

**CLAY-PLATTE MONTESSORI
SCHOOL**



**FAMILY COMMUNITY
HANDBOOK**

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WE USE THE TERM GUARDIAN TO REFER TO PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, AUNTS, UNCLES, FOSTER PARENTS, AND ANYONE WHO IS THE PRIMARY CAREGIVER FOR THE CHILD.

Welcome to the Clay-Platte Montessori community! Our diverse, caring community is a beautiful place for a child to grow. When alumni visit, we inevitably hear about how at-home they felt at Clay-Platte Montessori, whether they are 6 or 60. We strive to make sure that everyone in our community feels welcome, knows we are listening, and understands their value to us.

This Family Community Handbook is designed to offer insight into our principles and methods. What we know, more than anything, is that communication between you and the school is important. So, if you ever have questions or concerns, please contact us. We are a team, working to surround your child with everything they need to grow into the person they are meant to be. Both the guardians and the school offer unique perspectives on your child's development and growth, socially, academically, physically, and in so many other ways. Open lines of communication are vital to maintaining that healthy partnership.

Mission Statement

By employing the philosophy and methodology of Dr. Maria Montessori, Clay-Platte Montessori School will educate young people to their fullest potential, instilling a deep sense of personal independence and responsibility to self, others and the earth.

The Three Pillars of Our Philosophy

- **Peace**—Peace requires hard work, acknowledging some uncomfortable truths, and finding ways of a person adapting to others and of knowing where to stand strong. There are three aspects to peace: Inner Peace, which is feeling peaceful within oneself; Interpersonal Peace, which is establishing and maintaining healthy relationships and harmony between individuals; and Community Peace, which is establishing and maintaining harmony in a broader community, like a classroom, a school, a neighborhood...and the world. The children will nourish their abilities in all three areas, through their work in the classroom, academically, physically and socially.
- **Responsibility**—From individual responsibility to collective responsibility to social responsibility, the children will learn how to care for themselves, for their environment, and for others. Inherent within the idea of responsibility is independence. The children's growth, over time, in responsibility corresponds with their emerging independence. The growth is slow and gradual, but definite.
- **Inclusion**—Children and families of all races, all family structures, religions, and abilities are welcome at Clay-Platte Montessori. Our guides and teachers consistently work to identify their biases and work against racism and oppression, in every form. Families are invited to share their racial, ethnic, religious identities and family makeup, so that children's own cultures can be celebrated within the communities. Every child and family should feel like Clay-Platte Montessori is a place they can be their truest selves and be celebrated for that.

Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression Commitment

Clay-Platte Montessori School is situated on land once inhabited by the Očhéthi Šakówiŋ, ᖃᖅᖅᖅ ᖃᖅᖅᖅ ᖃᖅᖅᖅ ᖃᖅᖅᖅ(Osage), Kaskaskia, and Kiikaapoi (Kickapoo). The United States government broke many treaties with the tribes and forcibly removed Indigenous people from their ancestral/native land. Over time, even most of this reservation land was stolen by the US government. By utilizing this land, Clay-Platte Montessori School and its owners and directors acknowledge their ongoing complicity in the oppression of these indigenous groups.

Clay-Platte Montessori School recognizes that white supremacy is ubiquitous in the United States, both historically and systemically. Furthermore, Montessori education is not exempt from the role educational systems have played in upholding white supremacy.

In light of our participation in both US culture and Montessori education, Clay-Platte Montessori School is dedicated to dismantling white supremacy and actively fighting against racism and oppression in the world, the global Montessori community, the United States, Missouri, Kansas City, Clay-Platte Montessori School, and within ourselves.

We resolve to explicitly and publicly state our Anti-Racist, Anti-Oppression stance in our published literature, including websites, brochures, mailers, and more.

We resolve to explicitly state that we are Anti-Racist and Anti-Oppressive in our enrollment forms and agreements, requiring guardians to acknowledge and participate in the ARAO philosophy.

We resolve to ensure that our libraries, materials, and lessons reflect the diversity of students in each classroom and in the world. We will focus attention on BIPOC and LGBT+ history and contributions to the US and the world.

We resolve to make Clay-Platte Montessori School safe and accessible to BIPOC students and families, LGBT+ students and families, and students with disabilities.

We resolve to acknowledge and root out racism and other forms of oppression that are unconscious within each of us.

We resolve to work with indigenous people and groups to ensure that our students know the history of the indigenous peoples who inhabit and inhabited this land, and to uncover any anti-indigeneity within school personnel, curriculum or policies.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Because various adults in the community specialize in various aspects of your child's education, speaking with the right person will yield the best results. This section will help you know the roles of adults at Clay-Platte Montessori, what needs to be communicated, and the best methods of communication.

