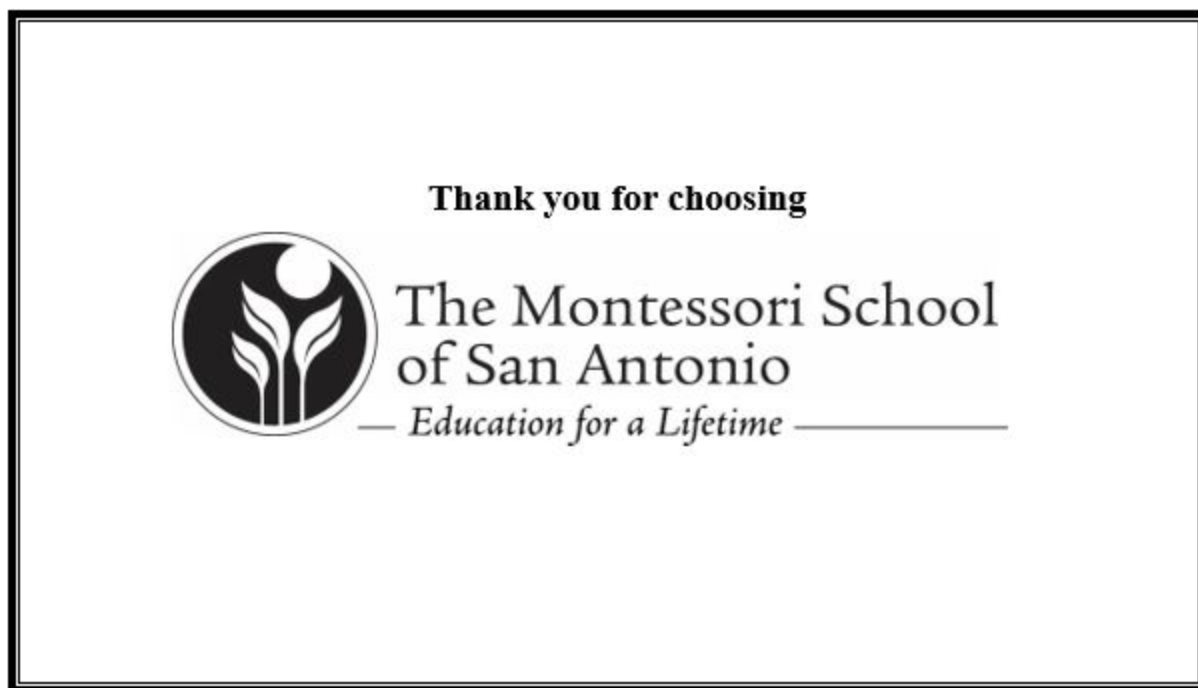




**FAMILY  
HANDBOOK  
2020-2021**



Dear Montessori School of San Antonio Families,

We ask that you please read our 2020-2021 Family Handbook to familiarize yourself with procedures and adhere to policies and guidelines as you partner with the School.

Your understanding of the systems and processes that organize and nurture life at MSSA will empower you to form a productive relationship with us in the best interest of your child. Therefore, we urge you to read the Handbook carefully and frequently refer to it throughout the school year. The Handbook is also available to reference at any time on our campus website.

Should you have questions about any of the details outlined in our Family Handbook, please do not hesitate to reach out.

We look forward to working in partnership with each of you.

The Montessori School of San Antonio



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# Guiding Concepts

## **MSSA Mission Statement**

The Montessori School of San Antonio guides children to be passionate learners, independent thinkers, and engaged citizens.

### *Our Montessori curriculum:*

- Provides limitless academic challenges
- Focuses on mastery
- Motivates children to learn through action, exploration, and discovery
- Promotes self-correction and independent problem solving
- Guides and supports each child's individual progress
- Deepens a child's engagement in the process of learning

### *Our school culture:*

- Values children for their own unique gifts and strengths
- Teaches and models grace, courtesy, and respect
- Cultivates meaningful and lasting relationships among teachers, parents, and students
- Honors diversity across ages, genders, religions, and cultural backgrounds
- Fosters collaboration and mentorship
- Encourages purposeful engagement in our school community

Through these guiding principles, children develop critical skills for academic, professional, and personal success.

### *MSSA: Education for a lifetime.*

## **School Philosophy**

The Montessori School of San Antonio (MSSA) builds on the philosophical and psychological principles developed by Dr. Maria Montessori during the first half of the 20th century. Dr. Montessori's vision of education developed as a result of a lifetime of observing and working with children. Through these experiences she created and implemented a highly effective educational methodology based on the developmental needs and abilities of children at different stages of life. Fundamental to her methodology is the belief in each child's uniqueness and ability to achieve.

At MSSA we recognize that development comes through the student's own activity and that the faculty's task is to carefully guide that activity within an environment specially prepared according to the student's particular stage of development.

Montessori at MSSA is an education that is both nurturing and rigorous, respecting each student's unique pace and style of learning while continually encouraging each child to reach his/her maximum potential. It is an education that addresses the critical integration of knowledge, skills, understanding, and moral action.

### A Brief History

Gay and Jim Judson founded The Montessori Workshop in 1974. Beginning with one primary class of 18 students, the School grew in its first eight years to 74 students and extended its program through lower elementary. In 1982, the School became a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation to expand its base of support, and changed its name to The Judson Montessori School. JMS continued to extend its program through upper elementary and middle school, serving more students every year. Through the generosity of the Rogers family and many patrons in the San Antonio area, the new campus opened at Rogers Ranch in January of 2000. The 24-acre campus is spacious, beautiful, and carefully designed to serve its outstanding, student-centered programs. In 2008, the School changed its name again to The Montessori School of San Antonio to avoid confusion with the Judson School District, and to better reflect its stature among other Montessori schools in San Antonio.

## FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

### Developmentally Based

The entire MSSA program is organized around the developmental needs and tendencies of students at various stages of life. This organization leads to mixed-age groupings, which provide rich peer stimulus and ample opportunities for continuity in each student's learning process. It takes into account such things as the young student's need for extended sensorial exploration and the older student's need for uninterrupted blocks of time for major academic projects.

## **Personalized Learning**

Individual differences in style and pace of learning are accommodated within the classroom. One-on-one teaching and group lessons, small and large, are a few of the many components of instruction.

## **Organization and Integration of Curriculum**

The curriculum is organized to move from the simple to the complex, with each lesson built on the previous one, thus promoting a more comprehensive understanding of ideas, concepts, and values. Though the lessons are given one at a time, each subject area crosses the curriculum, incorporating a variety of skills and academic concepts.

## **Flexible Scheduling**

The requisites for optimal learning determine the allotment of time for different learning activities. A school day at MSSA is composed primarily of long, uninterrupted work periods offering personalized attention and small group activities. Prescheduled classes, such as Spanish, music, physical education, and literature discussions are arranged to minimize interruption of the primary work period.

## **Learning Through Doing**

Learning is an active and experiential process at MSSA. Studies are typically based on each individual student's previous work performance. These activities engage a variety of skills and modes of expression rather than focusing on recitation of subject matter.

## **Freedom with Responsibility**

Students are guided to interact freely and responsibly with their learning environment, their peers, and their instructors. They are encouraged to maximize their learning opportunities within the limits of their own sense of responsibility and according to guidelines set by their teacher.

## **A Community of Learners Based in Cooperation and Mutual Respect**

The MSSA community responds to diversity, especially in matters of race, religion, ethnicity, age, and gender, through an active effort to understand differences. Cooperation sets the tone at MSSA. All members are guided to perform at their best level, respecting and acknowledging each other's efforts and accomplishments. Respect and trust weave the social fabric of the School.

## **Evaluation and Assessment Through Exhibition of Mastery**

The primary tools for assessment at MSSA are direct exhibition of mastery through individual, performance-based activities. Essential masteries are cumulative and lasting. MSSA's goal is for each student to exhibit these masteries across the full spectrum of his or her work.

## **Teacher as Guide**

The primary role of the teacher in the classroom is to guide the student toward maximum learning through responsible choices and concentrated effort by preparing a stimulating and well-equipped learning environment, giving key lessons (lessons that open doors to independent learning), and providing the social guidance and limitations necessary for students to work independently, collectively, and responsibly.

## **Student as Learner**

The faculty at MSSA recognizes that learning takes place only when the student is engaged and committed to the learning process. The work of the student is to gain interest, involvement, concentration, and continuity of effort as an active learner. The process of learning both actively and experientially fosters a love of learning.

# **ACCREDITATION**

The Montessori School of San Antonio is accredited by and is a member of the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS). MSSA is also a member of the American Montessori Society (AMS) and the International Montessori Council.

# **STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION**

The Montessori School of San Antonio admits students of any race, color, gender, creed, or national origin to all 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, gender, creed, or national origin in employment or in its administration of its educational policies, admission policies, financial aid programs, athletics, or other School-administered programs.



## **Board of Trustees**

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Board of Trustees is to ensure the institution remains financially strong for our children's children and to preserve and actively support the school in the realization of its mission.

### **About the Board**

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of MSSA and is responsible for all the affairs, property, and business of the School. The Board consists of no less than 12 and no more than 20 Trustees. Trustees serve for a term of three years. The Board conducts its business at regular or special meetings called at various times throughout the year. Meeting information may be obtained by calling the School. The Board conducts its business through several standing committees. The President of the Board may also appoint special committees from time to time.

## **Parent and Teacher Council (PTC)**

All parents and guardians of currently enrolled students, faculty, and staff are members of the PTC. No membership dues are required.

The mission of the PTC is to:

- Raise funds to enrich the curriculum and enhance the facilities and grounds;
- Promote a positive spirit and sense of service within the School and extended community;
- Support the School in the achievement of its mission and strategic initiatives.

The mission of the PTC is carried out in collaboration with the Head of School.

General meetings of the membership are held twice during the school year.

The Executive Committee of the PTC, consisting of its officers and the Head of School, conduct all formal business for the organization other than the election of officers, which is reserved for

the general membership. The Executive Committee presents a summary of PTC activities at the first general meeting each school year, adopts an annual budget for the organization, plans and implements fundraising and other activities which involve the parents, teachers and/or students of MSSA, and distributes funds raised from the PTC activities.

The success of the organization hinges on support and participation from the community. Volunteer opportunities exist in areas such as building and grounds, fundraising, classroom support, and community service. More information may be obtained by contacting the School or PTC representatives.

## **Admission and Continuation**

### **Admission**

The Montessori School of San Antonio is coeducational and accepts qualified students regardless of race, color, religion, or ethnic origin. Admission decisions are based on the space available and an evaluation of the suitability of MSSA for each student. Generally, priority consideration for enrollment is given to applicants in the following order:

1. Qualified siblings of current MSSA students;
2. Qualified students with previous Montessori experience;
3. All other qualified applicants.

Students entering at the Primary level must be at least three years old by September 1 and completely toilet trained. They must exhibit a readiness to attend school by easily separating from their parent(s), following verbal instructions, remaining focused on a task for a period of time, and displaying a sense of independence.

Every student enrolled in The Montessori School of San Antonio must be immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases in accordance with the immunization schedule adopted by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Admission at The Montessori School of San Antonio is contingent on students being current on all required immunizations. Prior to the first day of attendance, all students must present valid written evidence from their treating physician

(M.D. or D.O.), reflecting that all required immunizations have been received. See the HEALTH AND SAFETY section in this handbook for additional information.

