

# **Tempe Montessori School, Ltd.**

## **Parent Handbook**



**Last Updated: July 2012**

**Please familiarize yourself with all *Tempe Montessori School* policies detailed in this handbook.**



## **TEMPE MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

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**Tempe Montessori School (TMS) Website:** [www.tempemontessori.org](http://www.tempemontessori.org)  
**TMS E-mail:** [office@tempemontessori.org](mailto:office@tempemontessori.org)

**Parent Organization:** T.E.M.P.O. (Tempe Montessori Parent's Organization)

**Tempe Montessori School Tuition Organization (TMSTO):**

[www.tempemontessori.org](http://www.tempemontessori.org)  
**TMSTO E-mail:** [tempemontessoristo@gmail.com](mailto:tempemontessoristo@gmail.com)

**Other websites of interest:** [www.facebook.com/tempemontessorischool](http://www.facebook.com/tempemontessorischool)

### **TMS Mission Statement**

**Our Mission is to provide superior quality Montessori education and developmentally-appropriate care for children from 3 months to twelve years of age. Furthermore, we seek to help parents achieve their highest educational goals for their children by following the teachings of Dr. Maria Montessori in an effective and sensitive manner.**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**I. TMS Contact Information and Mission**  
**Statement.....2**

**II. Table of Contents.....3-4**

**III. Note to Parents.....4**

**IV. About this Handbook.....4**

**V. Responsibilities of the School, the Parents and the Child.....6**

**VI. Admission Requirements.....7**  
     **A. Enrollment Procedure.....9**  
     **B. Reenrollment.....11**  
     **C. Waitlist.....11**

**VII. Parent Code of Conduct.....11**  
     **A. Expectations for Behavior of Adults on Campus.....11**  
     **B. Social Media Policy.....12**

**VIII. Student Dress Code.....14**

**IX. Discipline Policy.....15**

**X. Health and Illness.....16**  
     **A. Healthy Habits.....17**  
     **B. Medication Policy.....17**

**XI. Arrival and Dismissal Procedure.....17**  
     **A. Arriving Late.....18**

**XII. Classroom Observation Policy.....19**

**XIII. Sharing and School Materials.....19**

**XIV. Birthday Celebrations.....21**

**XV. Food at TMS.....21**

**A. Healthy Snacks.....21**

**B. Lunches.....22**

**a. A Guide to Packing Nutritious Lunches.....22**

**XVI. Rest for Full Day Students.....23**

**XVII. Parent Participation.....23**

**A. Parent Meetings.....23**

**B. Parent Education.....23**

**C. TMS-Parent Communication.....23**

**XVIII. Custody Policy.....23**

**XIX. Transportation.....24**

**XX. Inspection Reports.....25**

**XXI. Procedures for Unforeseen Events.....25**

**XXII. Tuition Refund Policy.....26**

**XXIII. Critique.....26**

**XXIV. Thank you.....26**

**XXV. Terms of Agreement.....27**

**A. Mandatory Parent Signature**

*Dear Parents,*

*Please take time to read this handbook thoroughly, and then keep it in a handy place for frequent reference. All parents are expected to be familiar with the school policies and to abide by them.*

*Sincerely,  
Irma Letson*

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### **ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK**

As teachers and staff of Tempe Montessori School, it is our responsibility to safeguard the children and to protect their right to an authentic Montessori education at our school. Please support us in this endeavor by cooperating with school policies. Every policy is based on sound principles, which apply to the elementary children as well as the toddler and primary children.

Some of these principles are:

- The child's sensitive period for order
- The child's need for independence
- The child's need to learn concentration skills
- The child's need to complete a cycle of activity.

Dr. Maria Montessori stressed the importance of the child being given an uninterrupted three-hour work period every day which is designed to follow a child's natural pattern of learning (orientation, casual involvement, and concentrated involvement).

Please help us with our responsibilities as TMS teachers and staff to respect the children. Our staff's regard for their well being, development and safety is dependent on close adherence to school policies.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL:**

- To provide an environment that is clean, safe and attractive.
- To maintain the standards and licensing required by state, county, and city agencies.
- To provide an authentic Montessori program that is stimulating, developmentally appropriate, and of the highest possible quality.
- To provide teachers who are exceptional in their capacities for guiding and caring, and in the excellence of their professional skills.
- To report to Child Protective Services suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.
- To remain committed to professional growth and open to new ideas.
- To respect the confidentiality and individual needs of each TMS family.
- To maintain professional recognition by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI).

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS:**

- To bring the child to school and pick up the child on time.
  - Please keep in mind that school day begins precisely at 8:30am each day.
  - To sign one's full name and the accurate time on child's sign-in/out sheets
    - ☆ This is a requirement by the *Arizona Department of Health Services*.
- To inform the school of your location if you are delayed in picking up your child.
- To fulfill financial and legal obligations to the school promptly and completely.
- To support both the school and child by:
  - Becoming informed and knowledgeable regarding Montessori education
  - Striving to "parent" according to Montessori principles.
  - Communicating with the teacher as desired for suggestions on specific home behavior or developmental issues.
  - Attending parent meetings and conference.
  - Supporting the teachers & show respect for others.
  - Keeping informed on goals and policies of the school.
  - Following school policies & maintaining open communication.
  - Volunteering time, effort and talent.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHILD:**

*To construct the adult he or she will become.*

## **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

### **Nido: 3 months – 14 months (Walking)**

- In good health
- Ready for a new environment
- Parent participation

### **AGE SPECIFIC INFORMATION:**

- Parents provide their diaper bag daily, a change of clothing in the diaper bag and 5 extra sets of clothing to be left at school.
- For children who are breast feeding/ formula feeding, parents provide milk/ formula, preferred bottle and nipple.
- Shoes will not be worn in the Nido room and hands must be sanitized upon entry and dismissal.
- Parents may provide specific bedding if they choose to. TMS will provide clean sheets for bedding on a daily basis.
- Please leave toys and pacifiers at home.
- Visiting parents will be granted access through the office gate. Visiting parents must sign in and out in the classroom upon each visit.
- Parents provide diapers (paper or cloth) and preferred wipes
- Daily reports will be provided for parents.