School Contact Information

Clay-Platte Montessori School
5901 NW Waukomis Drive
Kansas City, MO 64151
Phone: (816) 741-6940
Fax: (816) 741-2906
Web: www.clayplattemontessori.com

Office Hours: 8:30 am-4:30 pm
Main Building Hours: 7:30 am-5:30 pm

Administration

General Office
info@clayplattemontessori.com

Jen Stoll
Head of School
jen@clayplattemontessori.com

Kristy Yager
Co-Director
kristy@clayplattemontessori.com

CeCe Holt
Director of Marketing & Enrollment
cece@clayplattemontessori.com

Meg Harrison
Director of Operations & Human Resources
meg@clayplattemontessori.com

Classroom Communities

Yellow Room Toddler Community, 15 months to 3 years old

Kellie Boydston Lead Guide kellie@clayplattemontessori.com

Sunrise Room, All Day All Year Primary Community, 3-6 years old

Layla Hotz Guide layla@clayplattemontessori.com

Orange Room Primary Community, 3-6 years old

Julia Davis Lead Guide julia@clayplattemontessori.com

Red Room Primary Community, 3-6 years old

Mark Stanley Guide mark@clayplattemontessori.com

Blue Room Elementary Community, 6-12 years old

Manisha Biswas Lead Guide manisha@clayplattemontessori.com

Green Room Elementary Community, 6-12 years old

Erica Wilson Lead Guide erica@clayplattemontessori.com

Farm School Kansas City, 12-18 years old

Lisa McKenzie Lead Guide lisa@cpmsfarmschool.com

Garrett Holt Lead Guide garrett@cpmsfarmschool.com

*We ask that guardians ask the classroom's **lead guide** about any issues with your child or the classroom. The classroom assistants do not have the expertise to draw conclusions about child behavior, incidents in the classroom, or the lead guide's behavior. Assistants who talk to guardians about these things are violating their job assignment and may be disciplined for doing so. If concerns abide after speaking with the lead guide, please contact Kristy Yager, the Executive Director. Anything concerning community relations, PTO, and enrollment, contact CeCe Holt. If you are not sure who to email, or if you need something more timely, please contact the general office at info@clayplattemontessori.com.*

Communication from School- Transparent Classroom

Communication

We value frequent, timely, open communication with you about your child. Transparent Classroom will be used to log lessons, photographs of your child's work, as well as notices and/or reminders (i.e. your child is out of spare clothes). We may also use emails, written notes, and conferences to communicate with you. Each guide will let you know how best to contact them.

Formal individual conferences between guides and guardians occur twice a year. Guides or

Guardians may request additional meetings when necessary.

Because the guides work with the children without a planning time, they are unavailable to answer phone calls, emails, or speak to you in person during the school day.

Emergency calls should be routed through the office.

Transparent Classroom www.transparentclassroom.com

Transparent Classroom is our online record keeping and guardian communication tool. Expect to receive texts, emails or posts with pictures of your child. You will also have access to your child's lesson records and a database of lesson descriptions (so that you can understand what your child is learning when they work with a particular lesson). This tool is also used to sign your child in and out of the classroom. At least one adult per family is required to accept the invitation to join Transparent Classroom and upload a profile picture. More information about how to use Transparent Classroom is found on our website blog.

School Email

We value frequent, timely, open communication with you about your child. School administration and classroom guides may email announcements, deadlines, requests and notes. We will use the email address provided in Transparent Classroom, please take this into consideration when selecting your provided email address (i.e. work email may not always be checked while on vacation).

Please allow us 48 hours to respond to emails. Likewise, urgent communications from school will not be sent via email.

Emergency calls should be routed through the office.

Social Media

Public page: www.facebook.com/clayplattemontessori

Private Community page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/5813450388725581>

Public FarmSchoolKC page: <https://www.facebook.com/farmschoolkc>

Instagram: www.instagram.com/clayplattemontessori

Website www.clayplattemontessori.com

Our website includes the School Year Calendar, Programs & Tuition Schedule and other helpful resources.

Changes to Contact Information

If you have a change of address, email, or phone number, please update your contact information in Transparent Classroom. It is vital we have current contact information, especially phone numbers, to be able to reach you if your child is ill.

Proper Lines of Communication

There are certain lines to follow in communicating with the school about your child's experience.

Guardian to Guide

Whenever a guardian has a concern about their child's development, behavior, or the classroom environment, it is always best to email the child's guide directly. If the concern cannot be adequately addressed through email, a phone call or a face-to-face meeting can be arranged, at a mutually satisfactory time.

It is important to recognize a key difference between Clay-Platte Montessori and other schools. While it is in the best interest of most schools to limit the resources they provide to any one child, it is in Clay-Platte Montessori's best interest to surround your child with as many resources as possible. This means that our administration, guides, and all staff members are advocates for your child. When you are communicating with the guides, please keep in mind that they truly have your child's best interest at heart.

Because we have faced several instances of blatant disrespect and abuse from guardians over the last few years, it is now necessary to clarify that communication with guides, assistants, and all staff members must be calm, considerate, and productive. Yelling, threats—physical or verbal, and/or violent communication of any kind will result in an immediate end to the conversation and may result in termination of the guardian's child(ren).

Formal individual conferences between guides and guardians are scheduled twice a year. Guides or guardians may request additional meetings when necessary.

Because the guides work with the children without a planning period, they are unavailable to answer phone calls, emails, or speak to you in person during the school day. Please allow the guides 48 hours to respond to emails or written notes they may receive.

Emergency calls should be routed through the office.

Changes in Home Situation

Please inform your child's teacher by email or personal conversation if there is a change in the home situation: death, divorce, or relocation (even within Kansas City), a new baby, extended visits by friends or relatives, a new baby-sitter or care-giver, a change in carpool or in the child's daily routine, or any fears, bad dreams, or fantasies. A change at home will often be reflected simultaneously or subsequently in behavior at school. Communication from guardians will enable the guide to help the child as need arises.