### **Admission and Continuation Criteria**

The following criteria are considered with making admission or continuation decisions:

1. The student's learning needs – The flexibility and adaptability of the MSSA approach to differences in pace and style of learning make the program suitable for a wide range of students. However, all students at MSSA must exhibit a certain level of independence, respect and responsibility toward work, environment, peers, and faculty.
2. The context of the entire grouping which the student is to be placed – Students with special learning needs can sometimes be accommodated at MSSA. However, the number and nature of other students already placed in a level will affect the appropriateness of a student's placement in that level. Students with special needs may be re-interviewed prior to moving to the next level.
3. The student's observed and/or reported behavior – Students must be able to attend to their own work, show respect for their peers, teachers and learning environment, and behave in a manner that does not diminish the quality of the learning environment.

### **Class Placement**

#### **Peer Grouping**

MSSA wishes to maintain a strong and healthy peer group within each classroom to support independence, social cohesion, and appropriate peer interaction. The creation of peer groupings is very important; therefore, great care is taken to maintain gender and age balance. Other factors besides balancing ages and gender include academic and social abilities, special needs, and physical maturity.

#### **Siblings**

To promote each student's developing sense of independence, siblings are placed in separate classes unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise. Separate class placement supports each child's process of individualization, which is, in turn, the foundation for healthy social adaptation. This separation is especially important in the younger age levels of Primary and Lower Elementary.

## **Final Approval**

The Admissions Committee chaired by the Head of School will give final approval to class placements before they are made official or released to parents.

## **Requesting Specific Teachers**

Because many factors are considered when assigning students to classrooms, MSSA will not accept requests from parents for placement of their children in specific classrooms or with specific teachers.

## **Change in Enrollment Status**

Any change in enrollment level during the school year is initiated by the student's teacher. Parents will be asked to sign an Enrollment Contract Change Request form that is completed by the teacher and signed by the Director of Admission.

## **Re-enrollment**

Re-enrollment decisions are made by the administration and faculty based on an annual review of each student's academic progress, social and emotional development, and any special needs (if applicable). Attitudes and values expressed by the child and parents are also taken into consideration. Invitations to continue at MSSA are normally automatic yet are not guaranteed.

Re-enrollment packets are emailed to current students in early February. Submitting the completed contract online by the due date ensures a reserved space for the following school year. Parents are required to stay current with their payment installments to ensure enrollment eligibility.

Families with concerns about re-enrollment should communicate with the Admission Office as soon as possible. Every reasonable effort will be made to work with families as they consider re-enrollment.

# **Academic Integrity**

The MSSA community provides students with an environment built around a love of learning, independence, and self-reliance including a strong sense of academic integrity. No forms of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of work, or other acts of academic dishonesty are tolerated because honesty is fundamental to our respectful and caring community. Some acts of academic dishonesty include:

- Direct copying of another student's work
- Using and failing to properly credit another work (i.e. article, internet site, book) produced by a different author
- Providing or accepting answers to an assignment from a peer, tutor, or parent
- Using any unauthorized notes or "cheat sheet" during a test or quiz
- Talking, texting, passing notes, or looking at another student's work during a test or quiz

To help students understand academic dishonesty, teachers will provide students with age-appropriate lessons and resources related to proper group work, cheating, and plagiarism. Fundamentally, every student must take responsibility for his or her own work and acts. As experienced professionals, teachers are trusted to provide an environment conducive to respect and honesty, in addition to determining if an act of academic dishonesty has occurred. Repeated or multiple instances of academic dishonesty may result in consequences for major misbehaviors. The consequences of an act will be determined by the teachers and administration dependent on the severity of the event, but may include:

- A failing grade or zero on the related material
- Required submission of an alternate assignment for a reduced grade
- Contact and conference with the student's parents
- Impact on report card comments

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To graduate from The Montessori School of San Antonio a student must meet the following requirements by the end of the eighth-grade year:

- Two years of English, mathematics, science, and history
- Two years of physical education
- Community service within the MSSA community
- Earn a final grade of 70% or above in all courses

## DISCIPLINE

### Philosophy

Montessori philosophy is centered on respect for others and the environment. Chronic misbehavior causes breakdowns in respect as well as a disruptive learning environment. When

the School informs students or their families of misbehavior, immediate corrective action is expected. Severe student misconduct, particularly that which endangers the physical or emotional safety of others or him/herself, may result in immediate suspension or expulsion at the discretion of the administration.

As a Montessori school, MSSA strives for students to achieve self-discipline and self-regulation without constant threat of punishment. As with academics, this philosophy accepts that students may “mess up” from time to time as part of the learning process. The school expects a child to acknowledge wrongdoing and work to remedy the harm done by his or her actions. MSSA’s approach to discipline is more *restorative* than *punitive*.

Restorative discipline is based on the idea that misbehavior is a violation of people and relationships. Violations create obligations, and justice involves persons harmed, referred students, and school community to repair that harm. The central focus of restorative justice is that the misbehaved student is accountable to the needs of the harmed person and works to repair the harm.

### **Examples of Major Misbehaviors**

- Interference to others’ rights to physical and emotional safety
- Damage, abuse, or theft of school property Possession or use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco substances, or inhalants
- Possession or use of weapons or explosives
- Truancy from school or mandatory school activities
- Use of obscene, profane, suggestive or intimidating verbal or written language
- Conduct committed off-campus or after school hours that is illegal or reflects negatively on the school
- Misuse of technology privileges
- Defiance in the face of correction

### **Available Consequences for Major Misbehaviors**

- Exclusion from classroom
- Exclusion from campus (designated as suspension on student’s record)
- Probation – official warning that expulsion will result from next major violation
- Non-renewal of enrollment contract for following year
- Expulsion

### **Bullying**

All students have the right to an educational atmosphere that is free from verbal and/or physical abuse. Bullying is defined as a pattern of physical or verbal mistreatment of a person where an imbalance of physical or psychological power is created with the bully being stronger (or perceived to be stronger) than the victim and which causes a disruption to the learning

environment. Aggressive behavior or bullying is any behavior that may subject a student to insults, taunts, or challenges whether verbal or physical in nature, which are likely to intimidate and/or provoke a violent or disorderly response from the student being treated in this matter. This also includes the encouragement or prodding of other students to engage in these types of aggressive behaviors.

These behaviors are, but are not limited to:

- Physical: hitting, kicking, grabbing, spitting
- Verbal: name calling, racist remarks, put-downs, extortion
- Indirect: spreading rumors, wearing or possessing items depicting or implying hatred or prejudice, exclusion from peer group, taking and hiding or destroying another's papers or other possessions
- Written: threatening e-mail, notes, graffiti, social media posts, text messages
- Coercion: forcing other students into acts against their wishes

### **Bullying – Key Questions for Definition**

1. Were the alleged bullying behaviors repeated and deliberate?
2. Did the alleged bullying behaviors inflict harm or suffering?
3. Is there an imbalance of real or perceived power between the alleged victim and alleged author of the behavior?

### **Bullying – Reporting**

If a student feels that (s)he is the target of bullying behavior, (s)he should report that immediately to his/her teacher. Anyone, student or adult, with knowledge of a bullying behavior is obligated to report that behavior to the child's teacher or the appropriate Division Director. If a teacher identifies a behavior as bullying, or is not sure, (s)he is obligated to report that activity to the Division Director.

### **Disciplinary Documentation**

Once a Division Director has been made aware of a disciplinary situation, a documentation process is initiated. This documentation will include:

- Nature of incidents
- Dates and times
- Notes from conversations related to incidents
- Actions taken by the School

## **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is defined as bullying via the use of the internet, interactive and digital technologies (such as computers, tablets and/or mobile telephones.) The use of any School computer or electronic device for the purpose of cyberbullying is strictly prohibited. Cyberbullying using home-based or off-campus devices that results in a material and/or substantial disruption to the School and/or a true threat will constitute grounds for investigation as to whether the use violates applicable law or school rules. Should misuse be determined, the student may receive disciplinary consequences appropriate for the frequency and severity of the violation. Students and parents are encouraged to notify the Division Director of any incidents regarding cyberbullying immediately.

## **Registration**

During the summer, MSSA will communicate information to families about the new school year. During a normal year, a registration event is held prior to the first day of the school year. A social distanced supply pick-up replaced the in-person event this year. All supplies for remote learning are included in this bag provided by each child's teacher.

### **Primary**

New Primary students are encouraged to participate in Montessori 101, a two-day free program that introduces them to daily life at school. Montessori 101 is held during the week prior to the first day of school.

### **Lower Elementary**

New students (new to school or new to level) are encouraged to attend a half-day orientation, held on the day prior to the first full day of school. This orientation helps ensure students will start the school year successfully. More information will be emailed to each new family in early August.

## **Arrival, Dismissal, and Parking**

To facilitate our main goals of safety and efficiency during the heavy traffic of arrival and dismissal times, please follow the procedures outlined below.



## **Speed Limit**

The speed limit on the MSSA campus is 10 miles per hour. Slow down at the entry and exit points to the campus, and watch for people walking, jogging, or biking on the sidewalk along Rogers Ranch Parkway. Please watch for children while on campus.

## **Admission to Campus**

Parents are to use the front entrance ONLY (not the gymnasium doors or back gate) to enter MSSA facilities. Early Arrival and After-School Care is accessed through the gate at the south sidewalk (to the right as you face the entrance).

For the safety and security of all students and employees, all vehicles entering the campus must already have downloaded and set-up an account on the arrival application SchoolPass. Visitors must stop at the security checkpoint to receive a visitor's pass.

## **Parking and Access**

Parent and guest parking is located in front of the School and in the south parking lots. Employee parking is in the north gravel lot and the south parking lots. Park only in spaces as defined by stripes or a parking bumper. **Under no circumstances are parents to park or let children out on Rogers Ranch Parkway.** Please do not leave valuables in your vehicle, and always keep your vehicle locked and turned off when not attended.

## **Arrival**

### **Early Arrival**

Early Arrival is available starting at 7:00 AM. Parents bringing children for Early Arrival MUST walk children to the gymnasium. All children must be accompanied by an adult to Early Arrival. Families will enter the right set of double doors and remain at the gym door entrance until an employee performs a temperature screening. Both parents and children will have their temperature taken before entering the classroom. Parents will be asked if anyone in the household has had a fever or experienced COVID-19 related symptoms AND if anyone in the household has been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19.

### **Regular Arrival**

Children may not enter the main building prior to 7:50 AM The school day starts at 8:20 AM.

**In the interest of safety and security for both students and school personnel during COVID-19, walk-up arrival is no longer allowed. All student arrival must be via the car line.**

Drivers form a single line as they enter campus and move slowly with traffic as they approach the unloading zone. Upper Elementary and Middle School students may be dropped off near the entrance to the gym. Their drivers may then use the center lane to exit, bypassing around Primary and Elementary traffic.

MSSA staff assigned to colored cones will start opening car doors at 7:50 AM and will stop promptly at 8:20 AM Please stay in line and pull forward to the next available cone; do not bypass the car in front of you to get to an open cone.

COVID-19 precautions: Morning greeters will do a temperature check for every person in the car as well as a verbal questionnaire which will include the following questions:

- Has anyone in your household had a fever or experienced COVID-19 related symptoms?
- Has anyone in your household been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19?

If anyone in the car has a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or above, or answers “yes” to either of the questions, the students in the car will not be permitted to attend school and must follow the COVID-19 protocol (outlined in the health and safety section).