### **Toddlers: 14 months – 3 yrs.**

- 14 months old, walking, weaned, and eating solid foods. Children ages 14 months to 17 months will be considered on a case by case basis. Children must be a stable walker to enter the classroom environment.

### **AGE SPECIFIC INFORMATION:**

- Parents may provide specific bedding if they choose to. TMS will provide clean sheets for bedding on a daily basis.
- Please leave toys and pacifiers, bottles and sippy cups at home.
- Observing parents will be granted access through the office gate. Parents must sign in and out in the classroom upon each visit.
- Parents provide PULL UPS/ UNDERWEAR and preferred wipes
- Parents provide extra pairs of clothing for children. Soiled clothing will be sent home on a daily basis.
- Upon drop off and pick up, parents remain in the outdoor environment. Children enter and exit the classroom on their own.
- Scheduled observations will be made through the office during observation hours.



- Please respect the classroom environment by not knocking or banging on the windows. The teachers can see you when you arrive.
- Please provide a nutritious lunch for your children with a healthy variety of food.
- To check on your child during the day, please contact the office
- Leave your schedule open for the first week of school as children transition into the environment. Expect calls between 9-10:30am.

**Primary Class: 3 – 6 yrs.**

- 3 years of age or have previous Montessori experience.
- Toilet trained, weaned, and eating solid foods.
- Language development sufficient to express needs.
- Able to follow simple commands, directives and prompts.
- Manageable behavior and simple obedience.
- Children 4.5 and older without previous Montessori will be considered on a case by case basis.
- Upon enrollment parents make a commitment to continue at TMS until the child finishes Kindergarten (3<sup>rd</sup> year).

**AGE SPECIFIC INFORMATION:**

- Parents may provide specific bedding if they choose too. TMS will provide clean sheets for bedding on a daily basis.
- Please leave ALL TOYS at home. TOYS brought to school will be placed in a safe place until the end of the day.
- Observing parents will be granted access through the office gate. Visiting parents must sign in and out in the office upon each visit. Please respect the classroom environment by not knocking on the windows. The teachers can see you when you arrive.
- Parents provide extra pairs of clothing for children.
- Upon drop off and pick up, parents remain in the outdoor environment. Children enter and exit the classroom on their own.
- Scheduled observations will be made through the office during observation hours.
- Please provide a nutritious lunch for your children with a healthy variety of food.
- To check on your child during the day, please contact the office
- ALL primary students are expected to use carport services if they are dropped off between 8:00-8:25 am (with the exception of the first week of school). Families with Nido (infant) or Toddler age children may say their goodbyes at the Nido (infant) or Toddler classroom.

**Elementary Class: 6 - 12 yrs.**

- Prior Montessori school experience is beneficial. Children without previous Montessori experience will be considered on an individual basis.
- Able to read, with some ability to write in cursive form.
- Knowledge of the four functions of mathematics (add, subtract, multiply and divide), number concepts to four digits.
- Ability to work independently without teacher prompting.
- Ability to complete cycles of activity with concentration in addition to evident pleasure and pride in work.
- Shows responsibility for self, and the capacity for self-discipline.

**AGE SPECIFIC INFORMATION:**

- Please leave ALL TOYS at home. TOYS brought to school will be placed in a safe place until the end of the day.
- Observing parents will be granted access through the office gate. Visiting parents must sign in and out in the office upon each visit. Please respect the classroom environment by not knocking on the windows. The teachers can see you when you arrive.
- Upon drop off and pick up, parents remain in the outdoor environment. Children enter and exit the classroom on their own.
- Scheduled observations will be made through the office during observation hours.
- Please provide a nutritious lunch for your children with a healthy variety of food.
- To check on your child during the day, please contact the office
- ALL Elementary students are expected to use carport services if they are dropped off between 8:00-8:25 am (with the exception of the first week of school).

**ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE**

Parents or guardians and their child [ren] can visit TMS for one of the weekly school tours. Tours are scheduled every Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 to 10:30a.m. Please call to confirm that our school is not closed during this time. During the tour, a short video (15 min.) is shown, visitors are guided around the property, the program is explained, and all questions regarding policies, schedules, fees, staff qualifications, discipline, and other matters are addressed. Parents or guardians are also asked to fill out an initial

questionnaire and informed about the wait list. They will also be given a copy of our fee schedule.

After touring, if parents or guardians wish to proceed with enrollment, we ask that they fill out a more detailed questionnaire and set up a time to observe in the appropriate classroom. After the observation, an informational teacher interview may be scheduled to answer, either in person or by phone, any remaining questions that parents might have. After these preliminary steps are completed, TMS will proceed with final enrollment as soon as space becomes available.

