

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Admission and Release Requirements**

Parents must accompany their child into Palm Valley Montessori School and sign the child in and out at the front desk. Please sign your first and last name next to your child's name. No individual may pick up a child without prior authorization and photo identification. If we have not been able to reach a parent, legal guardian, or emergency contact after one hour, we will be forced to contact legal authorities.

### **Student Drop Off**

We take our scheduled academic time very seriously, and we ask that you do the same by respecting the flow of the Montessori school day and arriving on time. All students, half-day or full-day, may arrive anytime between 7:30 AM and 8:30 AM. School-aged students who arrive after 8:30 AM are considered late, and their tardiness is recorded in school attendance records.

Late arrivals negatively affect your student and disrupt the entire classroom environment. If there is a valid reason for your child arriving late to school such as a doctor or dentist appointment, please notify the school beforehand by emailing the school manager, Mrs. LeAnna Gonzalez at [leanna.gonzalez@palmvalleymontessori.com](mailto:leanna.gonzalez@palmvalleymontessori.com), or calling (623) 986-9516.

School arrival should be drama-free regardless of the age of the student. Students should be signed in at the front desk by a parent/guardian and proceed to their classroom independently (escorted if in the Toddler program).

Please keep goodbyes short and sweet. Remember a major goal in Montessori education is independence and confidence. Although this is a tempting time to "have a quick conversation" with the teacher, we ask that parents and teachers, and assistants do not engage at this time of the day. It is extremely important that the teachers and assistants are focused on greeting students, getting them settled into the classroom, and engaging students with work upon their arrival.

Please be mentally and emotionally present when picking up and dropping off your child. Cell phone conversations should be finished outside. During this transition period, your child deserves your full attention. When your child is being picked up or dropped off, please do not allow him or her to run around the property. The school's parking lot is a potentially dangerous place and should be treated as such.

### **Student Pick Up**

Half-day students should be picked up at 12:15 PM. Full-day students should be picked up at 3:15 PM. A fee of \$50.00 per hour per child will be charged for any child left after closing time at 3:30 PM.

## Absenteeism and Tardiness Policy

Palm Valley Montessori School strives to be accommodating and flexible whenever possible. However, certain procedures must be followed to allow the learning environment to function properly. This is for your own child's benefit as well as the other children and families in our community. We ask that you respect the efforts of our school teachers to provide an excellent academic experience and arrive on time and attend school with regularity. All children should arrive no later than 8:30 AM.

## School Illness Policy and Medication Procedures

Ill children will not be admitted into the school. If your child should become ill while in our care, we will attend to their needs until a parent can pick up their child. If your child has an illness please notify us, the school is required to report any contagious illness to the Arizona Department of Health Services and to have a communicable illness record on file.

Do not bring your child to school with the following transmissible symptoms:

- Fever of 100.4° F (38° C)
- Vomiting
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Diarrhea
- Rash
- Infectious disease

**Children may return to school after being symptom-free for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducers.** Medications will not be administered to children.

## Allergies

There are several students with food sensitivities and a couple of students with severe and life-threatening food allergies at our school. For this reason, **we do not allow any peanut or tree nut foods** on the school grounds. The risk of exposure is too great. The staff closely monitors food consumption for these children.

Please be mindful of these restrictions when packing your child's lunch, providing snacks for the class, or preparing a potluck dish. For example, peanut butter, Nutella, and trail mix are potentially life-threatening foods in our school environment. If you are attending a school function that includes food, such as International Day or Summer Sizzle, do not give food to any student but your own.

## Dress Code

It is our goal to provide the best possible learning environment for our students. The Montessori classroom is referred to as "the prepared environment" because teachers are meticulous in their selection and presentation of materials and design of space. Everything has a place and a purpose. Clothing should also serve as an aid to the child's safety and development and not be a distraction to learning. However, uniforms are not desirable as they take away from our individuality and cultural expressions.

## Dress Code (Continued)

We want children to practice making appropriate choices within a reasonable framework. In an effort to shield our students from distraction and commercialism, Palm Valley Montessori School adheres to the following guidelines for dress:

- Sensible play clothes are the best choice for school. Please have your child dress as if they were going to the park for the day. Overalls and one-piece jumpsuits create an obstacle when it's time to use the bathroom, please save these types of clothes for the weekend. While we do teach children to wear aprons, it is not advisable to send children in clothes that cannot get dirty.
- Shoes, clothing, and accessories should not distract your student or others. Light-up shoes, shoes with wheels, watches, slap bracelets, colored hairpieces, etc. are not permitted. Flip sequins invite touching and are distracting. Please do not allow your child to put distracting items from home (lip gloss, stuffed animals, action figures, etc.) in their cubby.
- Hats are permitted for sun protection while playing on the playground or working outdoors. Students are asked to remove hats indoors.
- Do not allow your student to wear excessive jewelry to school. For example, simple earrings are not a problem, but large bracelets and necklaces are distracting to the child and are potentially unsafe on the playground.
- Movie and television characters on clothing encourage distractibility, silly behavior, and inappropriate fantasy play in the classroom. For these reasons, we have imposed a character-free clothing rule. This rule also applies to lunchboxes, water bottles, folders, or other student belongings.
- Please also evaluate whether the image or message on your child's clothes is aggressive, violent, or sassy in nature. For example, "here comes trouble" or "talk to the hand" are not appropriate school messages.
- Logos and advertisements based on reality are fine. For example, wearing a Diamondbacks cap or a Phoenix Zoo t-shirt are both acceptable.
- Temporary tattoos are not to be worn at school.