Guardian to Administration

Issues that cannot be resolved by the guardians and guide working together may be referred to the administration, such as information about referral to specialists, and special circumstances. This step can be initiated by the guardians or the guide.

Emergency & Safety Procedures

Inclement Weather

The school is equipped with a National Weather Service Emergency Weather Alert system. We also monitor weather on the internet. Teachers are kept updated and if necessary, children are evacuated to the basement classroom (in the Main Building). Inclement weather drills are practiced on a regular basis.

Inclement Weather School Closing

In the event of inclement weather, we will follow the Park Hill School District's determination. This decision comes after many years of making the decisions on our own and consistently facing ridicule, derision, and, in a few instances, abusive behavior from guardians. **There will not be a reduction in tuition or make-up days for inclement weather closings.*

Severe Weather Emergency

In a severe weather emergency, the school will remain open after hours to provide safety and care for your child until you are able to arrange for transportation. If guardians arrive at the school during severe weather, we ask that you join us in our evacuation area until danger passes. Adults challenging National Weather Service warnings set a dangerous example for the children.

Fire

Each room has evacuation routes in case of a fire. Fire drills are practiced on a regular basis.

Emergency Lockdown

In the event of an emergency in the area, children stay inside and classroom and building doors are locked until an all clear is given.

In a case when we need to be evacuated to a secure area away from school, a text message will be sent to inform you about where to pick up your child.

Health and Well-Child Policy

Immunization Records

Families are required to submit a current record of your child's immunizations and keep it continually updated. Please inform the office when you update your shots.

Families who do not immunize are welcome at Clay-Platte Montessori School with an appropriate exemption form on file. Parents must provide proper exemption forms, according to Missouri Department of Health Statute 167.181. Exemption forms can be obtained from the Health Department, and must be filled out by a physician. We are in close communication with the Kansas City Health Department. If there are any outbreaks of diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, or variants of COVID, children who are not immunized must stay home for their safety and that of the community, according to Missouri Department of Health regulations.

Health and Well-Child Policy***

Clay-Platte Montessori School's Health and Well-Child Policy complies with the Missouri Department of Health mandate.

(7) When a child exhibits any of the following in subsections (7)(A)–(O) of this rule, the guardian(s) shall be contacted, and the child shall be sent home.

Symptoms that require guardian contact and sending a child home are—

- (A) More than one (1) abnormally loose stool;
- (B) Red or blue in the face or makes high-pitched croupy or whooping sounds after coughing;
- (C) Difficult or rapid breathing—especially important in infants under six (6) months of age;
- (D) Yellowish skin or eyes;
- (E) Tears, redness of eyelid lining or irritation, followed by swelling or discharge of pus;
- (F) Unusual spots or rashes;
- (G) Sore throat or swallowing difficulty;
- (H) An infected skin patch—crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy areas of the skin;
- (I) Unusually dark, tea-colored urine;

(J) Gray or white stool;

(K) Fever over one hundred one degrees Fahrenheit (101°F) by mouth or one hundred degrees Fahrenheit (100°F) under the arm;

(L) Headache and stiff neck;

(M) Vomiting more than once;

(N) A child is in the contagious period of a disease; or

(O) Severe itching of the body or scalp or scratching of the scalp which may be symptoms of lice or scabies.

When a child is **fever-free for 24 hours without the aid of medication** and is otherwise symptom-free, they may return to school.

Because our staff is not qualified to determine the communicability of infections and illnesses, we ask that your child's treating physician provide a readmission statement (doctors note) for any condition (such as rash or irritated eyes) that is not communicable, but not symptom-free.

Medication

We can only administer prescribed medications to a child. Please complete a medication form indicating the name of the medication, the amount and times to be given. These forms are available in the office.

All prescribed medication should be brought to the office. A teacher or administrator will accompany the child to the office at the necessary time to take the medication. Administration will distribute inhalers, EpiPens, and other life-saving medications to classrooms **At no time should medications be packed in a lunch box or backpack.**

Food and Nutrition

Breakfast

Even though the brain is 1/50 of a child's body mass, it uses about half of the body's energy. No wonder, then, a recent study found that children who have breakfast make more progress in school than those who go to school hungry. A child who comes to school without breakfast simply is not ready for their day.

Please ensure that your child has a **nutritious** breakfast each morning before arriving at school.

Snacks

As part of the child's work (peeling, slicing), healthy food may be available in the room. Children who stay with us until 3:30 pm bring their lunches from home. Children who stay for After Care need to pack a snack in their lunchbox for their time after school.

**If your child has a special diet, it is vital that they have a snack packed with their box lunch.*

Packed Lunch at School

All children and guides pack their lunches to eat at school. While each community's lunchtime routines are slightly different, lunch is a social experience in each community. This is a time when we get to practice manners, courteous behaviors, conversation skills, and more. It is a time when the children are demonstrating their independence, as well. So, it is vital that nothing be packed in their lunch that they are not able to open by themselves. Microwaves are not available, so leftovers that require warming should be packed in a thermos.

Children should help pack their own lunches. One way to accomplish this is to offer limited choices about the food that goes into their lunch. All of the options offered should be acceptable to both the guardian and the child.

Practicing healthy eating habits at home and at school sends the message that the primary purpose of food is for nourishment.