Once a child is enrolled, the following documents must be completed or provided:

- Enrollment Contract
- FACTS tuition management form - to be filled out online or in house
- Emergency Card and a copy of the child's Immunization Records, Allergy and Medical Needs Report
- Birth Certificate or copy of the birth certificate
- Parent Consent for Student Activities
- Liability Waiver

Additionally, a **\$150 enrollment fee** per family AND the **first month's tuition** are to be paid upon enrollment.

### **RE-ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE**

Each spring, Tempe Montessori School invites families to re-enroll for the following year. When you are invited back, your packet will include the contract for the next year and any forms that require updating. Please complete and return these forms to the office, along with the **\$85.00 re-enrollment fee**. One re-enrollment payment per family is sufficient. Families who do not turn in re enrollment paperwork by the specified deadline will not have their space reserved for the following school year.

### **WAITLIST**

If no space is currently available for enrollment, the child's name is placed on the waitlist. A **\$50.00 waitlist fee** is required for this service, and will serve to hold the child's spot. Fees are non-refundable and no guarantees are made for desired placement, which is dependent upon space as available and what is in the best interest of each child.

## **PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

***“If help and salvation are to come, they can only come from the children, for the children are the makers of men.” Maria Montessori***

For the well-being of TMS children, parents, guardians, teachers, staff and visitors, we ask that you respect the following rules while on the premises:

### **General Behavior and Dress Code on TMS Campus:**

- Parents must treat their children with respect both verbally and physically
- We expect each parent to treat each staff member with respect.
- Parents and visitors to our TMS campus are asked to dress modestly and appropriately.
- Refrain from exposing tattoos or unusual piercing.
- Use a soft voice while inside the classroom.
- Refrain from using inappropriate language. There are many ears listening.
- Parents must be sober and not under the influence of drugs or alcohol when on campus and picking up children. We are a smoke free environment. **Smoking is not allowed on campus.**
- Firearms are not allowed on campus.
- If you have a conflict with a staff member, parent, or student, please take it to an Administrator immediately.
- Please refrain from using your cell phone on campus for both phone calls and texting, especially in the carport areas. Complete phone calls before you exit your car to get your children. Your full attention is needed when bringing your child and picking up your child as a matter of safety and respect for your child.
- **Our mission at *Tempe Montessori School* is to provide the very best education and care for children, as according to the teachings of Dr. Maria Montessori.**  
Moreover, we strive to do so in a developmentally specific, effective and sensitive manner and to continuously aid parents in achieving their highest educational goals for their children.
- **Parents in the TMS community play an integral part in the education of their children.**  
TMS parents and other members of the community are expected to follow and respect the educational process, and to act in a supportive manner toward staff, children and other parents. **Parents must be ambassadors for Tempe**

**Montessori School as well as for the Montessori Method, and as such, they are obligated to uphold the Mission Statement of the school.**

- **We are a community of like-minded people dedicated to the Montessori Method.**

For this reason, it is essential that parents continue their Montessori education by attending Parent Education Nights, TEMPO meetings, Parent Orientation, and other school functions. TMS parents must bring all concerns immediately to the administration and refrain from sharing negative opinions, concerns, and arbitrary or confidential information with the TMS community. We maintain a positive environment for the children, which allow them to learn and grow both peacefully and respectfully. Parents are therefore both expected and required to maintain a respectful demeanor as well as a supportive stance, and to take part in the continued education of their children.

- **Just as the children have boundaries and limits in the classroom, so do the parents.**

Please refrain from spending an extended amount of time socializing in the carport area. This space is a part of Tempe Montessori School property, and is used for student pick-up and drop-off only. It is not a space to share weekend plans, plan birthday parties or events. While we at TMS are delighted to know that families at the school feel at ease with one another and are actively strengthening social ties, we ask that you do so at your own leisure and instead reserve the school grounds solely for your children's academic and emotional development.

- **Similarly, the playground is a place exclusively designed for the children to play and explore.**

Children constantly listen, observe, evaluate and endeavor to understand events in their immediate surroundings. It is not appropriate to talk about personal matters with staff or about other children. Any behavior, discussion, or other action which could negatively impact the peaceful environment or interfere with the education of your children will not be tolerated, and when observed, parents will be informed of the Mission Statement here at TMS. Parents who choose not to act in accordance with the Mission Statement may be viewed as potentially harmful to staff, other parents, or the children, and will be asked to leave the TMS community.

- **As always, we are here to support the children, and to work together collaboratively, in the interest of providing a quality education for your children.**

**Just as the children have boundaries and limits in the classroom, so do the parents and guardians.** Please refrain from spending an extended amount of time socializing in the carport area. This space is a part of Tempe Montessori School property and is used for student pick up and drops off only. It is not a space to share weekend plans, plan birthday parties or events.

Similarly, the playground is a place exclusively designed for the children to play and explore. These young ears are taking everything in, and are masters in observation. It is not appropriate to talk about personal matters with staff or about other children. Any behavior, discussion, or other action which will negatively impact the peaceful environment or interfere with the education of your children will not be tolerated, and when observed, the parent will be reminded of the Mission Statement of the school.

