

Washington Montessori Public Charter School Blueprint for our Montessori Program

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Introduction

Our Vision

Our vision is of a world that can finally live in peace, a global community based on interdependence, respect for all life and all people. Our children will lead the way.

Our Mission

Washington Montessori is committed to the development of the whole child, enabling him to draw upon all of his gifts and reach his greatest potential. We encourage personal responsibility, both socially and academically. Each child is allowed freedom of choice and is offered guidance in setting individual goals. Our mission is to inspire academic excellence; to nurture curiosity, creativity and imagination, and to do so within an environment rich with warmth, kindness and respect.

Our program rests on four pillars:

- The cultivation within our students of a passion for excellence in everything they do, both in and outside of school.
- The development of a strongly held set of universal values, which include self-respect, respect for others, honesty, integrity, responsibility, empathy, compassion, kindness, peacefulness, a sense of concern for others, warmth and a love of community.
- The development of a global perspective and sense of international understanding.
- And a lifelong commitment to give something back through service to others who are in need.

Section 1. Educational Program

1.1. The Fundamental Nature of our School

- 1.1.1. The Montessori approach to learning is the educational framework our educational program.
- 1.1.2. Washington Montessori is an international school
- 1.1.3. Washington Montessori is designed to prepare students both for the higher education and for life
- 1.1.4. Our school teaches children to be at home in the world of nature
- 1.1.5. Washington Montessori is a family-friendly school
- 1.1.6. We are committed to character and values
- 1.1.7. We are committed to diversity.
- 1.1.8. Washington Montessori is a close-knit community of students, educators, parents, and friends of the school Washington Montessori is a family-friendly school

1.2. The Montessori Method is the educational framework of our educational program.

- 1.2.1. We use the Montessori Method, along with compatible curriculum materials from the larger non-Montessori educational community to provide opportunities for enrichment beyond the basic curriculum.
- 1.2.2. The nature of the child and the learning process
 - 1.2.2.1 We affirm that education begins at birth and continues throughout life. While our emphasis is on our children, we are a center of support for all of us to continue learning and developing toward becoming whole and healthy individuals.
 - 1.2.2.2. We believe that intelligence is not rare among human beings.
 - 1.2.2.3. We believe that the vast majority of people have the intelligence and natural ability required to learn everything they need to lead full, happy, and productive lives.
 - 1.2.2.4. We believe that wisdom can be cultivated.
 - 1.2.2.5. We believe that true wisdom is the ability to be introspective in order to best put your intelligence to work for you. To achieve this goal, self-esteem, human dignity, and emotional well being, as well as the ability to communicate and cooperate effectively with others, must be valued at least as highly as academic and material success.
- 1.2.3. We approach learning seeking to understand each person's uniqueness and guide her, individually and at her own pace, through the range of learning skills, so she fully realizes her potential.

1.2.4. We appreciate and respect the natural diversity of human beings, be it in learning style, interests, or definition of what makes a happy and successful life.

1.2.5. We affirm the ideal of the renaissance person. Our ultimate goal is to produce renaissance men and women who have not only learned how to learn, but also have an innate love of learning, a wide range of interests, and an openness to new ideas and possibilities.

1.2.6. We nurture Self-esteem: We affirm that self-esteem is the crucial ingredient for the full expression of a person's potential. We strive to base every interaction between community members, from how we discipline to respecting personal learning styles and stages of development, on this principle. This is the very fabric of our community and our educational methods.

1.2.7. We encourage students to not be afraid of failure: We consciously encourage our students to not be afraid of taking risks, but rather to learn from their experience-both success and failure-as non-threatening feedback on their progress and personal growth

1.2.8. We nurture intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical growth: The development of a whole, healthful being requires the nurturing of our many dimensions, including the spiritual, intellectual, physical, and emotional.

1.2.8.1. Intellectual: The intellect is an important tool in the shaping of our world. Through the development of our thinking abilities we refine our emotional responses, we clarify our picture of the universe, and we develop the discipline to maintain vibrant health.

1.2.8.2. Emotional: Our emotions are complex and powerful and it is very important that we learn to feel them fully and without fear, identify them correctly (in ourselves and others), respect them, and accept them. It is equally important, however, that we learn to harness their power and not let them control our lives unchecked.