Allergies

You will be notified if there is a severe allergy in your child's classroom and asked to refrain from packing those items in your child's lunch. If your student has severe allergies, please indicate so on your child's Transparent Classroom information and contact the office to complete an Allergy Action Plan.

Forgotten Lunch

Children who forget their lunches do not call home to have their guardians bring them lunch. Instead, they are offered a meal from our food pantry. An \$8 lunch fee will be assessed to the monthly tuition bill.

Our outdoor clothing policy is as follows:

60 degrees or warmer	coat is optional
40 – 60 degrees	warm coat
Below 40 degrees	warm coat, hat, mittens
Snow	warm coat, snow pants, snow boots, hat, and mittens required

Social/Emotional Development

Working with Children’s Social-Emotional Development at School

This section would typically be called “Discipline” or “Code of Conduct” or something similar, at other schools. Here, we know that a child’s behavior is an expression of the level to which their needs are met. Foremost among children’s needs is a sense of belonging. That means that the guide’s relationship with the child is a key element in the child’s behavior and development. So, while we cannot give a certain step-by-step plan of how we handle each situation, we can list some of the understandings we have, when we are guiding children through difficult times.

- All people are doing the best they can, with the resources they have, in each moment.
- Children must feel safe and accepted in order to learn or grow.
- Human behavior is governed by needs and connection.
- Children must know what behavior is acceptable before they can willingly behave acceptably.
- Adults must be in control of their behavior in order to adequately assist a child who is displaying out-of-control behavior.
- We can control ourselves. We cannot control others.
- Discipline is something developed within a person, not meted out by an authority.

As a whole, in Montessori classrooms, we talk a lot about “Grace and Courtesy,” or socially-acceptable behavior in various contexts. We begin by demonstrating the behavior we are looking for. That might happen in whole group, small group, or individual lessons. When a child behaves in a way that is hurtful to others, to themselves or to the environment, we re-demonstrate the original lesson.

From time-to-time, there are students who need a bit more guidance. The guides’ observations of the child help them to determine which need the child is expressing. (At this time—or any time after this—they may reach out to the guardians for additional perspective.) The guide will then alter the environment to assure that the child’s need is met. This may mean adding a material, removing a material, working with other children on a particular behavior, or any number of other alterations.

There are a few times when, despite the best efforts of the guide and guardian partnership, a child needs support from a specialist. These may include occupational or physical therapists, psychologists, tutors, or many other alternatives. Such a recommendation will come from the Family Community Handbook – Clay-Platte Montessori School – School Year 2023-24

Head of School, after consultation with the guide, a review of the child's record, and observation of the child.

These conversations are never easy for the guardians, the guide, or the Head of School. It is expected that each party enters the conversation in the spirit of a partnership, with the best interest of the child at the forefront. The school will do everything in our power to make sure our communication around these sensitive issues are respectful. Likewise, communication from guardians should also be respectful. Language use is important. In difficult conversations, however, connotations of words may vary from person-to-person. It is necessary, therefore, that we all assume everyone at the table enters the conversation with the best intentions.

If guardians choose not to—or are otherwise unable to—proceed with help from specialists, after a request from the administration has been made, the family will be asked to leave the school. This is rare and only happens when all other options have been exhausted.

Intersession

Intersessions are the equivalent of summer break for the children. One benefit of year-round schools is that the breaks are shorter and more frequent. This aids the children's academic retention, while offering them opportunities for rest and relaxation when they need it.

Clay-Platte Montessori School offers the All Day All Year Primary Program for children who need care during the Intersessions. Intersession care is available for Toddlers at a rate of \$109 per day. Please email info@clayplattemontessori.com for more information.

Before and After Care

Before and After Care is available for Toddlers at a rate of \$220 per month. Care is available from 7:30-8:30 am and 3:30 to 5:30 pm.

Elementary Clubs

Elementary children will have clubs available from 3:45 pm until 5:00 pm daily. Each day of the week will offer a unique opportunity for your child to participate in learning new skills in art, chess, physical education, music and more. Prices will be determined by club leaders. More information will be provided, as clubs are available.

Late Pick Up Policy

If a full day guardian is later than their scheduled time, a fee of \$20 for the first (15) fifteen minutes and \$1 per minute thereafter will be assessed to the monthly tuition bill.

Family/School Agreement

In consideration of Clay-Platte Montessori School (hereinafter "CPMS") enrolling and providing for my child's Montessori education, parent(s)/guardian(s) hereby agree/s to and accept/s this Family/School Agreement by electronically signing the enrollment form on Transparent Classroom.