Parents who choose not to act in accordance with the Mission Statement may be viewed as potentially detrimental to staff, other parents, or the children, and will be asked to leave the TMS community. We are here to support the children, and to work together collaboratively as a unit, in order to provide a quality education for your children in a sensitive manner.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

Tempe Montessori School provides information for parents of TMS through the TMS website, SMUGMUG, parent Rosters, and Facebook fan page, emails, parent mailboxes, etc. These pages are strictly for informational purposes and content is not to be redistributed to public forums or in an inappropriate or disrespectful manner.

The **TMS website** can be found at [www.tempeмонтessori.org](http://www.tempeмонтessori.org). This site serves as a virtual space to share school information with the public as well as other relevant information with TMS parents. The website contains photographs only of children whose parents have signed releases.

**SMUGMUG**, another online forum used to keep parents informed, allows parents a view of their child[ren]'s day. SMUGMUG pictures are sent through a secure and password-protected website. Due to the content and for both the protection and safety of the enrolled children at TMS, these are not to be shared with, sent out or emailed to anyone outside of the TMS community. Parents may only send photos from SMUGMUG of their own children.

**Parent Rosters** with contact information are provided for parents to communicate with one another about birthday parties, play dates, etc. Parent Rosters and any parent information provided by TMS must be used responsibly and discreetly. Parent emails, addresses, and phone numbers are not a means to communicate publicly with the entire community. All communication pertaining to TMS information must be first given to the administration.

The **Facebook fan page** is an additional way for TMS to keep parents up to date and provide information about school events. This is used as a forum for TMS to provide information. This is NOT a forum for parents to discuss concerns, complaints, personal

matters or any of the children. If an instance such as this should arise, the individual violating the code of conduct will be removed from the *Facebook* fan page and asked to review the parent code of conduct and the TMS Mission Statement.

In order to maintain professionalism, staff and parents are not permitted to be friends on *Facebook*, nor is staff permitted to befriend alumni students who are under the age of 18. Staff *Facebook* pages are their personal property and as TMS maintains that staff keeps their personal *Facebook* pages professional and appropriate, TMS is NOT responsible for personal information that staff members choose to disclose on their personal *Facebook* pages.

**Email** information is used for blanket communication with the TMS community. Emails sent from TMS, are not to be used as a public forum to discuss personal concerns or complaints. Please contact your teacher or the administration immediately with any concerns, so these may be helped in a sensitive manner

**Staff Email and Phone numbers** are made available to parents solely for the purpose of discussing their children. Please respect staff member's personal time. In order to maintain a calm and undisturbed work period for the children, staff personal cell phones are not in use during their work period. Please wait until after 3pm to contact them. Please also allow time for emails to be answered. Please do not TEXT Msg., Staff during the work period or before 6am or after 8pm, staff also has commitments to their families and other activities. Please respect their personal and family time.

**Staff confidentiality and parent complaints:** In order to maintain respect for all of us including staff and to keep out of unnecessary gossip trails, staff is asked to bring any parent concerns outside the realm of their children to the administration. If a problem arises which does not directly affect your child in their classroom, please bring all information to the administration so we may help better clarify and resolve a situation.

### **STUDENT DRESS CODE**

Your child should wear washable and comfortable clothes. Clothes that can easily be managed by the child are necessary. Bring a change of clothing to leave at school in case of necessity. These should be labeled with the child's name, as should sweaters and jackets. Also, shoes should be comfortable but give good support. All shoes must have a backing and cover most of the foot- no flip flops, please. **Please avoid clothing with fictional or commercialized characters or extensive advertising. This rule extends to shoes and lunchboxes as well.** Toddlers should have shoes that are easy for them to remove and put on. We recommend that children wear hats in extreme heat and encourage you to apply sunscreen to your child in the morning when dressing. Elementary children should have a pair of rubber boots left at school for barn or garden work. Please speak with your Nido / Toddler teacher about specific clothing for your child.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

All discipline shall be positive and focused on behavioral redirection or guidance, with the primary goal being the safety, education, establishment of self-discipline, and character development of and for the child. Furthermore, constructive, positive discipline serves to collectively benefit both the individual classroom and the entire school in that it maintains a structured and peaceful environment.

The following basic rules are explained to the children:

1. Talk softly
2. Walk slowly
3. Respect the work of other students
4. Use a rug for floor work, and walk around the rugs
5. Sit down to work
6. Replace all materials as you found them
7. At group time, wait your turn to talk
8. Listen to the speaker
9. Always be polite
10. Care for your classmates, yourself, and your school

When a child first breaks a rule, it is assumed that s/he did not know the appropriate behavior. The teacher will demonstrate to the child what to do and what to say in a particular situation.

However, when a child repeatedly disobeys, disrupts, injures her/himself or others, or destroys property, that child is immediately yet gently removed to a place apart from the group, but within staff sight and in viewing distance of the other children. This placement enables the child to observe other children behaving in positive ways. S/he may join the group or activities when s/he feels ready to comply with the rules, which are put in place to ensure the safety and well-being of all children at TMS. When a child intentionally hurts another person, the parents are called to pick up the child and keep her/him at home for the rest of the day.

**When a child repeatedly engages in a problem behavior, the parents are called in for a conference.** Consistent methods of discipline are discussed. Parents are encouraged to always avoid excessive, material rewards for good behavior, spanking or abusive methods of discipline.

If no apparent progress is made with unacceptable behavior, professional counseling with a psychologist is recommended, or medical evaluations are suggested. Ultimately, if all efforts fail to help the child and s/he is not benefiting from the Montessori program, or is a negative influence on the classroom, parents are asked to remove the child from the school. Alternative placements may be suggested.