Morning greeters will indicate the end of arrival by picking up their cones, at which time one more group of cars will be permitted to stop at stations and unload. Students arriving after this are considered tardy and must wait in their cars for an available staff member to conduct a health screening.

Child car seats must be installed on the curb side (passenger side) of the vehicle. Upon entering the loading zone, please be sure that your child’s car seat is unbuckled for a prompt exit.

Please help your child have his/her lunch box in hand, backpack ready, and if necessary, his/her coat on **before** reaching the loading zone. Waiting to gather items until the car door is open delays traffic flow.

If your child is not ready to get out of the car (still eating breakfast, having difficulty saying good-bye, etc.), please pull ahead to the very end of the sidewalk, out of the arrival zone, to help keep traffic moving while you tend to your child’s needs.

Once your child has safely exited from your vehicle, please proceed forward to exit the campus so as not to impede traffic flow.

### **Late Arrival**

All students who arrive after 8:20 AM and after all staff have gone inside **must** call the front desk for assistance. A staff member will meet you at the car to do a health screening which will include a temperature check and verbal questionnaire.

**Under no circumstances should a child be allowed to enter the building unescorted.**

### **Tips for Parents on Separation: Saying Good-Bye**

*It can be difficult for parents and young children to separate at the beginning of a school year, as they each feel a bit nervous when they leave one another in a new situation. If this is your child's first year at MSSA, we encourage you to visit the campus a few times before the start of school to allow him/her to become familiar with the new setting. In general, a short, positive good-bye is easiest for the child. A prolonged good-bye often makes the situation more difficult.*

*Please do not walk your child up the walkway or to the door or react with alarm if your child is hesitant about separation. The teachers and assistants are very experienced in helping children through these situations.*

*It is very important to reassure your child about where you will be during the day, and what time you will pick him/her up. Some children may be apprehensive for a while during the first few days, but reassurance and positive parental attitudes usually alleviate fears.*

### **Dismissal**

**In the interest of safety and security for students as well as school personnel during COVID-19, parents may not pick up students on foot. All students are dismissed through the car line.**

All vehicles must already have downloaded and set-up an account on the arrival application SchoolPass. The dismissal line forms on the right side of the driveway, and loops through the large parking lot, back to the front of the main building. By the time you pull into the loading zone in front of the school, your child(ren) will be waiting for you.

### **Dismissal for Primary Half-Day Program**

Students in the Primary Half-Day program will be seated in the loading zone in front of the School. Staff members will assist children getting into vehicles starting at 11:45 AM. Children

not picked up by 12:00 noon will be taken to the After-School Program zone area and the family's account will be charged accordingly. Students are not permitted to wait for their parents in the front lobby.

### **Dismissal for After-School Activities**

Parents picking up children enrolled in after-school activities or athletics will be given instructions on where to park or pick up their children by the instructor of each activity.

### **Going Home Via a Different Method, or With a Different Driver**

Please follow the steps listed in the arrival application SchoolPass for notifying the School your child will be picked up by a different person or is going home at a different time than usual (i.e. going home at Regular Dismissal instead of going to After-School Care.) Please inform your substitute drivers that they may be required to show a picture ID when picking up children.

### **Early Departure**

The time at the end of a school day is important for closure and a proper start to the next day. **Except in cases of genuine emergency, MSSA will not interrupt a classroom for the purposes of checking out a student after 2:30 PM (1:30 PM on Wednesdays).** Please do not schedule standing appointments such as lessons that require early or preferential dismissal.

If you must take your child out of school early, please notify the school using the SchoolPass application before 2pm.

Once you have arrived at school, please remain in your car and call the front desk. We will contact your child's teacher and the student will be sent to the lobby and be escorted out to your car.

If your child returns to school the same day, please remain in your car and call the front desk for assistance. A staff member will meet you at the car to conduct a health screening which will include a temperature check and verbal questionnaire.

Please consider the attendance requirements when scheduling appointments or making plans for your child during school hours. A student who leaves school before 10:00 AM is considered absent for the day. A student who leaves between 10:00 AM and 12:00 noon or does not arrive until 12:00 noon is considered absent for half the day.

# Attendance

Because MSSA is in the Northeast Independent School District, we follow its guidelines for attendance (*information obtained from the NEISD Student Handbook for Elementary Schools*):

- School attendance is required by law. Bringing your child to school late or removing him/her prior to the end of the school day is not advised.
- State law requires that a student may not be given credit for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the time the class is offered.

Although MSSA is a private school, its curriculum still depends on consistency and continuous progress. Every time a student is absent from school for any reason, there is a period of readjustment as he tries to get back into the routine of work. Chronic absences and tardiness affect academic achievements.

Student attendance is recorded on all Student Progress Reports. Attendance and tardy records are a consideration in the admission process of most private schools. A student's attendance record may also be a factor in other academic opportunities.

## Excused absences and tardies include:

- Student illness
- Illness or death in the family
- Natural disasters, weather or road conditions making travel dangerous
- Observance of religious holy days
- Attendance at an authorized school function
- Doctor or dentist appointment
- Quarantine
- Admissions visit to another school. Visits will be approved by the Program Director.

Parents requesting an excused absence should call the school or send a note explaining the absence. Students must be present for at least 50% of the school day in order to participate in after-school activities and athletic events.

Students who visit other schools and provide documentation of the visit will be allowed to participate in after-school activities and athletic events.

### Unexcused absences and tardies include:

- Absent or late with no notice of reason
- Being sent home because of violation of school rule or policy

### **Tardiness**

Practical life skills are an important component of the Montessori curriculum. One such essential skill is ***punctuality***, and parents play a major role in teaching and modeling it.

MSSA staff assigned to colored cones will start opening car doors at 7:50 AM and will stop promptly at 8:20 AM. Morning greeters will indicate the end of arrival by picking up their cones, at which time one more group of cars will be permitted to stop at stations and unload. **Students arriving after this are considered tardy and must be walked into school and signed in at the Front Desk in the Late Arrival Log.** Do not drop your children off and allow them to enter the building unescorted.

The student day starts at 8:20 AM. Please take traffic congestion and weather conditions into consideration when planning your commute to school. Have your children at school *prior* to 8:20 so that they can be ready to start their day.

### **Absence**

When children will be absent from school for any reason, please update this on the SchoolPass app as soon as possible. A student who leaves school prior to 10:00 AM and does not return is considered absent for the entire day. A student leaving between 10:00 AM and 12:00 noon, or not arriving at school until 12:00 noon, is considered absent for half a day. Students who have been absent must bring a written, signed statement explaining the reason for such absence. The statement may be from the parent/guardian or the professional office visited.

## **PARENT-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP**

The Montessori School of San Antonio is accredited by and is a member of the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS). MSSA is also a member of the American Montessori Society (AMS) and the International Montessori Council.

As a family in partnership with The Montessori School of San Antonio, you may expect all employees to:

- actively participate in the fulfillment of our mission statement
- provide a safe caring environment for your child
- regularly communicate about your child and the School
- extend invitations to be involved
- guide students with consistent values and fair discipline
- openly and directly communicate with students, parents, and colleagues

As an institution dedicated to meeting the academic and social needs of our students, we expect from each parent:

- agreement with and support of our mission statement
- communication with us about your child
- sharing any religious, cultural, medical, psychological, or personal information that the School may need to best serve your child and the school community
- attendance at meetings and events of the classrooms, levels, and school;
- involvement in appropriate ways
- support of our values and discipline practices;
- communication that is open and appropriately channeled;
- cooperation with and support of the School's policies and procedures;
- efforts to understand Montessori education through observation, participation in parent education classes, and reading (see the parent resource center in the MSSA Library);
- respectful communications;
- coverage of all legal, substitute, and other fees incurred by the School in matters in which MSSA employees are requested to give testimony in legal proceedings initiated by one or both parents in a family.

A positive and constructive working relationship between The Montessori School of San Antonio and the parent body is essential to the fulfillment of our educational mission.

Therefore, MSSA reserves the right to dismiss or deny the privilege of reenrollment to a student if we reasonably conclude that the actions of a parent or guardian impede a positive and constructive relationship or otherwise seriously interfere with the accomplishment of our mission.

## Communication

Communication is a two-way street. MSSA makes every effort to communicate openly and clearly with our families about student progress, school events, and general information throughout the school year. In return, we ask that you keep us informed about your child, keep

your contact information updated, and let us know about anything going on at home that might affect your child at school.

Parents are reminded that MSSA is a business enterprise. The school's professional staff is attending to both routine tasks and special projects that make high demands on their time. Therefore, if you wish to meet with any teacher or administrator, please call and set an appointment. This will help the employee allocate appropriate time and attention to you.

When parents are separated, divorced or not living at the same address, MSSA will keep both parents informed of all school matters as well as their child's progress. An exception may be requested by a court order from either or both parents; the request will require full consideration of the legal ramifications and other relevant matters, to the effect that dual communication is not required, desired, or to be pursued.

Unless an exception (documented by a signed court order) is granted, MSSA will adhere to the following.

- Both parents will receive copies of all mailed progress reports, announcements, and invitations at their respective addresses (if addresses are provided).
- The Weekly Dispatch will be e-mailed to all parents on Thursday who provide us with their e-mail address(es).
- Both parents are equally welcomed at all school events.

It is the parent's responsibility to provide the School with the most recent court order to honor.

## **How to Contact Us**

### **Office Hours**

The Front Desk is staffed, and the phone is answered from 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM. The office is closed on weekends and for school holidays.

### **Voicemail System**

Each faculty and staff member at MSSA has a private voice mail box for individual messages. During the day, the receptionist will transfer calls to voicemail, or directly to the individual staff member if appropriate. After hours, callers can either dial a direct extension number, press "2" for the school directory, or press "4" to leave a general message at the Front Desk.

General messages are checked between 7:30 to 8:30 AM each school day. Faculty and staff check their voicemail messages frequently during the day.



**Calls will not be transferred directly into the classroom during the school day.** Emergency messages for students and teachers will be hand-delivered to the classroom by a staff member.

### **E-Mail System**

Every MSSA employee has an e-mail account. E-mail addresses are listed in the School Directory and on the MSSA website at **[www.montessoriSA.org](http://www.montessoriSA.org)**. Please allow teachers a reasonable amount of time to respond to your e-mail before attempting to contact them through other means of communication.

### **Visiting School**

For the safety and security of all children as well as MSSA employees, all persons entering the building must remain outside by the front door until a staff member greets you to do a temperature check. All visitors must also check in on the school pass kiosk in the main lobby. This policy applies to everyone, including parents, board members, tutors, contractors, and anyone else who is not a student or MSSA employee. There will be no exceptions to this policy. Please remember that this is a security issue, not a nuisance policy.

Parents are not permitted to go to their child's classroom without pre-scheduling an appointment, as it is disruptive to the child, the teacher, and the entire class. All communications to students during the school day will be handled through the Front Desk.

We do not encourage items to be dropped off during the school day. However, if necessary, your items will be left at the front desk and delivered to the classroom.

### **Keep Us Informed**

Please update your family information (address, phone numbers, email, medical, and emergency contacts) online via FACTS Family Portal. In case of an emergency, this is the information we will use to contact you. For assistance with the FACTS Family Portal, call the School and ask for the Help Desk.

Information regarding your child's current interests or difficulties (divorce, death, family problems) is important to share with your child's teacher. This communication will be held in strict confidentiality. Please request a phone or in-person conference with your teacher to discuss these issues.