1.2.8.3. Physical We seek to help our students discover, understand and adopt the lifestyle habits most appropriate and beneficial for our bodies and minds. Among these are fresh air, pure water, exercise, sunlight, and proper diet.

1.2.8.4. Spiritual: We believe that it is up to each family to lead their children's religious education, and that thereafter it is each young adult's task to develop his or her own religious understanding and beliefs.

1.2.8.4.1 We do not teach religion, nor advocate any particular belief system.

1.2.8.4.2. We do teach universal values and a positive outlook on life.

1.2.8.4.3 We encourage children to explore the world's great religions from a cultural perspective, with the goal of helping them to both understand and respect those who hold different beliefs from their own. We encourage them to explore for themselves the great questions of philosophy and ethics, to retain a sense of awe and wonder, and to develop the spiritual side of their lives.

1.2.9. Developmental Approach to Education: Our educational approach is centered around the stages of human development.

1.2.9.1. Developmental stages: The school supports and encourages the faculty in its professional development. This includes keeping abreast of current research findings on child development, regular student observation, and a constant evaluation of the curriculum to ensure that it is appropriate for the developmental stages of our students.

1.2.9.1.1. First Six Years Critical: We recognize that the first six years of life are critical in each child's development, and therefore we place great importance on our educational programs for students under the age of six. As soon it is feasible, we are committed to opening and sustaining programs for infants, toddlers and early childhood age children within our own school. We also believe in the importance of helping parents to become more informed about child development and more effective in building a home that supports their children's development, and therefore set as an additional goal the establishment of a parenting education center at our school.

1.2.9.2. Individualization: We strive for individualized pacing and adaptation of the classroom program (when possible) to meet varied styles of learning.

1.2.9.3. Flexibility: Our educational program is designed for flexibility in its methodology and use of resources.

1.2.9.4. Academic expectations in an individualized approach: In designing this individualized program we follow an established curricular framework that includes the school's expectations for basic academic achievement at each level of the school, leading toward graduation and guidance toward appropriate placement for each child in college, professional school, or apprenticeships.

1.2.10. Active learning: We promote active, rather than passive, learning by:

1.2.10.1. encouraging spontaneous activity in education by encouraging students to pursue studies in areas of their personal interests;

1.2.10.2. using hands-on, "experiential" learning whenever possible, rather than lecture and drill, whether through concrete manipulative learning materials, experimental discovery, seminar discussions, independent library research, field investigation, or computer simulations; and

1.2.10.3. by bringing the student to a sense of accomplishment, closure and recognition of having reached a pre-established goal for learning.

1.2.11. The Passage to Abstraction: To facilitate this process, we consistently work from a very concrete level of experience to the abstract. To aid students in learning, we begin by giving them the "big picture" (a sense of gestalt), and work from this toward an increasing level of detail. This concept has created a spiraling curriculum in which skills and concepts are presented and reintroduced at increasing levels of complexity and abstraction over the years.

1.2.12. External structure: We strive to provide each student with sufficient external structure and support through a committed effort to ensure that his or her developmental needs are met. We do this in a manner that reflects our expectations and philosophy.

1.2.12.1. We interpret the general principle of Montessori education, "follow the child" to refer to the importance of allowing students to pursue areas of spontaneous interest whenever possible. However, if a child needs more direction at certain times, or is not internally motivated in a given area, we feel it is our responsibility to acknowledge the personal preference, but to still require that the necessary work be completed.

1.2.13. Freedom within order: We strive for a balance between freedom, order and responsibility.

1.2.14. Our primary focus will always be the well being and best interests of our students.

1.2.15. We nurture curiosity, creativity, and imagination:

1.2.15.1. As educators we consciously work to encourage students to think creatively in their writing, problem solving and research.

1.2.15.2. Our program places great emphasis on the Fine Arts, both in the classroom environment and through the contributions of specialists in the visual and performing arts.

1.2.16 As is appropriate for each age group, we encourage students to become aware of the major social, political, economic, environmental and ethical issues of our day, and, having carefully considered all sides, to take a responsible stand for themselves and to explore ways of making a positive personal contribution to society.

1.2.17 We model and encourage effective communication skills. We would like all students to be versed in skills of active listening; negotiation; conflict resolution and respectful disagreement; empathy for another person's position; and the ability to stand up for themselves and say no without guilt if someone is encroaching on their rights.