SMART SUPPORT: Arizona's Early Childhood Mental Health Consultations Systems



As an additional support for parents, children and staff, TMS has access to the Smart Support services under the Southwest Human Development and First Things First programs. All services are at no cost and require parental approval.

### **HEALTH AND ILLNESS**

Any child who appears to be ill upon arrival will not be allowed to attend class. If you notice signs of illness before bringing your child to the school such as: a fresh cold, sore throat, inflammation, fever of  $\geq 99^{\circ}$ , severe cough, rash, diarrhea, vomiting, or other symptoms, we ask that your child remains home. This is an *Arizona Department of Health Services* regulation that is enforced not only to protect the ill child, but all children and staff at the school in the event of communicable disease.

**Adherence to this mandatory school policy will lessen your child's risk of illness and allow a faster recovery in the home environment.**

In the event of communicable disease in the school, we will notify all parents of its presence, date of outbreak and known symptoms via *Medical Alert*, distributed in both electronic and paper form. A call to the school is expected if your child will be absent. If your child becomes ill during the day, we will isolate him/her from the group and you will be notified to pick up the child as soon as possible. The child is to **remain home until symptom-free** for **24 HOURS**. If a child is sent home due to illness, s/he may not return to school the next day.

**Please help us reduce the rate of illnesses at our school by cooperating fully in keeping an ill child home. We ask that you plan ahead for alternate childcare in the event of illness.**

If your child should be injured and require medical attention, you will be notified immediately. The Emergency Information Card, which you must complete, will provide us with information regarding alternate emergency contacts in the event that you are unavailable at the time of injury. The Emergency Information Card, with your signature, gives parental permission for medical and/or hospital care. If this form is unsigned, emergency treatment cannot be administered to your child.

### **HEALTHY HABITS**

In keeping with good health habits, we teach each child to blow his/her nose, discard used tissues, and cover his/her mouth when coughing or sneezing which is followed by hand washing. We also teach your child to wash their hands with soap before eating and after every time they use the toilet. This should be reinforced at home until it becomes a life long habit.

**MEDICATION POLICY**

1. Medication without a doctor's prescription and written permission from a parent or guardian will not be administered by TMS.
  - a. The appropriate forms can be found in the school office.
2. All medication must be in the original container, dated, with the child's full name.
3. All medication must be personally delivered by a parent to the school office and **MAY NOT** be brought by a child in a lunch box or backpack.
  - a. This includes vitamins, cough drops and other over-the-counter items.
4. If possible, medication should be administered at home, by a parent or guardian.
  - a. TMS staff is not responsible for overseeing and ensuring that children receive medication.

**ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURE**

Please enter the driveway at the North Entrance, near Broadway. If you wish to come into the school, please park your car in a designated area and **NOT** in the driveway, which would obstruct the flow of traffic. Never leave any child in the car alone for any reason, or for any period of time.

Additionally, please remember that we are in a residential neighborhood, and should always be respectful of the neighbors by not blocking the flow of traffic, or parking on their property, by driveways, garbage cans, or mailboxes. We request that you pull up in front of the driveway and depart as soon as possible so as to avoid a traffic jam. The speed limit on El Dorado is 25 mph. We appreciate your efforts in assuring the safety of your child, the TMS community and our neighbors.

**If you arrive before 7:30a.m., please remain with your child until a staff member is available. The gate will remain locked until 7:30a.m.**

Each school day, between **8:00-8:20a.m.**, parents, guardians, and authorized emergency contacts will be met in front of the school by a TMS staff member to drop off students. The gate will be locked at **8:30a.m.** All parents and visitors **MUST** be out of the classrooms by 8a.m. and off the playground by 8:20a.m. Any child arriving after 8:20 a.m. is to be brought to the gate and taken to class by a TMS staff member.

**We ask that you DO NOT walk your child into class after 8:20 a.m., as at that time, teachers and students have begun to transition into the school day and should not be distracted from the academic environment.**

**Parents MAY NOT leave children/ infants who are not attending school in the car during drop off/ pick up time. All children must exit the car with their parent and hold their hand in the drive way for safety reasons. TMS is required to document and report to the local authorities any child left in the car.**

If a child displays visible anxiety or unease during separation, a parent may stay with the child until that child is calm and/or the parent has to leave. Staff will then

accompany the child to the classroom, where s/he will be greeted warmly by the teacher. Please discuss any of your concerns with your child's teacher.

Children are picked up during carport, in front of the school, either at midday, between **12:15-12:25p.m.**, or after the school day, between **3:00-3:10 p.m.** One of our staff members will be in front of the driveway to meet adults, and they will be handed a sign-in/out notebook to sign and date. Documenting this information is mandatory and we thank you for your cooperation.

In inclement weather or in the event that a child is not ready for pick up, parents are requested to park their vehicles and come into the school to receive their children. Should any changes occur in the pick up schedule - however temporary - parents must inform their child's teacher or the administration in writing. TMS **cannot** release a child to an unauthorized person. All individuals picking up children must be listed on the appropriate emergency card, which should be updated regularly. If you are new to TMS or an authorized emergency contact, please be prepared to show proper identification to staff until we become familiar with who you are.