### **The Weekly Dispatch**

Every Thursday, important school information is sent electronically to parents in the Weekly Dispatch e-mail. Each parent may list two email addresses to receive the Dispatch as well as all

other school information. The Weekly Dispatch contains information such as lunch menus, school-sponsored events, order forms for school merchandise, reminders about deadlines, and other necessary communication.

### **Website**

The MSSA website, **[www.montessoriSA.org](http://www.montessoriSA.org)**, is a prime source of information about the school.

### **Calendar**

The MSSA calendar is published annually and is available on the MSSA website. Every attempt is made to ensure its accuracy, but some changes may be unavoidable. Changes will be announced in the Weekly Dispatch. A more detailed calendar is also provided every week in the Weekly Dispatch.

### **FACTS Family Portal**

MSSA uses a secure web-based portal, FACTS Family Portal, which is accessible through [www.montessoriSA.org](http://www.montessoriSA.org) and allows parents to view their children's information, family financial account, order lunches, and make payments. FACTS Family Portal also provides access to school information such as calendars, events, newsletters, surveys, and more..

### **Student Directory**

The Student Directory is published in mid-September, and one printed copy is provided to each family. Additional printed copies may be purchased for \$10 at the Front Desk or printed for free from FACTS Family Portal. The directory is published as a service to our families and **may not be used for solicitation or as a mailing list for business or other organizations.**

### **TeamSnap**

For students enrolled in competitive athletics, TeamSnap is the primary method of communication for last-minute schedule changes, practice cancellations, or other important details related to the student's sport. TeamSnap messages are sent via text to parent's cell phones. Data charges may apply.

### **Parent Conference**

The most effective way to communicate about your child's development is through an in-depth conference where parents and teachers discuss the physical, emotional, social and intellectual progress of the student. Two conferences per year (once in Fall and once in Spring) are

recommended. However, parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher whenever a concern arises. Conferences will take place via virtual platforms for the 2020-2021 school year.

### **Addressing Concerns and Conflicts**

Direct communication in person with the party or parties involved nearly always resolves conflicts or misunderstandings. Should direct communication not bring a satisfactory solution, parents may contact the Program Director or Head of School for help to resolve an issue.

If a parent feels that a decision of the Head of School conflicts with school policy, (s)he may submit a letter to the President of the Board of Trustees grieving the decision.

### **Telephone Use**

Students may use the telephone in the Front Office only with permission from the teacher. Use of the phone will be limited to emergencies and urgent situations. Students may not use the phone to arrange after-school plans.

### **Cell Phones**

Students may carry cell phones on campus if they are turned completely off during the school day and kept out of sight in a backpack, purse, or pocket. Cell phones may be used on campus only with teacher or staff permission. Cell phones will be confiscated if used inappropriately, and a parent must retrieve the phone after meeting with an administrator to review this cell phone policy.

## **Dress Code**

MSSA does not require the wearing of uniforms. Instead, we have a dress code that allows students to have a sense of personal choice while reflecting a courteous and non-distracting demeanor.

In general, student dress should reflect community values, be safe, non-distracting, comfortable, and facilitate freedom of movement for indoor and outdoor activities. Clothing with vacation images, cartoon or movie characters, products or brand names disrupts the working atmosphere of the classroom.

When students are in violation of the Dress Code, parents will receive email notification of the nature of the infraction. Parents are expected to acknowledge the infraction and take corrective action.

### **Lost and Found**

To help reduce the number of items in Lost and Found at the end of each quarter, please label all your child's items with his/her first initial and last name. Lost and found items are located in the Front Office. Small, valuable items that are found are kept at the Front Desk. The School cannot be responsible for lost clothing or items, labeled or unlabeled. Unclaimed clothing and other items are periodically donated to charity.

### **Spirit Wear**

MSSA offers t-shirts, jackets, and other items imprinted with the School's logo. These items are available for sale throughout the year. All students participating in off-campus activities such as field trips are encouraged to wear a MSSA branded t-shirt.

### **Physical Education Uniforms**

Middle School students are expected to dress out for PE every day. The PE uniform consists of any MSSA t-shirt as well as MSSA PE uniform shorts, available for purchase through the front desk. Appropriate footwear is also required. Due to COVID-19 Middle School students are encouraged to come to school dressed in clothes and footwear that are appropriate for physical education. Locker Rooms will be closed for health and safety precautions.

### **Primary Level Dress Code**

Primary level children are just developing their self-esteem. Therefore, clothing at this level should promote independence, be safe, non-distracting and comfortable, and facilitate freedom of movement.

All Primary students should have a complete set of under- and outer-clothing to change into when accidents occur. Please label all clothing with your child's name, and place items in a Zip-Loc bag that is also marked with your child's name. If your child is enrolled in After-School Care, please provide another set of clothing to be kept in the Child Care Room.

<b>PRIMARY LEVEL DRESS CODE</b>	
All clothing should be neat, clean, and labeled with the student's name.	
<b>ACCEPTABLE DRESS</b>	<b>EXAMPLES OF NON-ACCEPTABLE DRESS</b>
Shirts in solid colors, stripes, plaids, checks, and overall prints.	Clothing with distracting graphics, words, brand names, logos or cartoon images are discouraged.
Pants/shorts with elastic waistbands to facilitate independent restroom use	Pants/shorts with holes, tight waistlines, belts, excessive ornamentation
Dresses, skirts, shorts, skorts or pants of modest length. Shorts are required under dresses/skirts for gross motor movement.	Shirts or dresses that can expose the midriff
Athletic shoes or soft-soled shoes that allow for physical activity and safety.	Footwear that does not have a heel strap, Crocs, boots with heels, flip-flops, thongs, clogs, mules, “heely” roller shoes, shoes with lights
Non-distracting hats for outdoor use only	Berets, caps, or hats worn inside
Stud earrings or never-ending hoops that hug the earlobe; simple necklaces or pendants	Jewelry that is noisy or dangling
	Nail polish or make-up
	Tattoos, stickers or glitter on bodies or clothing

All clothing, backpacks, and lunch boxes should be labeled with the student’s name. Please consider purchasing a hooded raincoat for your child to wear on rainy days.

### **Elementary and Middle School Level Dress Code**

Students at the Elementary and Middle School levels are particularly sensitive to peer considerations. Clothing should reflect an attitude of dignity toward themselves, their work, and their peers.

## **ELEMENTARY and MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL DRESS CODE**

All clothing should be neat, clean, and labeled with the student's name.

Clothing must fit properly in length and size.

<b>ACCEPTABLE DRESS</b>	<b>EXAMPLES OF NON-ACCEPTABLE DRESS</b>
Solid-color pants, capris, skirts, shorts, skorts that have waistbands fitted at the waist	Pants, skirts, shorts or skorts that fit very low on the hip
Any shade of denim jeans with a waist	Extremely over-sized pants or pants worn below the waist.
Striped or solid color shirts	Clothing with distracting graphics, words, brand names, or logos, or cartoon images are discouraged.
Jackets, denim jackets, sweaters and sweatshirts	
Non-distracting hats for outdoor use only	Hats, caps, berets or other headgear worn inside
Soft-soled shoes, sandals with heel strap. Athletic shoes are required for P.E. and music	Boots with heels, flip-flops, thongs, clogs, mules, "heely" roller shoes, shoes with lights
Stud earrings or never-ending hoops	Jewelry that is noisy or excessively large or dangling
Students may wear non-distracting make-up to school, but may not bring it to apply at school	Tattoos, stickers, glitter on bodies or clothing

All clothing, backpacks, and lunch boxes should be labeled with the student's name. Please consider purchasing a hooded raincoat for your child to wear on rainy days.

## **Food at School**

## **Special Dietary Restrictions**

Some students may follow a special diet for religious or medical reasons. **Please be sure to notify the teachers if your child has allergies or should avoid certain foods.** These restrictions will be considered when planning snacks or on days when the class prepares a special feast.

## **Snacks**

All students may bring their own, individually packaged snacks each day.

## **Snack Guidelines**

### **Ideas for Snack Food**

Remember: “Variety is the spice of life.”

Please make sure that your child’s snacks are individually packaged.

### ***Foods***

One of the following foods or food combinations:

1. Crackers or breads with or without spreads such as spreadable cheese.
2. Fruits or vegetables with or without a dip, or with cream cheese.
3. Cheeses to slice or cube.
4. Dried fruits.
5. Yogurt (not containing artificial sweetener).
6. Hard boiled eggs.
7. Popcorn.
8. Plain tortilla chips with refried beans and cheese.

Please avoid sweet, sugary food (containing aspartame or artificial sweeteners), pre-packaged meat products, and food that is artificially brightly colored. Please do not send foods containing nuts as some children have a severe nut allergy. “Slurpable” items such as Go-Gurt, GoGo Squeeze, or applesauce pouches are discouraged. When in doubt, please check with the teacher.

**If your child is allergic to any food, please communicate this in writing to our staff.**

## **Lunch**

Students are encouraged to bring a well-balanced and nutritious lunch in a reusable lunch bag. Please do not send foods that are overly processed or high in sugar. Pack quantities of food that are appropriate for your child. Uneaten food will be returned home so you can judge how much

your child is eaten each day. *Items such as candy, chocolate, chocolate cookies, chocolate milk, gum, soft drink or “slurp able” items such as G0-Gurt, Go Go SqueeZ, and applesauce pouches should not be packed in your child’s lunch. Pouch- style juices such as Capri Sun are discouraged because they tend to spill easily.*

Please be sure your child can manage his/her lunch containers without assistance. Microwaves are available in the LE, UE and Middle School classrooms for students to heat their lunches or snacks. To avoid scalds or burns, there is a one-minute limit to heating items in the microwave.

## **Lunch Program**

MSSA offers the option of ordering a nutritious catered lunch daily for students who have pre-purchased a meal. Lunch is delivered in a pre-packaged disposable carton with utensils. Monthly menus are available on the FACTS Family Portal and published in the weekly Dispatch. Please note that lunches must be ordered and paid for in advance. Refunds will not be issued in the case of a student’s absence.

If a student forgets his or her lunch a prepackaged healthy snack pack will be provided. Outside food deliveries are not permitted.

Please note additional details about the Lunch Program is shared every Thursday in the weekly dispatch.

## **Field Trips**

During a normal school year, field trips enhance the MSSA program by providing learning opportunities that are unique to a particular subject, or that would otherwise not be available at the MSSA campus. Written notification will be sent to parents prior to each scheduled outing, and a signed permission slip must be returned before the child will be allowed to participate. Parents may contact the teacher if they do not wish for their child to attend.

### **Field Trip Drivers / Chaperones**

While MSSA uses bus transportation for field trips whenever practical, the School sometimes relies on the generosity of parent volunteers to transport and chaperone students. To become a qualified volunteer driver, parents must complete the “Volunteer Driver Information and Background Check” form (forms are distributed at Registration and are available in the Front Office of the School.) The information provided on this form will be kept confidential. Parents must also provide a copy of their driver’s license and a copy of their current automobile insurance card.



As a service to volunteers who have other students at MSSA, child care will be offered to their MSSA students not participating in the field trip at no charge if space is available. Arrangements for this child care should be made through the Coordinator of Child Care Program. Siblings may not tag-along on field trips.

## Health and Safety

The safety and security of students and staff is the number one priority at MSSA.

