Montessori.

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We look forward supporting you and your family and teaching and working with your children this year!!

Rachel Brunsmas, Head of School