**Always inform a staff member when picking up your child, and be sure to write your legal signature and the exact time on the sign-in/out form.**

### **ARRIVING LATE**

All children are expected to be in class before 8:30a.m. Every person who enters the class after it has started disrupts the class. When a child is picked up early, the opportunity to complete the cycle of activity is also denied. We request you schedule doctor appointments after 3:30p.m. whenever possible.

Thank you for all of your support and cooperation. If you have questions regarding school policies, please ask for clarification in the school office. Every policy is based on sound principles, which apply to the elementary children as well as the toddler and primary children. Some of these are:

- The child's sensitive period for order
- The child's need for independence
- The child's need to learn concentration skills
- The child's need to complete a cycle of activity.

Dr. Montessori stressed the importance of the child being given an uninterrupted three-hour work period every day which is designed to follow a child's natural pattern of learning (orientation, casual involvement, and concentrated involvement).

All children are expected to be in class before 8:30. Every person who enters the class after it has started disrupts the class.

When a child is picked up early, the opportunity to complete the cycle of activity is also denied. We request you schedule DR. Appointments after 3:30 whenever possible.

Please help us with our responsibilities as TMS teachers and staff to respect the children. Our staff regard for their well being, development and safety is dependent on close adherence to school policies.

Toddlers will not be admitted into class after 9:15am, primary children will not be admitted into class after 9:30 am, except for unavoidable appointments and emergencies.

Thank you for all of your support and cooperation. If you have questions regarding school policies, please ask for clarification in the school office.

**Unless you have an appointment in the office please leave campus promptly after safely dropping off your child. We ask that no personal business to be conducted on campus.**

#### **Late Pick up Policy:**

TMS is open Monday through Friday from 7:30- 6pm. Schedules are pre determined before the child is enrolled. Children on campus 20 minutes after the agreed upon pick up time will be charged an additional fee of \$5.00 per 20 minutes. Children left on campus after 6pm will be charged \$20 per every 10 minutes. Fees are due at the time of pick up. In accordance with state law, children who are left on campus after 6pm, and with no notification from the parents or legal guardians, will be reported to the Arizona police department. Schedules can be adjusted and changed with one week's written notice to the administration.

**Unless you have an appointment in the office,  
we ask that you leave campus promptly after safely dropping off your child.  
Please refrain from conducting personal business on campus.**

#### **CLASSROOM OBSERVATION POLICY**

Parents are expected to visit and observe the class at least once during the school year. **If your child is new, please wait 2 months before observing** so that s/he may have the opportunity to acclimate to the specific classroom environment.

Additionally, we welcome students, teachers, and others interested in Montessori education to observe. Limited space necessitates the advance scheduling of appointments, and observations usually are limited to 30-45 minutes. Photos are prohibited in the classroom to protect the privacy of children and families, and a copy of identification and relevant course syllabi are required for students and professionals visiting the school.

Should you be unable to keep your observation appointment, please call the TMS office to reschedule or cancel. Our staff takes great care in preparing for observations, and your consideration of this fact is greatly appreciated.

**Observation is NOT participation.** All adults observing at Tempe Montessori School must sit quietly in the classroom so as not to draw attention or distract children from their work. Please refrain from talking with teachers or children, as doing so might break children's focus or concentration. If a child approaches you or talks with you, you may respond briefly, but please do not engage in any extended conversation or activity with him/her. Teachers will give observers an informational sheet of "Observation Guidelines" to follow during this time as well as materials for taking notes.

Understandably, while you are in the classroom, your child may not behave as s/he usually does in the environment. As such, we request that you first watch the group as a whole to gain a more representative example of classroom routines. After the observation, you may leave your phone number in the office and so that a teacher may contact you for a follow-up and any remaining questions.

### **SHARING**

We encourage students to share items of educational value with classmates. We request that they be clearly marked with the student's name. Types of items that are encouraged are science and natural materials, books, cultural artifacts, and recordings. For safety and health reasons, **pets will not be allowed** for this sharing period, or on campus at anytime. Instead, we welcome a photo or drawing of a pet, which students can present and verbally share. We also cannot accept toys or personal treasures. This includes money, candy, gum, or prohibited items such as guns (including toy guns). Please discuss this policy in advance with your child to avoid disappointments.

### **SCHOOL MATERIALS**

Our students enjoy bringing home the books they are learning to read at TMS! Since we have a limited supply, however, please see that all books are returned as soon as possible. Furthermore, if your child comes home with a small object which looks like something belonging to the school, please return it immediately. The piece may be part of a full set of Montessori materials. As these highly specific items are rather expensive and extremely difficult to replace, we very much appreciate your efforts in ensuring that these items remain in the classroom only.

### **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

If you are inviting all children in your child's class to a party, you may use our sign-in/out books for the invitations. However, **if you are only inviting a select few**, we ask that you **please use the US Postal service** for delivery, as this will avoid any exclusion and hurt feelings among the children. TMS recommends having a small group for your child's home party, as it is less overwhelming for the child.

If you wish to share birthday activities with us by providing a healthy treat for the class, please talk to your child's teacher in advance to avoid duplication or confusion, as well as helping in planning. Healthy treats and sugar-free foods are recommended and always appreciated. As your child might enjoy the planning and preparation of this treat, we encourage that you include her/him in the process. Many children also enjoy donating a book to the classroom library, to share with others, in honor of their birthday.