### Emergency Contact Information

Your child's FACTS Family Portal record provides all emergency contact information needed to reach you or your designated alternate(s) should your child need your immediate attention. Please let those whom you have designated as your emergency contacts know that we may be contacting them if you cannot be reached. **Please review and update your child's information online via FACTS Family Portal.**

Students who need to be sent home because of illness or another medical situation must be picked up **within one hour** of the parent or emergency contact being reached. The School does not have the personnel nor facilities to care for sick children for an extended period of time. Students who are not picked up within one hour will have a \$5.50 charge per hour added to the parent's account.

### Health Records

Every student enrolled in The Montessori School of San Antonio must be immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases in accordance with the immunization schedule adopted by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Attendance at The Montessori School of San Antonio is contingent on students being current on all required immunizations. Prior to the first day of school, all students must present valid written evidence from their treating physician (M.D. or D.O.), reflecting that all required immunizations have been received.

For a list of immunizations required by Texas law, please refer to the Texas Department of State Health Services website, [www.dshs.state.tx.us](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us).

The only exception to the foregoing requirement is a notarized medical exemption signed by the student's treating physician (M.D. or D.O.). All students requesting a medical exemption must

provide valid written evidence reflecting the medical basis for the requested exemption. The affidavit for health reasons is only valid for one year at a time.

**The Montessori School of San Antonio does not consider conscience-based exemptions.**

**Statement from the Texas Attorney General:**

*Conscientious objections or waivers, which may be permissible for attendance in public schools, do not qualify as an exemption in Private Schools. A private school that does not accept state tax funds is not required to accept for enrollment a child who has received an exemption for the immunizations required by the Texas Health and Safety Code.*

*(Atty. Gen. OP GA-0420).*

**Health Screenings**

**Hearing and Vision Screening**

The Texas Department of Health requires that all children enrolled in public or private schools or childcare facilities must be screened for possible vision and hearing problems at the following ages or grade levels:

- 4-years-old by September 1<sup>st</sup>
- Kindergarten
- 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade
- All other first-time entrants (over the age of 4) to the school.

For the convenience of our parents, MSSA provides certified screeners to perform hearing and vision screenings at the School. The screenings are conducted in September. If you do not want your child screened, please contact the School's health office.

**Visual Exam for Acanthosis Nigricans**

In compliance with state regulation, MSSA will screen children in grades 1, 3, 5, and 7 for Acanthosis Nigricans (AN). AN is characterized by darkening of the skin on a person's neck and may indicate a pre-diabetic condition. This exam will take place at the same time as hearing and vision screening. If you do not want your child screened, please contact the Health Office.

**Spinal Screening**

Texas State law requires spinal screenings for girls who are ages 10 and 12 (as of September 1), and boys who are age 13 (as of September 1). Students will be screened at school by State-Certified screeners. Parents who wish for this service to be performed by their family doctor must submit a completed Spinal Screening Form to the Health Office.

## **Illness and Communicable Disease**

### **PLEASE READ CAREFULLY TO PREVENT SCHOOL-WIDE EXPOSURE.**

Parents must keep their child home if he/she is ill. The following criteria are used to determine when a child will be sent home or not allowed to return to school due to illness.

#### **Fever**

Children with a temperature of 100 degrees F or higher must stay home. They will be readmitted when the temperature has been normal, without the influence of ibuprofen or acetaminophen, for a full 24-hour period.

#### **COVID-19**

- If your child has any combination of the symptoms below coupled with a fever, the protocol is they must stay home.
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chills
- Muscle Pain
- Headache
- Sore Throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Known contact with COVID-19 illness

In the event your child has tested positive or exhibits symptoms for COVID-19, in order to return to school:

- A child must be fever-free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications
- 10 calendar days must have passed since onset of illness
- Symptoms have improved (cough, breathing, etc.)
- One COVID-19 test performed with a negative result or clearance by a healthcare provider

In the event a child exhibits COVID-19 symptoms while at school:

- The child will be separated from other children
- Families will be notified
- The child must be picked up within an hour
- Children may return to campus once the above criteria for returning to school are met

### **Vomiting and/or Diarrhea**

Children must stay home if they are vomiting or have diarrhea. They will be readmitted when the symptoms have been absent for a full 24-hour period.

### **Chickenpox**

Children must stay home after the first rash eruption occurs. They may be readmitted when all vesicles have formed scabs and the temperature has been normal for a full 24-hour period.

### **Communicable Rashes and Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)**

A child with a rash or bacterial conjunctivitis must stay home. Re-admission will require either: absence of the rash or redness in the eye; a re-admission note from a physician; or proof of the administration of medication.

### **Head Lice**

Head lice do not carry disease, nor does their presence indicate poor hygiene. However, children who have head lice or nits (lice eggs) must be treated immediately to prevent further spread in school. Parents will be asked to pick up children who have lice or nits. Children will be re-admitted as soon as they have been successfully treated and all nits have been removed. Upon returning to school, children will be rechecked for satisfactory treatment. MSSA has a “no nit” policy, so children who are clear of live lice but continue to have nits in their hair will still be sent home until all nits are removed.

### **Ringworm**

Children must stay home until control measures have been instituted (e.g., covering the affected area).

### **Strep Throat**

Children must stay home until prescription antibiotics have been administered for at least 24 hours and fever is no longer present.

### **Poison Ivy**

Children whose poison ivy includes obvious and extensive weeping must stay home.

**Please call the School office if your child contracts a communicable disease (e.g., COVID-19, strep, lice, pink-eye) other than the common cold.** Under Health Department rules, the School is obligated to notify families of students who are likely to have come in contact with infected persons.

A child who becomes ill at school will be sent to the Health Office to be examined and/or given a quiet place to rest. If necessary, the parent or designated alternate will be notified to pick up the child from the Health Office.

If an accident or other serious medical emergency arises, the parent or designated alternate will be notified. If immediate medical attention is indicated and no responsible, designated adult can be located, the child will be taken to an emergency room of the nearest hospital or to the physician listed on his/her Student Medical Form.

Please help your child pay close attention to personal hygiene.

### **Infectious Illnesses**

The School recognizes that infectious illness, including Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and its related conditions (both symptomatic and asymptomatic), have a tragic impact on those afflicted and involve significant and sensitive issues for students, faculty, and staff. Parents or guardians of students with an infectious illness (including AIDS) are expected to inform the Head of School of their child's medical condition so that the School can effectively implement the provisions of this policy. Accordingly, the School will take appropriate precautions to ensure that any health and safety concerns arising out of an individual's illness are managed in accordance with current medical knowledge and procedures. The School holds all information which it receives about the medical condition of an employee or student with an infectious illness in confidence.

### **Medications**

Children free of fever for at least 24 hours and clearly free of communicable disease may return to school even if taking medication. However, the State of Texas mandates specific safety guidelines for the administration of medications at school. Therefore, the School will be allowed to administer medications only under the following conditions.

### **Prescription and Non-Prescription Medications**

For a student to receive prescription and/or non-prescription medication at school, the parent must complete and sign an "Authorization for Medication" form (available at the Front Desk). **NO MEDICATION WILL BE ADMINISTERED WITHOUT THIS FORM.** All medications are kept locked in a cabinet in the Health Office and are administered by designated school personnel. Only prescription and non-prescription **UNEXPIRED** medications provided by the parent will be dispensed with the parent's authorization.

- Please send all medications to the Front Desk with the completed “Authorization for Medication” form (available at the Front Desk).
- Please make sure the medication is sent in its original container with proper instructions indicating the name of the person to receive the medicine, the required dose and frequency, the need for refrigeration (if required), and the name of the prescribing physician (if applicable).
- Students may not carry medication to school. This includes non-prescription medication such as aspirin, Tylenol, ibuprofen, or cough drops.
- No student is allowed to self-medicate while at school unless special arrangements have been made with approval from the school’s Health Services Coordinator.

Please have your child’s physician inform the office in writing (may be faxed) of any change in dosage or discontinuance of medication.

First aid medications to be applied topically (e.g., Neosporin, Benadryl spray/lotion, hydrocortisone cream) in the event of a cut, scrape, or insect bite will be administered only with parental authorization indicated on the Student Medical Form. Likewise, cough drops will only be dispensed with parental authorization

### **Epinephrine Auto-Injectors (Epi Pens)**

In June 2017, the State of Texas passed a bill allowing private schools to stock unprescribed epinephrine auto-injectors (Epi Pens). The School has authorized and trained the Health Services Coordinator to administer an Epi Pen to a student who is believed to be experiencing anaphylaxis while on campus or attending a school event. The Health Services Coordinator has trained and equipped other employees to effectuate the purposes of this policy. The School will have at least one employee who is authorized and trained to administer an Epi Pen during all hours the school is open. Epi Pens will be stored in a secured location in the Health Office which will be easily accessible to school personnel who are trained in their use. No later than the tenth business day after an unprescribed Epi Pen is administered, MSSA shall report to the health care professional who prescribed the Epi Pen, the Commissioner of State Health Services, and the Texas Education Agency.

### **Special Health Considerations**

If your student has any special physical condition that might affect him/her while at school, please send a written, detailed description of the condition, its approximate duration, and what steps are necessary to address the student’s needs.

### **Animal Safety**

For the protection of students and staff with animal allergies or with susceptibility to animal-borne diseases, MSSA does not allow students or parents to bring animals, reptiles, amphibians, or insects on campus at any time unless specifically cleared with a teacher in advance. To eliminate the risk of biting, MSSA does not allow dogs on campus.

The MSSA grounds contain undeveloped wooded areas, and deer, foxes, raccoons, owls, snakes, and other animals are occasionally seen on campus. All students and parents should avoid contact with animals, insects, snakes, lizards, etc. Feeding such animals is prohibited (except for the filling of bird feeders).

### **Sun Protection**

Because all students go outside every day, we recommend that sunscreen be applied daily before your child comes to school. We also encourage students to keep a hat at school for use during the outside period. Elementary and Middle School students who go outdoors later in the day or who wish to reapply sunscreen prior to midday recess are allowed and encouraged to do so. At the Primary level, teachers and after-school program personnel will apply sunscreen supplied and authorized by the parent.

### **Suspected Child Abuse**

Texas State law requires teachers, administrative personnel, and other employees of any public or private school to report all suspected incidents of child abuse to the appropriate child protective agency. Child abuse includes physical abuse, physical neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional maltreatment. The MSSA faculty and staff recognize that this subject is extremely sensitive and always requires the utmost confidentiality.

## **Holidays and Birthdays**

### **Birthdays**

A student's birthday may be recognized at school as a "celebration of life." Please discuss the birthday "ritual" with your child's teacher. In the interest of fairness to all students, party invitations to events outside of school hours should be mailed to avoid hurt feelings to those who may not be invited to an event. **Under no circumstances will there be distribution of invitations at school, limousine pickups, or disruptive deliveries during school hours (balloons, flowers, etc.)** In addition, the School will not email invitations to parents.

## **Holidays**

The MSSA approach to holidays with its students is grounded in three basic principles — inclusion, origins, and authenticity.

### **Concerning Inclusion**

Montessori education embraces the study of mankind as a whole. Geography, history, and human culture are approached from a global perspective in keeping with the basic principle of “whole to part” that is central to Dr. Montessori’s concept of “cosmic education”—the word “cosmic” deriving from the Greek *kosmos*, meaning ordered, harmonious universe.

