

Hill Country Montessori

2008-2009 Parent Handbook

This Parent Handbook constitutes a valid part of the enrollment agreement between Hill Country Montessori and the parents or guardians of children who are enrolled at the school. Enrollment at HCM constitutes acceptance of these policies.

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

HCM accepts children in the following order: 1) Current Students, 2) Siblings, 3) New Enrollees.

To be accepted for enrollment children must be at least two years old and must be toilet trained.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

The school calendar is updated regularly and is available on the website under the Parent section. The calendar includes school breaks, parent education nights, Institute events, snack schedules, conference schedules, etc.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

It is important to adhere closely to the arrival and dismissal times. Your child **must be accompanied** to the classroom. You must let a staff person know that your child has arrived by **making eye or voice contact**. Please make sure that the staff person **acknowledges your child's presence**.

Elementary and Middle students should enter through the the lower level.

The time before class is vital for the teacher to prepare the classroom and daily activities to ensure a smooth productive day. We ask that you arrive no earlier than ten minutes before the start of class (8:20). A brief "Hello" to the teacher, a hug and kiss followed by a firm good-bye to your child will permit a confident separation. Promptness in a child's life is also important. Children who arrive late and are picked up late feel awkward and uncomfortable. Tardiness is also disruptive to the teachers and students.

Dismissal is at 12:30 for three and four year-olds, for older students it is 3:30. Please come to your child's classroom and **let a staff person know you are leaving by making (acknowledged) voice or eye contact**. A ten (10) minute grace period is given for dismissal.

Children dropped off before 8:20 or picked up after 3:40 will automatically be enrolled in our after-school program.

Occasionally you may wish to arrange for someone other than yourself to pick up your child(ren). We ask your cooperation in insuring a smooth pick-up of your child when this occurs. Please:

- Notify the staff in writing that a different person will be picking up your child. This written notification must include the date, the name and relationship of the person authorized to transport your child and must be signed by the parent or legal guardian.
- Prepare your child, if at all possible, ahead of time by letting them know that someone else will be picking them up.
- Have that authorized person be prepared to show a picture I.D.

ABSENCES

Regular attendance dramatically impacts student achievement. Absences (and tardiness) are disturbing to students, disrupt schedules, require readjustment to the class routine, and slow down learning. Please make every effort to schedule doctor, dentist, and other appointments for students at times outside the school day. This will reinforce the importance of school and will prevent the student from getting (or feeling) behind in his or her work.

In the case of absence call the school as soon as possible. Our telephone number is 770-463-2221. Please leave a message if necessary.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In the case of school closings due to inclement weather, HCM will be closed if the Fulton County Public Schools are closed. To determine if school is closed listen to local television or radio stations for information of the Fulton County Public Schools. There will be no separate announcement for HCM.

DISCIPLINE

We strive to maintain a classroom environment in which we treat materials, others, and ourselves with respect. In instances where a student's behavior compromises this, we will work individually with the student and his or her family to help that student understand what the problems were with his or her behavior and help that student prevent similar behavior in the future.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

All parents are encouraged to observe their child's classroom throughout the year and we have assigned each family a designated time for their first observation of the year. We welcome you to schedule additional observation times as required.

You are always welcome at any time, but by arranging it ahead of time we can limit potential disruption caused by too many observers at once. Check with the office to determine the best times to visit. The length of stay is up to you. However, most observers find that 20 to 30 minutes is quite fulfilling.

An "Observation Sheet" will be provided to guide you through your observation.

PLACE-BASED EDUCATION TRIPS

Our children will regularly leave school for educational activities. There will not be individual permission slips for each out-of-school trip. Permission for these trips is contained in the Parent Agreement that each parent must sign upon enrolling their child(ren). For some trips, we may invite parents and/or siblings.

School personnel will always carry a cell phone and at least one will be trained in first aid and CPR. A first aid kit is always carried. Parents must provide car seats for children until they are 40 pounds and six years of age. You may leave the seat with us for the day.

HEALTH AND ILLNESS

With your cooperation, we can establish a healthier environment for all the children if, when your child is sick, he/she is cared for at home. If your child has had any symptoms of illness, such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or fever (100 degrees or higher), he may not return to school until free from these symptoms for 24 hours.