1. Parent(s)/guardian(s) acknowledge/s receipt of and have read a copy of this Family/School Agreement and the Family Community Handbook;
2. Tuition charges, Toddler Before and After Care charges, field trip fees, and incidentals (such as lunch fees) will be pulled through Automated Clearing House (ACH) on the first of each month.
3. If tuition is not received by the 5th of the month, CPMS has the right to suspend the student until tuition is paid in full;
4. Late Pick Up Policy: If a half day guardian is later than 11:30 am, or a full day guardian is later than their scheduled time, a fee of \$20 for the first (15) fifteen minutes and \$1 per minute thereafter will be assessed to the monthly tuition bill;
5. Any fees incurred as the result of a faulty payment will be passed on directly to the parent(s)/guardian(s) (i.e. denied ACH transaction, etc.);
6. Delinquent accounts may be sent to a third-party collection agency. Any fees charged by the agency to collect on the delinquent account, will be passed on directly to the parent(s)/guardian(s);
7. A non-refundable Material Fee is due annually at the time of enrollment;
8. ACH is the preferred method of payment for CPMS. Credit cards may be used upon request, however a 5% convenience fee will be added to any credit card transaction;
9. No discounts will be offered for payment of tuition in full or any part thereof;
10. There is no reduction in tuition or make-up days for: non-attendance, holidays, inclement weather closures, closures due to Force Majeur (Acts of God) and/or scheduled closures;
11. Either parent(s)/guardian(s) or CPMS may terminate this Family/School Agreement, with or without cause, upon thirty (30) days written notice given to the other party. Such notice shall state the date the child is to be withdrawn from school. If, on the date the child is to be withdrawn from school, there is any prepaid and unearned tuition, a refund of such amount shall be paid to guardian/s. If, on the date of the child's withdrawal, any tuition is owed, guardian/s shall promptly pay that amount to CPMS. If guardian/s fail to give CPMS thirty (30) days written notice of withdrawing their child, one (1) month's tuition (or portion fulfilling thirty day notice) shall be pulled via ACH on the first of the month after the child's withdrawal;
12. Within the child's first six (6) weeks of attendance, either the school or the parents may decide to terminate this agreement, without penalty. The termination must be presented through written notice to the other party and can take effect immediately;
13. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will make every attempt to have their child at school on time, understanding that bringing their child late to school disrupts their learning and the classroom;
14. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will follow the CPMS Health and Well-Child Policy;

15. Parent(s)/guardian(s) agree to pick up their child within one hour, if called due to child's illness;
16. Parent(s)/guardian(s) understand how important it is for their child to go outside even if the child has been ill. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will bring the appropriate clothing for the outdoor temperature as outlined in this Community Handbook;
17. Parent(s)/guardian(s) agree to be responsible for any damage, incurred by their child, to the environment or materials. Partial reimbursement or total replacement may be required;
18. Parent(s)/guardian(s) understand that our staff is highly trained and skilled in their roles. Should the parent(s)/guardian(s) recruit any of our staff for employment, they will be charged a \$3,000.00 recruiting fee;
19. Parent(s)/guardian(s) agree to follow any addendum to the handbook, offered throughout the school year;
20. Parent(s)/guardian(s) understand/s and agree/s to pay all fees, and to follow all policies and guidelines set forth in this Community Handbook, which is incorporated herein by reference, and any changes or additions thereto which may be made in the future;
21. Parent(s)/guardian(s) acknowledge receipt of and understanding of Clay-Platte's Anti-Racism Anti-Oppression Commitment. We commit to fighting racism and oppression.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Creating Community: Guardian Partnership Events and Volunteering

One of the ways that we ensure that our school is a community is by hosting various events, throughout the year and by inviting guardians to volunteer in the school. We request that each family participate in at least five events and **offer five hours of volunteering**.

School Organizations and Events

Clay-Platte Parent Teacher Organization, Inc. is the cohort of guardians and teachers, who work together to make the school the best possible environment for the children. From volunteering to help teachers laminate materials to the Annual BBQ Fundraiser, PTO is supportive of the school in many ways. Funds are dedicated to a purpose and, in the past, have provided play equipment, professional development, and outdoor classrooms.

The 10-Acre Woods Farm is the business of The Farm School KC, Clay-Platte Montessori's sister school, which is a middle and upper school program, serving adolescents, ages 12-18. This organization sells farm products, including eggs, mohair, and produce. Additionally, The Farm School offers Kids' Night Out (an opportunity for children to get a break from the adult world, meet up at the school, and have some fun) and pizza sales, when available.

Community Gatherings

Community Gatherings are held on the last day of most sessions (TBA) at 9:00 am in the Learning Center. Community Gatherings serve two important functions: The first is to bring our community together (from our youngest to our oldest students) to experience each other's friendship, fostering a sense of community. The second function is to allow an opportunity for classrooms or individual students to share a special talent or prepared play or song with their peers fostering self-confidence and appreciating one another's gifts and uniqueness. During Community Gatherings, children who are bridging to the next level will also be recognized. Families are always welcome to attend the gatherings.

Earth Day Celebration

Each year, we join together in the meadow for a picnic lunch in celebration of Earth Day. Families are welcome to attend.

Open House

We open all classrooms to guardians and the community. This is a time for children to show their guardians their classroom. Open Houses are also a great time for extended families and prospective guardians to see the school. There is also a Bake Sale, which benefits the Clay-Platte Parent Teacher Organization.

Kids Nights Out

The Farm School hosts children who are toilet independent for a night of fun, games, and a late-evening movie and popcorn. The Farm School students will post sign-ups, prior to each event.

Winter Tea

Each year, just before Winter Break, the Elementary and The Farm School communities host a Winter Tea. The children prepare a light snack and tea, then serve their guardians, as a pre-holiday gift. This event is invitation-only.

Talent Show

Each year, the Elementary and The Farm School communities perform in a fun variety show, featuring class plays, individual and group acts.

Information Nights

Periodically we present information nights to cover a range of topics from Healthy Lunches to Emotional Development to Discipline to Setting Up the Home Environment. Each information night will last approximately one and a half hours and count toward your parent education hours.

Maria Montessori's Birthday Celebration

Each year, on or around August 31—Maria Montessori's birthday—we have a birthday party. This is a great time to meet new friends and learn more about your child's school environment.

International Dinner

Once a year, we gather, share a meal from our traditional cultures, and enjoy food and festivities from around the globe. It is a favorite!

Annual BBQ Fundraiser

Our annual spring festival, this event's highlight is the free train ride! Come prepared to stock up on gifts for everyone in your life at the silent auction. Each room will also hold a raffle. This is the major fundraiser for the Clay-Platte Parent Teacher Organization.

Volunteer Opportunities

Most of these events will require guardian volunteers. Please check with your child's guide to see if there are other opportunities to volunteer.

Arrival and Departure

Each individual authorized to drop off and pick up your child will be given an access code to the main door. Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES should the personalized code be shared with anyone else.

Program	Arrival	Departure
Toddler	8:30 am-8:45 am	3:00 pm-3:15 pm
All Day All Year Primary Orange Room & Red Room	7:30-8:00 am	5:00-5:30 pm
Elementary	8:15 am-8:30 am	3:15 pm-3:30 pm
	8:00 am-8:15 am	3:30 pm-3:45 pm

A late arriving child must wait until a guide is available to greet them. We strongly encourage a prompt arrival; it can be difficult for the entire community if a member is tardy.

Approved adults who drop off and pick up children should park and check in at the office, with their photo ID. The office staff will check IDs and then introduce them to the child's teacher. If any person other than a guardian or an approved adult is to pick up a child, advanced notice must be routed through the office. You may also update your child's "Approved Adults" on Transparent Classroom.

If any person other than a guardian or an approved adult is to pick up a child, advanced notice must be routed through the office. You may also update your child's "Approved Adults" on Transparent Classroom. Guardians and approved adults must be prepared to show photo identification each time your child is picked up.

Late Pick Up Policy: If a guardian is later than their scheduled pick-up time, a fee of \$20 for the first (15) fifteen minutes and \$1 per minute thereafter will be assessed to the monthly tuition bill.

TODDLER COMMUNITY

A brief moment in one of the Toddler Communities confirms this is the most peaceful environment in the school. The children are naturally drawn to the child-size work, replicating their guardian's work: Preparing food, doing dishes, watering plants...these are the activities that are driven by the child's inner teacher. It is when the adults give space for the child to listen to that inner teacher that peace results.

As the toddlers gain independence in toileting and otherwise caring for themselves, they simultaneously demand to do things for themselves. While their words may sound demanding, "I'll do it myself!" is their first foray into responsibility.

Clothing

Please label everything with your child's name or initials, not forgetting removable items such as coats, sweaters, scarves and gloves. Anytime toddlers are together, clothing inevitably gets mixed up. To have the best chance of keeping track of your child's clothes, each article of clothing should be labeled with your child's name.

"Help me do it myself!" is the motto of the youngest children. At this stage of development, they are mastering functional independence. Their clothing must not inhibit their work toward independence. Pants with elastic waists, t-shirts, and pull-on or Velcro shoes allow the children to dress themselves.

Children will work on the floor and outside, so we recommend that school clothes are neither expensive nor treasured. Clothes will get dirty, as a natural outcome of the children's daily work. If the clothing is wet or too dirty, the guides will help the child change. So, it is always necessary to have several changes available at all times.

Please make sure that any jewelry, costume pieces, headbands, trinkets and toys, etc. are kept at home, as they interfere with the child's concentration in the classroom environment. We work to carefully, thoughtfully curate the materials in the environment. Clothing that is shiny, full of ruffles, lights, buttons, etc. distracts from the environment. Please provide the plainest possible clothes for your child, so their focus will be on the developmentally appropriate materials, rather than their clothing.

Toileting

Once the child begins in the Toddler Community, the child will wear training underwear. This allows the child to gain independence in toileting and control over their clothing. The child's mastery of their own body is the essential work of the toddler.

This work of the toddler is developmental, meaning it doesn't know the boundaries of the classroom. Families who do not adhere to the Toilet Awareness by Sarah Moudry at home will not be admitted to the Toddler Communities. If the guides determine that families are not following-through with Toilet Awareness, while the toddler is in the community, the toddler will be dismissed.

Materials

The classroom environment contains pocket-sized items such as rocks and shells and imported educational materials. Because of the self-correcting nature of the materials, any material that is missing a part is removed from the classroom until that part is found or replaced. This is not a punitive action. On some occasion, if your child's pockets should contain such an item, please return it promptly. It can take six or more weeks for us to replace an item, and some items are irreplaceable.

The environment has been thoughtfully prepared for toddlers. Each item in the environment has a purpose suitable to the children's development. Outside items interfere with the psychological, physical, and intellectual development of the children. Please save the following for enjoying outside of school:

- Toys, books, stuffed animals
- Jewelry, headbands, etc.

Nap Items: If your child will be napping at school, the school will provide a nap bag, resting mat, pillow, blanket and a sheet. These items will be kept in the nap bag. All items will be sent home at the end of your child week for laundering and must return on their next day back to school.