### **Concerning Origins**

Holidays generally have cultural-historical roots of great significance that derive from fundamental human needs. It is from this perspective that holidays are researched, discussed, and celebrated at MSSA. It is our belief that students are both enriched culturally and enlarged in tolerance through developing an understanding and sensitivity to different cultural and religious traditions. While MSSA as an institution does not promote any single viewpoint, we do encourage and support the thoughtful and respectful expression of the different national, ethnic, and religious backgrounds and traditions represented within the school community.

### **Concerning Authenticity**

MSSA stands on the principle that children develop their unique capacities and gifts through genuine self-expression within the context of a caring and respectful community of learners. Hence, we will choose and support authentic, student-generated expressions over commercial or mass-produced products in connection to a holiday.

A practical outcome of these three principles might appear as follows for St. Valentine’s Day. A Lower Elementary teacher selects some books and encourages students to research the origins of the holiday, as well as where and how it is celebrated in different parts of the world. Concurrently, specialists in music, Spanish, or the library support this inquiry. Students then share their findings with one another in a group setting where all can benefit by the various research efforts. Finally, students have the opportunity, using various materials available in the classroom, to create their own expression of affection for a family member or dear friend. If you have questions, concerns, or input regarding a holiday, please contact your child’s teacher well in advance of the holiday.

### ***Halloween***

Please do not send your child to school with a costume or mask.



### ***Christmas/Hanukkah***

We ask that the children not exchange gifts with one another within the classroom environment or anywhere on campus.

### ***Valentine's Day***

Valentine's cards and candy should not be exchanged at school.

## **Physical Education**

All students participate in Motor Skills or Physical Education (PE) on a regular basis. Athletic shoes are required for these activities. **Please make sure your child wears or brings athletic shoes and socks every day.** If your child needs to refrain from physical activity for short- or long-term periods, please advise your child's teacher **in writing**. Unless the teacher receives **written notification**, the teacher will assume that your child is able to participate in Motor Skills/PE. Appropriate clothing for PE is addressed in the dress code. Middle School students are required to wear a MSSA PE uniform. The PE uniform consists of any MSSA t-shirt as well as MSSA PE uniform shorts, available for purchase. Appropriate footwear is also required.

## **Athletics**

**\*The following guidelines for Athletics are to be applied during a normal school year. Athletics at the School are temporarily postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

### **Athletic Philosophy**

Each child shall have the opportunity to experience individual accomplishment, teamwork, self-discipline, and sportsmanship. Children are provided with high standards for personal wellness as well as venues for athletic trials and successes. These opportunities, along with the academic possibilities at MSSA, will help create well-rounded, productive individuals.

### **Fees and Registration**

Athletic programs are held after-school and therefore have fees and schedules specific to offerings. Registration is done twice a year through Active in the fall (for fall and winter sports) and spring (for Spring and end-of-year sports). The deadline to register will always be posted in the fall/spring brochure. Please note the deadline dates; some may vary.

## **Levels of Athletics**

MSSA's Athletic Department has consciously developed a program to promote competitive youth sports participation starting at Lower Elementary first grade (LE1). We encourage and support multiple sport athletes. The framework behind the athletic program is to foster sports skills, physical fitness, performance, character, teamwork, and fun in a productive environment designed for development. Our athletic program aspires to provide our student-athletes tools that will carry on with them for a lifetime. The athletic program is committed to providing opportunities for all interested students, and as such, all players registered before the deadline for each sport are guaranteed to be rostered on a team.

### **Developmental Team (Youth teams) Discover, Learn & Play\***

Grade levels LE1-UE4 primarily fall under this category. If multiple teams are needed to provide adequate playing time, teams will be organized without consideration of performance. This level is focused on fundamental movement, basic sport skills, rules of play, physical fitness, and having fun in a safe, motivational environment. Game playing time will be distributed equally.

### **Intermediate Team (Junior Teams) Develop & Challenge\***

Grade levels UE5-UE6 primarily fall under this category. If multiple teams are needed to provide adequate game playing time, teams will be organized without consideration of performance. This level focuses on refining sport skills, enhancing physical fitness, identifying personal strengths and areas of improvement, and communication skills in a fun, structured, and safe environment. Opportunities to further develop skills are introduced (private/small group lesson, camps, etc.) Game playing time will be distributed equally.

### **Competitive Team (MS Teams) Train & Compete\***

Grade levels 7th-8th primarily fall under this category; however, levels as young as UE5 may be included. If registration numbers are high, groups may be organized into A and B teams, and these A and B Teams will be based on sport performance, knowledge of the game, and experience playing. All 8th graders are required by the Independent School Athletic League (ISAL) to make the A-team. This level is focused on improved sport-specific skills and training. Nutritional and sports psychology guidance is introduced. Opportunities to further develop skills are encouraged (private/small group lesson, camps, etc.) Fun and socialization are still implemented at this level. Game/tournament playing time is not guaranteed; however, an opportunity to compete will still be provided through other avenues.

*\*Stages based on the American Development Model (ADM)*

## **Team Communication**

### **Team Snap**

For students enrolled in competitive athletics, TeamSnap is the primary method of communication for last-minute schedule changes, practice cancellations, or other essential details related to the student's sport. TeamSnap messages are sent via text to parent's cell phones. Data charges may apply. Parents will receive an email invite to join TeamSnap once the team has formed. Parents can add multiple users to their accounts, so everyone receives information sent out by the MSSA Athletic Department.

## **Health and Safety**

### **Physicals**

All students wishing to participate in competitive athletics during the school year are required to have a physical examination and must submit a cleared physical form to the school health office prior to any participation (including practice) in a sport. A physical exam form is available on the FACTS Family Portal, or from the Health Office. Physicals are good for one year to date.

### **Concussion Management Protocol**

If an athlete exhibits any signs, or behaviors of a concussion, the athlete **will** be removed from play immediately, closely observed, and parents/guardians will be notified. If a concussion is suspected, the student-athlete will be kept out of play until a doctor reports the student-athlete as being symptom-free and is cleared to return to play. Once a student-athlete returns he/she will begin a 5-step return to play physical activity program.

## **Student-Athlete Guidelines and Expectations**

- Athletics is an extension of the Montessori classroom. As such, all grace and courtesy are expected with all coaching staff, with all teammates, and with all visiting opponents, coaches, spectators and referees.
- It is the responsibility of UE and Middle School student-athletes to report immediately following the dismissal from their classrooms to the meeting point for their after-school sports activity. Classroom teachers for LE students will escort student-athletes to meet-up location.
- Being on time is important! Student-athletes will be held reasonably accountable for repeated tardiness.

- Student-athletes are expected to wear sport-specific and seasonally appropriate attire and footwear in order to practice and participate in games and tournaments. Please note that student-athletes not wearing appropriate attire and footwear (jeans, sandals, etc...) and/or protective gear (as it applies) will not be allowed to practice and will be sent to after-school care; parents will be responsible for after-school care fees.
- Student-athletes are expected to care for all practice equipment.
- Any student-athlete who is absent from school or who cannot fully participate in PE, or who leaves home early due to health concerns will not be allowed to participate in after-school athletics on that day (practice/game/tournament).
- Student-athlete attendance at practice is essential for the athlete, team and coach. Unexcused absences for practices/games/tournaments will be taken into account when determining game playing time at all levels.
- If a spot is reserved during registration, that fee is non-refundable following the registration deadline, as fees are necessary to facilitate the forming of teams. If a student-athlete decides not to participate in a sport after the first practice, they forfeit any funds paid for participation.
- Student-athletes are expected to follow all league rules and regulations. Additionally, MSSA has consequences for students who are ejected from games:
  - 1st offense: Student-athlete will not be allowed to participate in next scheduled game
  - 2nd offense: Student-athlete will not be allowed to participate in the next scheduled game and practices leading up to the game.
  - 3rd offense: Student-athlete may be removed from the team.

### **Parent/Guardian Guidelines and Expectations**

- Parents are required to attend the beginning of season team meetings to meet the team coach and receive information on the upcoming season.
- Parent pick-up from practice is expected at the conclusion of practice. Athletes whose parents are late will be sent to after-school care at parents' expense.
- If an LE or UE child will be unable to attend a practice or game, or will be arriving late or leaving early, it is the parent's responsibility to be in contact with the team's coach at least 24 hours before said event. Middle School athletes can take on this responsibility.

- Parents are expected to serve only as positive spectators and supporters during all games, not as coaches. This is to avoid conflict of communication and understanding for the players and to allow the coach to perform their duties and responsibilities.
- Parents are to remain in spectator areas during all games. This is a requirement of all leagues that the school participates in and must be followed.
- Parents are responsible for transportation to all away games.
- All team communication will be done through TeamSnap. Parents are required to sign-up for this free app.
- As spectators, parents are to model sportsmanship and to demonstrate MSSA's values of grace, courtesy and respect in all correspondence with opposing coaches, players, and/or parents. Parents are to show respect toward officials and never openly dispute their decisions.
- If questions and concerns arise, the first step should be for student-athletes to speak to their team head coach. If there is a need for more clarification or resolution, parents should then contact the team head coach. If the issue does not resolve, the next step is communication between the parent and the Athletic Director.
- Next day Contact policy: Parents who have questions or issues will not be able to speak to team coaches before, during, or following "game times" or tournaments unless there is an emergency. Instead, team coaches will be available to schedule meetings on the following day.
- Parent/Guardian/family members who are ejected from a game (Home/Away) will need to leave the premises immediately. If the person(s) disregards the request to vacate, the game shall not continue and may possibly end in forfeit. Any parent who consistently violates these regulations will not be allowed to attend games until such time as determined from the Athletic Director and/or Head of School.
- It is against ISAL guidelines for parents to recruit students or families from fellow ISAL schools, this could result in expulsion from the league.

## **Toys at School**

Items such as toys, money, expensive or keepsake jewelry, electronic devices, or sports or hobby equipment not designated for a school purpose are not appropriate for school. They can easily get lost or broken and can cause distraction or conflict.

Children may bring items of special interest to share with their classmates with the pre-approval of their teachers. For example:

- Items from nature, such as rocks, bird nests, fossils, shells, insects, plants, or some properly housed and fed animals. All animal visitations should be prearranged with the teacher, and animals may not remain at the school overnight.
- A book, article, short story, or tape that your child especially enjoys (these should be given to the teacher to preview before presentation to the class).
- Something made by the child, a hobby construction or display, or a personal collection.

## School Services

MSSA offers a Before and After-School Program to enrolled students. Due to our new health and safety precautions Child Care and After-School Sports and Activities are one program. Cohorts will continue from the classroom into the After-School Program. Classrooms will report to their zone areas for childcare and those signed up to participate in the after-school sport/activity will be picked up by their Instructor/Coach. Participants will then be returned to their zone area for pick-up. Parents must indicate their intent to utilize either Early Arrival or the After-school Program by using the Activities tab in the SchoolPass application.

All students in the After-school Program will be billed a rate per day. Children will be clocked in and out electronically. Payments will be electronically processed by FACTS on or about the 10th of each month following the month of usage.

### **Early Arrival (7:00 to 7:50 AM)**

Early-Arrival begins at 7:00 AM in the gymnasium. All children must be accompanied by an adult to Early Arrival. Families will enter the right set of double doors and remain at the gym door entrance until an employee performs a temperature screening. Students are dismissed from Early Arrival at 7:50 AM.

### **After-School Program (11:45 AM to 6:00 PM)**

#### Child Care

Child Care offers an environment that closely aligns with Montessori principles and philosophy. After lunch, a rest time is provided for Primary students who need a nap. Other students are

provided with opportunities for indoor and outdoor activities. Healthy, nut-free snacks are provided in the late-afternoon program.