## Extra Clothes

Students should come to school dressed for the work of the day. Primary and Toddler students should bring a complete change of clothes on the first day of school. A shirt, shorts, socks, and underwear should be enclosed in a clear zip-lock bag with the child's name clearly marked. These items will remain at school. The clothes are not only for toilet accidents but are also helpful to have on hand in the case of spills, bloody noses, illness or injury, mud, etc.

## Water Bottles

All students need to bring a water bottle daily. The water bottle should only be filled with water. Please ensure the water bottle is character-free and clearly marked with your child's name. Water bottles should also be relatively small or child-size. Please **DO NOT SEND** any beverages other than water.

## Student Lunches

All students will need to bring a packed lunch from home. All lunches are refrigerated, and food can be reheated for students. **\*\*Please package food items requiring reheating separate from the other items in microwave-safe storage (i.e. glass instead of plastic containers).**

Lunch boxes should be free of characters (no Spider-Man, Barbie, Disney Cars, etc.). For example, a lunch box with a turtle design is great, but a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle is not acceptable. A horse picture is fine, but My Little Pony is not. Lunch boxes also need to be a reasonable size. Lunch boxes are kept refrigerated and oversized lunch boxes take up too much space. **\*\*We ask that lunch boxes be relatively small, so we can accommodate refrigerating all lunches.** Every lunch box should be clearly labeled with the student's name.

At school, we do our best to promote and model healthy eating and good table manners.

- Please **DO NOT SEND** junk food in your child's lunch.
- Please **DO NOT** send squishy packet foods such as Go-Gurt or squeezable apple sauce. Foods packaged in this way discourage the table manners we are working so hard to achieve.
- Please **DO NOT** send Lunch-able kits, Macaroni and Cheese kits, or packets of noodles. These items take too much time to assemble and/or cook, causing the student to be behind schedule.

Foods requiring reheating are fine, but foods requiring cooking are not. The teachers and assistants help the students to unpack their lunches, but our goal at lunch is the same as the rest of the school day in that we try to encourage independence and have the student do as much as he can on his own. Please support our efforts by having your child practice unzipping their own lunch box, opening their containers, and eating independently and politely while remaining seated at home.

Lunches will be consumed either inside at tables or at outdoor tables. Students will need to pack all necessary utensils and a cloth or paper napkin in their lunch box. Utensils will go back home for cleaning. Students will use their water bottles during lunch.

**Please remember: NO PEANUT or TREE NUT products may be brought to or consumed at school.**

## **Snack & Share Day**

Primary students will be given pre-selected “snack and share” days. On these predetermined days, the child will bring in some healthy foods to share with classmates for snack time and an item for show and tell. Students are encouraged to bring in food they can help prepare: apples to wash and slice, bananas to peel and cut, and cantaloupe to scoop. All food should be finger food i.e. no yogurt or applesauce. Primary students will have one snack and share day approximately once every two months. The schedules will be available on the Weekly Connection and in the school lobby. Snack is served family-style and is available throughout the morning.

Show and tell items should be something meaningful to the child. Cultural artifacts, favorite books (licensed character free), something the child made, an item from nature, or a photograph are all wonderful sharing objects. Please do not bring toys to share, or any item featuring a movie or television character.

## **Birthday Celebrations**

We love to celebrate children’s birthdays, but in the Montessori classroom, we do not celebrate with goodies, cakes, prizes, etc. Instead, the birthday child carries the globe around the birthday mat “sun” symbolizing their own journey. Parents are welcome to attend the ceremony or to send in pictures and short stories to share with the class. We share the child’s experiences and accomplishments (visiting the Grand Canyon, getting a dog, learning to swim). We ask what they would like to do in the next year of life. Birthdays are a time for reflection and goal setting.

Due to allergy restrictions and a desire to minimize treats, we ask that parents DO NOT celebrate their child’s birthday at school with food or sweets. Sharing baby photos or making a poster board presentation about your child’s year are fun ways to celebrate a birthday in the classroom.

Plants or flowers for our classroom environment, playground balls, sandbox toys, colored pencils, a cultural artifact, or a book would also make a great, long-term contribution to the community to acknowledge and celebrate your child’s special day. If your family would like to donate a book to the Palm Valley Montessori School library in honor of the occasion, please write your child’s name and birthday message inside. This is a wonderful way for the young child to contribute to the classroom community and remember their special day.

Please schedule a birthday celebration in your child’s classroom by contacting our school manager, Ms. LeAnna at [leanna.gonzalez@palmvalleymontessori.com](mailto:leanna.gonzalez@palmvalleymontessori.com) or 623-986-9516.

## **Dis-enrollment Procedure**

Children will be admitted on the basis of a pre-enrollment evaluation and application packet. However, the school reserves the right to discharge, at any time, any child whose presence, in the opinion of the school, is detrimental to the program and who is not benefiting from his instruction. If parents wish to withdraw their student, they will supply the school with written notification at least 30 days in advance. Charges will continue until a child is officially withdrawn.