PRIMARY COMMUNITY (AGES 3-6 YEARS)

The Primary-aged child is still in the phase of the Absorbent Mind, meaning they learn just by being. Like sponges, they absorb information and culture from their surroundings. Our specially-trained guides prepare a home-like environment for the children in their communities. The children's work focuses on building concentration, refining the senses, language acquisition, and refining movements. Within the context of the classroom community, the children learn to value and empathize with one another, creating natural limits for their behavior.

Attendance

We tend to call each of the classes "communities." There is a good reason for this: The children and guides create a series of relationships with one another, the materials, the environment. Every part of the community's function relies on each individual playing their part. When a child is absent, the role they play in that intricate web is truly missed by the other parts of the community.

Additionally, the Absorbent Mind stage of development and the particular sensitive periods of this stage means that the child greatly benefits from a structured routine. Regular attendance at school is an important part of that routine. The more regularly a child attends, the more they will feel like a critical part of the community.

That being said, we know that trips can facilitate learning experiences and we encourage that along with a month's notice, if possible, to plan for that absence.

Clothing

Please label everything with your child's name or initials, not forgetting removable items such as coats, sweaters, scarves and gloves. Anytime children are together, clothing inevitably gets mixed up. To have the best chance of keeping track of your child's clothes, each article of clothing should be labeled with your child's name.

"Help me do it myself!" is the motto of the youngest children. At this stage of development, they are mastering functional independence. Their clothing must not inhibit their work toward independence. Pants with elastic waists, t-shirts, and pull-on or Velcro shoes allow the children to dress themselves.

Children will work on the floor and outside, so we recommend that school clothes are neither expensive nor treasured. Clothes will get dirty, as a natural outcome of the children's daily work. If the clothing is wet or too dirty, the guides will direct the child to change. So, it is always necessary to have several changes available at all times.

Please make sure that any jewelry, costume pieces, headbands, etc. are kept at home, as they interfere with the child's concentration in the classroom environment. We work to carefully, thoughtfully curate the materials in the environment. Clothing that is shiny, full of ruffles, lights,

buttons, etc. distracts from the environment. Please provide the plainest possible clothes for your child, so their focus will be on the developmentally appropriate materials, rather than their clothing.

The general principle for clothing and shoes is that they should be:

1. Safe and appropriate for running, jumping, hiking, climbing, and playing sports.
2. In the spirit of the serious working environment of the classroom.
3. Able to be independently taken off and on by the child.

Materials

The classroom environment contains pocket-sized items such as money, rocks, shells, and imported educational materials. Because of the self-correcting nature of the materials, any material that is missing a part is removed from the classroom until that part is found or replaced. This is not a punitive action. On some occasion, if your child's pockets should contain such an item, please return it promptly.

Personal items such as electronics, toys, dolls, stuffed animals, trading cards, books, and money are to be left at home. If there is a unique item you believe would be of interest to your child's class, please ask your child's guide about bringing this item to share with the community.

Celebrations of Life

In the Primary Community, our birthday celebration at school is rich with ritual and personal expression. Food can be a part of the celebration but is not essential to it. Classrooms will prepare a special treat to share; we cannot accept sweets/cakes/cupcakes at celebrations of life. Guardians are encouraged to attend, please coordinate the celebration with your child's guide.

On the special day, please come prepared with the following: One or two photos of your child from birth to 1 year of age; 1 to 2 years of age; 2 to 3 years of age; and so forth up to current birthday. You may mount the pictures on popsicle sticks or unsharpened pencils to allow easy handling. The student and their guardians may come prepared with a short "story" or memory of the child and/or standout events during each of the years. As the celebration begins, you will be asked to share these moments with the class. It is a nice summary and progression of your child's life and special moments.

Since this is a special and unique celebration, we ask that you save more traditional party items for home. Please do not send hats, balloons, favors, drinks, or treat bags, as they can create too much of a distraction in the classroom.

To avoid potential hurt feelings, we also ask that personal invitations to parties not be distributed at school, or all students must be invited.

Nap Items:

If your child will be napping at school, the school will provide a nap bag, resting mat, a sheet, a small pillow, and a small blanket. These items will be kept in the nap bag. All items will be sent home at the end of your child week for laundering and must return on their next day back to school.

ELEMENTARY COMMUNITY (AGES 6-12)

Now they are six, and the children are ready for the universe. They have learned to care for themselves and their environment, to categorize and classify impressions, to name tens of thousands of objects, to master their language, to utilize numbers. Now that they know the “what,” the children want to know why and how. This, we call Cosmic Education.

The child’s new intellectual and imaginative abilities are just waiting to be exercised. The path is primed for the guide to offer stories, puzzles, and games that intrigue the children. In the process, every child is learning about everything from the formation of stars to the function of the tiniest cells, from how to form a sentence to the history of the English language, from how to multiply large numbers to how to calculate the smallest fraction. We offer them the universe, inside and outside the classroom.

When conversing with your child after departure, let them know you are interested in all aspects of their day, not only school progress. A question such as, “What did you do today?” may imply expectations of an evaluative nature. Also, when your child brings work home, set aside a time to share it when you can focus your attention, exhibit your true interest, and appreciate their pleasure. Genuine, specific comments from you, which express neither excessive praise nor negative criticism, will help your child understand that you value their effort. “This drawing has so many details!” is an example of something you might say.

Attendance

We tend to call each of the classes “communities.” There is good reason for this: The children and guides create a series of relationships with one another, the materials, the environment. Every part of the community’s function relies on each individual playing their part. When a child is absent, the role they play in that intricate web is truly missed by the other parts of the community.

Additionally, this highly social plane of development means that most of the time, the children are working on projects with other members of the community. When one is absent, it may be difficult for the others to continue their work.

Clothing

While we must emphasize hygiene with the children, the clothes they wear to school need not be very fancy. Children will work on the floor and outside, so we recommend that school clothes are neither expensive nor treasured. Clothes will get dirty, as a natural outcome of the children’s daily work. If the clothing is wet or too dirty, the guides will direct the child to change. So, it is always necessary to have a change of clothes available at all times.

Please make sure that any jewelry, costume pieces, headbands, etc. are kept at home, as they interfere with the child’s concentration in the classroom environment. We work to carefully,

thoughtfully curate the materials in the environment. Clothing that is shiny, full of ruffles, lights, buttons, etc. distracts from the environment. Please provide the plainest possible clothes for your child, so their focus will be on the developmentally appropriate materials, rather than their clothing.

The general principle for clothing and shoes is that they should be:

1. Safe and appropriate for running, jumping, hiking, climbing, and playing sports.
2. In the spirit of the serious working environment of the classroom.

Materials

The classroom environment contains pocket-sized items such as money, rocks, shells, and imported educational materials. Because of the self-correcting nature of the materials, any material that is missing a part is removed from the classroom until that part is found or replaced. This is a practical and not a punitive action. On some occasion, if your child's pockets should contain such an item, please return it promptly.

Personal items such as electronics, toys, dolls, stuffed animals, trading cards, books, and money are to be left at home. If there is a unique item you believe would be of interest to your child's class, please ask your guide when it may be brought to school.

Assessments

Clay-Platte Montessori School utilizes portfolio assessments, a cumulative compilation of the child's work. The child, as they demonstrate understanding of a particular skill, will—in consultation with their guide—add some of their work to their portfolio.

As they transition from Lower Elementary to Upper Elementary, the child, the Elementary guide, the director, and the guardians will each look at the portfolio separately. Together, they will discuss the progress the child has demonstrated in each subject area. This is a time for the child to show off anything and everything that they have learned in Lower Elementary. This is a celebration of their growth and should be approached with respect for and regard for the immense tasks the child has accomplished.

As the child transitions from Upper Elementary to the Farm School, the six-year portfolio nears completion. The child will choose an audience (including the Upper Elementary guide, one Farm School guide, and the director) to whom they will present their portfolio or a special project that demonstrates many of the skills and lessons they have learned over their six years in the elementary program. This offers the child the opportunity to reflect on their accomplishments, to analyze the progression of their work, and to synthesize their learning. Again, the new adolescent will be surrounded by a supportive team of individuals. At this time, the child will be prepared to answer a few general questions in each subject area. Their celebration will include a bridging ceremony.

Please remember: When a child is consistently answering math equations correctly, we know it is time to move them to the next lesson. *Much of the work they bring home may be incorrect because they are still learning.* Rather than assess them with a grade, we watch closely as they

master the use of the material. If there seems to be no progression, the guide will either offer a second lesson or a new approach. Questions you might have regarding the meaning or progress of children's work should be addressed during a conference with the guide.

Programs & Services

Within the Cosmic Curriculum, the guides offer the children physical education, art, music, drama, and more. Therefore, each week, nine of ten work cycles will be dedicated to Montessori work. One work cycle will include Orff Music class. These classes are offered, as part of the elementary tuition.

Other lessons, such as Chess Club, will be available for an additional charge. Guardians will be notified via email, when sign up starts.


Field Trips & Going Out

“When a child goes out, it is the world itself that offers itself to him. Let us take the

child out to show him real things instead of making objects which represent ideas and closing them in cupboards.” - **Maria Montessori**

A word about terminology: A *Field Trip* is usually a trip planned by the guide or the children for the whole class; a *Going Out* is a trip planned by and for 2-5 students whose studies or responsibilities in the classroom take them out of the classroom.

“Going Out” is an essential element in the Montessori elementary program and is very different from a traditional field trip. The children “go out” in small groups as an extension of their research and to gain experiences in the world outside the classroom. The children develop independence, resourcefulness, and self-confidence through functioning capably in the larger world without adult assistance.



The goal of policies and procedures contained within this handbook is to create an environment conducive to the development of the children in our community. Because events may necessitate our adaptation of that environment to meet the needs of the children, please know that the handbook may change from time to time. You will be notified via email, any time there is a change to policy or procedures.

You and your family are valued members of this community. If you find any policy or procedure to be harmful or unfair to you or your child, please contact us as soon as possible.

Some examples of harm we have tried to avoid include:

- Punishing students for non-attendance on culturally-significant holidays;
- Excluding children or families from events or opportunities due to physical access to locations;
- Positive representations of their race, culture, religion, gender, or sexual orientation being absent from the classroom and community experience;
- Assignments (eg personal timelines or family history projects) and celebrations (eg Mother's Day) that may marginalize children from adoptive, LGBTQ, or single-parent families.

It is our intent to be as inclusive as possible, so that every child has everything they need to grow into a peaceful, responsible adult who values people of diverse backgrounds.

Thank you for being a part of our community!