**Parents may visit** the classroom at lunchtime on the day of celebration, and have the option of **making a visual timeline** of their child's life, with pictures and milestones from each year. Parents and their child will share this timeline with the class, and talk about how far s/he has come. We keep all celebrations simple (no clowns, balloons or noise makers) and symbolic of the transition the child is making. Please allow about **10 -15 minutes before the scheduled lunch period** for the celebration.

### **FOOD AT TMS**

#### ***Healthy Snacks:***

We appreciate and encourage your participation in the healthy snack program. In our classrooms each day, children help to prepare and serve a nutritious snack. Parent-made snacks provide a greater variety in food than what is available to the teachers. If you care to provide an occasional snack for your child's class, please let the teacher know. The Health Department requires that any food brought from home be prepared on site, at the school. Any food brought from your family must be sealed in the original store packaging. Generally, all cake, candy, cookies, and sweets are avoided.

Snack foods provided in the morning and afternoon for Primary children consist of the following food selections:

- Milk, cheese
- Fresh seasonal fruit and vegetables
- Raisins and other dried fruit
- Baked bread (zucchini, banana, etc.)
- Cereal
- Bottled or frozen 100% fruit juices (always sugarless, except lemonade)
- Cold water, which is always available

#### ***Lunches:***

Each student will need to bring his/her own lunch. In your child's best interest, we encourage you to send the most nutritious meals possible and to limit foods containing sugar. To ensure smooth and timely transitions from work to lunch and then to play, **please prepare a lunch that does not need to be heated.**

Often, we see portions that are too large for young children. A lunch that is too large or which contains too many choices can overwhelm the child. Please make your portion size appropriate to the child's age. We encourage you to **have your child help** prepare

her/his lunch in containers that can be opened easily. When at school, lunch boxes are kept in a refrigerator. Soft lunch boxes or cloth bags are preferred over metal lunch boxes because space is often limited.

In an effort to reduce classroom waste, ease clean-up and ensure minimal negative environmental impact, we ask that you please store your child's food items in reusable bags and containers. This practice has the additional benefit of allowing your child to learn ecologically responsible habits and clean up after themselves more effectively.

TMS will provide 100% fruit juice with snacks and milk or water with lunch. If a child is allergic to milk, parents may either provide a substitute product, or TMS can provide juice. If you send a drink, please note that **only** 100% fruit juice and milk are acceptable. Please do not send soft drinks or punch. TMS **cannot and will not** microwave food for children. Please send hot food in a thermos or insulated container if you prefer hot food for your child, along with a note for your child's teacher to keep the lunch out of the refrigerator.

### ***A Guide to Packing Nutritious Lunches:***

#### **1. Choose foods that are low in fat.**

Choose lean meat, fish, poultry, dry beans and peas, low fat cottage cheese, low fat cheeses, peanut butter as protein foods. Example of high fat foods to avoid when packing lunches for young children include bologna, salami, excessive use of butter, margarine, or mayonnaise, potato chips, heavily salted tortilla chips.

#### **2. Choose foods with adequate starch and fiber.**

Children should eat fruit and vegetables, whole grain breads and cereals, beans, peas, and nuts. Select fresh fruits or fruit canned in its own juice or water packed. You can substitute these foods for fats and sugars.

#### **3. Choose foods that are low in sugar.**

Keep all sugars, including white sugar, brown sugar, raw sugar, honey and syrups to a minimum. No Go-Gurts, please. Read food labels for clues on sugar content. If the names sucrose, glucose, maltose, dextrose, lactose, fructose, or syrups appear first, there is a large amount of sugar in the product.

#### **4. Choose foods that are low in sodium.**

Examples of high sodium foods that children should only eat in small quantities are: potato chips, pretzels, salted nuts, pickled foods, and cured meats.

#### **5. Peanut butter products**

Since several children on campus are highly allergic to peanut and peanut products, please omit loose peanuts or mixed nuts from lunches. There are substitute butters such as sunflower butter.

*Copies of Arizona Department of Health Services guidelines for serving sizes that meet the nutrient requirements for children ages 1 to 12 are available in the TMS office.*

## **REST FOR FULL DAY STUDENTS**

All toddlers nap in the afternoon. Primary children may have a rest or nap time. If you want your primary child to nap, please inform the teacher. We do not insist that a child nap if s/he does not want to. Elementary children seldom require a rest or nap, but if they do, it is allowed on an individual basis.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

Many parents have expressed a desire to participate as volunteers in the children's Montessori education. **Parent participation is welcomed and appreciated**, and those willing to volunteer in the classroom should discuss this matter with the classroom teacher. It is important that volunteers are consistent in the approach to discipline, philosophy, and methods of instruction. If you sign up for a specific time, the schedule should be followed dependably.

Volunteers would be **especially helpful** during the playground and lunch time supervision at TMS. If you would like to speak to a class about your experiences in foreign countries, or teach a foreign language, music, art, or other subject, please let us know. Parents can also speak to the classes about their occupations. Additionally, parent volunteers are frequently needed to drive and chaperone on field trips, help prepare classroom materials, and participate in the *Tempe Montessori Parents Organization* (TEMPO).

**TEMPO** will be creating a newsletter and conducting informative meetings throughout the school year. Watch for detailed information about this exciting organization. They sponsor educational, social, and fund raising events for the support of our school community. All parents are asked and expected to participate.

### ***Parent Meetings:***

Parent meetings are frequently scheduled at the school and are usually held in the early evening. Specific dates and times will be posted or sent out via email. Meetings will include discussion of various aspects of Montessori education and philosophy as well as activities planning for each classroom and opportunities for parent involvement.

**Check [www.tempemontessori.org](http://www.tempemontessori.org) regularly to stay informed about all informational meetings and TEMPO events.**

### ***Parent Education:***

TMS teachers and staff prepare five exciting parent night workshops for the whole school community. Child care is provided during this time. The parent night workshops are a great opportunity for parents to develop a greater understanding of how the Montessori Method enables children to develop focus, concentration, self-awareness, love of learning and positive social behavior. The workshops are interactive and informative, and all



**parents are encouraged to attend** this incredible opportunity to learn and discuss what is happening at TMS.

### ***Parent Library:***

Parents are expected to become informed on the teachings of Dr. Maria Montessori by familiarizing themselves with relevant literature. A small library is available for your use in the school office, and you may visit your local library or bookstore for more information on Dr. Montessori.

### ***TMS-Parent Communication:***

The school communicates with parents often by means of fliers and notices. These are placed in the parent folder of each sign-in/out notebook. It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to check these folders daily for any school communication. If a child has more than one household (i.e. in the event of divorce and/or joint-custody), please let the school know to provide two parent/guardian folders.

### **CUSTODY POLICY**

TMS will always respect the rights of the child and as well as those of both parents and/or guardians. The school **must** have legal papers of visitation schedules to ensure proper communication with parents and guardians is being maintained. If there are no legal papers, the office will accept a written agreement signed by both parents.

Each parent or guardian has the right to receive school mail, speak to teachers, attend conferences, receive progress reports, accompany children as a chaperone on field trips, observe classrooms by appointment, view sign-in/out sheets, and pick up their child, at the agreed upon date and time, **unless there is a legal document stating otherwise** (e.g. a Restraining Order or a statement from Child Protective Services). Only the parent with legal custody may enroll the child, withdraw the child, or sign permission slips and paperwork.

If issues regarding child custody should arise, it is the TMS Staff policy not to side with either parent in the event of a divorce. Staff also may not write letters in parents' defense for any legal hearing or legal action. This is to protect TMS staff from involvement in any personal litigation.

In the case that estranged, separated or divorced parents or guardians should both arrive on campus for student pick up, TMS requires that each party treat the other respectfully. No conflicts may occur while on TMS property and those who engage in any form of altercation or hostility will be asked to leave the premises immediately.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

All transportation is the responsibility of the parents or guardians. TMS **DOES NOT** provide transportation to attending students.

## **INSPECTION REPORTS**

All inspection reports are available from the Arizona Department of Health Services at the *Office of Child Care Licensing*:

150 N. 18th Ave., 4th Floor,  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Phone: (602) 364-2539  
or toll free at 1-800-615-8555.

Reports can also be found in the TMS office.

## **PROCEDURES FOR UNFORSEEN EVENTS**

Fire drills are practiced monthly and lock down drills are practiced twice a year. Sometimes the children refer to the lock down drill as the “Sardine Game”.

1. Police will be called in case of any threat to the safety of the children or staff caused by civil commotion or any other threatening behaviors. Children will be kept in the safest location possible on the school premises and protected by the staff until the police arrive and pronounce that the threatening event has passed.
2. In the event that children are to be sent home due to school closure for any unexpected reason, the parents will be notified and the children will be kept in the safest location possible on the school premises until the children can be picked up by parents or other authorized persons. When the children are picked up by parents or other authorized persons, the school responsibility for the child ceases.
3. If children have to be evacuated from TMS campus, and it is prudent to do so, they will be escorted to Daumler Park at 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Evergreen Rd. in Tempe.
4. In the event of fire, the fire alarm will be sounded and the children will proceed outdoors as outlined by the Mesa Fire Dept. The fire department will be called, and the children will be kept in the safest location on the school grounds, or near-by property, until the fire chief declares that the fire danger is passed. If necessary, parents will be notified to pick up the children as outlined above. In case of a bomb threat, the same procedure will be followed as for a fire, except that the Mesa Police will be called.

5. For emergency evacuations due to flood, toxic cloud, or other dangerous event, the children will be transported to a location designated by the city emergency personnel.

### **TUITION REFUND POLICY**

Tuition refunds will be made under the following circumstances:

1. Parents/Guardians are being transferred to a new location.
2. A Director agrees that a withdrawal is in the best interest of the child.
3. All tuition payments and fees are current.
4. **One month** advance notice is given to TMS in writing.
5. Withdrawal forms are completed and accepted.

Refunds will be made for up to **30 days** following an approved request.

No refunds will be made for:

1. The months (or partial months) of August, December or May.
2. Waiting list or enrollment fees.

### **CRITIQUE**

If you have any suggestions, disagreements, disappointments, concerns, or critique to offer the staff, we will be eager to listen to and discuss these ideas or needs with you privately. Please keep the lines of communication open with frankness and honesty, and we will respond with the same.

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**Thank you again for your cooperation and dedication.**

*Irma Letson*  
*Founder and Administrator of Tempe Montessori School*

**TEMPE MONTESSORI SCHOOL  
PARENT HANDBOOK**

Terms of Agreement

*Please sign and date this form before returning it to the office.*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, parent of \_\_\_\_\_,

have read, understand, and agree to abide by the policies, terms, and conditions mentioned  
in the parent handbook.