It is particularly important that you inform the school if your child has contacted any communicable diseases so we may pass that information on to the other parents (which will be done anonymously).

If your child becomes ill at school, he/she will be cared for individually, removed from the classroom, and you or an authorized person listed on the emergency form will be notified immediately in order to pick up your child.

MEDICATIONS

Prescription medication will be administered only with a medication consent form signed by the parent. Prescription medication must be in the original prescription bottle. Any and all medication to be given during school hours must be labeled with the child's name. Medication is to be brought to the office. It is not acceptable to send it in a child's lunchbox, backpack etc. No medication will be administered without a signed medication form. If a child takes medication daily, it is the responsibility of the parent to make sure that there is enough medication in the office. The school is not responsible for medicine that has run out.

IMMUNIZATION

The state immunization law requires all students to have an immunization record on file for school attendance. If your child is exempt from immunizations, he/she must have a signed exemption on file. All needed immunization records must be on file prior to the child attending school. If your child does not have immunization on file, he/she will not be allowed to attend classes until the situation has been remedied.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

A child will not be admitted unless an emergency contact information sheet is on file. Parents are asked to notify us in writing immediately if an address or telephone number changes.

Please keep in mind that if your child were to have an accident and the information on your emergency contact information sheet is incorrect, we have no way to contact you.

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

All accidents/incidents will be reported immediately to the Director. The teacher is ultimately responsible for preparing a written accident/incident report for the guardian and the student's file.

In case of a Minor Accident, the child will be tended to by a staff member. Appropriate first aid will be administered when needed and the injury will be reported to the person who picks up the child.

In case of a Serious Accident, the parent or person responsible for the child will be notified. If necessary, the Director will call 911. (Parents will be expected to assume responsibility for any expenses incurred.) A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and take his/her emergency information with them in case emergency care is needed.

SHOW AND TELL/ITEMS FROM HOME

We encourage children to bring objects of educational value such as plants, flowers, shells, nature and science objects, tapes, books, current newspaper articles or pictures to school at any time. It should be understood, however, that these will have to be worked into the teacher's classroom plans and may not be able to be presented that day.

We ask you to cooperate, however, in seeing that toys, treasures, money, play jewelry, etc., be left at home. **No electronic items (Gameboy, iPods, telephones) should be brought to school.** If inappropriate items are brought to school they will be held by the teacher until the end of the day and then returned to the adult picking up the child.

CLOTHING

Children's clothing should not be an obstacle to their enjoyment of the activities at school. A student's appearance may not interfere with the educational process, nor pose a health or safety hazard. Their clothes should allow them to run and climb and play freely. Avoid clothing with media-based pictures, advertising, or offensive messages.

Children must wear soft-soled closed-toe shoes with socks. This enables the children to effectively participate in activities which will develop coordination safely. When inside, children will take off their outside shoes. Children should bring a pair of socks or slippers to leave at school to wear inside the classroom.

Although we do wear aprons for some of our work involving water, paint, food, etc., accidents still happen and we would encourage you to not have your child wear some of his/her most expensive or favorite "good" clothes.

Each child should bring a labeled extra set of clothes (socks, too) with his name marked on it. This way, if your child ever needs a change of clothing, it is available. Older students may need this if their clothing is determined to be inappropriate by the school.

Our program stresses independence, and clothes that allow a child to dress and undress himself, without help, are preferred. Avoid difficult snaps, belts, shoulder straps, or anything that your child cannot undo or do himself.

Children should know when a particular field trip will require specific clothing. An example might be more “dressy” clothes when going to interview a community elder for an oral history project.

All elementary students should have labeled rubber boots suitable for wading in a stream.

LUNCH

Lunch is a quiet, social time. The children participate in setting the table, preparing for lunch and tidying up after lunch. It is the responsibility of the parent to insure that the lunch provides approximately one-third of the child’s daily nutritional requirements, as required by state law. Your child should be responsible for packing her own balanced, nutritious lunch. **Please do not send candy, soda, desserts, or any other food with high sugar content.** All food items should be cut and ready to eat. All lunch containers must be labeled. It is extremely important that the food which your child consumes fosters excellent growth and development. Sharing of food is not permitted.