Parents must indicate their intent to use After-School Care by completing the Intent to Use After-school Program form located on the FACTS Family Portal.

Child care ends at 6:00 PM. Additional fees will be assessed after 6:00 PM. See fee schedule for details.

### After-School Sports/Activities

After-School Sports/Activities will be offered on various days to class cohorts. Programs will run 30 - 60 minutes depending on level. A full schedule will be available to families once finalized.

### Late Pick-up

If a student is not picked up at school dismissal time, the student will automatically be taken to After-School Program and the daily rate will apply. Parents must pick up the child from outside the designated After-School Activity zone area.

## **MSSA Library Resources**

### Library Resource Center (LRC)

The Library Resource Center's (LRC) purpose is to ensure that all students and staff have access to a wide variety of materials in different formats. The following are important LRC policies:

- The entire MSSA (faculty, staff, parents, and students) may check out materials from the library.
- Materials are checked for a two-week period.
- No overdue fines are charged, but materials should be returned on time to allow others to use them.
- A student will not be allowed to check out material if he/she has overdue material.
- If material is checked out and lost or damaged, a replacement cost will be charged.
- All materials must be returned by the end of the school year to avoid replacement cost being charged.

# Emergency Closures and Drills

## **Inclement Weather**

In the event of extremely bad weather, please call the School's main number, 210-492-3553, for a recorded message. Listen for school closure announcements on the major local television stations as well as radio station WOAI 1200 AM. MSSA follows the same emergency school closure dates as the North East ISD; therefore, if NEISD is closed, MSSA will also be closed.

Use your good judgment for your family's safety and avoid attempts to travel in hazardous conditions, regardless of whether the school is closed.

## **Other Emergencies**

Throughout the school year, emergency evacuation drills will be conducted. These drills vary from silent practice to full-fledged drills. In the event of a real emergency (fire, natural disaster, chemical spill, etc.), parents, guardians, or those listed for emergencies will be contacted and given specific instructions on where to pick up their children. To keep school phone lines open for emergency communications, please wait for the School to make contact.

MSSA has a complete Emergency Response plan that is available for review upon request.

## **Parent Notification System**

MSSA uses an automated notification system that places a phone call and sends a text message to each family in the case of inclement weather, school closing, emergencies, or other important school message. The notification system will contact up to five numbers per student.

# Technology Environment

All school computers, printers and copiers are fully integrated into MSSA's network (MSSANet), providing a flexible arrangement that is efficiently and effectively supported.

All portable storage devices such as "flash" or "thumb" drives, memory cards, CDs/DVDs, USB drives, or any other device with built-in storage brought into the School MUST be scanned for potential viruses in the technology department prior to use in the classrooms or offices.



To maintain the integrity of MSSANet, any questions or issues involving technology must be referred to the technology department. This is especially applicable where potential donations are involved.

## **Student Use of Technology**

Through MSSANet, students are allowed access to the internet. This resource can extend students' educational experiences far beyond those currently available through other means.

Internet use at MSSA involves certain responsibilities. Though MSSA uses the latest electronic filtering tools, it is possible that your child may come across some material you might find objectionable. Even with strong classroom management, it is not possible for MSSA to guarantee that it can completely prevent such access.

Please review the Student Acceptable Use Policy with your child. While teachers and administrators will continue to emphasize proper behavior, your help in stressing the importance of the guidelines will help ensure compliance.

Students who violate the policies outlined below may be subject to having their access restricted or denied while at school.

## **Student Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)**

*Students are given access to MSSANet. It is the student's responsibility to follow the rules for appropriate use. MSSA's values of grace, courtesy, and respect also apply to student online activity; violations of the AUP will be handled in accordance with the school's disciplinary policies as outlined in this handbook.*

### **Safety of Self and Others**

- Students will report to their teachers, school staff, or any other appropriate personnel, any communication received that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Students will not reveal personal information about themselves or others.
- Students will not use the system to e-mail or chat with anyone.
- Students will not use the system to threaten others (cyber-bullying.)
- Students will use appropriate language for the educational environment and for the educational activity in which they are currently involved (no swearing, vulgarity, ethnic or racial slurs, or any other inflammatory or threatening language).
- Students will not transmit (send or receive) obscene pictures or messages.

### **Access and Uses**

Access to and use of the MSSANet is considered a privilege accorded at the discretion of The Montessori School of San Antonio. MSSA maintains the right to immediately withdraw access and use of these services when there is reason to believe violations of

the law or school policies have occurred. In such cases, the alleged violation will be referred to School administration for further investigation and adjudication.

- Students will only use the system for educational purposes; any school, division-level or grade-level communication, including e-mail, group chats and video conferencing through devices, documents or drives, or texts can only be sent with the permission of the appropriate division head.
- Students will not access files and/or documents of other users without permission.
- Students will not access e-mail, files and/or documents of MSSA employees.
- Students will not use the internet for financial gain or for political or commercial activity.
- Students will not use the system for purchasing products or services.
- Students will not deface, abuse or tamper with school technology property.

### **Copyright Laws**

- Students will be aware of copyright laws and will follow them.

### **Illegal Activities**

- Students will not use the system for illegal purposes, or any other activity prohibited by MSSA policy.

### **System Security**

- Students will not attempt to harm equipment, materials, or data.
- Students will not knowingly infect a computer or network with a virus.
- Students will not knowingly disrupt the network.
- Students will not provide passwords to other users.
- Students will always report any known violations of the MSSA Acceptable Use Policy to a teacher or administrator.

### **Respect for System Limitations**

- Students will not download large files unless they have been given permission and it is absolutely necessary.

### **Consequences of Violations**

- Consequences will be determined in cooperation with teachers, ranging from disabling an account for a few days, semester, or the remainder of the school year.
- Consequences for severe violations will also be set in cooperation with pertinent administrative staff.

## Personal Wireless Device Usage Policy

The MSSAGuest wireless network allows visitors with a personal wireless device (laptop, tablet, iPhone, etc.) to access the internet at MSSA for school-related business **only**. This internet access will operate with the same school internet filter currently in use. To protect the school's system, the MSSAGuest wireless network does not allow access to school printers, servers, or files. The MSSAWifi wireless network is available for use by school-owned devices only.

These policies are in addition to the Student Acceptable Usage Policy detailed above, are not all-inclusive, and may be modified at any time.

- Personally-owned devices/laptops cannot be physically connected (via cable) to the MSSA network at any time or location.
- Personally-owned devices/laptops can be used to access the MSSAGuest wireless network only, not the MSSAWifi wireless network.
- MSSA is not responsible for any support of personal laptop or wireless devices.
- Student use of personally-owned devices in the classroom setting will be at the discretion of MSSA and subject to all MSSA technology policies.
- MSSA reserves the right to inspect, at any time, any personally-owned devices while connected to MSSANet for the purpose of verifying that it is in compliance with this policy/agreement.
- Illegal, destructive, harmful, or any other inappropriate activities, including, but not limited to computer hacking, cyber-bullying, accessing offensive/obscene materials, or engaging in illegal activity are strictly prohibited.
- Attempts to circumvent or defeat any mechanism put in place by MSSA to manage the network or filter internet access will be subject to immediate termination of network services.
- Any unauthorized attempt to access another computer (on or off campus) is prohibited. Attempts to access other computers will result in the immediate disconnection of the suspected network connection until the matter has been resolved.
- Access to managed wireless access points to connect to the internet is only allowed from within school grounds. Connection to third party access points is not permitted. MSSA services and wiring may not be modified or extended beyond the area of their intended use.
- MSSANet may not be used for any commercial purposes or used to provide wireless internet access to anyone outside of the school community for any purpose.
- The digital reproduction and distribution of copyrighted materials is against federal law. Anyone found distributing (sharing) such material, including copyrighted music,

digitized video from copyrighted motion pictures, copyrighted software, etc.) is subject to termination of their network services.

- MSSA is not responsible for any possible damage the connection to MSSANet or any electrical power source may cause. MSSA assumes NO responsibility for costs associated with loss or damage to any personal devices and associated peripheral equipment.
- MSSA will not be obligated to supply electrical power access where such access does not already exist.
- MSSA employees and parents and/or guardians of any student bringing personal technology to school agree to be responsible for and to reimburse MSSA for any damage that may arise out of and relating to the use of MSSANet with his/her personally-owned device.

## **Student Records**

### **Student's Permanent Record**

Each student's permanent record contains comprehensive progress reports, completed by the faculty, as well as standardized assessments when developmentally appropriate.

### **Student Progress Reports**

Written progress reports are maintained on all students. Copies of progress reports are e-mailed to each student's home four times per school year (October, January, March, June.)

Progress reports will not be issued if a student has a past-due balance on his/her account, and access to FACTS Family Portal may also be restricted. Reports will be released, and FACTS Family Portal access restored once the account has been brought up to date.

### **Standardized Testing**

Even though there seems to be an incongruity between standardized testing and the Montessori educational approach, MSSA does administer standardized tests as part of our student assessment process. The primary purpose of such testing is to provide information that can be used to improve instruction. These tests are also helpful in evaluating the content and methods of our program as they pertain to basic skill development. MSSA has chosen the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) because they both provide age-based norm comparisons for aptitude (CogAT) and achievement (ITBS). These tests are also chosen because they are well-respected and are the most widely used across the nation. Besides giving us another tool to review each student's aptitude and basic skill development,

they also provide a widely recognized record for students to use when they transfer to more traditional schools. Because standardized tests are commonly used throughout high schools and universities, we believe it is in our student's best interest to be prepared for taking such tests.

Typically, the CogAT is administered to students beginning in the third year of Lower Elementary, and every other year thereafter. The ITBS is administered annually beginning in the third year of Lower Elementary. Test outcomes are discussed during parent conferences and become part of the student's permanent record.

### **Transcript and Recommendation Requests**

Transcript and recommendation requests must be made in writing, signed and dated by parents, and submitted to the Director of Admission.

Parents must supply the recipient institution's address, phone and fax information. Completed recommendation forms will be sent directly to the designated institutions and will not be released to the parents. Please allow at least one week for both transcript and recommendation processing. **Expedited service is not available.**

Transcripts cannot be issued if a student has a past-due balance on his/her account. Once the account is brought up to date, the transcript will be released.

## **Financial Matters**

### **Tuition and Fees**

MSSA operates on a tuition-based budget. It is important that parents be conscientious and prompt about payment of tuition and fees. Notice of payment due will be sent via email around the 25<sup>th</sup> of every month, and all payments are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month. Account status may be accessed online at any time on FACTS Family Portal.

Once the enrollment contract is signed, parents are responsible for all fees and tuition for the full academic year. Payment will be made through the online FACTS system. Tuition may be paid annually, semi-annually, or over ten equal payments.

FACTS requires that every family enter a valid bank account or credit card number as a guaranteed form of payment. Checks may be sent to the school for payment but must be received at least ten (10) days prior to the payment due date in order to avoid having a charge

made to the registered guaranteed form of payment. MSSA will not be responsible for overdraft fees or penalties incurred as a result of insufficient funds or invalid accounts.

MSSA may withhold records or deny student attendance as a consequence of delinquent and/or non-payment of tuition and fees.