1.3. We are an international school

1.3.1. We embrace a global perspective as a philosophy for building a diverse community grounded in knowledge that leads to understanding and acceptance of all peoples.

1.3.2. We celebrate diversity in our community and acknowledge the unique contributions of all of the cultures which enrich and inspire our personal growth.

1.3.3. We seek to develop a global perspective and international understanding, weaving international education through our curriculum at every age level:

1.3.3.1. through the study of modern foreign languages

1.3.3.2. through the study of physical, cultural, and economic geography

1.3.3.3. through correspondence, international travel, and student exchange programs with our sister Montessori schools around the world

1.3.3.4. through encouraging families to share their cultural traditions, travel experiences and traditional festivals

1.3.3.5. by utilizing our international families as a tremendous teaching resource

1.3.3.6. through an on-going experiential program of international cultural education

1.4. Washington Montessori prepares students for higher education:

1.4.1. We want our students to be well trained in the basic academic disciplines, to fulfill their creative potential, and to gain satisfaction in their physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development.

1.4.2. Academic standards: In all cases, we set our expectations high, not asking individuals to do more than that of which they are capable, but consistently stressing, at all levels, the importance of careful work and pride in accomplishment. The reward is not in a quantity of work achieved, but the satisfaction of work done well for its own sake. We carefully build a supportive environment for the unhurried mind to move steadily toward the pursuit of excellence.

1.4.3. Competition: We believe that it is neither necessary nor appropriate to inspire unrestrained academic pressure and scholastic competition among students. We cultivate the ability to accept success with grace, and failure or loss with dignity, and resolve to build on the experience. We ensure students' right to choose whether or not to participate in competitive activities, and we stress the principles of good sportsmanship.

1.4.4. Success: We design our educational program to maximize each person's academic and personal success. We strive to encourage people to build on their strengths and personal learning styles and learn from their mistakes.

1.4.4.1. Academic success: We teach skills that support independent and successful learning, critical thinking, cooperative projects, reflective reading, problem solving, library research, use of technology, techniques for effective study, test-taking strategies, and techniques for focusing attention.

1.4.4.2. Personal success: In addition to academic success, we consider it equally important that our students be successful human beings who can establish healthy relationships and achieve happiness in their personal lives. We teach our students to pay attention to and respect feelings, both their own and those of others. We help them to learn to solve conflicts effectively and fairly, and to express their feelings in a healthy manner. Group dynamics and communication skills are also stressed.

1.4.4.3. We offer a curriculum designed to prepare students for higher education:

1.4.4.3.1. Science: We teach students not only scientific facts, but the process, history, and true nature of science. We want them to understand that science is not the subjects that scientists study, like the nature of atoms, but the process of studying the world, with the goal of arriving at conclusions about what is probably true, and what is probably not. Its end product is simply reliable information. Students will study science every year. Our curriculum will be consciously integrated, incorporating topics from botany, zoology, physical science, machines and technology, astronomy, geology, ecology, earth science, weather, and the medical sciences.

1.4.4.3.2. Foreign Language: As an international school, our students will study modern foreign language(s) every year. .

1.4.4.3.3. Mathematics: Our approach will be Unified Math: integrating topics in arithmetic, geometry, pre-algebra, statistics, logic, algebra, trigonometry, and calculus. Whenever possible, we will help students grasp the underlying concepts of math through the use of concrete apparatus and through application of mathematics to real world tasks.

1.4.4.3.4. Economics: Our children live in a world in which economics is a constant basic element of their lives. While money is not the most important thing in our lives, the stress that follows a lack of sufficient money to pay one's bills can have a negative impact on everything that is important. Our goal is for our students to both understand the principles of economic freedom and to feel comfortable with financial and business matters. Whether or not they choose to run their own businesses, we want them to develop an entrepreneurial spirit.

1.4.4.3.5. Geography: As an international school, we seek to develop a global perspective and international understanding, teaching world geography (physical, cultural, political, and economic) at every level of the school.

1.4.4.3.6. History: We develop a strong historical perspective through the study of prehistory and history, following an anthropological orientation into the fundamental needs of humankind and the cultures, lifestyles and technology of the past. We cultivate an appreciation of family and community heritage. History sets the stage for integrated learning at every age level.

1.4.4.3.7. Anthropology and Mythology: Again, as part of our nature as an international school, we teach students the basic elements of anthropology, addressing the question of what makes us human, the nature of culture, and how cultures have attempted to explain or illuminate the great questions of life through story, myth, and cultural archetypes.

1.4.4.3.8. Major World Religions: We believe that our students should be familiar with the traditions and basic beliefs of the world's major religions. While we do not teach religion, nor advocate any particular belief system, we encourage students to explore questions raised by religious teachers and develop the spiritual side of their lives.

1.4.4.3.9. Architecture: We all live surrounded by buildings. We believe that our students should understand the patterns of architecture found around us, how houses are constructed and designed, and develop an appreciation for the timeless beauty of well-designed spaces.

1.4.4.3.10. Civics and Law: We strongly believe that our students should understand how government works at the local, state, and federal levels, and the role that citizens can and should play in shaping consensus, advocating their point of view, and making informed decisions before they vote. They should also understand how the legal system works and have an informed working knowledge of and respect for the law. Our goal is to lead young men and women to keep informed about current issues and to play an active and responsible role as citizens of our nation.

1.4.4.4. Language Arts and Literature: Naturally, our goal is to lead our students to read and write with facility, read voraciously, and write with enjoyment. We explore all forms of human communication. We recognize that we live in a time when the mass media has a profound impact on our culture. We teach our students to understand and filter this influence. We also believe that by developing their ability to use the language arts, we strengthen students' self-esteem and enhance their ability to express more effectively their thoughts and feelings.

1.4.4.4.1. Research Skills: Rather than having students memorize facts mindlessly, we teach them to learn mindfully and become skillful in the process of doing investigations and research using the library, internet, public records, and primary and secondary source materials. Interviewing skills are also very important skills that we emphasize. We seek to have our students learn how to organize the information that they compile into increasingly sophisticated reports and presentations. As a result, textbooks play an insignificant role within our educational program.

1.4.4.4.2. The Visual and Performing Arts Our program places great emphasis on the Fine Arts, both through the contributions of Music and Art specialists and through classroom programs and experiences initiated by the teachers and the school to foster art and music appreciation and creative drama.

1.4.4.4.3. Physical Education, Health, and Athletics: We want our students to understand, appreciate, and adopt a healthy lifestyle that includes exercise, proper diet, intelligent choices regarding personal health, and stress reduction. We believe that individual and competitive team sports make up an important element in reaching these goals.

1.4.4.4.4. Peace Education: Human relations and conflict resolution skills, nonviolence, leadership training and cooperative teamwork skills, and communication skills are all important elements in nurturing our students. Peace Education is as vital an element of our curriculum as mathematics and science.

1.4.4.4.5. Creative thinking and problem solving skills are fostered.

1.5. Washington Montessori prepares students for life

(Our goal is to inspire a passion for excellence and a lifelong love of learning)

The Washington Montessori School provides a broad preparation for life, balancing academic excellence with the development of personal and practical life skills.

1.5.1. We teach universal values

1.5.1.1. We make a concerted effort to empower students at our school, helping them to learn how to make responsible choices for themselves, to recognize that they are assuming increasing control over their lives as they mature, and to discover how to make a difference in the world around them through positive efforts and contributions to others.

1.5.1.2. Our goals for students are for them to be open-minded and compassionate, to gain a sense of themselves and others, and to understand and appreciate the diversity of the human spirit.

1.5.1.3. To facilitate the development of independence and a sense of engagement with the community, we strongly encourage participation in day-to-day classroom management, care of the environment and decision making. We teach our students to see the value of commitment to our school, local and global communities; and that the good of the individual and that of the community are interdependent.

1.5.1.4. We want students to love learning and to value knowledge, creativity, and humor. We hope they will be responsible, critical, and caring members of a pluralistic society and recognize that they have the power and resources to effect change as well as the self-esteem and confidence to pursue their goals.

1.5.1.5. We respect the fundamental human needs, rights, and dignity of each student, no matter how young, as a full and independent person who is engaged in the ongoing process of development. During this process, while honoring the right to self-determination, we model and encourage certain values: kindness, honesty, warmth and openness, respect, tolerance, cooperation, good sportsmanship, and nonviolence.

1.5.1.6. As educators, parents and citizens of the world with the mutual goal of world peace we consider it our responsibility to model and encourage tolerance of differences in ability, color, culture, beliefs, opinions, and physical appearance.

1.5.2. Discipline

1.5.2.1. We teach students to accept full responsibility for their behavior, their attitudes, their experiences, and their lives.

1.5.2.2. In keeping with the true meaning of the word discipline, which is to teach, we prefer to model and encourage appropriate, kind, and considerate ways to behave in various situations, rather than focusing on rules and the consequences of breaking them.

1.5.2.3. School should be safe. We endeavor to provide a school environment that will promote and protect the physical and emotional well being of our students and staff.

1.5.2.4. We use positive reinforcement whenever possible to encourage progress and acknowledge contributions.

1.5.2.5. We will never permit the use of corporal punishment.

1.5.2.6. We encourage and model ways to negotiate conflict situations, so that whenever possible everyone can win and at the very least everyone feels heard and that his or her feelings and needs are respected.

1.5.2.7. As necessary, we cue and remind students of appropriate behaviors before inappropriate behavior occurs.

1.5.2.8. When behavior is inappropriate, and a gentle reminder isn't effective, we intervene and respectfully but firmly stop the misbehavior.

1.5.2.9. Our ultimate goal is to encourage students to behave appropriately through self-discipline and self-motivation, rather than using external rewards and punishments.

1.5.2.10. We are successful with a very wide range of students, however no school can be right for every child. One of our greatest challenges is to be objective and compassionate, yet realistic in considering the needs of each child. If we fail, despite our best efforts, to help a student to meet appropriate behavioral expectations within the school's fundamental ground rules, we will help the family seek another school setting in which their child can experience success.

1.5.3. Community Service: We seek to show and teach our students that the responsibility to change our world for the better lies with all of us, and that service needs to be an accepted part of everyone's life if we are to achieve this goal.

1.5.4 Practical Life skills: To facilitate and encourage a sense of independence, we deliberately teach a wide range of practical life skills appropriate to each child's level of development. We regard this as a vital element affecting the design of our entire curriculum. These practical life skills include the following:

1.5.4.1. Eye-hand coordination and the use of simple tools.

1.5.4.2. Grace and courtesy: appropriate ways to handle situations kindly.

1.5.4.3. Practical economics: the value and use of money, including how to earn and manage spending money.

1.5.4.4. Technology: the safe and ethical use of technology, such as more complex tools, telephones, computers, classroom audio-visual equipment, and household appliances.

1.5.4.5. Computers: We use the computer as a fundamental tool for learning, not only as an element of contemporary practical life, but also as an aid in the development of logical planning and problem solving.

1.5.4.6. Transportation: As appropriate at each age level, the safe use of alternate means of transportation other than a parent's car, such as hiking and bicycling, public transportation, and driver's education.

1.5.4.7. Communication: the appropriate use of the technology of personal and mass communication, from writing letters to using the telephone, using the word processor, preparing a newsletter, speaking before an audience and designing audiovisual presentations.

1.5.4.8. Care of One's Environment: how to clean and set tables, do dishes, laundry, cook, sew, iron, infant and childcare.

1.5.4.9. Health and Safety: the development of sound habits of safety, nutrition and hygiene, along with the acquisition of first-aid skills and, as appropriate, CPR.

1.6. Our school teaches children to be at home in the world of nature

1.6.1. Strengthening our connection with nature and the environment is an integral part of Washington Montessori.

1.6.2. We seek to instill in our students, parents, and staff not only a reverence for the earth, its waters, and all living things, but also a sense of stewardship for the environment based on a conviction of our individual responsibility for the beauty of the land and the health of our ecosystems.

1.6.3. We believe that being at home in the world of nature is basic to being a whole and healthy human being.

1.6.4. We consciously work to foster in each person a strong sense of belonging to the web of life. We accomplish this goal through:

1.6.4.1. Programs in outdoor education, and field biology at every age level in the school, using the natural setting of our campus and the wide variety of natural resources around us as a classroom out of doors.

1.6.4.2. Programs in gardening and small animal care.

1.6.4.3. Programs in camping, canoeing and field ecological studies in natural wilderness settings.

1.6.4.4. We stress recycling and environmentally friendly packaging for lunches and all foods and products used in our community.

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Section 2. Faculty

- 2.1. We carefully identify the duties and responsibilities of each position in the school.
- 2.2. We carefully identify the skills and knowledge, experience, educational philosophy, core values, and interpersonal skills needed to be successful in each position at our school.
- 2.3. We take great care in our hiring process to find new members of our faculty and staff who bring the right mix of skills, knowledge, experience, values, and personality to succeed at our school.
- 2.4. We will clearly communicate to all members of the faculty and staff our expectations, personnel policies, benefits and professional development opportunities that may be applicable to their positions.
- 2.5. In evaluating the school's programs and performance of each member of the faculty, we will be as objective and positive as possible, encouraging individual initiative, self-evaluation, and continuous professional growth.
- 2.6. Our school does not discriminate in matters of employment on the basis of race, religion, or ethnic background. We consciously follow fair and equal employment practices in hiring, assigning, promoting, and compensating both teaching and non-teaching staff members.
- 2.7. No official of our school will seek to induce a teacher who is under contract at another school to break that contract. [There is nothing deemed improper if a member of the teaching or administrative staff of another school independently approaches our school about possible employment.]
- 2.8. Our school will not offer employment to a member of the faculty or staff of another school without communicating with the Head of the school at which he or she is presently employed or committed for the upcoming school year to request a frank evaluation of a candidate's qualifications. This information will be considered absolutely confidential.
- 2.9. Our school will take all reasonable and lawful precautions to maintain the confidentiality of records and information concerning teachers and other staff members who are applying for employment at another school, in accordance with the rights of the individual.
- 2.10. Any materials brought to School by a member of our faculty and staff, purchased with his or her own funds, shall remain his or her property.
- 2.11. Any teacher-made educational materials produced by a member of the faculty and staff using school materials and supplies shall be considered the property of the school.
- 2.12. Any new curricula, teaching techniques, teaching aids, or any other educational materials developed by a member of the school's faculty, will belong to the teacher, providing he or she grants to the School a perpetual license to utilize said materials or ideas in its educational programs with both children and in teacher training.
- 2.13. Any teaching aids, materials, or curricula developed by the School, as well as any mailing lists of the School's students and families, represent the proprietary property of the School. No member of the faculty will be authorized to sell, transfer, assign, or disseminate said materials to a third person or a competitor of the School without first obtaining the Head of School's written approval.

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Section 3. Facilities

3.1. We will deliberately seek to create a campus of timeless beauty that communicates to our students that the buildings and grounds are expressions of our love and commitment to their education and success.

3.2. Whatever the size of our enrollment, or the age levels encompassed in our programs, our buildings and grounds will support the implementation of our educational program and institutional mission as ideally as possible.

3.3. Buildings will not be constructed solely for the sake of having space. Each will be carefully considered in terms of need, ideal space and configuration, and integration into the pattern language developed for our master plan.

3.4. As a Montessori school, a very high priority for us will be to have a campus large enough to include areas set aside for natural habitat, as well as areas set aside for programs in horticultural education, animal husbandry, marine and aquatic programs.

3.5. The school will attempt to keep the buildings and grounds free from toxic substances and environmental irritants. Whenever possible, pesticides and cleaning products will be found that are non-toxic and which do not induce allergic reactions in students or staff members.

3.6. The school will consciously follow safety procedures designed to protect students and staff:

3.6.1. all power tools, fuels, paint removers, and other hazardous substances will be kept under lock and key

3.6.2. no lawnmowers or other potentially hazardous machinery will be used anywhere in the vicinity where children are present.

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Section 4. Finances

4.1. Our school honors its financial commitments to parents, staff, vendors, and others.

4.2. We will operate on a balanced budget.

4.3. Tuition for any school programs not supported by public funds, will be set on the basis of what it costs to do the job correctly.

4.4. We are committed to making any school programs that we offer which are not supported by public funds truly inclusive by pursuing funding sources and endowments to offer financial assistance for families who are unable to fund their child's participation themselves.

4.5. We will communicate accurate information about the financial state of the school in an annual report to the community and from time to time on a more frequent basis.

4.6. We will endeavor to operate without depending on income from fund raising projects.

4.7. We expect all of our families, as members of our community, to honor their financial obligations to the school in a timely and responsible manner.

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Section 5. Recruitment and Enrollment

A Montessori student can never be replaced.

5.1. Our primary goal in the recruitment process is to help each family carefully consider whether their values and goals for their children's education are a good match with those of our school, and what will work best for each individual child.

5.1.1. When we enroll a new student, we recognize that we are entering into a relationship with his or her entire family, and seek to cultivate a true partnership.

5.1.2. In the enrollment process, we strive to help parents weigh many factors before they make their decision, including helping them to develop a thorough understanding of our Montessori program, and the nature of the partnership that we expect from parents.

5.1.3. Hopefully the children who we enroll in the early years will graduate from our school. Ideally it will be so much a part of each family's life that eventually the children of our graduates will attend our school as well. We want to be a family tradition.

5.1.4. We will welcome prospective parents and make it as easy as we can for them to learn what our school is really all about:

5.1.4.1. We will hold school visitations for prospective parents at least once a week and gladly schedule individual tours during school hours if for some reason the normal time is inconvenient.

5.1.4.2. We will normally make a list of the names and home phone numbers of Ambassador parents available to prospective parents who would like to speak with another family.

5.1.4.3. We will arrange frequent and convenient times when prospective parents can observe our classrooms.

5.1.4.4. We will spend as much time with prospective parents as possible in order to answer their questions, address their concerns, and assist them in determining whether it feels to them as if our school would be a good match for their child.

5.2. Non-discrimination Our school does not discriminate in matters of enrollment on the basis of race, religion, or ethnic background. We consciously teach children to accept, respect, and celebrate the rich cultural diversity of the global community.

5.3. We regard a mix of backgrounds and abilities as a positive and important element in our community.

5.4. Truth in Advertising and Public Relations: We pledge to represent our school truthfully and accurately to the general public and internally to our parent community.

5.5. Negative Public Relations: We further pledge ourselves to respect the diversity of the community of Montessori schools. We will not engage in negative public relations nor make any negative statements about another Montessori school.

5.6. We will promptly consult with parents should it ever become clear that a student is not benefiting from the school's program, or if the school is not the best program to meet his/her needs.

5.7. Our school recognizes each family's right to visit and consider other schools and to hold preliminary discussions regarding admission without feeling compelled to notify the school, which their children presently attend.

5.8. While we welcome inquiries and interest in our school, we will never knowingly attempt to enroll a student who is presently enrolled in or committed to attend another Montessori program.

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Section 6: Building Community

6.1. We recognize that a Montessori school is more than a place of learning; it is a community of children and adults that has a significant impact on our students' capacity to learn, grow, create, develop, assimilate values, and relate peacefully and respectfully to other people and to the natural world.

6.2. We treat all students, families, teachers, and staff members with kindness, warmth, and respect.

6.3. We consciously work to build a constructive partnership between the family and school in support of each child's educational development.

6.4. Within the school's guidelines, established to ensure the integrity of our educational program and the privacy of other students' records, parents are welcome to visit the school to observe their child in class or to review his/her academic progress.

6.5. We believe that every member of our community has a fundamental right to be treated with respect, regardless of age.

6.6. We place a primary emphasis on building relationships with families as early as possible in order to help parents recognize the uniqueness of their child. We also work together to enhance the parents' ability to parent.

6.7. We want to be a family-friendly school

6.7.1. In establishing policies and procedures, we attempt to remain sensitive to the needs, desires, and factors that might add unnecessary stress and pressures onto our families.

6.7.2. Also, in establishing policies and procedures, along with setting the calendar of school events, we will attempt to avoid conflicting with the religious traditions and holy days of our families. We recognize that this at times may be virtually impossible considering our diversity, but at the very least every effort will be made to create a balanced and respectful approach to this issue.

6.7.3. From time to time, we will survey our families or hold special community meetings to explore how the school could be more family friendly.

6.8. We strive to maintain a close-knit community of students, educators, parents, and friends of the school. We attempt to reach out and support one another throughout the school community.

6.9. We believe in the principle that those matters which affect individual community members directly impact all others in our community. We consider input from all of our community members in our decision making processes in order to take into account the needs of our total community.

6.10. Parenting Center: We encourage parents to participate in programs that can help them to refine their parenting strategies, to facilitate the development of independence, responsibility, self-confidence and self-respect in their sons and daughters and in themselves. We recognize parenting as an extremely difficult, rewarding and valuable job for which we have had little preparation and for which in the modern world we get little support. We are committed to find ways to provide that support for families from birth through adulthood by the creation of a parenting center to include parenting classes and ongoing support groups as well as sharing of clothing, toys, high chairs, etc., child care swapping, and car pooling.

6.11. The Ambassador Parent Program: We understand the special needs of new participants in the community and the necessity of a program to match new families with ones experienced in the community to provide support and information.

6.12. Support for Community Businesses: We will encourage and facilitate methods for members of our community to access the services of other community members.

6.13. Adult Development Programs: We will establish a program of adult classes and seminars on a variety of topics guided by community interest, in keeping with our commitment to a lifelong process of learning and personal growth.

6.14. Commitment to the Community: We expect all members of our community, students, parents, teachers and support staff to be committed, contributing members of the community, and to show support for the rules, regulations and principles established by the community, and we are prepared to support them in this effort as in some cases it may involve a paradigm shift.

6.15. Class and Community Meetings: We will hold monthly class and community meetings to allow and encourage a free and open exchange of ideas and information.

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Section 7. Administration

7.1. Our administration is focused on providing educational leadership, more than business administration.

7.2. The primary role of the Head of our school is to articulate the core values and vision, provide academic leadership, take leadership in the recruitment and enrollment process, build community and reduce attrition among students and families, recruit and coach faculty members and staff, oversee the financial health of the school, serve as the school's primary spokesman to the larger community, and lead the process of internal self-evaluation and long-term planning.

7.3. The Head of School will ensure that excellence and consistency with our values and vision permeate the school seamlessly from class to class, from level to level, and from one year to the next.

7.4. Naturally the Head of School will support his or her faculty and attempt to provide similar support and counsel to the school's families. However, the ultimate factor on which difficult decisions must be balanced is what is best for each individual child and what is consistent with the core values of the school.

7.5. When conflicts arise within the school, whether they involve parents, staff members, students, or administrators, every attempt will be made to find the best and highest resolution of the issues under dispute that is most consistent with the school's fundamental values and is most oriented to a win-win model.

7.6. The administration of the school will ensure a smooth and timely flow of communication about important dates and information to parents, students, and staff.

7.7. The administration will follow a collegial model in working with faculty members and staff, inviting their input and participation whenever appropriate in important questions facing the school.

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Section 8. Governance

8.1. The Board of Trustees shall be comprised of men and women who share a deep sense of commitment to the school. In all matters, they consider the overall best interests of the school over their own interests or over the interests of any constituent group within the school community.

8.1.1. The primary responsibility of the Board of Trustees is to establish and from time to time reexamine, and if necessary refine, the institutional identity, mission, and core values and beliefs about education that define the nature of the school.

8.1.2. That mission, institutional identity, and core values and beliefs will be set down in writing in a working document called the "Blueprint."

8.1.3. In making major or difficult decisions and at such times as it may prove to be helpful, The Board of Trustees should consult the Blueprint for guidance.

8.1.4. Repealed - BoT meeting 7/16/2009

8.1.5. Repealed - BoT meeting 7/16/2009

8.1.6. Except when confidential matters are being considered, board meetings are normally open.

8.1.7. Except for confidential issues, the major actions of the board will be communicated to the school community.

8.1.8. Concerned parents or staff members may request the opportunity to address their opinion to the board.

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Section 9. Fundraising

9.1. Every gift given to our school will be a gift of love, generously offered in support of our work.

9.2. We will not nickel and dime our families to death with petty fundraisers. We will limit fundraising activities to major programs, such as the Annual Fund and Annual Benefit.

9.3. While donations of funds, tangible goods, services, or real property are deeply appreciated, the school can never accept any gift that would require it to violate any of its core beliefs outlined in this document.

9.3.1. While individuals wishing to donate funds to the school are welcome to designate the use to which they may be used, it is up to the Board of Trustees to establish policy about who will decide on behalf of the school if they can be accepted in light of the conditions established.

9.3.2. Only the Board of Trustees can accept a gift of real property or tangible goods on behalf of the school that would potentially require the expenditure of funds to repair or maintain.

9.4. The Board of Trustees should be a key element in leading and promoting the school's fundraising efforts.

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