There will be a staggered schedule for microwave use.

SNACKS/WATER

Each family is expected to bring snack/pet food on a regular rotating basis. The snack schedule is listed on the school calendar. At the end of the week prior to your snack week, your child’s teacher will provide you with a more specific list of what you need to bring on the Monday of your snack week.

Each student must bring a labeled washable water bottle that closes completely to have drinking water available during the day, at recess, and on outings.

PARENT EDUCATION SESSIONS

Parent Education sessions are held throughout the school year. Please check the School Calendar for dates. These meetings are held to help parents understand the Montessori philosophy and to provide information on parenting techniques and other relevant topics. We welcome suggestions of topics and speakers and strongly encourage all parents to attend.

BOARD MEETINGS

The board meets monthly. Board Meetings are open to the entire school community, except for certain closed sessions to discuss personnel and similar matters. We also have a number of Board committees that we encourage parents to be involved in. For a complete list of committees and committee chairs please our website under the “About” section.

GIFTS AND GIVING

HCM is funded by tuition and donations. We are dependent on your gifts of time, talent and treasure to provide an outstanding educational experience for our children. HCM asks families for their financial support because together we can build one of the finest schools in the world. By contributing to our school’s financial health, we strengthen current programs, implement program enhancements and cover capital costs. Just as we’ve decided to make our children’s education a priority, it is essential that we all understand the need to make regular giving a priority. Every year, HCM families and friends are invited to participate in the Annual Fund. As paid, these monies go directly

into the operating budget. Participation does not impact enrollment. However, we must conduct a successful Annual Fund campaign to operate within our current budget.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

We must know your current email address. Our regular email newsletter is our most important means of communication. Our newsletter will also be posted on the website under the “Parent” section. It is important that you read the newsletters thoroughly as that contain essential information.

The more accurately informed we are about your child, the better we can care for him/her. Please inform the child’s teacher of any changes at home or in the child’s life that may have an effect at school.

Please do not rely on verbal messages – they are too easily forgotten in the activity of caring for our students. Each community will have a notebook available to leave notes and messages for the teachers or you can email them.

Formal conferences for Primary and Elementary are held twice a year. This gives parents and staff an opportunity to discuss the child’s social, physical, emotional and cognitive development. Both parents are encouraged to attend.

Informal conferences can be arranged as needed. Please be aware, however, that at arrival and dismissal time, we are responsible for the children; it is difficult for us to engage in conversation with parents at that time.

PARENT PARTICIPATION/VOLUNTEERS

Parents are invited to participate in our program in a variety of ways. They are invited to help on a regular basis or to share a special interest or skill. We also welcome parents to share family cultural traditions throughout the year. Please contact your child’s teacher with your level of interest.

COMPUTER POLICY

Computers are to be used for research and educational purposes. Children will be educated on the appropriate uses of the computer and will be monitored by teachers while using the computer. If for any reason a child is found to be deliberately seeking inappropriate sites, the children’s parents will be called immediately for a conference with administration to determine the appropriate action.

TUITION

There are no make-ups and tuition is not subject to adjustment because of illness, vacation, holidays or absence from school. Parents are responsible for paying the tuition on time. Tuition payments are due as indicated on the admission agreement. No more than seven days may lapse after the due date, after which your child’s enrollment may be terminated. If your check is returned for any reason, there will be a \$25.00 charge.

MYSTERIOUS OBJECTS

Many of our classroom materials consist of small attractive objects that are appealing to children. If you find any “mysterious objects” in your child’s possession, please return them to school.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are an important celebration for our children. Every student should bring photographs for each year of their life to share with their class. Parents are welcome to join us for this event.

Other than our special birthday ceremony we do not celebrate a child's birthday with party favors, balloons, hats, etc. Some students choose to bring a gift for their classroom (such as a book) or a special snack to commemorate their birthday. You may ask your child's teacher for a suggestion.

Any birthday party invitations should be mailed and should never be distributed at school.