### **Tuition Protection Plan (TPP)**

The Tuition Protection Plan (TPP) is a program that provides tuition protection in the event circumstances require a student to withdraw from MSSA prior to the end of the school year. MSSA hires teachers, purchases textbooks and materials, and makes plant and building maintenance decisions based on the number of students that register before the start of each school year. All MSSA Enrollment Contracts are for the full academic year. If a student is withdrawn before the end of the school year for any reason, the family is still obligated to fulfill the terms of the Enrollment Contract. If the family is participating in the TPP, the plan pays either 50 percent or 100 percent of the unused portion of the annual tuition, depending on the circumstances of withdrawal.

The TPP is optional, though encouraged, for parents who pay tuition on an annual basis. The TPP is mandatory for parents paying semi-annually or monthly. For further information about the plan, please contact the Business Office.

### **Financial Assistance**

MSSA supports socioeconomic diversity in its student body through the provision of financial assistance. Families requesting financial assistance may inquire in the Admission Office about the MSSA Financial Assistance Program. Online applications for financial assistance are accepted starting in January. All forms must be submitted to the appropriate office by February 15 to be considered for the following school year. After the specified deadline, late applicants will be considered only on a funds-available basis. All questions regarding Financial Assistance should be directed to the Admission Office.

## **Gifts To The School**

### **In-Kind Gifts**

MSSA is blessed with a dedicated and generous parent community. During the school year, some parents perceive a need in their child's classroom and take it upon themselves to meet this need. While the staff and administration are most grateful for such generosity, it may result in

some classrooms being better equipped than others on the same level, or a teacher receiving something that will not be used. To ensure that all students have equal access to materials and equipment, MSSA has established an In-Kind Gift Policy and asks that all MSSA parents follow its procedures when considering a material donation to the School.

1. A potential donor is directed to the Communications Department to obtain an In-Kind Gift Donation Information form.
2. The donor completes the form, providing information about the proposed gift (Who will benefit from the gift? Is professional installation needed? Does the gift meet state and local codes for a school? Is regular maintenance required?)
3. The donor returns the completed form to the Communications Department.
4. The proposed gift is evaluated by the Head of School, the Facilities Director, and other appropriate staff to determine benefit to the School, how the gift fits into the School's overall plan, and any potential problems. Research will be conducted to ensure that all city and state codes, as well as other regulations (homeowner's association, aquifer restrictions, etc.) are met. A final decision about acceptance of the gift rests with the Head of School.
5. When the gift is approved, the Communications Department will advise the donor, make necessary arrangements to receive the gift, properly record the gift in development records, and send appropriate acknowledgement of the gift in a timely manner.

## **Fundraising**

Like most private institutions, MSSA conducts targeted fundraising efforts throughout the year to provide enhancements not covered by operating resources.

### **Annual Fund**

MSSA conducts an annual giving campaign in support of the School's mission. Donations to the Annual Fund provide flexible resources to grow The Montessori School of San Antonio and to make the School stronger. This year, the Annual Fund is dedicated to support of the MSSA expansion project, including furniture and equipment for the new facilities.

### **Other Giving Opportunities**

Honoraria and Memorials – any gift to MSSA may be made In Honor Of or In Memory Of an individual or event such as a birthday or anniversary.

Designated Gifts – once a MSSA family has contributed to the Annual Fund, other gifts may be made for specific purposes or projects, e.g., new classroom, library materials, playground equipment, etc.

The MSSA Parent and Teacher Council (PTC) conducts one major fundraising effort during the year.

MSSA reserves the right to reject any gift inconsistent with the mission and values of the School.

### **Acknowledgements and Tax Considerations**

All gifts to The Montessori School of San Antonio are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law and will be acknowledged per the wishes of the donor. The Montessori School of San Antonio is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization under the Federal Internal Revenue Code. The School's fiscal year is August 1 through July 31.

Gifts of money or other securities to MSSA from any source may not be designated to directly benefit or be received by any specific employee, independent contractor, volunteer, or consultant.

## **Recommended Reading List**

To better acquaint parents with the depth of the Montessori philosophy and methodology, we recommend reviewing the following books and websites.

### **Books**

*First Things First* — Boysen, Agnes

*Children: The Challenge* — Driekurs, Rudolf

*Discipline Without Tears* — Driekurs, Rudolf

*How Children Learn* — Molt, John

*Why Montessori for the Elementary Years* — Jones, Sanford

*Montessori: A Modern Approach* — Lillard, Paula Polk



*From Childhood to Adolescence* — Montessori, Maria

*Spontaneous Activity in Education* — Montessori, Maria

*The Absorbent Mind* — Montessori, Maria

*The Montessori Method* — Montessori, Maria

*The Secret of Childhood* — Montessori, Maria

*What You Should Know About Your Child* — Montessori, Maria

*The Magical Child* — Pierce, Joseph Chilton

*The Montessori Revolution in Education* — Standing, E. M.

*The Plug-in Drug* — Winn, Marie

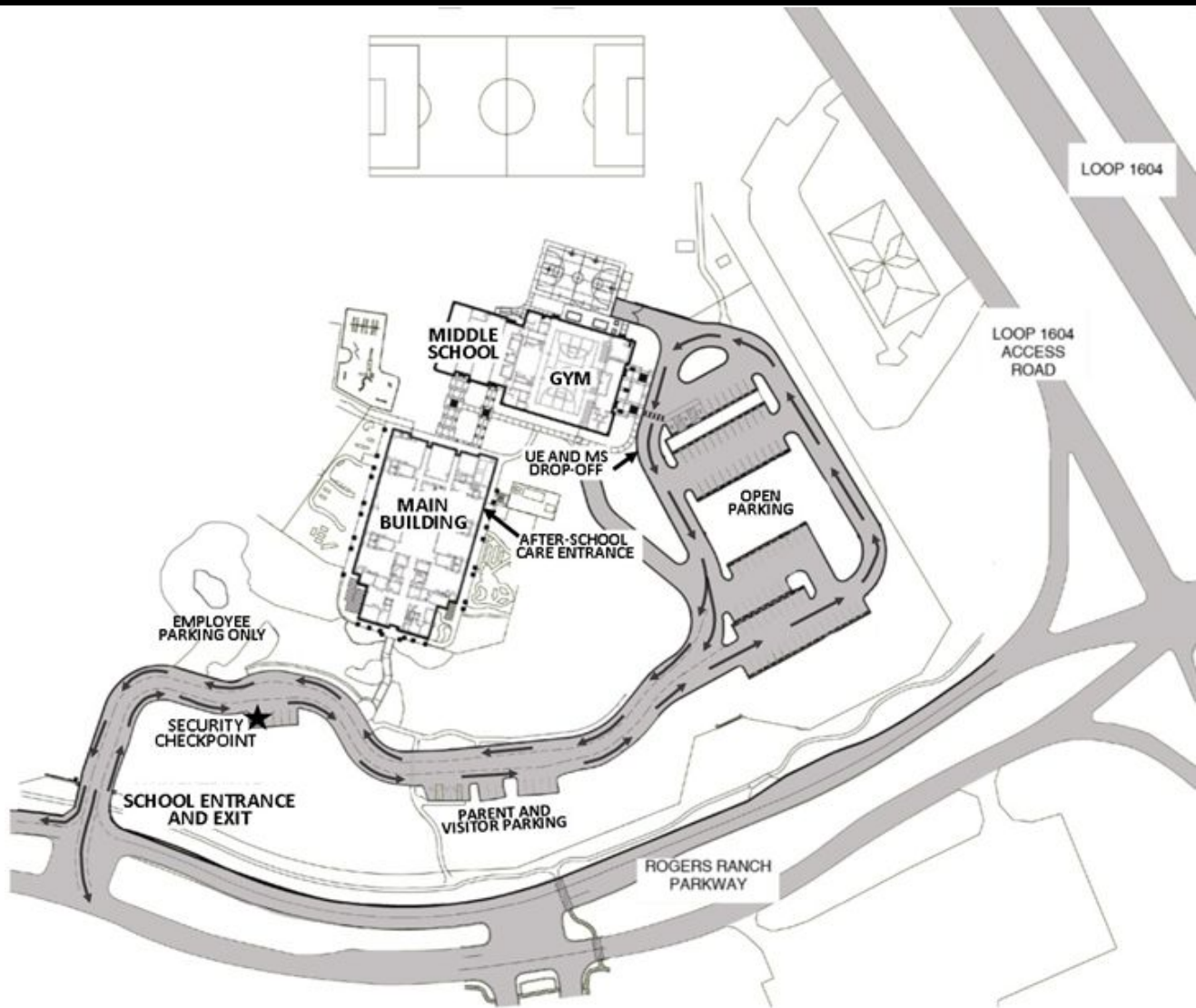
### **Websites**

[www.montessoriSA.org](http://www.montessoriSA.org)

[www.amshq.org](http://www.amshq.org)

[www.montessori-ami.org](http://www.montessori-ami.org)

# MSSA Campus Map



## CONTACT INFORMATION

The Montessori School of San Antonio  
17722 Rogers Ranch Parkway  
San Antonio, TX 78258  
Phone: 210-492-3553  
Fax: 210-492-3484  
On the Web: [www.montessoriSA.org](http://www.montessoriSA.org)

## SCHOOL HOURS

Office Hours	M-F 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM
Early Arrival Care	7:00 to 7:50 AM
Arrival (car doors opened by staff)	7:50 to 8:20 AM
Classes Start	8:20 AM
Primary Half-Day Dismissal	11:45 AM
Regular Dismissal	3:15 PM
Wednesday Dismissal	2:15 PM
After-School Care	3:15 to 6:00 PM

## ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Dan Ahlstrom	Head of School
Francesca Creamer	Executive Assistant to Administration
Jocelyn Durand	Director of Communications
Maru Galarza	Director of Admission
Kimberly Gomez, LVN	Health Services Coordinator
Elizabeth Holland	Bookkeeper
Ralph Huber	Business Manager
Cynthia Mullett	Information Technology Specialist
Leticia Obregon	Director of After School Program
Jon Ollis	Director of Facilities
Theresa Powers	Program Director

## Primary Level

### TEACHER

Libby Brocard  
Sumi Chaudhuri

\*Angie Jones

Janet Moro  
Cheri Sebring

\*Level Representative

### ASSISTANT

Angie Updike  
Ray Myles

Kristina Richards  
Judy Korge

## Lower Elementary Level

### TEACHER

Maria Flores

\*Page Judson

Pranita Patel

Teresa Treat

\* Level Representative

### ASSISTANT

Lynn Ortiz

Donna Hengst

Jennifer Moreno

Peter Sebring

## Upper Elementary Level

### TEACHER

\*John Pettit

Anne Shadle

Cassandra Trevino Shannon Pettit

\*Level Representative

### ASSISTANT

Kara Ralston

Judi Abbott

## Middle School

### TEACHER

Shauna Cardenas (Language Arts)

Josh Duelm (History)

Julie Hartung (Science)

\*Chris Noel (Math)

\*Level Representative

## Specialists

Margo McCarthy

Lisa Christal

\*Becca Morgan

Michelle Taylor

Leticia Obregon

Louis Alvarado

Art

Library

Music

Music

Physical Education

Physical Education

Brenda Estrada

Physical Education

Anabell Rosales

Spanish

\*Level Representative

## Child Care

Patty Escobedo

Coordinator of Child Care

Sandra Alvarado

Child Care Instructor

Lauren Talley

Child Care Instructor

Sylvia Flores

Child Care Instructor

Taylor Wallace

Child Care Instructor

Judy Korge

Early Arrival Instructor

Angie Updike

Early Arrival Instructor