OUTDOORS

The children will go outside for work and play daily unless there is severe inclement weather. Be advised that rain is not necessarily inclement weather! Help your child to dress appropriately for being outdoors.

If you feel your child should not go outside due to health reasons, then he/she is too sick to be in school.

MEDIA INFLUENCE/"SCREEN TIME"

Television, video games and the Internet can inform, entertain and teach us. However, studies show that "screen time" may lead to more aggressive behavior, less physical activity, altered body image, and increased use of drugs and alcohol. By knowing how "screen time" affects your children and by setting limits, you can help make your child's "screen time" experience less harmful, but still enjoyable. Here are some guidelines:

Limit your child's use of TV, movies and video and computer games. Do not let your child watch TV while doing homework. Do not put a television in your child's bedroom. Some families give each child 30 minutes a day, some children have four hours a weekend. Some families let kids "pool" their minutes, other families count any time spent staring at a TV screen towards the TV allotment.

Plan your child's viewing. Instead of flipping through channels, use a program guide and the TV ratings to help you and your child choose shows. Turn the TV on to watch the program you chose and turn it off when the program is over.

Whenever possible, watch TV with your child and talk about what you see. If your child is very young, she may not be able to tell the difference between a show, a commercial, a cartoon or real life. Explain that characters on TV are make-believe and not real.

Help your child resist commercials. Do not expect your child to be able to resist ads for toys, candy, snacks, cereal, drinks or new TV programs without your help. When your child asks for products advertised on TV, explain that the purpose of commercials is to make people want things they may not need.

Give other options so that watching TV is not a habit for your child. Help your child find other things to do with his time, such as playing; reading; learning a hobby, a sport, an instrument or an art; or spending time with family, friends or neighbors.

Set a good example. You are the most important role model in your child's life. Limiting your own TV viewing and choosing programs carefully will help your child do the same.

Hill Country Montessori

2008-2009 EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION FORM

Date Completed _____

STUDENT'S FULL NAME:

DATE OF BIRTH:

STREET ADDRESS:

CITY/STATE/ZIP:

HOME PHONE:

MOTHER'S NAME:

HOME PHONE:

WORK PHONE:

CELL PHONE:

FATHER'S NAME:

HOME PHONE:

WORK PHONE:

CELL PHONE:

ALTERNATIVE EMERGENCY CONTACT 1

NAME

PHONE:

RELATIONSHIP:

ALTERNATIVE EMERGENCY CONTACT 2

NAME

PHONE:

RELATIONSHIP:

IN ADDITION TO THE PEOPLE LISTED ABOVE, THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE MAY PICK UP MY CHILD FROM SCHOOL:

THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE MAY **NOT** PICK UP MY CHILD FROM SCHOOL:

CHILD'S PHYSICIAN :

PHONE:

HEALTH INSURANCE COMPANY:

POLICY NUMBER:

KNOWN ALLERGIES OF CHILD (MEDICINE, FOOD, ETC.)

MEDICINES TAKEN BY CHILD

DESCRIBE ON A SEPARATE SHEET ALL PHYSICAL CONDITIONS OR ILLNESSES, WHICH COULD AFFECT THE CHILD'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAMS OR PROPER MEDICAL TREATMENT (DIABETES, EPILEPSY, POOR BLOOD CLOTTING, ETC.):

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2008-2009 GRANDPARENTS' INFORMATION FORM

Please fill out this form so we may keep our student's grandparents informed and invite them to our annual Grandparents' Day Celebration.

STUDENT'S FULL NAME

GRANDPARENT'S NAME

STUDENT CALLS THIS GRANDPARENT:

STREET ADDRESS:

CITY/STATE/ZIP:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

GRANDPARENT'S NAME

STUDENT CALLS THIS GRANDPARENT:

STREET ADDRESS:

CITY/STATE/ZIP:

EMAIL:

GRANDPARENT'S NAME

STUDENT CALLS THIS GRANDPARENT:

STREET ADDRESS:

CITY/STATE/ZIP:

EMAIL:

GRANDPARENT'S NAME

STUDENT CALLS THIS GRANDPARENT:

STREET ADDRESS:

CITY/STATE/ZIP:

EMAIL:
